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**The Monster and the Maiden:
Literary Affinities in the Writings of Iris Murdoch and Elias Canetti**

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2009

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy of German and Comparative Literature

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Acknowledgements

In memory of May Corcoran 1930-2009

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam

Working in chronological order, I extend enormous thanks to Prof. Julian Preece for first encouraging me to work on Murdoch and Canetti, and for his steadfast enthusiasm for this project. I am deeply indebted to Prof. Osman Durrani for his brilliant, incisive, attentive and considered supervision of me. I am also hugely grateful to Dr. Ben Hutchinson for his keen interest, encouragement and for his invaluable feedback and advice on drafts of the thesis. I wish also to thank other friends, colleagues and advisors for their encouragement and assistance along the way: Prof. Jeremy Adler, Prof. John Bayley, Agn s Cardinal, Prof. Peter Conradi, Dr. Ana de Medeiros, Dr. Tammy Grimshaw, Prof. Heather Jackson, Susanne Krauss, Dr. Miles Leeson, Prof. Claudia Liebrand, Dr. Mark Luprecht, Dr. Catherine Morley, Dr. John Partridge, Dr. Dominic Sandbrook, Tom Sutton, Dr. Montserrat Roser, Dr. Elizabeth Sch chter, Dr. Anna-Katherina Schaffner, Dr. Axel St hler, Pippa Tuckman, Dr. Shane Weller, Frances White and Dr. Patrick Quinn. My thanks also to the library and archival staff: Dr. Christoph Eggenberger at the Zentralbibliothek, Zurich, Jane Rutland and Katie Giles at the Kingston archive and staff at the British and the Templeman libraries. I wish to also thank the administrative staff at SECL, especially Maureen Nunn and Juliette Ashby for their help over the past few years.

My thanks also to SECL at the University of Kent for granting me a bursary in 2005 and to the AHRC for awarding me a doctoral studentship which enabled me to undertake the vast majority of this research. I also wish to thank the Colyer-Fergusson grant scheme and the CUTG (now AGS) which enabled me to undertake research in Zurich and London.

I am grateful to my friends especially Claire Lozier, Angela Gerhardt, Bilge Daldeniz, Danielle Shalet, Amy-Danielle Cullen, Eilis O'Brien, Emer O'Connor, Hannah Maurer, Paul Taberham, and Jane Baiss for their good conversation and offers of coffee breaks at exactly the right moment.

I wish to extend enormous and heartfelt thanks to Tom and Verna Sutton for their support and friendship.

I thank my parents, grandmother and my heaven-sent sisters, Catherine, Deirdre and Rachel, for their unstinting love, loyalty and encouragement. I thank my lovely nieces, Emily and Emer, for always bringing me such joy and sunshine.

And finally, I thank Matt for sustaining me in every way throughout the past few years.

Abstract

This thesis seeks to reassess the intellectual relationship between Iris Murdoch and Elias Canetti. According to the widely accepted view, Canetti has been portrayed through various power figures, some of whom are endowed with monstrous qualities, in several of Murdoch's novels. This conventional model would imply that a personal and intellectual antagonism existed between Canetti and Murdoch, a view that is reinforced by the assumption that his work concentrates on the human lust for power, whereas her literary and philosophical focus is the human potential for goodness. However, by examining those aspects of Canetti's works with which Murdoch was demonstrably familiar, this study reconsiders a group of Murdoch's novels that have previously been used to contrast the two writers' ideas and methods. Through a close reading of these texts, and with reference to hitherto unpublished material held in the Iris Murdoch Archive, this thesis demonstrates the presence of significant points of contact between them. These include their shared literary preoccupation with the themes of goodness and of power and the ways power is exercised and can be avoided. The thesis finds similarities between the two authors' central, guiding insights of 'Transformation' and 'Unselfing', and uncovers affinities between individual motifs and stylistic practices in their approach to the theme of power. These findings challenge and expand existing interpretations of their writing and in other cases develop new approaches to interpreting their work. Rather than simply representing Canetti's alleged demonic nature, the power figures in Murdoch's fiction embody the philosophical legacy of the post-Kantian Enlightenment against which both she and Canetti were writing. On the strength of the literary and philosophical comparison which it presents, the thesis rejects the conventional view of an opposition and argues, instead, that Murdoch and Canetti may be viewed as intellectual allies.

Abbreviations

Canetti

ZB: Canetti's estate at the Zentralbibliothek, Zurich. ZB 54, for example, refers to box number 54.

DA: Das Augenspiel: Lebensgeschichte 1931-1937 (Munich: Hanser, 1985)

DB: Die Blendung Die Blendung (1935), 36th edn. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2004)

DFO: Die Fackel im Ohr: Lebensgeschichte 1921-1931 (1980) (Munich: Hanser, 1995)

DgZ: Die gerettete Zunge: Geschichte einer Jugend (1977) (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987)

GdW: Das Gewissen der Worte: Essays (1975) (Munich: DTV, 1978)

KdE: Komödie der Eitelkeit (1950) *Dramen*, 14th edn. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2004)

MM: Masse und Macht (1960) 30th edn. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2006)

PB: Party im Blitz: Die englischen Jahre (Munich: Hanser, 2003)

Murdoch

IML 1120: Reference for Murdoch's copy of *Crowds and Power* held at Kingston University Archive.

IML 1121: Reference for Murdoch's copy of *Masse und Macht* held at Kingston University Archive.

KUAS: Reference for papers from Kingston University Archive

EM: Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature, ed. by Peter Conradi (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997)

FE: The Flight from the Enchanter (1956) (London: Vintage, 2000)

FHD: A Fairly Honourable Defeat (1970) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986)

GK: The Green Knight (1993) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995)

MGM: Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals (1992) (London: Vintage, 2003)

PP: The Philosopher's Pupil (1983) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984)

TB: The Bell (New York: Viking, 1958)

TSTS: The Sea, The Sea (1978) (Suffolk: Triad/Granada, 1982)

TBP: The Black Prince (1973) (London: Vintage, 1984)

TTA: The Time of the Angels (1966) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968)

TTU: The Unicorn (1963) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972)

UN: Under the Net (1954) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969)

Introduction

This thesis seeks to reassess Iris Murdoch's and Elias Canetti's relationship through a close reading of their work. Although it is now common knowledge that they enjoyed a love affair in London from 1952 until Murdoch's marriage to John Bayley in 1956, what almost all previous depictions of their personal and sexual relationship overlook is that their work manifests many shared intellectual interests.¹ These shared interests and their implications for Murdoch and Canetti scholarship are in urgent need of exploration.

John Bayley is the earliest writer to comment in detail on Murdoch's and Canetti's relationship in his memoir *Iris: A Memoir of Iris Murdoch* (1998).² Bayley met Murdoch in 1953, during her affair with Canetti. He holds that Murdoch was the much-maligned maiden to Canetti, the 'monster of Hampstead': 'But to me in those days she seemed at the negligent disposition of these unknown and godlike older men, whom she went humbly to 'see' at times when it suited them [...] she would make what appeared to me these masochistic journeys to London; and chiefly to Hampstead, for me the abode and headquarters of the evil gods.'³ While Bayley's reflections bear shades of self-mockery – for instance when he notes: 'In reality the people Iris went to see were not gods or demons but intellectuals, writers, artists, civil servants, mostly Jewish, mainly refugees, who knew one another and formed a loose-knit circle with its own rivalries, jealousies and power struggles' – this reductive view of the relationship between the monster and the maiden has endured.⁴ It is the intention of this thesis to call into question the accuracy of this view of Murdoch's connection to Canetti.

¹ Christine Ann Evans, 'Review of *Understanding Elias Canetti* by Richard H. Lawson', *Iris Murdoch Newsletter*, 6 (1992), pp. 4-5. Evans notes that the themes of blindness, self-absorption and isolation are ones which Canetti's novel shares with Murdoch's. However, because, as Evans sees it, there is no hope for improvement in Canetti's novel, then 'Canetti's novel seems quite different from Murdoch's works' (p. 5).

² John Bayley, *The Iris Trilogy: Iris: A Memoir of Iris Murdoch, Iris and the Friends: A Year of Memories, Widowers House* (London: Abacus, 2003) (Individual texts first published separately London: Duckworth, 1998, 1999, 2001).

³ Bayley, *The Iris Trilogy*, pp. 45 & 124. Bayley asserts that Friedl Benedikt's (Canetti's lover who directly preceded Murdoch) novel *The Monster* is based on Canetti. He and Conradi maintain that Murdoch's monsters are similarly modelled on Canetti. This is in spite of the fact that Benedikt told her parents the book was about Hitler. See Peter Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life* (London: HarperCollins, 2001), p. 365.

⁴ Bayley, *The Iris Trilogy*, p. 46.

Peter Conradi's biography *Iris Murdoch: A Life* (2001) mirrors and expands on the monster and the maiden depiction of the relationship with Canetti as presented by Bayley. Central to Conradi's representation of Murdoch's and Canetti's connection is his view that Canetti served as a model for Murdoch's monstrous power figures. He claims that Canetti's power and his writing (*Masse und Macht* in particular) were, for Murdoch, 'challenges to English liberal humanism', implying that the man and his work represent a moral adversary for Murdoch.⁵ Conradi asserts that Murdoch 'first portrayed' Canetti in *The Flight from the Enchanter* (1956) through the villainous character, Mischa Fox.⁶ Her later monstrous power figures, Charles Arrowby and Julius King, are also inspired by Canetti's malignant nature, according to Conradi.⁷ Furthermore, he traces connections between Murdoch's fictional characters' traits and Canetti's alleged malignancy; however, many of his pronouncements about Canetti are based on opinion and anecdotal evidence which even his own notes reveal to be disputable.⁸ When attempting to give a flavour of the nature of the relationship, Conradi provides a description of a love scene from Murdoch's diary: "He takes me quickly suddenly, in one movement as it were – and he kisses me restlessly, & savagely draws back my head [...] When we are satisfied

⁵ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 371. Conradi's equation of Canetti with the despots of *Masse und Macht*, and his suggestion that both advocate the exercise of power, entirely misses the point.

⁶ Ibid. p. 353.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 523-524. For example, Conradi claims that Canetti, like Murdoch's character, Charles Arrowby was a misogynist. He uses as evidence of Canetti's misogyny his mother's comment in *Das Augenspiel* that women would love him for the 'Frauenhaß' of *Die Blendung*. This is not, however, the same as saying that Canetti is a misogynist. More recent critics agree that the book is about misogyny, but this forms part of the blindness which Canetti saw an aspect of pre-war Vienna and which he satirises. See Chapter Two of this thesis for more on this topic.

⁸ Conradi's file at the Kingston Archive, which also houses Murdoch's estate, shows that he asked acquaintances of Canetti's for their memories of the writer. He uses this anecdotal evidence to bring the charges against Canetti which feature in his chapter on the relationship, 'Conversations with a Prince'. However, it does not represent those respondents who spoke favourably of Canetti as much as those who spoke ill of him. Mary Douglas's recollections, for example, are omitted. She notes that Canetti was '[v]ery kind, magnanimous and always flattering to the work of others'. She also states: 'I was very surprised to hear that he had been the model for Iris Murdoch's *Flight from the Enchanter*'. I wondered if those who attributed a sinister influence to him were not being influenced by the character in the play, and not so much by direct encounters with himself'. (KUAS 6/2/34/2) These opinions did not have a place in Conradi's chapter. Nor did John Willett's letter have a part in the biography. Willett pleads with Conradi to disbelieve what John Bayley wrote about Canetti in his memoirs: 'But I feel I must beg you to discount what he [Bayley] says about Canetti, whom he seems to see as a squat gorilla of some kind with bushy hair.' Willett finishes emphatically stating that the picture Bayley gives is 'wildly wrong'. (KUAS 6/1/11/30) Even Susie Ovardia (Friedl Benedikt's sister), on whose recollections Conradi's negative portrait relies so heavily, states: 'I remain convinced that Canetti wanted Friedl's best'. (KUAS 6/1/7/3) These alternative points of view demonstrate the problems of a methodology which depends so greatly on anecdotal evidence, as in Conradi's chapter on Canetti.

we do not lie together, but contemplate each other with a sort of amused hostility”.”⁹ However, Conradi fails to acknowledge that Canetti’s description of their love-making in *Party im Blitz* is completely at odds with Murdoch’s.¹⁰ Indeed Murdoch’s husband’s statement, that sex was not very important for his wife because she was far too busy all the time, appears to corroborate Canetti’s version of events.¹¹ Bayley also learned, and informs the reader, that a previous lover of Murdoch’s also noted her alleged shortcomings in love by stating, with Murdoch in mind: ‘Nothing more discouraging than a partner who won’t enter into the spirit of the thing’.¹² How things really were, we will never know. I am not attempting to settle the issue finally one way or another here, but rather merely to demonstrate the difficulties and dangers inherent in passing such judgements on people. All these considerations taken together mean that Conradi’s efforts to draw connections between Canetti and Murdoch’s fictional power figures, however interesting they may be, are highly problematic.¹³

Notwithstanding these inherent problems of attempting to find the real person in the fictional text, Conradi’s and Bayley’s view of Canetti as the monster whom Murdoch writes into her fiction has tended to prevail. A. N. Wilson’s memoir, *Iris Murdoch as I knew her* (2003), also portrays Canetti as a monstrously ‘cruel man’ who was both physically and psychologically abusive towards Murdoch.¹⁴ Bran Nicol’s *Iris Murdoch: The Retrospective Fiction* (1999), though not concentrating on Murdoch’s relationship

⁹ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, pp. 357-358. An extract from Murdoch’s diary (which is not accessible to the public) dated 24 March 1953.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 582. Note 82 shows that Conradi read the manuscript of *Party im Blitz* and claims that his portrait was one-sided and was informed by his jealousy of Murdoch’s success. This claim seems peculiar given the fact that Canetti also enjoyed much success; he had, at that point, also won the coveted Nobel Prize. For further discussion of the discrepancies in the biographical versions of the relationship which Conradi presents and *Party im Blitz* see: Julian Preece, ‘The God-Monster’s Version’, *Guardian*, 7 February 2004, p. 36.

¹¹ Bayley, *The Iris Trilogy*, p. 44.

¹² Ibid. p. 72.

¹³ For a critique of the biographical material produced about Murdoch’s life in general, see David Aaronovitch, ‘The Iris Troubles’, *The Observer*, 7 September 2003.

¹⁴ A. N. Wilson, *Iris Murdoch as I knew her* (London: Hutchinson, 2003), pp. 87-88. Contrarily, Conradi rules out the rumours that Canetti was physically abusive. The conjecture which surrounds Canetti by Murdoch’s biographers is also a feature of Wilson’s brief comments on her relationship. Of Canetti’s receipt of the Nobel Prize, Wilson bafflingly notes that it ‘had been awarded by the author to himself, inside his own psyche, a good half a century earlier’. One may rhetorically ask how Wilson is privy to such information.

with Canetti, welcomes the memoirs and biographies for providing more information about Murdoch's personal life. Mentioning the example of the detail that Murdoch had a sado-masochistic relationship with Canetti, he aims to show that this subject is of profound importance for Murdoch's depiction of the process of writing.¹⁵ However, Nicol sagely points out that reading Murdoch's life through her fiction and *vice versa* should be avoided.¹⁶

Barbara Stevens Heusel's study *Iris Murdoch's Paradoxical Novels: Thirty Years of Critical Reception* (2001) only fleetingly refers to Murdoch's relationship with Canetti.¹⁷ She states ambiguously that Murdoch 'jousts' with Canetti, but gives no details as to how. She also notes that Murdoch, like Canetti, 'stands against her time, creating a rich and imaginative realm, a place many artists lack the courage to enter', but again does not develop this observation.¹⁸ Tammy Grimshaw's *Sexuality, Gender and Power in Iris Murdoch's Fiction* (2005) also briefly mentions Murdoch's relationship with Canetti, and largely follows the view of Bayley and Conradi. Grimshaw notes that Canetti was a 'personal influence' on Murdoch's writing.¹⁹ Heather Widdows also repeats Conradi's view that Canetti served as a model for Murdoch's villains and that he and his ideas represent his 'moral atheism', because he believed that 'power-wielding nihilism' is the 'correct vision of the world'.²⁰ More recently, in *Iris Murdoch: A Reassessment* (2007), Conradi reiterates his view that Murdoch and Canetti were intellectually opposed, since Canetti dismissed Murdoch's desire to know 'how love can go beyond power'.²¹ Conradi also adds in his essay on the writing of the biography: 'Chapter 13 was for me the biography's centre, and I detected Canetti behind those notably bad manipulative father-

¹⁵ Bran Nicol, *Iris Murdoch: The Retrospective Fiction*, 2nd edn (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 168-169.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Barbara Stevens Heusel, *Iris Murdoch's Paradoxical Novels: Thirty Years of Critical Reception* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2001).

¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 3 & 128. Heusel also states incorrectly that Canetti was a mathematician. Conradi also mistakenly identifies the year of Veza's death as 1962. Such inaccuracies suggest the lack of knowledge about Canetti among Murdoch critics.

¹⁹ Tammy Grimshaw, *Gender, Sexuality and Power in Iris Murdoch's Fiction* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2005), pp. 23 & 119.

²⁰ Heather Widdows, *The Moral Vision of Iris Murdoch* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 5.

²¹ Peter Conradi, 'Preface', in *Iris Murdoch: A Reassessment*, ed. by Anne Rowe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. xvii.

figures: Mischa in *The Flight from the Enchanter*, Julius in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* and Charles Arrowby in *The Sea, The Sea*'.²²

In 2003, a fourth volume of Canetti's autobiography was posthumously published as *Party im Blitz: Die englischen Jahre*. The book is assembled from pieces Canetti wrote before his death, one of which concerns his relationship with Murdoch. In his review article, Conradi criticised the chapter on Murdoch, arguing that Canetti's portrait is 'awash with bile, backstabbing and envy'.²³ Yet Canetti is more generous in his assessment of Murdoch than this implies, praising in particular her powers of listening (something to which Conradi admittedly also draws attention).²⁴ Canetti repeatedly notes: 'Als Zuhörerin *mochte* ich Iris. Ich spürte, wie *gut* sie hörte und dachte auch, daß sie deswegen zu mir kam'.²⁵ However, while Conradi believes that Murdoch's listening to Canetti talk about himself, thus his personality, fed into her creation of Mischa Fox, Canetti is not merely stating that Murdoch listened to his personal stories. She also listened to him discuss his ideas and share his knowledge, as she did with the other 'specialists' in her life: 'Ihr Wissensdurst war groß, die Freunde, die sie in Oxford hatte, waren meist Spezialisten für etwas, es gab sehr gute darunter, von denen sie alles lernte'.²⁶ Canetti refers to this as Murdoch's practice of robbing men of their minds: 'Sie hatte - verborgen - eine räuberische Natur und war darauf aus, jeden ihrer Liebhaber um seinen Geist eher als um sein Herz zu berauben'.²⁷ Contrary to Bayley and Conradi, Canetti stresses that, other than their sexual liaison, the relationship was about Murdoch listening to him. He states: 'Sie bewahrt alles, was sie *hört*, und wenn es nicht vorher als Philosophie gefaßt war, wird es zu ihrer anonymen Beute. Ich könnte sagen, daß sie aus ihrer Beute bei mir viel gemacht hat, aber es ist vermischt mit so viel *anderer* Beute, daß

²² Peter Conradi, 'Oedipus, Peter Pan and Negative Capability: On Writing Iris Murdoch's Life', in *Iris Murdoch: A Reassessment*, pp. 189-203 (pp. 197-198).

²³ Peter Conradi, 'Fox on the Loose: Peter Conradi finds Elias Canetti's Recollections Awash with Bile, Backstabbing and Envy', *Guardian*, 9 July 2005, p. 14. (Repr. 'Review of *Party in the Blitz* by Elias Canetti', *The Iris Murdoch Newsletter*, 18 (2005) pp. 3-4. Conradi chastises Canetti for criticising Murdoch's appearance and hospitality in *Party im Blitz*).

²⁴ Conradi, 'Fox on the Loose'.

²⁵ Elias Canetti, *Party im Blitz: Die englischen Jahre* (Munich: Hanser, 2003), p. 183.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 184.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 181.

man sich dafür schämt: es ist verbindlich'.²⁸ Rather than stating that he felt Murdoch gave his personality to some of her characters, Canetti is here referring to Murdoch holding on to ideas as her booty. This version introduces an important amendment to the previous monster-maiden depictions of the relationship. Canetti suggests that it was not his personality, but rather his ideas which fed into Murdoch's work, although he concedes that the claim is hard to prove, since, as he puts it, these ideas are mixed up with so many others.²⁹ What is in any case implicit in Canetti's comments in *Party im Blitz*, is that there are definite connections between their work. This thesis is an exploration of these affinities.

Bertram Kazmirowski includes a relatively short section on Murdoch and Canetti in his monograph *In der Provinz des Lehrers: Rollenbilder und Selbstentwürfe in Leben und Werk von Elias Canetti* (2004). He also repeats many of Conradi's claims regarding Canetti serving as the model for Mischa Fox.³⁰ As indicated by the title, Kazmirowski views the relationship as another example of the teacher-pupil motif associated with Canetti's life and work. He argues that Murdoch replaced Friedl Benedikt as Canetti's pupil. However, Kazmirowski overlooks the important differences between Murdoch and Benedikt which compromise his theory.³¹ Crucially, Murdoch was not, as he claims, a 'junge Irin' when she met Canetti; moreover, Kazmirowski offers no evidence of what Murdoch learned from Canetti.

Canetti's biographer, Sven Hanauschek, also views the relationship as one where Canetti was, as in his relationship with Friedl Benedikt, a teacher figure for Murdoch: 'Es kann kaum bezweifelt werden, daß die Jahre mit Canetti für Murdoch außerordentlich wichtig waren, er scheint ein "Meister" für sie gewesen zu sein wie für Friedl Benedikt'.³² Like Conradi, Hanauschek only points out Canetti's personal influence on Murdoch's character, Mischa Fox, in *The Flight from the Enchanter* (1956): 'Es ist bisher

²⁸ Canetti, *Party im Blitz*, p. 175.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Bertram Kazmirowski, *In der Provinz des Lehrers: Rollenbilder und Selbstentwürfe im Leben und Werk von Elias Canetti* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 2004), pp. 297-306 (pp. 298-299).

³¹ This argument is discussed more in Part (ii) of Chapter One.

³² Sven Hanauschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie* (Munich: Hanser, 2005), p. 403.

nur beschreibbar, wie Canetti auf Murdoch gewirkt hat, welche Bedeutung er für sie hatte, zumal er als Figur durch einige ihrer Romane geistert, zumeist als Figur “dämonischer” Art.³³ He thus repeats Conradi’s comments about Canetti being a model for Mischa Fox. However, he vehemently defends Canetti against Bayley’s and Conradi’s charges that Canetti was a monster, pointing out that Bayley and Canetti were rivals for Murdoch’s affections, and that Bayley’s soubriquets for Canetti, including ‘the god-monster of Hampstead’, stem from a ‘literarische Sottise’, originating in Benedikt’s novel. ‘Auch seine “godmonster”-Prägung und die Anekdoten, die Bayley in seinem Buch und im Gespräch erzählt, sind spöttische, auch groteske Anekdoten; es sind keine *moralischen* Anekdoten’.³⁴ Hanuschek thus refutes Conradi’s view of Canetti as a kind of moral adversary for Murdoch.

Other than Conradi’s chapter, the most extensive piece written on the relationship is Claudia Liebrand’s short essay ‘Versierte Liebe: Elias Canetti und Iris Murdoch’. Like Conradi, Liebrand is critical of Canetti’s ungentlemanly portrait of Murdoch in *Party im Blitz*: ‘Der Gentleman genießt und schweigt. Sollte dieser Gemeinplatz stimmen, dann war Canetti kein Gentleman – oder genauer: dann haben die Nachlassverwalter verhindert, dass er sich uns als solcher präsentiert’.³⁵ She also follows Conradi in seeing Canetti as Murdoch’s figure, Mischa Fox, stating erroneously that Canetti, like Fox, had one blue eye and one brown eye.³⁶ Though on the one hand, Liebrand notes sensibly that the relationship between real life and fiction is too complicated to say that Fox is Canetti, and his love interest, Rosa Keepe, Murdoch, she nevertheless concludes that the novel is a ‘Drehbuchvorlage’ of Murdoch’s break-up with Canetti.³⁷

The main line of argument in all of these studies which, on the whole, attempt biographical assessments of Murdoch’s and Canetti’s relationship, is that Canetti is portrayed in Murdoch’s fiction through her monstrous power figures in order to reflect

³³ Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, p. 403.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 426.

³⁵ Claudia Liebrand, ‘Versierte Liebe: Elias Canetti und Iris Murdoch’, *Text+Kritik: Zeitschrift für Literatur*, VII (2005), 118-125 (p. 118).

³⁶ Ibid. p. 121.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 122.

his powerful nature and that, as such, he represents a moral adversary for Murdoch. The idea of Canetti as the monster is refuted only by Hanuschek, and Conradi, for his part, rejects Canetti's portrait of Murdoch. However, to pursue Canetti, the man, into Murdoch's fiction is, for reasons pointed out earlier, highly problematic, given the amount of speculation involved. In truth, these biographers could go on forever without finally establishing the facts of how things were within the personal relationship.

This thesis proposes, conversely, to understand the nature of their intellectual relationship through a study of their works. Apart from biographical accounts of their relationship, there are also intellectual accounts which are overlooked by all the assessments hitherto cited. These accounts are an important component of this thesis, since they indicate points of shared interests and intellectual affinity between Murdoch and Canetti. Murdoch's review of *Masse und Macht* for the *Spectator*, as well as her review copy of Canetti's text, which she annotated and which is held at Kingston University Archive, are primary sources for our study.

Murdoch's review 'Mass, Might and Myth' remains an important and comprehensive introduction to Canetti's text.³⁸ It is not surprising, then, that it has been published no less than three times. The review consists of a synopsis of the book complete with introductions to its fundamental concepts including 'crowds', 'survival', 'stings', 'commands' and 'transformations'. Murdoch credits the book with providing us with 'a satisfactory theoretical explanation of Hitler', with revealing the problems of 'the necessary incompleteness of systems' and with confronting us with the need to find the means to overcome the exercise of power.³⁹ Murdoch's affinity with Canetti's work is

³⁸ Iris Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', *Spectator*, 6 September 1963, pp. 337-338. (Repr. in Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. by Peter Conradi (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), pp. 187-192 and *Critical Essays on Elias Canetti*, ed. by David Darby (NY: G. K. Hall & Co., 2000), pp. 154-157). Despite these re-printings, which indicate that the review offers a good, solid introduction to the book, Conradi undermines Murdoch's opinion by stating that her review was one of only two favourable ones. Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 455. Bayley also does so when he says that Murdoch thought *Masse und Macht* a 'cult book'. Letter to me dated February 2007. These opinions that Murdoch really thought very little of the book are not reflected in the evidence at all. Why then would she include a review of it in *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*?

³⁹ Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', pp. 337-338.

immediately suggested here, since these are issues which her own work also takes up. Furthermore, within the review, she directly connects Canetti's ideas to those typically associated with her work when she ponders (in response to Canetti's call for the need to find ways to overcome the cycle of power): '[...] cannot the pain of stings be removed by love and compassion'.⁴⁰ Within the case studies to come, the review will be employed to support the literary affinities identified, since it allows us to see which of the 'hundreds of memorable things' contained in the book struck a chord with her.⁴¹

Murdoch's copy of *Crowds and Power* will be used in a similar manner within the chapters (especially in Parts Two and Three where we discuss *Masse und Macht*) to support the affinities detected. Murdoch's library contains two copies of Canetti's book: one in the original German, presented to her on publication bearing the inscription 'Für Iris Murdoch von Elias Canetti – Juli 1960'⁴², and a proof copy of the translation dating from 1962.⁴³ Her notes and markings are in ink and in a small, neat hand. There is extensive underlining throughout the book as well as some marks in the margins.⁴⁴ Most pages are marked up. The flyleaves to the rear are crowded with a nine-page index which, at times, consists of a single term or word and a page number, for example: 'crowd symbols 75', 'Arrest, The clutching hand 204 The hand 206', 'Teeth 207' (IML 1120, 471-482). Murdoch singled out a number of these indexed subjects for praise in her review: 'There is a beautiful description of the human hand [...]', for example.⁴⁵ She was also clearly more interested in the power half of the book than the crowds section; her index begins almost sixty pages into the two-hundred pages on crowds and less than three pages of the nine-page index are devoted to that subject.⁴⁶ These considerations indicate that rather than merely trying to summarise the content of the book for the purpose of the review, Murdoch was guided by her own interests.

⁴⁰ Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', p. 338.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² IML 1121. Iris Murdoch Library copy of *Masse und Macht*.

⁴³ IML 1120. Iris Murdoch Library copy of *Crowds and Power*.

⁴⁴ Marked margins and underlining will be indicated with underlining. I will indicate more specifically where the underlining is representing marked margins.

⁴⁵ Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', pp. 337-338.

⁴⁶ IML 1120, pp. 471, 472, 482.

Four main categories of annotation can be identified within Murdoch's personalised index. The first consists of her recordings of the page numbers of specific ideas; these usually consist of a single term and page number. A second category is when Murdoch reacts approvingly to the text, for example, 'A new & totally original way of looking at myth' (IML 1120, 471), 'Communion service join each to the church but separates fr. [from] others present. Yes! 156' (IML 1120, 472), 'Birth of Nazism in disband of army: excellent 181' (IML 1120, 472) and 'Wonderful sense of the variety of human image – the Freudian ones have grown stale' (IML 1120, 463). The third main category of annotation consists of those where Murdoch expresses resistance to an idea. Her practice here was to note any criticisms or queries after the indexed item (when such comments are absent, we can assume that she was favourably struck by the particular idea). She notes, for example, in relation to Canetti's discussion of crowds: 'How necessary are all these distinctions?' (IML 1120, 471). Perhaps the most significant criticism that Murdoch finds with Canetti's thesis, and one which we shall probe more carefully in Part Three, is its one-sidedness, as she sees it. She notes: '[...] paranoiac never forgives. Pardon as power/ Yet EC [Elias Canetti] does not consider [the] case of real pardon tho' [though] he sees its value/ A pessimistic ethic – he sees the sources of evil & is silent about the sources of good' (IML 1120, 484). The fourth category consists of general remarks on the text as a whole, some of which were incorporated into the review, for example: 'One wd. [would] have to be a polymath to review this. I am far from being the polymath who wd. be ideal reviewer' (IML1120, 471). Murdoch's comment, 'writer's handbook', is one of the more interesting ones and may suggest that this is how she viewed Canetti's book (IML 1120, 484).

Mark Luprecht's short essay 'A Most Uncritical Critique: Looking at Murdoch's Textual Notes for Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power* (1962)' notes that many of Murdoch's more critical annotations are either reformulated so that they are less critical in the final review, or else do not make it into the review at all. He concludes:

Murdoch's original motivation for composing a most uncritical critique of Canetti's *Crowds and Power* is not likely to be unearthed. Did a completed

reading of a work that does, truly, cover an immense range, finally convince her that she should overlook what she might have determined to be minor objections? Did Canetti, upon Murdoch's patient reflection, ultimately address the queries and shortcomings she noted? Or were the scholarly lapses filtered out by an emotional sieve? These are questions which Murdoch's notes and annotations can raise, but not answer. Her immediate reactions, when juxtaposed with her published review in the *Spectator*, offer a glimpse of her mind at work, and perhaps of her emotional attachment as well. They are an example of the potential richness for scholarly research still lying untouched at Kingston University.⁴⁷

Yet this thesis will show that Murdoch's most significant criticism of Canetti in the annotations, relating to his neglect of goodness and his sole concentration on power, is represented in the review. Furthermore, it will show that Murdoch and Canetti, in the end, offer similar solutions to the problem of power, in spite of her criticism that he ignores the human capacity for good. (See in particular, section (vii) in Part Three.)

In order to be able to come to terms with Murdoch's marginalia in *Masse und Macht*, it must be compared with other annotated texts in her library. Underlining with the creation of a personal index seems to have been her usual practice. Her copies of Plato, Freud, Weil and Heidegger, for instance, all contain annotations organised as those in *Masse und Macht* are.⁴⁸ This observation again implies that her interest was also a personal one and not merely for the purpose of the review. Indeed the notes she made on *Masse und Macht* are among the most extensive which she made on a single volume. *Being and Time* (1962), though consisting of almost six hundred pages, warranted only five pages of notes.⁴⁹ Plato, a considerable influence on Murdoch's philosophical writing, is not marked up and annotated as much as Canetti. Her copies of *Georgias* and *Protagoras and Meno* each have four pages of notes to the rear. Secondary studies of Plato, however, have more notes. Thinkers who more significantly informed her writing

⁴⁷ Mark Luprecht, 'A Most Uncritical Critique: Looking at Murdoch's Textual Notes for Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power* (1962)', *Iris Murdoch Newsletter*, 19 (2006), pp. 33-35 (pp. 34-35).

⁴⁸ Cf IML 1 (Plato), IML 940 (Weil), IML 998 (Heidegger), IML 956 (Freud).

⁴⁹ IML 989.

of *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) and *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (1992) such as Freud, Heidegger, Hegel, Kierkegaard and Weil, are similarly marked (underlining and index), but not to the same extent as *Masse und Macht*. *The Notebooks of Simone Weil* is less plentiful in marginalia than *Masse und Macht*, even though Murdoch was ‘fascinated’ with Weil’s work.⁵⁰ If her notes and annotations are an indication of her interest in a particular text, then Murdoch was also significantly interested in Canetti’s thought. It is in any case certain that she read *Masse und Macht* very carefully and ingested all of its detail. Unlike other books Murdoch studied, where her index and underlining suggest sporadic reading, the index of *Masse und Macht* is highly detailed and sequential, suggesting that she read the book through completely. The personalised index facilitates a speedy return to specific ideas and therefore might also indicate that the book was used more than once.⁵¹

Despite these indications of an intellectual connection between these writers, Murdoch’s annotations and her review of Canetti’s *magnum opus* form no part of efforts to understand their relationship until now. Indeed, the virtually exclusive emphasis on their personal relationship and the view that Canetti is the model for Murdoch’s monsters have eclipsed indications that they had shared interests. Therefore, rather than pursuing possible references to Canetti’s personality in her fiction, the aim of this thesis is to investigate affinities between their respective literary descriptions of key concepts such as vision, power and goodness. It also aims to investigate whether these authors were intellectually opposed, whether Canetti was exclusively interested in the exercise of power, in real life and in his writing, and whether Murdoch, on the other hand, was concentrated on the search for goodness. This approach will afford us a new view of the relationship as one of two writers (rather than merely lovers) with shared interests,

⁵⁰ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 299.

⁵¹ It is also important to point out that Bayley wrote a well-informed article on Canetti’s work after the latter won the Nobel Prize. Like Murdoch’s review, this article has since reappeared three times: John Bayley, ‘Canetti and Power’, in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, trans. by Michael Hulse (London: André Deutsch, 1987), pp. 129-145 (p. 141) (first publ. in *London Review of Books* (17 December 1981- 20 January 1982), pp. 5-7). While we cannot speculate that Murdoch had an input into this essay, it is interesting to note that both husband and wife praise the same texts (*Masse und Macht* and *Die Blendung*) and often refer to the same individual ideas.

tackling shared philosophical questions regarding the nature of the human, of goodness and of its antithesis.

The thesis consists of three parts which compare aspects of (mostly) one work by Canetti and one work by Murdoch (though other works will also be adduced). Murdoch's vast *oeuvre* consists of twenty-six novels, of poetry, plays and numerous essays on philosophy and literature. The three novels from Murdoch that I deduce to be richest for the purpose of demonstrating the detail of their shared interests, and which can be taken as representative of the three decades of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, are: *The Flight from the Enchanter* (1956), *The Time of the Angels* (1966) and *The Sea, The Sea* (1978). These novels are also those which contain power figures hitherto held by critics to be modelled on Canetti's personality. By using these texts, the alternative interpretation of these powerful characters, and the new angle on the relationship which the thesis presents, will be clearer. The texts we focus on by Canetti are those which we know Murdoch read - *Masse und Macht*, *Die Blendung* and *Komödie der Eitelkeit* - although, as in the case of Murdoch, reference will be made to other elements of Canetti's *oeuvre* as appropriate. The thesis concentrates on these texts also because Murdoch's reading of them indicates that their subject matter reflects her own interests and, therefore, their shared interests. Her knowledge of his aphorisms and his autobiographies, for example, is not documented to the same extent. Nevertheless, as appropriate, reference will also be made to these works.

In order to support the argument that Murdoch and Canetti had substantial shared intellectual interests, the thesis aims to set out a range of literary parallels between their works. The approach is essentially empirical: by comparing Murdoch's writing with Canetti's texts which she read, and the evidence of these readings in the form of her review and annotations, we aim to ascertain and illustrate the literary affinities which manifest these shared interests. In this context of a literary relationship, it is important to consider whether theories of literary influence and intertextuality could provide a framework for our study. There is some overlapping between these concepts and each has had various permutations, according to where a particular theorist places more emphasis.

Clay's and Rothstein's important essay 'Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality' (1991), Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973) and Roland Barthes's essay 'The Death of the Author' (1968) are of particular importance in understanding the parameters of these concepts.

Strictly speaking, influence refers to 'relations built on dyads of transmission from one unity (author, work, tradition) to another'.⁵² It is a term which has been with us since the mid-eighteenth century, and it is centrally concerned with agency.⁵³ Studies of influence, particularly in this era, aimed to identify natural genius, that is, a poet who was not influenced by another (for example, Shakespeare): the original genius would then go on to influence inferior poets. From its origins, therefore, influence has been 'author-centred' and 'evaluative'.⁵⁴ In the mid-1950s, influence studies broadened and shifted from the emphasis on the transmission of motifs between authors to the transmutation of historically given material.⁵⁵ There also came the tendency to think less in terms of the influencer and more in terms of what the influenced poet does with the ideas of the precursor.⁵⁶ This more liberal view of influence led to an enrichment of the understanding of intention and agency. In terms of the influencer, the 'line of intentionality' runs at best from the later to earlier writer, or may not even run at all 'since one usually does not intend to be influenced by another'.⁵⁷ Influence, therefore, becomes more like an act of perception where one author's observations, while reading a text, induce an action while writing one's own.⁵⁸ Herein lies one of the central and permanent problems with literary influence, namely, that the critic can never categorically prove that an author's observation of an aspect of one text (how do we know precisely what an author observed or perceived by merely reading their work?) prompted an aspect of their own writing.

⁵² Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, 'Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality', in *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 3-36 (p. 3).

⁵³ Ibid. p. 4.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 6-7.

⁵⁶ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). Bloom identifies six 'revisionary ratios' by which later 'poets' rewrite a precursor following a misreading of the earlier poet's work. Therefore, by way of the original misprision, the younger poet identifies himself through the older, parent-like poet.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 7.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

This permanent grey area, where one must take a leap of faith regarding the workings of the mind of the influenced author, in terms of what they perceive and in terms of what happens to that perception, means that influence is always problematic. In spite of the marginalia in Murdoch's copy of Canetti's text which this thesis presents, and which afford us a sense of her reception of that text, it would be impossible to be absolutely sure that her reading of it, whether consciously or unconsciously, directly fed into her own work. Notwithstanding some points where there may well be a case for direct influence, one cannot escape the fact that Murdoch and Canetti had shared interests, that they not only read each other's work but also enjoyed a love affair during which, as we shall see, they discussed their work and ideas. While there may be some points where one could argue that Murdoch was influenced by Canetti's writing, this thesis will thus stop short of presenting the relationship as a full-blown example of literary influence, since one has to allow for the necessary element of speculation about the workings of the mind of the receiving author in relation to an allegedly influential text. The problematic concept of artistic hierarchy and the questions of originality which it raises, as well as its tendency to be evaluative, would seem to render the theory of influence inappropriate in the case of Murdoch's and Canetti's literary relationship. Although some aspects of this study will come close to being instances of influence, the employment of the term itself would be misleading.

Intertextuality is considered a more egalitarian version of the older idea of influence, in that it removes the centrality of the author from the picture and concentrates instead on 'a much more impersonal field of crossing texts'.⁵⁹ First used by Julia Kristeva in 1969, the concept was developed from her reading of Mikhail Bakhtin's semiotics. The text is viewed as a 'mosaic of quotations' and is the result of the 'absorption and transformation of another'.⁶⁰ Roland Barthes's seminal essay 'The Death of the Author' also explains intertextuality by describing the text as 'a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of

⁵⁹ Clayton and Rothstein, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez. Trans. by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1980), p. 66.

quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture'.⁶¹ He concludes: '[t]hus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation'.⁶² Intertextuality, therefore, can be seen as a broadening out of the idea of influence

to encompass unconscious, socially prompted types of text formation (for example, by archetypes or popular culture); modes of conception (such as "in the air"); styles (such as genres); and other prior constraints and opportunities for the writer. [...] [I]ntertextuality might be used to oust and replace the kinds of issues that influence addresses, and in particular its central concern with the author and more or less conscious authorial intentions and skills.⁶³

Just as it is problematic to apply the idea of influence to Murdoch's and Canetti's literary relationship, given the level of personal information about Murdoch's cognitive processes - in relation to the influencer - to which the critic would have to lay claim, so intertextuality is also incompatible with this particular case. We cannot pretend that Canetti and Murdoch did not have a personal relationship and that Murdoch did not read Canetti's work and *vice versa*, although there is no comparable evidence of the latter in the form of annotations. Nor can we overlook the fact that they discussed their work and ideas together. Furthermore, because we are ultimately interested in understanding these authors' literary relationship, it would not be sensible to employ a theory which is inclined to disregard the author.

Our methods will thus be largely empirical. Our starting point is that Murdoch and Canetti had shared intellectual interests. Aside from the empirical evidence of their mutual interests, it is important to note that the Second World War was a key event in the development of both authors. Canetti grew up as a Jew in Vienna and experienced anti-

⁶¹ Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image Music Text*, ed. and trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-148 (p. 146).

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 148.

⁶³ Clayton and Rothstein, p. 3.

Semitism during his school days.⁶⁴ He fled to London with his wife to escape the Nazis. Political oppression (indeed oppression in all its guises) is central to his novel and his *magnum opus*.⁶⁵ Murdoch's concern with the theme of power can similarly be traced back to the Second World War. She elected to be posted in refugee camps on the continent.⁶⁶ Both Murdoch and Canetti personally identified with historically oppressed groups of people (Jews and the Irish) and indeed wrote about such individuals directly and also indirectly in their works which deal with the theme of power play in the widest sense. The affinities which this thesis identifies stem from these shared intellectual concerns. Each of the three parts of the thesis contains a section providing evidence and tracing the intellectual connections between them. From there, the chapters will illuminate the literary affinities between their writings, which manifest these shared interests.

Part One of the thesis points out indications of Murdoch's and Canetti's intellectual relationship, before proceeding to compare Murdoch's novel *The Flight from the Enchanter*, Canetti's *Die Blendung* and aspects of *Das Augenspiel*, in terms of their respective employment of vision and blindness as metaphors for morality and its antithesis. It then compares Murdoch's portrayal of the good man with Canetti's, before exploring their discussions of blindness especially in relation to the question of gender. This section in particular makes a significant contribution to the growing body of research on gender in Murdoch's writing. In this respect, the thesis contests the view that Murdoch was less interested in gender issues in her writing.⁶⁷ The final section of this chapter argues that Murdoch's good figure, Peter Saward, is an inverted Kien, the contemptible, blind protagonist of *Die Blendung*. However, rather than representing a point of antagonism between their writing, it is a shared ideal, as implied by the satire of

⁶⁴ Canetti, *Die Gerettete Zunge*, pp. 243-252.

⁶⁵ Canetti, *Der Provinz der Menschen*, underlines the centrality of the theme of power to his literary endeavours in his annotations.

⁶⁶ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 212.

⁶⁷ Marije Altorf, 'Assessing Iris Murdoch in the Light of Feminist Philosophy: Michèle Le Doeuff and the Philosophical Imaginary', in *Iris Murdoch: A Reassessment*, ed. by Anne Rowe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 175-186. Altorf notes that up until very recently critics were reluctant to examine gender in Murdoch's novels because of the view that Murdoch was not interested in feminism and exclusively women's issues (pp. 176-177).

Canetti's novel. This chapter demonstrates that conventional concentration on the monster and the maiden motif played out by Mischa Fox and Rosa Keepe in this text and others eclipses substantial areas of intellectual affinity between Murdoch's and Canetti's writing.⁶⁸

Chapter Two begins with an assessment of indications of their intellectual relationship in the period between *The Flight from the Enchanter* and *The Time of the Angels*. It refers to letters which Murdoch wrote to Canetti during this period, as well as to her reading of *Masse und Macht*, all of which, it will be argued, indicate correlations between their interests. The chapter proceeds to consider the shared themes of isolation and communion with other people in their works. It finds that these themes are important for both writers, particularly in the context of their shared critique of post-Enlightenment philosophy, and its depiction of the human being as powerful and isolated. Using Murdoch's review, annotations and personalised index, the chapter finds a web of shared motifs in their depictions of the powerful human, from Peter Kien and Canetti's analyses in *Masse und Macht*, to Carel Fisher in *The Time of the Angels*.⁶⁹ The final section of this chapter compares these authors' solutions to the problem of power as they are represented in these texts, in anticipation of a more detailed exploration of the concepts of transformation and unselfing at the end of the final case study.

Part Three concentrates on *Masse und Macht* and *The Sea, The Sea* in order to compare Murdoch's and Canetti's depictions of the powerful, paranoid, possessive man. This chapter's argument and analysis is groundbreaking in its politicisation of Murdoch's writing; it demonstrates how Murdoch, like Canetti studies not only the power drive in interpersonal exchange but also in political despotism. As in Chapter One and Chapter

⁶⁸ The monster and the maiden motif recurs in a number of Murdoch's novels other than *The Flight from the Enchanter: The Time of the Angels* (Carel and Elizabeth/Pattie), *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* (Julius and Morgan), *The Black Prince* (Bradley and Julian), *The Sea, The Sea* (Arrowby and Hartley) and *The Green Knight* (Lucas and Aleph).

⁶⁹ In this chapter and in Chapter Three I will refer to the character, Julius King in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*. I have elected not to devote an entire chapter to this particular text because I deem those upon which I concentrate more fully to be more fruitful for the purpose of tracing affinities. However, that is not to say that this text is not connected with Canetti's *Masse und Macht*. On the contrary the opposite is the case and for this reason *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* is referenced substantially in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Two, this final chapter begins with indications of their intellectual relationship in the years between *The Time of the Angels* and *The Sea, The Sea*, before proceeding to demonstrate their shared intellectual interests as manifested in the literary affinities between these texts. It will also use Murdoch's review and annotations in order to add weight to this central claim. The final section of this chapter compares the authors' concepts of Transformation and Unselfing, which are presented as responses to the problem of power which they both identify. Connecting these two central ideas adds another thread to Murdoch's moral psychology and opens the possibility of understanding Canetti's writing as proffering such a discussion. Even though Murdoch accuses Canetti of neglecting goodness in his study of power in her annotations, the thesis demonstrates that affinities exist between the manner in which good conduct is achieved for both authors.

Chapter One

Blindness and Vision: *Die Blendung* and *The Flight from the Enchanter*

(i) Introduction

This chapter is the first of three case studies, which will explore affinities between some of Murdoch's and Canetti's writings. To set the scene for the subsequent literary comparison of *Die Blendung* and *The Flight from the Enchanter*, we commence with a discussion of the intellectual genesis of their relationship. This constitutes a first attempt to foreground the intellectual connections between these writers. We outline which parts of Canetti's work Murdoch read and engaged with during this time. It is also important, as will be shown, to consider what Canetti was working on during these years, since Murdoch's diary shows that he discussed his ongoing work with her.⁷⁰ Although there is no evidence from Canetti's side, in the form of diary extracts or comments about Murdoch's work, we will note that, from the outset, these authors had shared interests and that the hitherto concentration on their love affair and its alleged depictions in Murdoch's writing with the monster-maiden motif is extremely limiting and, at worst, misleading. This first section presents the backdrop against which the parallels in their writings which the thesis brings to light will be discussed.

This first case study demonstrates how *The Flight from the Enchanter*, which is dedicated 'To Elias Canetti', deals with three major interconnected themes also discussed by the novel's dedicatee. The first of these, and the main focus of this case study, is the theme of blindness, the central metaphor of Canetti's own novel. *Die Blendung*'s Peter Kien is, metaphorically speaking, blind to the external world because he lives inside his head. He is a 'Kopf ohne Welt'.⁷¹ Murdoch's characters, like Kien, are metaphorically blind to the world around them, due to their personal obsessions with themselves and their own interior worlds. The comparison documents how this shared theme of blindness

⁷⁰ Extracts of Murdoch's diary held at the Kingston Archive show that Canetti discussed aspects of *Masse und Macht* with Murdoch and she then noted these ideas in her diary. This source will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters on *Masse und Macht* and Murdoch's novels. KUAS 6/1/13/3.

⁷¹ Michael Mack, 'Die Blendung as a Negative Poetics: Positivism, Nihilism, Fascism', *Orbis Litterarum: International Review of Literary Studies*, 54:2 (1999), 146-160 (p. 149).

manifests itself in these novels and demonstrates how, for both novelists, it is connected to the theme of morality: the blindness of their characters is a manifestation of moral blindness. Significantly, these characters are complicit in their own blindness and their subjection at the hands of others, because they deliberately avert their eyes from reality and the external world. In contrast to Kien and the characters of *The Flight from the Enchanter*, Murdoch and Canetti emphasise the necessity of vision for moral behaviour. Murdoch's essays, particularly 'On "God" and "Good"', and Canetti's portrait of Dr. Sonne, are comparable in terms of revealing the significance of identifying the 'good' for both authors.

The second section of this chapter considers the issue of gender as it is discussed in these two novels. It argues that in both, the male figures are blind to the females, because of their tendency to objectify them and to see women as homogenous groups, rather than as individuals. This phenomenon is underlined by the fact that Kien in *Die Blendung* and Rainborough in *The Flight from the Enchanter* actually fail to see the women in question. In addition to these considerations, we note that in *Die Blendung*, Therese, and indeed the other women, bear no relation to real women because, as we shall see, they are merely compositions of gender stereotypes of women, and thus an extension of Kien's fantasy world. In *The Flight from the Enchanter*, however, the women themselves are, in many respects, inversions of the figures found in Canetti's novel. While the men hold false images of the women, the female figures break with the gender stereotypes and thus represent reality. Again the themes of vision and blindness form part of Murdoch's and Canetti's discussion of morality and its antithesis. Seeing the real through the suspension of the self is not possible for the satirical figures of *Die Blendung*. However, there is some possibility of vision in *The Flight from the Enchanter*.

When Murdoch was writing *The Flight from the Enchanter* in 1954, she was simultaneously translating Canetti's drama *Komödie der Eitelkeit* (1950), which was written between 1933 and 1934.⁷² The third section of this chapter turns to consider important connections between these two works pertaining to the idea of blindness and its

⁷² Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 370.

connections to power and morality. The basic premise of the play is that, in order to combat the problem of vanity, an imaginary state bans mirrors, portraits and photographs. The authorities thus effectively blind their subjected citizens to themselves. However, rather than solving the initial problem of vanity, this remedy simply leads to people finding ever more inventive ways of catching glimpses of themselves. Their fixation on their own reflections results in a turning away from the world and others.⁷³ Their lack of a sense of their own individuality breeds individualism, the main problem from which Canetti's Kien also suffered. We shall point out further comparisons with Murdoch's novel, which similarly deals with the issue of power, blinding and moral advancement.

The final section of this chapter looks beyond blindness and in doing so marks the point where Murdoch's work appears to diverge from Canetti's. It indicates the early signs of a thrust which would increasingly become more central to Murdoch's thought over the ensuing decades. Apart from Franz Metzger, a young boy Kien meets in the street, none of Canetti's characters can see. None are held up to be exemplary. In Murdoch's novel, however, Peter Saward, as his name implies, is presented as a sighted and thus more optimistic, indeed antithetical, version of the myopic Kien: He represents an example of how Murdoch's writing can be viewed as being in dialogue with Canetti's. This inversion illustrates an apparent disagreement with his work about the blindness, evil and folly of humanity; Murdoch's writing, which also diagnoses these problems, speaks more explicitly about seeing and goodness.⁷⁴ That is not to say that Canetti did not believe in the human capacity for vision and virtue. Rather, his focus in *Die Blendung* was to present the evil with which the world was replete.⁷⁵ In response to similar problems, Murdoch uses her work to search more overtly for means to improve humanity morally. The satire of *Die Blendung* can be said to have a similar objective. These considerations may go some way to explaining why commentators such as Conradi, as

⁷³ Dagmar Barnouw, 'Utopian Dissent: Canetti's Dramatic Fictions', in *Critical Essays on Elias Canetti*, ed. by David Darby (NY: G. K. Hall, 2000), pp. 121-134 (p. 127).

⁷⁴ Cheryl Bove, *Understanding Iris Murdoch* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), p. 15. Bove points out that discovering means to improve humanity morally drives Murdoch's work. She adds that for Murdoch, we grow morally by looking, and to this extent, any movement away from ourselves is moral improvement.

⁷⁵ Dagmar Lorenz, 'Elias Canettis *Masse und Macht* und *Die Blendung*: Bezüge zwischen Roman und Massentheorie', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 16:3/4 (Special Elias Canetti Issue) (1983), 81-91 (p. 90).

noted in the Introduction, claim that Murdoch's and Canetti's writings are in opposition, that Murdoch was interested in the human potential for good and Canetti the human capacity for evil. With this chapter, the thesis begins the process of debunking this theory, by arguing that the moral improvement of humanity was central to both authors' work.

(ii) Foregrounding Intellectual Connections

Contrary to all previous assessments of their relationship, Murdoch's first encounter with Canetti was not a personal one.⁷⁶ The accepted view is that Franz Baermann Steiner, Murdoch's fiancé and Canetti's friend, introduced the pair.⁷⁷ However, relegated to Conradi's footnote is the more interesting fact that Murdoch wrote to her friend, the French writer Raymond Queneau, on 4 June 1952 (before Canetti greeted her and before they met) noting her interest in the *thinking* of 'Canetti, Kojève, Hegel'. This was not, however, the first time Murdoch mentioned Canetti's writing to Queneau.⁷⁸ In 2006, Conradi recalls that, in 2001, while looking through some of Murdoch's correspondence to Queneau, he made a note of a letter from 1947 or 1948 wherein she also made enquires of Kojève and, 'quite distinctly', of Canetti.⁷⁹ Queneau was very much engaged with Canetti's writing at this time, because he was working on having *Die Blendung* translated into French.⁸⁰ It had just appeared in English in 1946 (the year Queneau first met Murdoch), and John Bayley remembers the *frisson* the book occasioned in English

⁷⁶ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 345.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 640. In a footnote (1), however, Conradi mentions that in response to Canetti, who on 15 July 1952 greeted Murdoch through Baermann Steiner, she 'wrote formally to EC – signing both her names – proposing a meeting in Paris' for around August/September 1952.

⁷⁸ Conradi, 'Preface', in *The Iris Murdoch Review*, 1:1 (2008), 4-6 (p. 4). Confirmed in conversation with me in September 2006.

⁷⁹ Alexandre Kojève gave a series of lectures in Paris which Queneau and other French intellectuals attended. Tammy Grimshaw argues that Murdoch came to know of Kojève through Queneau in the late 1940s, which again adds weight to the argument that she also came to know of Canetti through Queneau. Grimshaw, *Sexuality, Gender and Power in Iris Murdoch's Fiction*, p. 95.

⁸⁰ Hanuschek notes that Queneau championed *Die Blendung* to win the Grand Prix International du Club Français du Livre in 1949. In a letter to Marie-Louise von Motesiczky, dated 20/6/1951, Canetti noted that Queneau sat on the committee which awarded him the prize and that he "passionately championed the book" (my translation). As quoted by Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, p. 380.

intellectual circles.⁸¹ He also believes that Murdoch, like many others, read it around this time.⁸² All in all, given the emphasis that she places on an interest in Canetti's *thinking* in her epistolary conversations with Queneau, who had a particular admiration for Canetti's writing which would certainly not have escaped Murdoch's attention, and finally, given Bayley's conviction that Murdoch read *Die Blendung* when the English translation appeared in 1946, it is more plausible that Murdoch's first encounter with Canetti was an intellectual one, based on a reading of *Die Blendung*. Her letters to Queneau make it clear that Canetti was a shared interest for them and also confirm that Murdoch was engaged by Canetti's ideas in the first instance. This insight is striking given critics' hitherto exclusive emphasis on Murdoch's personal connections to Canetti as detailed in the introduction to this thesis.

Murdoch's relationship to Queneau is important when considering her relationship to Canetti because of what it tells us about her interest in Canetti's novel, and also because there are parallels in the genesis of the relationships and in terms of the more established authors' roles for her. Her reading of Queneau's work, most notably, his novel, *Pierrot mon Ami* (1943), predates their first personal encounter by two years.⁸³ As already noted, this pattern was also the case with Canetti and *Die Blendung*. When she came to know Queneau personally, Murdoch was an aspiring writer, and in a letter to him dated 28 February 1946 she expressed her hope of finding a 'literary master'.⁸⁴ Queneau performed this role of 'master' writer to Murdoch as apprentice for some time.⁸⁵

⁸¹ When Murdoch's romantic relationship with Canetti began at the end of 1952, he was an acclaimed novelist in Britain. *Auto-da-Fé* went through three impressions between 1946 and 1947, reflecting an interest undoubtedly helped along by the many favourable reviews which appeared in a broad spectrum of the press. The English edition and English criticism generated a more lasting interest in the novel for the first time in its history. During the 1950s, reference was repeatedly made to it. Of all of the endorsements of Canetti's novel during these years, perhaps the most critical, in terms of ensuring a sustained debate about the text, was the BBC critique by Jacob Issacs. The BBC Third Programme commissioned six one-hour lectures which took a retrospective look at literature produced in the first part of the century, in order to identify works which Issacs thought would stand the test of time. These lectures, which included a discussion of Canetti's work, were very well-received and were published in book form in 1951. As noted by Herbert G. Göpfert, 'A Prefatory Note on the Publication History of the Novel', in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, Trans. Michael Hulse (London: André Deutsch Ltd., 1987), pp. 290-296 (pp. 292-293).

⁸² In conversation with me 12/3/08.

⁸³ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 231. Conradi notes that Murdoch introduced her friend, Philippa Foot, to the novel, which was one of a number that she brought back from Paris after liberation in 1944.

⁸⁴ Ibid. pp. 234 & 630.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 234.

Murdoch's advance reading of Queneau's and Canetti's works before she met them indicates that she also shared their interests as manifested in these works.

While there are many similarities between Murdoch's relationships with Queneau and Canetti, there are also important differences; most notably, her connection to Canetti was deeper and more sustained. If Murdoch still sought a literary master in 1952, she probably met the right person in Canetti. His zealous instruction of Friedl Benedikt resulted in three novels. Literary role-models had always been very important to Canetti himself, and it is thus unsurprising that his efforts to encourage young writers in the 1950s earned him the status of a kind of literary guru in Hampstead. The degree to which he helped these fledgling poets varied considerably. Assisting Benedikt was probably the most intensive of all his tutelages; they met frequently, she followed him to London from Vienna and lived near him, she kept a diary for him and dedicated all of her literary output to him.⁸⁶ In other cases, however, his assistance consisted of conversation and, by inference, encouragement. Sometimes he put the younger writer in contact with another 'established' author whom he deemed more qualified to be of assistance: he put Ingeborg Bachmann, for instance, in contact with Erich Fried, who had more connections with other poets. His relationship with Murdoch was different from that with Benedikt and certainly with Bachmann. Murdoch was thirty-three years old when her relationship with Canetti began. She was set soon thereafter to become a published novelist and held a teaching post at St. Anne's College, Oxford. By contrast, Benedikt was more than a decade younger when she met Canetti and was struggling to know what to do with her life. A teenage bride, she left her husband after only two years and returned to her parents, directionless. She had some thespian ambitions which were dashed when she was rejected by the Max-Reinhardt Schauspielschule.⁸⁷ There are, however, important comparisons between these women's relationships to Canetti. Both were aspiring writers who read *Die Blendung* before they met Canetti. While there is no surviving evidence

⁸⁶ Hanuschek describes the degree of intensity: 'Ihr Meister war zum Liebhaber avanciert, nahm aber auch sein Lehramt ernst. Täglich kam Canetti bei ihr vorbei und kontrollierte ihre Schreibungen: Hatte sie Tagebuch geschrieben? War ihr Pensum ausreichend gewesen? Saß sie an der Arbeit, hatte sie ihr Zimmer aufgeräumt? Erst nach dieser Kontrolle ging er zu anderen Freunden oder in ein Kaffeehaus, soweit vorhanden'. Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, p. 316.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 275.

that Murdoch wrote a regular diary for Canetti, as Benedikt had, she did send working drafts of her writing to him for criticism.⁸⁸ Both also dedicated novels to Canetti. While the contrasts between these relationships indicate a greater degree of parity in Murdoch's connection to him, there is no doubt that both relationships were rooted very much in shared interests (manifested in their original admiration for Canetti's writing), and in their own personal literary aspirations.

What did Canetti's support of Murdoch involve? We know that they discussed their work and ideas and that he encouraged her. Soon after they met, as Canetti notes in *Party im Blitz*, he gave Murdoch a book as she left to return to Oxford:

[...] ich begleitete sie zur nahen Finchley Road Station, ging die Stufen der Untergrund mit ihr hinunter und ließ sie auf einer Bank zurück, mit dem Buch in der Hand, das ich ihr kurz zuvor geschenkt hatte: 'The Lyrebird', eine Schilderung des australischen Leierschwanz von einer Frau, die in der Wildnis mit einem Leierschwanz Freundschaft schloß, er kam für sie tanzen und singen. Dieses zauberhafte Buch, das ich erst vor kurzem entdeckt hatte, gab ich ihr, sie verstand, was es zu bedeuten hatte, es war eine Art von Taufe, durch die sie unter die Dichter aufgenommen wurde. Es gab von ihr damals noch kein einziges Buch (das war Anfang 1953, jetzt gibt es allein vierundzwanzig Romane von ihr). (*PB*, 178-9)⁸⁹

For Canetti, presenting a book was symbolic, and he had the impression that Murdoch understood this. This quotation reveals that he saw her as a young, promising writer, and he wished to encourage her talents. His presentation of a copy of the American edition of his novel to her in 1953, which reads: 'To Iris in great hopes, Elias Canetti. 12 January 1953', is also encouraging in tone.⁹⁰ Perhaps one of the most obvious expressions of his

⁸⁸ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 368. Murdoch gave Canetti the manuscript of *Under the Net* to read. Additionally, when Murdoch struggled to write in the late 1950s, she met Canetti and he criticised her work – again revealing that Murdoch allowed him read it, p. 429.

⁸⁹ Interestingly, 'Lyrebird' is also the name Murdoch gave to a racehorse in *Under the Net* which she was writing when Canetti gave her a book of the same name (*UN*, 157).

⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 352.

support, and of his faith in Murdoch's literary talent, was when he posted the manuscript of her first novel through the door of Gwenda David, a scout for Viking publishers.⁹¹ Furthermore, in 1960 Canetti sent Murdoch a copy of *Masse und Macht* and her library also contains a second copy of that text in translation. Murdoch reciprocated these gestures by sending copies of her works to Canetti, which shows that she thought her work was of interest to him. Exchanging books in this way was a habit which they continued until Canetti's death. His library in Zurich contains no fewer than twenty-one volumes of Murdoch's work, and all come with handwritten inscriptions from their author.⁹² These exchanges suggest an understanding that their books were of interest to one another and, thereby, further supports the view that they had shared intellectual interests.

When asked if Queneau's *Pierrot mon Ami* (and Samuel Beckett's work) influenced the writing of her first novel, *Under the Net* (1954), which appeared some eight years after they met, Murdoch replied that, while the result did not resemble anything like them, it was not her fault because: 'I was copying them as hard as I could!'.⁹³ This is not the only occasion on which she acknowledges affinities between her first novel and *Pierrot mon Ami*.⁹⁴ What we can safely deduce from these comments, however, is that Murdoch was also interested in Queneau's preoccupations in *Pierrot mon Ami*, as her acknowledgement of affinities between her novel and this text indicates.

Translating may be seen as another activity where an author engages closely with the work of another, and is one in which Murdoch involved herself with respect to Queneau's novel.⁹⁵ Her literary aspirations are furthermore evident in a journal comment from 12 July 1947 where she admires 'that vertiginous heart-breaking absurdity which

⁹¹ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 368.

⁹² There are no annotations on Canetti's copies of Murdoch's works.

⁹³ *Recontres avec Iris Murdoch*, ed. by Jean-Louis Chevalier (Caen: Recherches de Littérature et Linguistique des Pays de Langue Anglaise, 1978), p. 76.

⁹⁴ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 234. Conradi quotes an entry from Murdoch's journal written after Queneau's death in 1976: 'I knew RQ well, he was a friend....I think he (especially *Pierrot*) influenced *U[nder the] N[et]*'. After she dedicated her first novel to Queneau, she wrote to him that 'it has certain affinities with *Pierrot*'.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 232. She attempted to secure translation rights for Queneau's novels and translated *Pierrot mon Ami*, though it was rejected for publication.

Queneau achieves by his ambiguous serio-comic play. Oh oh I wish I could write like that'.⁹⁶ Her interest in Queneau's writing and their relationship are inextricably bound up with her own literary ambitions, as is again apparent in her comment: 'Part of me wants to be Raymond Queneau, another wants to be Thomas Mann'.⁹⁷ Canetti is described by John Bayley as Murdoch's 'teacher' and 'inspiration' and thus, arguably, replaced Queneau in this role.⁹⁸ However, in the light of her interest, since the late 1940s, in *Die Blendung*, it is clear that the genesis of the relationship lies in common intellectual concerns.

Murdoch, therefore, welcomed contact with selected established authors, that is, those who shared her interests. Indeed, before she met Queneau, she wrote to David Hicks that she 'needed' the influence of the French writer.⁹⁹ These words were echoed some years later in relation to Canetti, when Murdoch told Bayley in 1955: 'I don't want to lose him at the moment', implying that she also 'needed' him.¹⁰⁰ Rather than an 'anxiety' of 'influence', in the Bloomian sense, Murdoch 'needed' the company of experienced writers who shared her intellectual interests.¹⁰¹ She acknowledged their roles in fulfilling this 'need' by dedicating *Under the Net* to Queneau and later *The Flight from the Enchanter* to Canetti.¹⁰²

Valerie Purton notes that all of Murdoch's dedications up to *The Green Knight* (1993) use the preposition "To", considering that it could imply '[...] the active nature of the giving: the recipient is, as it were, *invited* to respond. "To" implies "From"; it sets up

⁹⁶ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, Footnote 12, p. 630.

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 231. Conradi quotes from Murdoch's journal.

⁹⁸ Bayley, *The Iris Trilogy*, p. 426. Bayley, however, means that Canetti's negative persona 'inspired' Murdoch's fiction. This is an opinion with which I take issue.

⁹⁹ Valerie Purton, 'Iris Murdoch and the Art of Dedication', *The Iris Murdoch Review*, 1:1 (2008), 28-36 (p. 30). Quoting Murdoch's letters to David Hicks.

¹⁰⁰ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 389.

¹⁰¹ Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, pp. xi-xxvi. Bloom's study of artistic influence hinges on a fundamental antagonism felt by the younger poet towards the precursor poet. In this view, all literary texts are poetic misreadings of those which precede them. There are many reasons why the term 'influence' is not always entirely compatible with the relationship discussed in this thesis. This is one reason. See also the 'Introduction' to this thesis. pp. 16-19.

¹⁰² Valerie Purton categorises Murdoch's dedicatees into enchanters, protégés and successful married couples. Unsurprisingly, Canetti falls into the 'enchanters' category, as does Queneau. I would argue that Murdoch's reasons for dedicating her novel to Canetti in particular are more complex than Purton's system would lead one to believe. pp. 29-30.

a reciprocal relationship, which is not there in the use of the more passive and pious ‘For’.¹⁰³ This theory, unexplored by Purton, would mean that there was a common denominator between two writers already in place. If one writer is inviting the other to respond, then the subject matter must be something to which they, given their own interests, can respond. It must be a shared concern. This thesis will investigate these authors’ shared interests.

Discussions of Murdoch’s and Canetti’s relationship between 1946 and 1956 pay scant attention to these writers’ readings and writings during these years. The years of the affair were creative ones for both. Canetti was researching and writing his *magnum opus*, *Masse und Macht*. He completed the play, *Die Befristeten* (1964) around March 1953.¹⁰⁴ He also wrote his travelogue, *Die Stimmen von Marrakesch: Aufzeichnungen nach einer Reise* (1968), after a journey undertaken in March 1954.¹⁰⁵ Murdoch published her first book, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953), soon after the affair with Canetti began.¹⁰⁶ She was also writing her first novel, the entire second draft of which was completed on 28 March 1953; it was accepted for publication by 3 October that same year.¹⁰⁷ Murdoch also wrote and published *The Flight from the Enchanter* during the affair. As regards Murdoch reading Canetti’s work, we know that he supplied her with a copy of the American edition of *Die Blendung*. In addition, it is clear that she read Canetti’s *Komödie der Eitelkeit*. Murdoch heard Canetti read the play from Stuttgart while listening to the radio in 1954.¹⁰⁸ Although she did not succeed in translating it, her intention betrays the degree to which she was not only involved with Canetti personally and romantically, but also intellectually. In addition, Murdoch was also familiar with *Die Befristeten*, at the very least, due to attending its première at the Oxford Playhouse in 1956.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 29.

¹⁰⁴ Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, p. 419.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 527. This is the only book of Canetti’s which John Bayley admits to enjoying. Confirmed in conversation with me 12/3/08.

¹⁰⁶ There is no evidence that Canetti shared Murdoch’s interest in the Existentialist movement.

¹⁰⁷ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 368.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 370.

¹⁰⁹ Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, p. 420.

In light of these important considerations regarding the intellectual genesis of the relationship, and Murdoch's literary connections to Canetti during the period from 1946 to 1956, I argue that these authors shared important intellectual preoccupations. The next section of this chapter develops this argument by demonstrating that there are important points of comparison between *Die Blendung*, *Komödie der Eitelkeit* and *Die Befristeten*, and *The Flight from the Enchanter*. Contrary to all previous assessments of Murdoch's relationship with Canetti, which claim that she wrote him into her novels and that her villains are modelled on him, I argue, against a backdrop of intellectual connections, that parallels exist not only between Canetti's alleged personality and her fictional characters (she always flatly rejected the claim that her characters were based on real people), but also between their work.¹¹⁰ The exposition of these textual parallels will also allow us to test the current theory that these writers were opposed in their views of human nature.

(iii) Vision and the Good Man

The search for goodness represents an important affinity in the writings of Murdoch and Canetti. In her essay, 'The Sovereignty of Good over other Concepts', Murdoch poses the question: 'What is a good man like?' (*EM*, 342)¹¹¹ In *Das Augenspiel*, Canetti echoes Murdoch's enquiry in the chapter 'Auffindung des Guten', where he considers: '[g]ab es einen guten Menschen? Wie müßte er sein, wenn es ihn gäbe?' (*DA*, 138)¹¹² With the help of Hermann Broch, Canetti discovers a good man, namely, Dr. Sonne (whose real name was Abraham ben Yitzhak).¹¹³ Sonne becomes a 'Vorbild' for Canetti, and in him he invests the characteristics of the Good which he and Broch identified (*DA*, 165). I wish to demonstrate that a capacity for vision is a key parallel between Canetti's concept of the good man, as depicted through Sonne, and the good man as identified by Murdoch. We will then note points of comparison between Peter Kien and some of Murdoch's blind

¹¹⁰ For an account of depictions of the relationship as it stands, see the 'Introduction' to this thesis.

¹¹¹ Iris Murdoch, 'On "God" and "Good"', in *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. by Peter Conradi (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), pp. 337-362 (p. 342).

¹¹² Elias Canetti, *Das Augenspiel: Lebensgeschichte 1931-1937* (Munich: Hanser, 1985), p. 138.

¹¹³ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, notes that Murdoch was aware of Dr. Sonne from her conversations with Canetti, and that she recalled him in her diary forty years later, p. 349.

characters in *The Flight from the Enchanter*. Through these comparable characters, it is possible to demonstrate that personal fantasy and solipsism are the main impediments to the Good for Murdoch and Canetti.¹¹⁴ Their blind figures are the antithesis of Sonne and Murdoch's good figure, Peter Saward, particularly in light of their unwillingness to see all aspects of the world. On the other hand, both Saward and Sonne share a capacity for vision. In both these novels, the central conflict is between vision and blindness, although the vision part of this binary is not explicit in *Die Blendung*, but rather is implied by the novel's satire.¹¹⁵

In her important essay 'On "God" and "Good"', where Murdoch sets out her concept of the Good, she instructs her reader to 'notice the metaphors of orientation and of looking' which she associates with the Good (*EM*, 345). Her thinking takes as its starting point the view that '[o]bjectivity and unselfishness are not natural to human beings', that '[i]n the moral life the enemy is the fat relentless ego' and '[t]he chief enemy of excellence in morality (and also in art) is personal fantasy: the tissue of self-aggrandizing and consoling wishes and dreams which prevents one from seeing what is there outside' (*EM*, 341-342, 347-348). Murdoch sees fantasy as 'the proliferation of blinding self-centred aims and images' (*EM*, 354). In her imagination, blindness born of solipsism is antithetical to the Good. Goodness is achieved by an ability and willingness to '[...] contemplate and delineate nature with a clear eye', however, this is not easy and requires a 'moral discipline', according to Murdoch (*EM*, 352). Since, as we have noted above, selfish desires impede moral vision, Murdoch notes: '[...] the authority of the Good seems to us something necessary because the realism (ability to perceive reality)

¹¹⁴ As pointed out by Heather Widdows, p. 99.

¹¹⁵ The theme of moral blindness runs through many of Murdoch's novels. We note, for instance, that blindness is also a theme in *The Bell* (1958), where Dora Greenfield and Michael Meade, for example, are frequently dazzled and their vision obstructed. In the same novel, Toby considers that 'human beings always turn their eyes away' (*TB*, 164). By the end of the novel, we notice that Dora's vision has improved: 'As she walked down the avenue of trees the fog was clearing, and the Court became visible opposite her, its pillars and copper domes clear-cut and majestic in the sunshine, a light, radiant grey against a sky of darker moving clouds, rising above the still-misty levels of the lake' (*TB*, 341). *The Unicorn* (1963) also takes up this theme. On Marian's arrival to 'Gaze' Castle, we notice numerous references to her impaired vision. She is 'dazzled' and struggles to see because of the 'hazy light' from the outset (*TU*, 11-12). Many of Murdoch's characters attempt metaphorically to see more, to improve themselves morally, and this process is portrayed as a movement from impaired vision towards improved powers of perception as encapsulated in the metaphor of vision in her fiction.

required for goodness is a kind of intellectual ability to perceive what is true, which is automatically at the same time a suppression of the self' (*EM*, 353). Seeing, therefore, is not merely engaging the senses, but also the intellect. Vision is the metaphor which Murdoch and Canetti employ to convey this concept.¹¹⁶

Echoing Murdoch's description of the good man as one who is not self-obsessed and egotistical, Canetti's figure of Good, Dr. Sonne, is characterised by an absence of the personal; he never speaks about himself and never uses the first person (*DA*, 145). Through his use of the third person in his discussions with Canetti, Sonne distanced himself from the subject matter, the effect of which is that he is more objective in his contemplation of it. Sonne contrasted with many of the other people Canetti knew in Vienna at the time, who were filled with self-pity and self-importance with their incessant 'Ich-Reden', as he puts it (*DA*, 146). Sonne also has no political or religious affiliations, which facilitates his clarity and objectivity of vision. Canetti notes that nothing said by Sonne was falsified by emotions, though it was not without feeling (*DA*, 146-147). In conversation, it seemed as if the interlocutors were not present, only the subject matter, such was his ability to suppress the self (*DA*, 147). We can immediately notice the important parallel between Murdoch's and Canetti's pictures of the good man as one who is capable of suppressing the self, and thereby achieving perspicacity of vision.¹¹⁷ Canetti notes of Sonne's clarity of thought and insight: 'Es ist nicht irreführend, diese Klarheit als eisig zu bezeichnen. Es ist diese Klarheit dessen, der durchsichtige Gläser schleift, der mit Trübem nicht umgeht, bevor es geklärt ist' (*DA*, 151-152).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Suguna Ramanathan's study *Iris Murdoch: Figures of Good* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990) also points out the importance of clear vision for goodness in Murdoch's writing, and connects this with the author's interest in Buddhism, p. 32.

¹¹⁷ Stephanie Wieprecht-Roth, 'Die Freiheit in der Zeit ist die Überwindung des Todes': *Überleben in der Welt und im unsterblichen Werk: Eine Annäherung an Elias Canetti* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004), p. 145. Wieprecht-Roth notes 'daß "Sehen" von Canetti weniger als sinnlicher Vorgang denn vielmehr als moralische Haltung verstanden wird, mit welcher der Künstler eindeutig Stellung bezieht. Seine Verantwortung liegt im Hinsehen, im Wegsehen besteht seine Feigheit. Die distanzierte Position verleiht ihm den entsprechenden Überblick, um Wahrheit aufzunehmen. Der unvermischte Blick verhilft ihm zur gewünschten Objektivität'.

¹¹⁸ Christoph Menke, 'Die Kunst des Fallens: Canettis Politik der Erkenntnis', in *Einladung zur Verwandlung: Essays zu Elias Canettis Masse und Macht*, ed. by Michael Krüger (Munich: Hanser, 1995), pp. 38-67 (pp. 41-42). Menke states that 'Erkenntnis' is the ideal for Canetti and in achieving it, as Murdoch notes, the self must be suppressed: 'Sich aus sich selbst in den Gegenstand selbst versetzen – das ist aber nichts anderes als die Umschreibung einer Haltung, der es um *Erkenntnis* geht [...] Im Zentrum der

(iv) Blindness and Immorality

In contrast to the 'seeing', self-suppressing, good person which both authors describe in their essays and autobiographies, the characters in their novels, especially here *Die Blendung* and *The Flight from the Enchanter*, are in many respects the opposite; they are self-obsessed and, as a result, blind to the real world. These authors' discussions of Goodness and vision need also to be viewed against the backdrop of a critique of Western philosophical thinking, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.¹¹⁹ Murdoch precedes her discussion of the Good with the argument that Cartesian philosophy has left us 'isolated' with 'an unrealistic concept of the will'. She adds that 'our picture of ourselves has become too grand' and 'we have lost the vision of a reality separate to ourselves' (*EM*, 338). Similarly, Canetti notes in *Masse und Macht* (and Murdoch underlines):

Man's power and the conception he had of himself had already expanded enormously when he stumbled upon the bacillus. This discovery made the contrast immeasurably greater. Man, with his enhanced opinion of himself, increasingly seeing himself as an individual detached from his fellow-creatures, was suddenly confronted with entities much smaller even than vermin [...] On the one hand was himself, greater and more isolated than before, and on the other a crowd, larger than any he had previously imagined, of infinitesimal creatures (*IML* 1120, 363).

Erfahrungsweise, die Canetti in *Masse und Macht* [...] beschreibt, steht das Absehen von sich im Erkennen'. However, Menke does not connect this to Sonne and the idea of the good man, nor, of course, to Murdoch.

¹¹⁹ While Murdoch's thinking on goodness was honed by her readings of Plato, *Die Blendung*'s critique of the blindness of Western philosophy focuses on aspects of Plato's *Republic*. Canetti parodies Plato's myth of the cave, where, as he interprets it, philosophical knowledge is analogous with vision. However, because philosophical knowledge excludes so much other knowledge, especially knowledge of the material world, Canetti rejected and parodied this Platonic view of the philosopher through Kien. See Konrad Kirsch, 'Zwei Blendungen in der "Blendung": Canetti, Platon und Sophokles', *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*, 123:4 (2004), 549-573. Murdoch similarly had reservations about these aspects of Plato. See in particular: Iris Murdoch, 'The Sublime and the Good', in *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. by Peter Conradi (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), pp. 205-220 (pp. 214-216). Murdoch, like Canetti, expresses reservations about Plato's mistrust of the world of senses and of particularity. She states rather that the discovery of the 'unutterable particularity' of the world, and of other humans, is seeing the real.

We notice here that while Canetti does not refer to the philosophical tradition in the manner of Murdoch, referring to scientific developments and discoveries which shaped that tradition instead, they nevertheless bring the same charges against the human; both criticise his/her increasingly enhanced picture of him/herself, which Murdoch describes as 'too grand', which is born out of the objectification and therefore blindness to what is outside of his/herself. In Canetti's writing, the 'crowd' exemplifies the other to which the human opposes itself, which it attempts to master and to which it renders itself blind. We return to this in part (vi) of Chapter Three.

Murdoch's and Canetti's discussions of the human condition, its blindness to the other, and their ideas on Goodness and vision also must be viewed against the background of the events of the Second World War, which saw such extreme forms of not seeing the other as anti-Semitism, misogyny and homophobia. Murdoch, in her search for Goodness, is trying to learn what 'would make a man behave unselfishly in a concentration camp' (*EM*, 346). In her essay 'Against Dryness' (1961), she points out that the picture of the individual as 'stripped and solitary', and by inference, blind to the 'other', has, 'since Hitler, gained a particular intensity' (*EM*, 291). Similarly, Canetti notes that the concept of the individual opposed to the crowd of what he describes as 'infinitesimal creatures', is

the exact model of the dynamic of power. Man easily persuaded himself to see as vermin everything which opposed him; as such he regarded and treated all animals which he could not use. And the despot who reduces men to animals and only manages to rule them by regarding them as belonging to a lower species, reduces to vermin all who do not qualify even to be ruled and ends by destroying them by the million (IML 1120, 363).¹²⁰

Here Canetti connects many of the main ideas of his thinking. The human being's enhanced picture of himself, and the reduced picture of the other (the crowd as vermin,

¹²⁰ Murdoch marked the margin of this piece of the text and I have underlined it to demonstrate that.

for instance), results in his blindness to the other. Blindness, therefore, is born of the human being's fantastical picture of himself. Contrary to this, Murdoch notes that through 'seeing', the 'separateness and differentness of other people is realised', and it thus becomes harder to treat that other person as a 'thing' (*EM*, 353).

Die Blendung and *The Flight from the Enchanter* pivot on the idea of blindness as a manifestation of self-obsession, the resultant inability to see reality, and the moral failings of the protagonists. *The Flight from the Enchanter* is centrally concerned with the flight from the enchanting self.¹²¹ Canetti's Kien does not have an epiphanic moment, as some of Murdoch's characters do, which allows them to flee themselves and their fantasies. This difference marks one of the major points of contrast in these works, as noted in the final section of this chapter. Kien's self-obsession paradoxically leads him to self-destruction, whereas Murdoch's characters only come close to that fate. Vision, as in the ability to perceive reality outside the self, is an enduring theme in both these authors' writings and Canetti's later autobiographies also continue to focus on the importance of 'vision', as is evident from their titles alone which bear reference to the sensory organs: *Zunge*, *Ohr* and *Auge*.¹²² Thus Murdoch's dedication of *The Flight from the Enchanter* to him can be interpreted as an acknowledgement of the dovetailing of their intellectual interests.

Before proceeding to an examination of the literary manifestations of these shared interests, it is important to point out that comparisons can also be made between the wider issues which these novels address, and that they too are connected to the themes of blindness and vision. Written between the autumns of 1929 and 1930, *Die Blendung* is a satirical reaction to contemporary socio-cultural evils against women, the disabled and

¹²¹ Anne Rowe, *The Visual Arts and the Novels of Iris Murdoch* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2002), p. 49. See also Zohreh Tawakuli Sullivan, 'The Demonic: *The Flight from the Enchanter*', in *Modern Critical Views: Iris Murdoch*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986), pp. 71-86 (p. 72). Sullivan notes: 'What Murdoch finds lacking in the modern age is a clear perception of external reality as independent, unique and worthy of loving exploration. If the sickness of the age, as Murdoch contends, is solipsism, [...] she would hold that [...] [it] could be cured by a therapy of perception'.

¹²² Susan Sontag, 'Mind as Passion', in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, pp. 88-107. Sontag also points out that '[a]ttentiveness is the formal subject of the book [*Die Blendung*]'. (p. 101). As we know, Murdoch's work also concentrates on attentiveness, despite the fact that her characters are mostly inattentive.

people classified as ‘other’, in particular, through Fischerle;¹²³ xenophobia, fuelled by growing nationalism, was becoming more prevalent in Europe in the early decades of the twentieth century. *The Flight from the Enchanter*, though written in a very different cultural context, nevertheless also has a strong social agenda; Murdoch makes this intention clear on the title page of the manuscript of the novel by noting one of its purposes as ‘to tear society down for being so cruel’.¹²⁴ Social issues topical in Britain at the time of publication, akin to those which Canetti’s novel addressed in 1930s Vienna, are brought to the fore. The struggles of women and individuals perceived as foreign or ‘other’, and attitudes to women’s efforts to improve their situations professionally are concerns at the heart of both novels.

The eponymous process of *Blendung* afflicts nearly all of the characters, and encapsulates the critique which the novel levels against society.¹²⁵ Echoing this metaphor, many of Murdoch’s characters’ names refer to their visual impairment. (When names do not refer to blindness they denote vision, for example, Peter Saward and Agnes Casement, and these will also form part of our discussion). Annette ‘Cockeyne’ is portrayed as blind or ‘cock-eyed’ throughout the novel, as her name implies. Similarly, the brothers Jan and Stefan Lusiewicz’s surname refers to St. Lucia, the patron saint of the blind.¹²⁶ Calvin Blick’s surname also expresses limited vision; *blicken* implies a quick

¹²³ Annemarie Auer, ‘Ein Genie und sein Sonderling – Elias Canetti und die Blendung’ in *Interpretationen zu Elias Canetti*, ed. by Manfred Durzak (Stuttgart: Klett, 1983), pp. 31-53 (pp. 33-34). Auer situates *Die Blendung* in the tradition of literary critiques of Austrian ruling classes because: ‘[a]ls Firnis überdeckte sie die seit einem Jahrhundert wachsenden gesellschaftlichen und individuellen Grausigkeiten und tabuierte die daraus entstandenen Deformationen des Zusammenlebens wie der Individualitäten. Sie war dazu bestimmt, die blutig niedergeschlagenen Revolutionen und nationalen Aufstände, die brutalste koloniale Ausbeutung der östlichen Nachbarvölker leicht aus dem nachdenkenden Gedächtnis zu schieben’. This tendency (of powerful members of society to crush the less powerful) continued in Canetti’s time with the hostilities towards women and Jews, for example.

¹²⁴ In Conradi’s file held at Kingston University Library Archive.

¹²⁵ William Collins Donahue, *The End of Modernism: Elias Canetti’s Auto-da-Fé* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 1. Donahue finds that the ‘blinding’ of the title refers to a practice of blocking out social realities on a personal level, which is part of a wider cultural practice. Donahue argues that the novel is concerned with evading social crises in this way. I would add that, fundamentally, the ‘social crises’ which Donahue refers to (he speaks specifically of misogyny and anti-Semitism), are caused by an inability or unwillingness to really ‘see’ ‘others’. ‘Seeing’ here includes empathising with others and understanding them (as in Canetti’s idea of *Verwandlung* which we will discuss in more detail later).

¹²⁶ The connection between names, poor vision, immorality and power-play returns in *The Green Knight* with the figure of Lucas, who is frequently shrouded in darkness (*GK*, 84) and ‘enjoyed absolute power over his brother’ whom he had taught ‘to accept any degree of despotism’ (*GK*, 81).

look or glance. Murdoch's choice of a German word for this character's surname is almost undoubtedly connected to her German-writing dedicatee. In this respect, Blick represents a compelling connection to the optical imagery which courses through *The Flight from the Enchanter*, and which ran through *Die Blendung*, which Murdoch had received while writing it.¹²⁷

For both authors, the characters are not permanently physically blind, like the classical seer and prophet from Greek mythology, Tiresias; though they can ordinarily see, their vision actually temporarily fails, in order to underline their metaphorical and moral blindness. Both employ a variety of methods to draw attention to the impaired vision of their flawed characters. Conradi has referred to Murdoch's use of pervasive fogs as a metaphor for obfuscation and the '[...] bewitchment of the intelligence' which besets some characters.¹²⁸ Changes in lighting, alcohol consumption, averting the eyes from reality, day-dreaming, being hoodwinked, amongst others, are further means by which the authors convey the characters' blindness. Dissinger provides an account of the various types of 'Blendung' to be found in the novel.¹²⁹ The characters in *Die Blendung* and *The Flight from the Enchanter* are fundamentally engaged in self-deception.¹³⁰ They ignore reality and other people, and this is as a result of their own personal fantasy of themselves as the isolated and enhanced individual.

This fantasy amounts, for Kien, to an unreal image of himself as a mighty scholar and as a ruler, for Annette Cockayne, a mistaken image of herself as a grown up,

¹²⁷ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 391. Conradi also draws the connection between Canetti and Blick. However, he argues that the parallel pertains to Canetti's (alleged) and Blick's shared malignancy: 'Iris solves the problem that Canetti/Fox [the enchanter] is morally mixed, at a time when she was in thrall to Canetti, by giving him a wicked double, Calvin Blick [...]' Blick argues that reality 'is a cipher with many solutions, all of them right ones', a view Carol Stewart recalls as close to Canetti's [...]. In contrast to this view, I propose that Blick represents a more interesting, thematic connection between these authors' novels.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 351.

¹²⁹ Dieter Dissinger, *Vereinzelung und Massenwahn: Canettis Roman Die Blendung* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1971), pp. 73-99 (p. 76).

¹³⁰ Ibid. for *Die Blendung*. See also Peter Russell, 'The Vision of Man in Elias Canetti's *Die Blendung*', *German Life and Letters*, n.s., 1 (1974), 24-35 (p. 27). For this theme in *The Flight from the Enchanter*, see Sullivan, 'The Demonic: *The Flight from the Enchanter*', pp. 71-86. Sullivan finds that according to Murdoch's essays from the 1960s, if human beings fail to see, it is because they are completely absorbed in their own fantasies of themselves; all external objects are seen only in terms of that world and not as independent things/people, p. 72.

seductive woman and a princess ruling over a realm.¹³¹ Both Kien and Annette avert their eyes from reality which threatens the obsessional, unreal world in their heads where they, especially Kien, almost exclusively reside.¹³² In both novels, there are street scenes which are important in demonstrating their blindness to what is external to themselves. A young boy to whom Kien speaks (an unusual event, for which Kien berates himself), Franz Metzger, tells him ‘sie sehn immer weg, wenn jemand über die Stiege geht’ (DB, 8). In his meeting with Metzger, Kien is compelled to confront the boy, but only because the youngster deliberately positions himself in his line of vision: ‘Als er heute auf dem Heimweg vor einer Auslage stehenblieb, trat plötzlich ein Junge zwischen das Fenster und ihn. Kien empfand diesen Schritt als Ungezogenheit’ (DB, 9). Perhaps the best example of this practice comes at the beginning of the novel, when a passer-by asks Kien where Mutstraße is, but Kien, who always averts his eyes, does not realise the man is talking to him:

Kien wunderte sich; da gab es auf offener Straße noch außer ihm schweigsame Menschen. Ohne aufzublicken, horchte er hin. Wie würde sich der Fragende zu dieser Stummheit verhalten? ‘Verzeihen Sie, bitte, können Sie mir vielleicht sagen, wo hier die Mutstraße ist?’ Er steigerte seine Höflichkeit; sein Glück blieb gleich gering. Der andere sagte nichts. ‘Ich glaube, Sie haben mich überhört. Ich möchte Sie um eine Auskunft bitten. Vielleicht sind Sie so freundlich und erklären mir, wie ich jetzt in die Mutstraße finde’. Kiens Wißbegier war geweckt, Neugier kannte er nicht. Er nahm sich vor, den Schweiger anzusehen, vorausgesetzt, daß er auch jetzt in seiner Stummheit verharrte. Zweifellos war der Mann in Gedanken und wünschte jeder Unterbrechung zu vermeiden. Wieder sagte er nichts. Kien belobt ihn. Unter Tausenden ein Charakter, der Zufällen widersteht. ‘Ja, sind Sie taub?’ schrie der erste. Jetzt wird der zweite zurückschlagen, dachte Kien und begann die Freude an seinem Schützling zu

¹³¹ For Kien, see the chapter, ‘Mobilmachung’, in *Die Blendung*, and for Annette, see Chapter Seven in *The Flight from the Enchanter*. See also David Darby, “‘Esse Percipi, Sein ist Wahrgenommen’: Perception and Perspective in Berkeley and Canetti”, *Neophilologus* 75:3 (1991 July), 425-32 (p. 427), who points out that when the discussion turns to Kien’s scholarly success in the novel, Kien himself is in control of the narrative. Darby concludes that Kien’s alleged brilliance is another part of his fantasy world in his head.

¹³² Ibid. Darby notes that Kien’s manner of blocking out the real world is by literally shutting his eyes, p. 426.

verlieren. Wer beherrscht seinen Mund, wenn man ihn beleidigt? Er wandte sich der Straße zu; der Augenblick, sie zu überqueren, war da. Erstaunt über das fortgesetzte Schweigen, hielt er inne. Noch immer sagte der zweite nichts. Zu erwarten war ein um so stärkerer Ausbruch seines Zorns. Kien hoffte auf einen Streit. Erwies sich der zweite als gewöhnlich, so blieb er, Kien, unbestritten das, wofür er sich hielt: der einzige Charakter, der hier spazierenging. Er überlegte, ob er bereits hinblicken solle. Der Vorgang spielte zu seiner Rechten. Dort tobte der erste: 'Sie haben kein Benehmen! Ich hab' Sie in aller Höflichkeit gefragt! [...] Ich übergebe Sie der Polizei! Wissen Sie wer ich bin! Sie Skelett! [...] Was halten Sie da unterm Arm? Ihnen zeig'ich's noch! Hängen Sie sich auf! Wissen Sie, was Sie sind?' Da bekam Kien einen bösen Stoß. Jemand griff nach seiner Tasche und riß daran. Mit einem Ruck, der weit über seine normalen Kräfte ging, befreite er die Bücher aus den fremden Klauen [...] Der zweite, der Schweiger und Charakter, der seinen Mund auch im Zorn beherrschte, war Kien selbst (DB, 14-15).¹³³

In this scene, Kien's proclivity for deliberately ignoring the world around him is especially apparent. His sensory shutdown, as expressed in 'Schweigen', 'Stummheit', 'überhören', 'ohne aufzublicken', 'taub', is analogous to his blindness. Rendering himself oblivious to the world in this way is an attempt to make himself, and his unreal, internal world, impenetrable to reality; for Kien, blindness is a 'weapon' against time and space (DB, 73). He also employs this kind of sensory shutdown in order to prevent Therese from penetrating his world when he aims to turn himself into stone (this will be discussed further in Chapter Three): 'Von neun Uhr Vormittags bis sieben Uhr abends verharrte Kien in seiner unvergleichlichen Stellung. Auf dem Schreibtisch lag ein aufgeschlagenes Buch, immer dasselbe. Er würdigte es keines Blickes. Seine Augen waren ausschließlich in der Ferne beschäftigt' (DB, 172). All attempts at disabling his senses, which amount to

¹³³ In *Under the Net*, which Murdoch was writing when she received the American edition of *Die Blendung*, she also makes direct reference to Berkeley's *Esse Percipi* principle when Jake muses: 'There is something compelling about the sound of a fountain in a deserted place. It murmurs about what things do when no one watches them. It is the hearing of an unheard sound. A gentle refutation of Berkeley' (UN, 185).

blindness, are part of his efforts to safeguard his obsessional, inner world. His self-inflicted blindness signifies his moral, intellectual and social failings.

Deliberately disabling the senses is also a strategy employed by Murdoch's metaphorically blind character, Annette Cockayne.¹³⁴ While there are many important differences between Annette and Kien – Kien is clearly the more severely afflicted of the two – there are also significant points of comparison. Both have brothers who live in Paris who, in the course of the novels, are seen as possible sources of help when their respective siblings have breakdowns. Both brothers are also described as more sexually liberated than their underdeveloped siblings, which again underlines Kien's and Annette's disengagement from the external world and its inhabitants. Both Canetti's and Murdoch's characters are evicted from their homes and spend time wandering around the city (Vienna and London) before lodging in hotels. Both are also sexually inexperienced, naïve, have unsatisfying first sexual encounters and are taken advantage of by the opposite sex. Both struggle with their inductions into the world outside of themselves which manifests itself in their disabled senses. Like Kien, who absents himself from the real world (as he, ironically, sees it, to learn, as we see it, to preserve his inner, isolated world), Annette also dismisses her reality. The manner in which she does so, by shutting down her senses, is comparable with Kien's method:

Against the Ringenhall curriculum she had fought with unremitting obstinacy, determined not to let a single one of the ideas which it purveyed find even a temporary lodgement in her mind. When it was possible, she read a book or wrote letters in class. When this was not possible, she pursued some lively daydream, or else fell into a coma of stupidity. To do this she would let her jaw fall open and concentrate her attention upon some object in the near vicinity until her eyes glazed and there was not a thought in her head (*FE*, 8).

¹³⁴ Elizabeth Dipple, *Iris Murdoch: Work for the Spirit* (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 138. Dipple dismissively notes Annette's 'unconsciousness and ignorance are not very interesting'. On the contrary, I argue that Annette's progression from unconsciousness to consciousness, from blindness to seeing the external world, is critical for Murdoch's thinking which emphasises the human possibility for vision (goodness), despite the greatness of the propensity for blindness (immorality). See also Sullivan, 'The Demonic: *The Flight from the Enchanter*', p. 75, who points out that Murdoch presents the 'private myths' of the characters. We have already alluded to Kien's private myths.

Both are intent on not allowing the external world to penetrate their inner worlds, and fall into a state of inertia as a result of their efforts. Kien, who is more successful than Annette in this endeavour, realizes this consequence when he finds that he has not completed any work (*DB*, 176). While Annette's intention in this practice is the same as Kien's, it is clear from the reference to her reading and writing letters that she is less successful in blinding herself to the outside world. This represents a key difference between Murdoch's and Canetti's novels and will be discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter.¹³⁵

As with Kien, Annette's blindness is demonstrated in a street scene. She also averts her eyes from reality, as Kien does, and as with Canetti's novel, the passage is infused with humour and irony:

Twice she dropped her books and had to go back for them. Three times she passed something which pleased her and had to run backwards until it was out of sight. Annette never minded turning around in the street and looking back. [...] But her brother Nicholas, whom she admired more than anyone in the world, had said: 'People who never look round are always missing things.' [...] Annette shot around the corner from Queen's Gate at a considerable pace backwards, looking at a black man. Then she turned and pelted along Kensington High Street. [...] Two ladies passing stared at her in amazement. Her eyes and mouth were wide open [...] Trying to kick her heels behind her like a horse, she nearly fell flat on her nose (*FE*, 13-14).

By looking behind her, Annette aims to not miss anything. However, she is always missing what is happening in front of her as a result. Her eyes are averted from what is in front of her, as are Kien's. She drops her books. We note that Kien also carries his books in the parallel street scene, and also nearly loses them. At times, Annette seems to be

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 78. Whereas Sullivan finds that there is no hope for Annette ever perceiving, an interpretation which suggests a pessimistic ending to Murdoch's novel, I argue the contrary, as we shall see.

completely unaware of herself; for instance, when she talks to herself out loud, and when the other pedestrians stare at her. In another street scene, she is standing on Lambeth Bridge: 'Annette was leaning excitedly over the parapet. Her lips were moist with saliva and her eyes were dazzled [...] She did not see Jan Lusiewicz until he was standing close beside her [...] Annette started and shivered. Jan looked like a figure in a dream' (*FE*, 222). Annette, like Kien, is so consumed with her own inner world (and thus, by herself) that she, paradoxically, seems not altogether the inhabitant of her own body. For both, what is real (including other human beings) is considered unreal; to Annette, Jan resembles '[...] a figure in a dream', which is reminiscent of how Kien considers all others human beings as 'Lügner' and 'Schauspieler' (*DB*, 13).

Annette's and Kien's mutual attempts to disable their senses are also conveyed in comparisons between both these characters and corpses. Kien is twice mistaken for dead. He is referred to as a skeleton on a number of occasions and tries to petrify himself.¹³⁶ All of this is part of the evocation of his blindness, and that of the characters around him. Annette is similarly compared to a corpse and other inanimate objects, including a machine.¹³⁷ Rosa is compared to a statue (*FE*, 61). Images of the mechanical (non-vital) are always associated with blindness and immorality.¹³⁸ Indeed Murdoch explicitly connects images of the mechanical with power and immorality, and with Canetti's writing in *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*.¹³⁹ Conversely, however, in the end Kien

¹³⁶ See the chapter 'Die Erstarrung' of *Die Blendung* pp. 168-178 for Kien's petrification and p. 15 where Kien is referred to as a skeleton. See also the chapter 'Der Tod' where Kien is mistaken as dead, pp. 102-112. For Annette see p. 57 of *The Flight from the Enchanter* where she is compared to 'a beautiful corpse' and described as being 'in a happy coma'.

¹³⁷ Sullivan, 'The Demonic: *The Flight from the Enchanter*', pp. 74-75. Sullivan connects the emphasis on the inanimate machinery in *The Flight from the Enchanter*, with a lack of human sensitivity, noting also that Annette can 'amputate herself from the world through induced spells or numbness' and can 'at will cut off or mechanize any form of human response to herself and others'. This phenomenon is highly reminiscent of Kien's process of self-petrification.

¹³⁸ Dipple, *Iris Murdoch: Work for the Spirit*, p. 138. Dipple asserts that Rosa's sewing machine '[r]epresents by analogy her own mechanical personality and activity', which can be easily controlled. For Dipple, the image of the mechanical introduced in this novel becomes more important as Murdoch's career continues.

¹³⁹ Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (London: Vintage, 2003), p. 503. Murdoch describes passing on hurt and pain (as in the Greek concept of *ate* which we deal with more comprehensively in the next case study), as mechanical, and as an immoral tendency which the individual must resist. In doing so, she also connects this idea to Canetti: 'We have been unjustly treated, insulted, humiliated: we want to get out own back, to get even, if need be to hurt innocent people as we have been hurt. We console ourselves with fantasies of "bouncing back". We yield to the natural gravity (*pesanteur*) which automatically

actually becomes the corpse that he resembled in life, whereas Annette's vitality is underlined, implying more optimism as regards her possibilities for self-improvement.

Such are both these characters' inabilities to deal with the reality outside their own heads, that they both attempt to take their own lives - the ultimate rejection of reality. The final section where this takes place in *Die Blendung* is entitled 'Welt im Kopf'. Having experienced the wiles of the outside world (which he had avoided for so long) after Therese turned him out of the flat, Kien loses himself to the world in his head and commits suicide. Similarly, having been turned out of the Keepes' house, and experienced the 'School of Life', Annette struggles to cope with the complexity of the world outside of herself. When she decides to attempt suicide there are echoes of Kien's 'Welt im Kopf': 'Her head was growing and growing until it enclosed the whole world. Annette was no longer present. She was become [*sic*] the boundary of the universe and within her all things lived and moved and had their being. Death could not change her now more than she was already changed' (*FE*, 245). Kien dies in an inferno in his flat, and this fate is what Annette yearns for: 'If only she could pull the hotel down on top of her, leap into a roaring fire, blow herself up with a bomb' (*FE*, 246). Unlike Kien, Annette does not succeed in taking her own life. The final descriptions of her indicate that she will move closer to seeing the world.

Many of the other characters in these novels succumb to the state of blindness which characterizes Kien and Annette. Their blindness is always coupled with someone external supporting a private image which they have of themselves. They are also blinded by themselves, though it may seem someone, or something, else is responsible. In *Die Blendung*, Therese's blindness to reality is underlined in a scene in the furniture shop. In order to make a sale, the dealer pays her attention and flatters her. However, his flattery supports the view which she has of herself, which is completely at odds with reality. Her self-absorption in this respect is underlined by her blindness to her surroundings:

degrades our thoughts and feelings. (Imagery of the mechanical, in Simone Weil, in Wittgenstein, in Freud, in Canetti's *Crowds and Power*.) Instead of this surrender to natural necessity we must hold on to what has really happened and not cover it with imagining how we are to unhappen it'.

Sie hatte die Möbel noch keines Blickes gewürdigt [...] Verhext folgte sie den Bewegungen seines Mundes, seiner Hand. Ihre Augen, sonst in vielerlei bösen Farben funkelnd, jetzt friedlich, wäßrig und beinahe blau, flossen gehorsam über die Einlagen [...] Sie besah die Garnitur, die er ihr empfahl. Doch hätte sie nicht sagen können, wie sie aussah (*DB*, 82-83).

Similarly, Annette finds herself in Nina, the dressmaker's, shop with the apparent object of her affection, Mischa Fox. When Fox, the alleged enchanter, pays Annette attention by sitting and looking at her during a dress fitting, Annette is so caught up in her own thoughts and images of herself that she too, like Therese, becomes blind to her surroundings. While initially Nina has a 'large, light room', the 'very tall and luminous' mirror adding even more light, as soon as Mischa Fox enters shadows appear heralding the onset of Annette's blinding. Fox's head appears 'quite darkened' as he hovers in the shadows watching the dress fitting. Even when he momentarily emerges from the shadows, Annette is so consumed by his different coloured eyes (Fox has one blue and one brown eye), that everything else around him is invisible to her. In other words, she is blind to everything else. As the scene continues, Annette's perception and grip on the reality of the situation wanes. She lapses into fantasy, wishing that her own eyes were like his and her answers to his questions become 'vague'. As the dress fitting continues, Annette feels more and more 'helpless' and 'puppet'-like. Her visual paralysis dramatically becomes a physical one when Nina 'spins her around as if she had been a dummy', and moves Annette's arms and head 'as if she were made of wood', turning her head this way and that 'as if it had been a ball' (*FE*, 79-80). This happens again during and after Fox's soirée. She is 'in a dream' and in a 'daze of beatitude' (*FE*, 199). When she travels to the sea with Fox, her visual paralysis continues as testified by the 'dim mysterious light', 'the grey hazy light' and 'the thick mist' which surrounds them. Annette does not even know where she is because she is 'completely dazed' and 'hemmed' in by the mist. Martha Nussbaum points out the connection between vision and morality and Plato's myth of the cave in Murdoch's writing.¹⁴⁰ However, she also notes

¹⁴⁰ Martha Nussbaum, 'Love and Vision: Iris Murdoch on Eros and the Individual', in *Iris Murdoch and the Search for Human Goodness*, ed. by Maria Antonaccio and William Schweiker (Chicago: University of

parallels with Dante, especially as regards the propensity for erotic love to impede vision rather than to promote it. While it seems that the 'enchanter', Fox, is having this effect on the women, it is rather a narrative device, which both Murdoch and Canetti utilize when characters are blinded by false images which they hold of themselves, which in turn results in their failure to see reality and others.

Rosa and Nina are similarly blinded during their encounters with Fox. As in the case of Canetti's characters, these women's fantasies of themselves blind them to reality. Much of the beginning of Nina's life in England is spent fantasising about a romance with Mischa, but when that is patently impossible, she begins to dream about going to Australia. Her propensity for blindness is apparent in the following quotation:

But she could neither see the dizzy drop to the street below nor the green of the springtime plane trees which blurred the edges of the houses that lay between her and the river. The cool air blew suddenly into her face. But Nina, looking out with a glazed expression, knew at that moment only the darkness of her own heart. As she sat there stiffly she looked like a blind girl. (*FE*, 140)

Likewise Rosa Keepe's private fantasies leave her blinded or dazzled by the light on meeting Fox. She is not even aware he is in the room when she first enters. Her action of covering her face (including her eyes), and the description of her 'eyelid fluttering under his mouth like a bird' are similar to Nina's and Annette's blinding through fantasy and self-absorption (*FE*, 240).¹⁴¹ She is so caught up in her fantasy of being reunited with Fox that she does not notice that Nina is in a state of distress. Her enchantment with herself is underlined when looking at the alleged enchanter is described as 'like looking into the

Chicago Press, 1996), p. 35. Nussbaum argues that Murdoch's philosophy seems to break with Plato's on the issue of erotic love facilitating vision of another individual. She finds that Murdoch is closer to Dante, where 'sexual love, like other sins, creates a kind of egoistic "fog" around the lover, impeding his vision of the reality of the other and of the Good'. She adds that 'Murdoch, more than any other contemporary ethical thinker, has made us vividly aware of the many stratagems by which the ego wraps itself in a cozy self-serving fog that prevents egress to the reality of the other', p. 36.

¹⁴¹ This idea also returns in Murdoch's other novels. In *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, for instance, during her attempt to seduce Julius, Morgan is described as 'rather dazed' and is not even aware that she is completely naked, p. 155.

mirror' (*FE*, 240). The immorality of her blindness is underlined with Nina's suicide, which Rosa may have been able to prevent if she had noticed her. As with Annette, and in contrast to Canetti's characters, there is some optimism regarding her potential for self-improvement which is expressed in the light and visual imagery in the final description of her: '[...] she saw the pictures through a gathering haze of tears' (*FE*, 287).

Calvin Blick is another blind character through whom Murdoch's and Canetti's shared interest in themes of power and moral blindness is demonstrated. While Kien and Annette are powerful only within the confines of their own heads, Blick, by contrast, exerts power over others. Kien's and Blick's attitudes to the theme of blindness have fundamental similarities. Both claim to be purveyors of truth and vision. Kien believes that books are truth and his studies in isolation are a 'Dienst an der Wahrheit' (*DB*, 13). Similarly, Blick sees his photography as accessing truth: 'This is the truthful eye that sees and remembers. The lens of my camera' (*FE*, 160). However, it is a limited view in both cases, abstract and blind to real life. Kien notes: 'Man näherte sich der Wahrheit, indem man sich von den Menschen abschloß. Der Alltag war ein oberflächliches Gewirr von Lügen'.¹⁴² Blindness is something which both these characters accept. Kien claims: '[u]nser Dasein [ist] eine einzige, ungeheuerliche Blindheit, bis auf das Wenige, das wir durch unsere kleinlichen Sinne – kleinlich ihrem Wesen wie ihrer Reichweite nach – erfahren. Das herrschende Prinzip im Kosmos ist die Blindheit' (*DB*, 73).¹⁴³ This view is echoed by Blick in conversation with Rosa Keepe: 'You will never know the truth and you will read the signs in accordance with your deepest wishes. That is what we humans always have to do. Reality is a cipher with many solutions, all of them right ones [...] The truth lies deeper, deeper. It is always so!' (*FE*, 278). Both characters see vision as

¹⁴² Shutting out others and the external world for Kien is part of his unwillingness to join the crowd. All passers-by are liars, actors in his opinion who change all the time: 'Wer unter den schlechten Schauspielern, aus denen die Masse bestand, hatte ein Gesicht, das ihn fesselte? Sie verändern es nach dem Augenblick' (*DB*, 13). The changing nature of the crowd does not fit well with Kien who cannot grant that degree of freedom because he cannot control it (fesselte). The significance of the crowd will be discussed in more detail in Part Three.

¹⁴³ This, Kien's view, comes close to Murdoch's character's Julius King's who, referring to the Venerable Bede, compares human life to 'a sparrow that flies through a lighted hall, in one door and out the other. What can that poor sparrow know? Nothing. These attempted truths are tissues of illusion'. While King also comes close to Murdoch's own view when he states that all human beings 'fly from consciousness', his view that art is a method of flight is completely at odds with both her own and Canetti's view as we shall see in the final section of Chapter Three of this thesis (*FHD*, 222).

impossible for humans, though they do not appear to include themselves in their assessments.¹⁴⁴

For both, blindness to reality and others is also a weapon, a means to power. For Kien, it facilitates the protection of his powerful position within his own head. For Blick, his blindness, including his lack of empathy with others, allows him to scheme and manipulate Hunter and Rosa Keepe, and thus maintain the upper hand in his relations with them. In this respect, their blindness is connected to their selfish desire for power and it is thus also immoral. Indeed Murdoch's comment that '[t]he idea of a really good man living in a private dream world seems unacceptable. Of course a man may be eccentric, but he must know certain things about his surroundings, most obviously the existence of other people and their claims' (*EM*, 347), is echoed by Canetti's and Broch's discussion of the good man where they decide: 'Er war kein simpler oder reduzierter Mensch, er befand sich nicht in einem Zustand der Ahnlosigkeit über die Welt, er hatte die Fähigkeit, andere zu durchschauen. Er ließ sich von ihnen nicht täuschen oder einschläfern, er war wach und aufmerksam, empfindlich, lebendig, rege [...]' (*DA*, 139-140). Indeed they find this quality in Sonne who, antithetically to Kien, is aware of everything going on around him (*DA*, 164). Kien, on the other hand, lives by the borrowed and misconstrued Berkelian maxim: "Esse percipi", Sein ist Wahrgenommenwerden, was ich nicht wahrnehme, existiert nicht' (*DB*, 73), a statement which sums up a limited and dangerous view of the world.¹⁴⁵ For Kien, anything or anyone who does not support him in perpetuating his existence, is not real to him.

Canetti's and Murdoch's blind characters are blinded by themselves and their private worlds. They are a central part of their critiques of wider socio-cultural and political evils, which support the view of the individual as independent of others. Canetti's aim with *Die Blendung* was to show this blind world to itself, in the hope of

¹⁴⁴ Calvin Blick's first name is also significant when considering his negative outlook regarding human goodness. Calvinism emphasises the permanence of human sin. Ted Honderich, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), p. 120.

¹⁴⁵ For further discussion of Kien's corruption of Berkeley's writing see David Darby, "Esse Percipi, Sein ist Wahrgenommen": Perception and Perspective in Berkeley and Canetti', 425-32.

bringing about vision.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, contrary to the opinion that Canetti did not believe in the possibility of goodness and vision, as is the case with Murdoch's villains, Blick and King, his satire in *Die Blendung*, and his description of the Good through the character Dr. Sonne, confirm that the opposite is the case. An extract from Murdoch's diary, dated 1 April 1953 reads: 'C. on "good characters". He would wish to create one, in a book. How they are usually in literature either unconvincing (Alyosha) or demonic (Myshkin). He said – but good has to become demonic, in our age, in real life. Unless it can live idyllically.'¹⁴⁷ This quotation shows that Canetti believed in the existence of Goodness. However, he, like Murdoch, as their novels show, was also keenly aware of the human propensity for its opposite, blindness. The next sections consider other important and comparable manifestations of blindness in *Die Blendung* and *The Flight from the Enchanter*.

(v) Blindness and Gender

Critics are very clearly divided regarding the subject of gender in Canetti's novel. In the early- to mid-1990s Lawson, Ferrera and Foell drew attention to Canetti's portrayal of the female through the character of Therese in *Die Blendung*, and claimed that she was a testament to Canetti's own misogyny.¹⁴⁸ Foell, in particular, points to the influence of Otto Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* (1903) on Canetti's creation of Therese. Crucially, however, Foell does not see that Canetti is parodying Weininger's thesis in *Die Blendung*.¹⁴⁹ More recent critics like Donahue, Pankau and Peiter argue that the figure of Kien's housekeeper should not be taken at face value, and that rather than Therese evidencing the author's latent hatred of women, Canetti was demonstrating the distorted view of women held by his male protagonists, and which is also propped up by the European tradition in which they find themselves. In

¹⁴⁶ Anne D. Peiter, *Komik und Gewalt: Zur literarischen Verarbeitung der beiden Weltkriege und der Shoah* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007). Peiter points out that by presenting the false logic (anti-Semitic, misogynistic) of the characters, the reader is invited to enter into it and then be inoculated against it, p. 19.

¹⁴⁷ In Conradi's file at the Kingston archive.

¹⁴⁸ Donahue, *The End of Modernism: Elias Canetti's Auto-da-Fé*, p. 43.

¹⁴⁹ Kristie A. Foell, *Blind Reflections: Gender in Elias Canetti's Die Blendung* (Riverside, CA: Ariadne, 1994), p. 76.

other words, Canetti was parodying Weininger's work. Therese is, therefore, to be understood as a figure constructed from literary and social stereotypes of the female. The point is that she has nothing at all to do with real women, whom the protagonists cannot see correctly. Rather than Canetti, through his novel, upholding the Weiningerian attributes of the male and the female, he criticises them:

Kien [...] is equipped with nearly all the attributes that have been associated with masculinity in gender discourse since the late nineteenth century: he is antisocial, thus lonely, spiritual, rational, intellectually creative, unsensual, in short, almost the ideal M-type in Weininger's sense, but exaggerated to an illusionary, absurd extent. Of course the corresponding extreme is found in the formal characteristics of the Therese figure: she is marked by her strong physical appearance (symbolized, for example, by the skirt), by her desires for sex and possessions, by her lack of intellectual capacity and interest, and by her vanity.¹⁵⁰

Critics who cry misogyny overlook the most basic fact that Canetti's novel is a wholesale satire of pre-war Vienna, including stereotypes of men held by men and women. Through his wife, Veza, whose writing dealt with gender issues, Canetti was certainly *au fait* with the problems women confronted owing to misogynistic attitudes.¹⁵¹ While ultimately Canetti is criticising these attitudes, and indeed all gender stereotyping, his method of doing so is a process described by Peiter as 'Hineinkriechen', wherein Canetti appears to 'creep into' the persona that he is criticising.¹⁵² In Canetti's own terminology, this process is an example of *Verwandlung*. He, therefore, becomes the misogynist whom he is criticising in order to understand its false logic and ultimately reject it.

¹⁵⁰ Johannes G. Pankau, 'Images of Male and Female in Canetti's work', in *A Companion to the Works of Elias Canetti*, ed. by Dagmar C.G. Lorenz (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2004), pp. 217-238 (p. 226).

¹⁵¹ Julian Preece, *The Rediscovered Writings of Veza Canetti: Out of the Shadows of a Husband* (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2007), p. 9. Preece confirms that Canetti and his wife worked in parallel and each was well aware of the other's writing.

¹⁵² Peiter, p. 19. Peiter argues that in order to show up the false logic of the misogynistic and anti-Semitic figures (which are, as I am demonstrating, as a result of their blindness towards the external world), Canetti imitates them in his fiction. He is not, of course, espousing their views.

Donahue supports the view that Canetti should not be accused of the very thing that he is describing, and adds further weight to this argument through a discussion of the narratorial strategies which are employed in *Die Blendung*. He points out that very often the seemingly omniscient narrator is infiltrated by the misogynistic figures (especially Kien), meaning that it is not Canetti speaking, but rather the male figure. Furthermore, even in cases where this process of narratorial infiltration does not take place, we must always remember that Canetti is also satirising the tradition of narration within which, as has been pointed out previously, the female characters do not have a voice.¹⁵³ The point of this is not that Canetti, the real person, did not want them to have a voice, but rather that his novel is a reflection of a real and literary world where women are historically voiceless.

Murdoch's female characters, especially in *The Flight from the Enchanter*, are also, at times, narrated by the male figures and, as in Canetti's novel, the purpose of this strategy is to reveal their blindness to real women, owing to the borrowed thinking about the female to which they cling. Most recently, Grimshaw, who deals explicitly with gender, sexuality and power (though she gives extremely short shrift to *The Flight from the Enchanter*), finds that in *The Bell* (1958) Murdoch presents gender stereotypes of both males and females, held by both males and females. She argues that accepting these stereotypes, thus not 'seeing' the individual is tantamount to moral failure for Murdoch.¹⁵⁴ In this way, gender forms part of Murdoch's discourse on morality, because it involves thought patterns which blind one to the true complexity and particularity of the world and its inhabitants. Grimshaw uses the terms 'form' (which includes constructs, like gender, which omit the real world), and 'contingency' (which is the real world), to describe the struggle between patriarchal power inherent in gender stereotypes and freedom, which is seeing things as they really are.¹⁵⁵ As we noted in the previous section

¹⁵³ Donahue, *The End of Modernism: Elias Canetti's Auto-da-Fé*, p. 44.

¹⁵⁴ Grimshaw, *Sexuality, Gender and Power in Iris Murdoch's Fiction*, p. 114. Through a comparative study of de Beauvoir and Murdoch on gender, Grimshaw argues that Murdoch's fiction represents the gender stereotypes held by both men and women of one another, pp. 74-116.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 79-80. See also Grimshaw's more recent essay where she notes the shift in Murdoch's attitude towards a rejection of all gender classifications: 'Plato, Foucault and Beyond: Ethics, Beauty and Bisexuality in *The Good Apprentice*', in *Iris Murdoch: A Reassessment*, ed. by Anne Rowe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 163-174 (p. 164).

of this chapter, seeing reality in this way is associated with the good for both Murdoch and Canetti. I argue in this section that these authors' representations of gender stereotypes in their fiction are part of their critique of blindness. Through stereotypes of femininity and masculinity held by both male and female figures, the characters' vision of reality, particularly of the individual, is obfuscated.

The inordinate emphasis on the enchanter-figure in criticism on *The Flight from the Enchanter* overshadows other very important themes and discussions, in particular the question of gender and morality.¹⁵⁶ This is notwithstanding the struggle for a feminist publication, the *Artemis*, at the centre of the novel and the main female character's mother being described as a Fabian.¹⁵⁷ In this respect Murdoch was echoing the temper of her own times. After the war many women continued to work (as had been necessary during the war), and they worked within organizations alongside men but did not enjoy the same opportunities for promotion and equal salary, for example. This is the world represented by Murdoch through the fictitious government organization, SELIB (Special European Labour Immigration Board), and the characters, John Rainborough and Agnes Casement, within it.¹⁵⁸

It is the contention of this section that similarities exist in these authors' novels in terms of how the male characters misperceive the females. In the descriptions of Therese and Casement, the narrators emphasise their physical appearance and their clothes, which suggests the superficiality of their understanding of the women with whom they are confronted. This motif is crucial in understanding Murdoch's and Canetti's treatment of the theme of gender in their writing which has frequently been misunderstood or

¹⁵⁶ Dipple, *Iris Murdoch: Work for the Spirit*, p. 137. This thesis supports this point of view by arguing that the monster (enchanter) and the maiden motif, especially in the context of understanding Murdoch's relationship with Canetti, eclipses the more important textual parallels which point towards a sustained intellectual affinity between these authors.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. Dipple notes: 'The two central characters, Mischa Fox and Rosa Keepe, are kept in sharply adversary position, signalling the fundamental sexual conflict which is a more central concern of this novel [...]'. Dipple finds that Murdoch is ultimately more interested in 'the larger moral issues of power' in *The Flight from the Enchanter*. p. 137.

¹⁵⁸ Cheryl Bove and Anne Rowe, *Sacred Space, Beloved City: Iris Murdoch's London* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 107-111. Bove and Rowe note that Whitehall is regularly a setting in Murdoch's novels in which '[p]rejudiced attitudes towards female colleagues are echoed'. (p. 110).

completely overlooked.¹⁵⁹ In *Die Blendung*, Therese is reduced to her blue starched skirt by Kien, and this synecdoche is set in opposition to the trousers of the book which he grew up on, *Die Hosen des Herrn Bredow*, thus encapsulating the strictures of gender through which he sees her and himself. On the tram ride home after their wedding, Kien's attention turns to Therese's skirt:

Kien aber betrachtete verstohlen ihren Rock. Er war blauer als gewöhnlich und noch steifer gestärkt. Der Rock gehörte zu ihr wie die Schale zur Muschel. Versuch' es wer, mit Gewalt die Schale zur Muschel einer geschlossenen Muschel zu öffnen. Einer Riesenmuschel, so groß wie dieser Rock. Man muß sie zertreten, zu Schleim und Splittern, wie damals als Junge am Meeresstrand. Die Muschel gab keine Ritze nach. Er hatte noch nie eine nackt gesehen. (DB, 54)

Kien is clearly anticipating his first sexual encounter with his new wife. However, the actual woman is absent from his day-dream and she becomes only her skirt. After the journey home from the register office, having contemplated Therese's skirt, Kien thinks to himself: 'Es war höchste Zeit, sie vorzubereiten. Etwas mußte gesagt sein' (DB, 56). Following a suggestive comment, Therese understands what is on his mind and goes to prepare herself for her wedding night. When she returns, in her underwear, Kien's thoughts imply that she is the initiator, despite the fact that the sexual inclination originated with him:

Gott sei Dank. Der Rock ist weg. Jetzt brauch' ich nichts zu zerdrücken. Ist das anständig? So ein Glück. Ich hätt' mich geschämt. Wie kann sie das tun. Ich hätte gesagt: Leg' ihn weg. Das hätt' ich nicht können. So selbstverständlich steht sie da. Wir müssen uns schon sehr lange kennen (DB, 59).

¹⁵⁹ Altorf notes that owing to Murdoch's tendency to distance herself from feminism in interviews, critics did not conduct feminist readings of her work for a long time. However, 'there is now a growing body of research into the role of gender in Murdoch's novels' (p. 177). This section of the thesis contributes to this body of research by demonstrating that Murdoch's writing, particularly the text currently under discussion, engages in a sustained way with gender issues.

Kien's knowledge of himself and of Therese is so skewed here that he projects his own desires on to Therese (*DB*, 56). Kien's objectification of Therese and his projection of his own desire onto her are part of his blindness to the world and its inhabitants.

Similarly, Rainborough's awareness of Casement's skirt marks his sexual awakening to the female. However, the superficiality of his observations, as in the case of Kien, underlines the limitations to his perception of the person before him:

It was through Miss Casement that Rainborough began to be aware of an entirely new range and type of feminine charms. He noticed, for instance, that when she sat down, Miss Casement hitched her skirt up so that the whole of her legs from the silken knees downwards were plainly visible together with an inkling of underclothes. This gesture, which Rainborough had imagined was affected only by film stars when being photographed for the evening papers, infuriated and delighted him (*FE*, 90).

Just as for Kien, the woman becomes reduced, for Rainborough, to her skirt. Both men project their own sexual appetites on to the women they are contemplating, and this is another way in which their views of the women before them are distorted. Considering Rainborough's relations with Annette, a directionless, naïve, young woman, we note: 'While Rainborough poured out some sherry, she [Annette] stood awkwardly, her feet crossed, looking round the room with an air both of being curious and of noticing nothing' and '[s]he dropped her coat on the floor and drank some sherry quickly. She seemed neither embarrassed nor at ease' (*FE*, 124). Rainborough on the other hand is focused from the outset on making '[...] the best of the matter and at least to derive some entertainment from Annette's visit'. His observations of Annette quickly make known the type of entertainment he has in mind: 'Her extreme slimness seemed to emphasize the scantiness of her clothes. Her blouse hung upon her breasts like a cloud'. Soon he is wrestling Annette to the ground in an attempt to have his entertainment and suddenly 'Rainborough thought that there was a very faint gleam of amusement in her eye [...] He

might be amused, but she ought to be trembling' (*FE*, 127). His assumption that she is consenting to his actions is clear:

'Annette,' he said, 'you're a grown woman now. Don't pretend that you're not making this scene as much as I am. Give me, at least, that pleasure' [...] The effect was instantaneous. Annette's eyes suddenly clouded over with a look of hurt indignation. 'Oh!' she said, 'How can you be so -' [...] she began to struggle [...] (*FE*, 128).

Like Kien, Rainborough projects his own desire onto Annette. However, unlike Therese who accepts Kien's advances and thus makes him shocked that she is so shameless, Annette rebuffs Rainborough, who is shocked that she is so frigid. Neither man can properly perceive the woman in front of him. They cannot see what is other than themselves because of themselves. They have not learned to suppress themselves to see the other, which according to both authors, is required for the good.

Their blindness is also seen in their association of sex and violence. In *Die Blendung*, the woman is all but absent from the scene; she is objectified as a mussel and removing her skirt is compared to the violent separation of the mussel from its shell. Annette is also objectified by Rainborough and is thought of in terms of a fish rather than a fellow human being:

Rainborough wished that there was some way of becoming intimate with a woman which did not involve these agonizing moments of irrevocable decision. It was like hunting fish with an underwater gun, a sport which he had once been foolish enough to try. At one moment there is the fish – graceful, mysterious, desirable and free – and the next moment there is nothing but struggling and blood and confusion (*FE*, 127).

The final image of this scene of 'struggling blood and confusion' is strongly reminiscent of 'Schleim und Splittern', which is the end result for the woman/mussel after being

conquered by Kien (*DB*, 54). However, both men's efforts to have their way with the women are thwarted. Kien understands that his wife has no respect for his books and leaves the bedroom without having consummated his marriage. Rainborough is interrupted in his struggles with Annette and also fails in his endeavour. Their respective failures in their love scenes are another indication of their failures to see the reality of the women in front of them, and the resultant inability to connect with them in a meaningful way.

In both Canetti's and Murdoch's novels there are scenes where two main male characters discuss women, and these are also important in understanding the theme of blindness to the other, in this case the women. These scenes reveal their blindness towards individual women by revealing the stereotypes of the female which the men hold. Firstly, they compare the women to swarms of insects and termites, which are also, in *Masse und Macht*, used to denote the crowd, the other to the individual. In a parallel scene in Murdoch's text, where two men converse about women, the notion of the woman as an insect also occurs. The woman is suggested in the 'beautiful moth' which is floating around Rainborough's room and which he, at the end of the chapter, crushes under his heel. In addition, Rainborough also refers to the women in his office as having 'infested everything' (*FE*, 132). Again, the female is objectified in both Murdoch's and Canetti's texts and the male characters proceed to make generalisations about women which, in effect, blind them to the individual woman.

Kien begins a tirade against the evils of womankind, using various literary examples to support his thesis. In particular, he buttresses his claims with examples of descriptions of women in Greek mythology. Murdoch's character, in this parallel conversation, also refers to Greek myths mentioning the Furies and the Sirens (*FE*, 132). The effect of these scenes is that they underline the falseness of the men's views of women. As in the scene between Rainborough and Fox, in conversation with Georges, Kien compares women to the sirens which must be resisted by men as in classical texts:

Ein Mann, dieser Oktavian, ein herrlicher Mann, die Haut schützt er durch seinen Panzer, die Augen, indem er sie niederschlägt! Auf ihren Sirenengesang soll er kein Wort erwidert haben. Ich hab' ihn im Verdacht, daß er sich die Ohren verstopft hatte wie Odysseus seinerzeits. Nun, durch die Nase allein konnte sie ihn nicht kaptivieren (DB, 490-491).

In a parallel conversation in *The Flight from the Enchanter*, we note: "After the unicorn girl," said Mischa, "comes the siren, the destructive woman. She realises that men have found her out, that she cannot save men, she has not that virtue in her. So she will destroy them instead" (FE, 133). In these parallel scenes, the men attempt to make a sort of taxonomy of women which is really a taxonomy of stereotypes of women in literature. Kien does this by referring to Confucius - who does not even mention women such is their insignificance - and Buddha, before listing the evils of women as they appear in a variety of classical texts. Analogously, in Murdoch's scene between two men, they also set out categories which include: the young girl who is '[...] full of dreams', the unicorn girl, 'the siren, the destructive woman', the 'perpetual virgin' and the 'wise woman' (FE, 133-134). While Kien holds the views listed, his brother and interlocutor, Georges, listens to what he says more critically and so does not necessarily share his views of women. In Murdoch's novel, it is unclear whether either of the men genuinely believes in the categories which they describe. Rainborough states: "Why are you talking this rubbish, Mischa," he said, "and making me talk it too? If what you say were true, women would be either poisonous or boring!" and Fox later says: "I did enjoy our talk. But don't believe a word I say. I love all creatures" (FE, 135-136). There is a sense then that Fox was articulating the emotions which Rainborough experienced. He had just violated Annette and then on Mischa's arrival bundled her into a cupboard, where she is trapped for the duration of their conversation. In both Canetti's and Murdoch's novels, attempts are made to develop categories of threatening females which have the effect of blinding the person who holds those views to individual women. However, whereas Kien firmly believes in those categories, Murdoch's male characters appear not to, implying that Murdoch's novel is more optimistic about the possibilities of self-improvement.

In both novels, the men's inability and unwillingness to see the individual women they encounter is underlined by their failure to countenance them visually. Early on in the first third of the novel, we learn that during the meal times which Kien and Therese pass together, he looks past her (*DB*, 70). He similarly shuts his eyes to the furniture which she brought into his apartment. Later in the Theresianum, he employs a similar tactic when attempting to wrestle a package of books from Therese: 'Jetzt zerrte auch Kien am Paket. Ihr Widerstand wuchs. Sie wandte ihm das Gesicht zu, er schloß die Augen' (*DB*, 309). Indeed Kien goes into a virtual comatose state in this, his first encounter with Therese since she ejected him from the apartment. When he is transported to the police station, he sustains a cut from the *melée* that followed the struggle for the packet of books, and we learn that the blood he sheds is '[...] das erste Lebenszeichen, das Kien von sich gab' (*DB*, 324). Kien clearly spent the struggle with Therese in a blinded state. This condition continues in the police station where Kien sits with his eyes firmly shut causing the inspector to flick Kien's eye-lids in order to prove that he is not dead. When Kien opens his eyes and appears to focus them on Therese, they assume a glazed appearance, like that of a dead person. In the scene in the police station, Kien again refuses to see and thereby acknowledge Therese. He claims that she has been brutally murdered and that he is hallucinating when confronted by Therese's presence:

Helfen Sie mir! Sie rührt sich nicht von der Stelle. Befreien Sie mich von dieser Halluzination! Ich leide sonst nie daran. Sie geht mir nach, ich fürchte, schon über eine Stunde. [...] Ich sehe Sie alle. Sie sehen mich. Genauso steht die Ermordete neben mir. Alle meine Sinne haben mich verlassen, nicht nur die Augen (*DB*, 331-332).

Similarly the men's blindness is underlined by the actual failure of their vision in scenes with women in Murdoch's novel. In the drawing room scene between Rainborough and Annette, before he bundles her out of sight on Mischa Fox's arrival, and while he wrestles her to the floor, we note: 'He seemed almost unaware of Annette's presence' and 'He did not look at her, but studied her hand and arm closely as if they were detached

from her body' (*FE*, 127). In his love scene with Casement, Rainborough's impaired vision as regards women is again noticeable:

They looked at each other. Rainborough could see nothing of Miss Casement except the light reflected from her eyeball. Yet he knew, somehow, exactly what her expression was and exactly what she was going to do. She leaned forward and kissed him on the cheek [...] Rainborough remained quite still. There was a raging confusion inside his head. The bitch, a voice was saying, the bitch. He leaned towards her and began to kiss her brutally and indiscriminately upon her face and neck. He had never felt before that kisses could be so much like blows (*FE*, 194).

The male characters' blindness to the female characters is also apparent in the tendency they have not to see women as distinct individuals. When Kien is occupying Pfaff's peephole box before he is restored to his apartment, he refuses to look at any skirts which are passing. Women are reduced to skirts for Kien and the implication is that every woman he encounters is Therese:

Viel häufiger passierten Röcke, die fielen ihm lästig. An Umfang und an Zahl nahmen sie mehr Platz ein, als ihnen gebührte. Er beschloß sie zu ignorieren. Seine Hände blätterten unwillkürlich um, als hielten sie ein Bilderbuch fest und teilten den Augen ihre Arbeit vor. Je nach der Geschwindigkeit der Hosen blätterten sie langsamer oder rascher. Vor Röcken wurden die Hände von der Abneigung ihres Herrn ergriffen; sie überblätterten was er nicht lesen wollte. Dabei gingen oft mehrere Seiten zugleich verloren, was er nicht bedauerte, denn wer weiß, was sich hinter solchen Seiten verbarg (*DB*, 415-416).

Kien's sweeping generalisations about women such as 'Frauen haben ein feines Gefühl für die Stimmung des Geliebten' and 'Wenn Frauen lieben, werden sie charakterlos', again betray this inclination to see women as a homogenous group, rather than as individuals (*DB*, 127). Pfaff's hostility to names is another expression of this tendency

and will be considered in more detail in the next chapter. He imagines a world where all women are prototypes of his enslaved daughter: 'Die Weiber seien doch zu etwas gut, der Mann müsse es eben verstehen, lauter Polis aus ihnen zu machen' (DB, 409).

Similarly in Murdoch's novel the male characters view women in this way. Rainborough notes:

There are certain human species whose members appear to be indistinguishable one from the other. What these species are will vary with the observer. Some people find it impossible to distinguish undergraduates. Rainborough had never been able to distinguish typists. They all looked to him exactly alike. He could see their smile, but no other features (FE, 84).

Rainborough's and Fox's generalisations about women, and their effort to categorise them, are also part of the male tendency towards a homogenisation of women. This idea is also borne out when Rainborough sees Casement's face superimposed on Annette Cockayne (FE, 127). This tendency which afflicts them runs contrary to both Murdoch's and Canetti's views of the good person, which stipulate that they must suppress themselves to perceive the particularity of the world and other people.¹⁶⁰

The female figures, especially in Canetti's text, are composed of images of the female and as such are presented for satire. In Therese's case, these are chiefly her predisposition to idle prattle, her avarice, her materialism and her enormous sexual appetite.¹⁶¹ It is important to note that none of Canetti's female figures, as Donahue points out, are to be taken as 'psychologically realistic', since they represent a parody of

¹⁶⁰ As we will note in the final case study, Charles Arrowby in *The Sea*, *The Sea* similarly struggles to see women as individuals.

¹⁶¹ Donahue, *The End of Modernism: Elias Canetti's Auto-da-Fé*, p. 45. Donahue's study reveals Canetti's female figures to be stock types from the literary tradition. He shows the figure of Therese to be an intertext of Hauptmann's Lene in *Bahnwärter Thiel*, particularly in terms of her sexual appetite and her avarice. However, whereas Lene is opposed to Thiel, for whom the reader may feel sorry as he is a more sympathetic character, this is not the case with Kien who is equally as monstrous as Therese. Donahue claims that with Therese, the reader is made to 'rethink the gendered binary distribution of vices'. pp. 56-60.

the male figures' distorted views of women, and thus are antithetical to real women.¹⁶² However, unlike Therese, who does not change (such is her unreality), Annette breaks out of the gender stereotypes which society sets out for her, and in this way represents the opposite to Therese. Similarly, Casement constitutes, in many respects, the inversion of Canetti's Therese, because she is representative of the real. This does not mean, however, that Murdoch would have received Canetti's novel with hostility. The female figures are an important element of his satire. Rather, Murdoch's inversion represents her moving beyond the satirical, by attempting to pierce the unreal images of women which it presents, with reality. There are a number of examples of these points of inversion to be highlighted.

Before Kien decided to marry Therese, she had been his housekeeper for eight years. Little is known of her youth other than that she had a difficult relationship with her mother. She is presented as a social climber and this ambition is nurtured by her daily study of the advertisement columns of the newspaper. Prior to working for Kien, she worked for a family but decided to leave on seeing a notice in the newspaper promising a greater salary:

Sie dachte nicht daran, ihr Leben bei dieser gewöhnlichen Familie zu beschließen. Sie war noch eine junge Person, keine 48 Jahre alt, und wollte am liebsten zu einem alleinstehenden Herrn. Man kann sich da alles besser einteilen, und mit Frauen ist ja doch nicht auszukommen. [...] Diesmal stach ihr die Annonce gewaltig in die Augen. Bei 'Gehalt Nebensache' blieb sie hängen und las die Sätze, die durch gleichmäßig fetten Druck hervorgehoben waren, einige Male von rückwärts nach vorwärts durch. Der Ton imponierte ihr; das war ein Mann (*DB*, 25).

Therese is a predatory female from the lower classes who is deliberately seeking out a single man. The implication is that she will then seek to seduce him. Grimshaw points out that the idea of a woman needing to 'catch' a husband (in the manner that Therese

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 45.

attempts to catch Kien, though of course she does not refer to *Die Blendung*), recurs in Murdoch's fiction and is part of her depiction of gender stereotypes.¹⁶³ Dipple views Agnes Casement in a similar light in *The Flight from the Enchanter*.¹⁶⁴ We also learn that Annette's father sends her to Ringenhall finishing-school in the hope that she will learn some etiquette and will become marriageable: 'The Ringenhall Ladies' College was an expensive finishing-school in Kensington which taught to young women of the débutante class such arts as were considered necessary for the catching of a husband in one, or at the most two, seasons. The far-sighted mammas [...] wanted quick results' (*FE*, 7-8). This alleged stereotypical female aspiration is also reiterated when Therese is seen to compare herself positively with her mother; the elder Krumholz had a relationship with a butcher who was physically abusive and left her no money: 'Nein, ich nehm' nur einen ernsten Menschen mit Pension oder dann einen bessern Herrn, der selber was hat' (*DB*, 65). However, while Therese, unsurprisingly, does not change, Murdoch's Annette does. She decides to leave Ringenhall, the school which would enable her to 'catch' a man. In doing so, she begins her journey towards the 'school of life', which comes to mean the journey away from her self-obsessed illusions towards reality, which for Murdoch means towards the good.

Therese's interest in money is also underlined by her compilation of an extensive catalogue of Kien's books. She is aware that the books are valuable and is concerned that, in the event of Kien's death, his brother will reappear and take some of the more valuable volumes. Great emphasis is placed on Therese writing the letter 'O', which will be discussed at the end of this section, and on her tremendous industry in executing this task. 'Sie sah ein, daß sie zu langsam vorwärtkam, eine Stunde am Tag war zu wenig. Sie beschloß, ihren Schlaf zu opfern. Sie verbrachte schlaflose Nächte auf der Leiter, las und schrieb' (*DB*, 123). In *The Flight from the Enchanter*, Casement is also conducting an

¹⁶³ Grimshaw, *Sexuality, Gender and Power in Iris Murdoch's Fiction*, pp. 76-77. Using de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Grimshaw finds that both authors emphasise that one skill which women needed to possess was the ability to 'catch' a husband. In *The Bell* (1958), Dora Greenfield 'catches' her husband, Paul. Dora (like Therese) also places importance on a prospective spouse possessing money.

¹⁶⁴ Dipple, pp. 140-141. Though Dipple describes *The Flight from the Enchanter* as 'most convincingly about the warring opposition of men and women', she sees Rainborough as Casement's prey, (referring to her as 'the predatory bird-secretary') and places her on a par with the 'enchanter', Mischa Fox. This study disagrees with the latter part of this view.

audit. However, unlike Therese, who is looking out for her own immediate interests, Casement is attempting to improve the running of the organisation: 'She was to be found at all hours of the day employing her spare time, which was considerable, in reading through the entire files of the Finance Department. These files were confused and voluminous [...] Over these complicated documents Miss Casement pored for long hours, taking notes. She called this "familiarizing herself with the background"' (*FE*, 89). Casement, therefore, also represents an inversion of Therese. While Therese is blinded by herself in her audit, Casement is focussing her energies on a project external to herself; she is thus free of the blinding effects of self-interest. She is also an inversion of the gender stereotypes which Therese represents.

Casement's first name, Agnes, a saint who broke conventions by refusing to marry, also captures Murdoch's character's tendency to break with the conventions of gender, unlike Canetti's Therese. Her surname, Casement, which also denotes a type of window, suggests vision and again, in this respect, she is an inversion of Therese. Though she is perceived and presented by Rainborough according to a stereotype, it merely serves to underline his blindness.

Through the image of the economising 'Hausfrau', another traditional image of the female comes into play. Both Therese and Casement are involved in money-saving. Therese's thoughts are often preoccupied with such matters: 'Während der Nacht lag Therese in Geschäftssorgen wach. So lange der Mann arbeitete, bis zwölf Uhr, ging ihr die Lichtverschwendung bitter nahe' (*DB*, 134). When Kien gives her money to buy a new bed: 'Erst draußen überzeugte sich Therese davon, daß wirklich der verrückte Preis auf dem Papier stand. Da tat es ihr Leid um das schöne Geld. Sie muß nicht das feinste Schlafzimmer haben. [...] Da kauft sie lieber eins, das halb soviel kostet, und trägt den Rest auf die Sparkasse' (*DB*, 78). Similarly, Casement's study of the files in SELIB results in a report which she submits to Rainborough. In it she offers:

[...] a number of concrete proposals for streamlining the organization of the office and producing a greater efficiency at a smaller cost. These proposals involved the

virtual abolition of several departments and the curtailment of others; and Rainborough noticed at once that in the new regime, as envisaged by Miss Casement, the Finance Department would occupy the leading position [...] (*FE*, 119).

The image of Therese, begrudging each item of expenditure, is turned around with Miss Casement, whose economising has the more efficient running of the organisation as its aim, not her own immediate gain. Again, the stereotype embodied by the figure of Therese is inverted in the figure of Casement.

Another aspect of Therese's greed is her lust for improving her status, which is similarly inverted in Casement. While both Therese and Casement are initially employed as assistants to men, they both move beyond these positions to higher ones. Upon her marriage to Kien, Therese is elevated to the rank of mistress of the house; we have already pointed out Miss Casement's promotions within SELIB. Therese's and indeed Casement's social climbing is presented as a result of their conniving, coveting natures by the male narrators, Kien and Rainborough. Therese feigns a deep respect for books in order to extract a marriage proposal from Kien. She then becomes mistress of the house and her husband's equal. Casement claims that the document she prepared, with proposals for streamlining the organization, was inadvertently sent to the wrong person, the director of SELIB; however, Rainborough believes that she deliberately sent it to the director so that she would be acknowledged. For Rainborough, it is all part of her scheme to attain his salary and prestige:

It was then that, passing by the registry, he caught a portentous glimpse of Miss Casement leaning against a filing-cabinet, in deep converse with Evans. He told himself immediately that there was nothing important in this. All the same the little picture haunted him. There was something about the intent and purposeful attitude of Miss Casement which made him feel uneasy. After all, as he had always suspected and had lately been able to verify, the girl was capable of anything (*FE*, 178).

Whereas Therese improves her status by deception, Casement does so through hard work. She thus represents an inversion of Therese and of the stereotype according to which Rainborough views her. In this way, the portrayal of Casement serves also to illuminate Rainborough's blindness to her.

Another of Therese's traits which Murdoch inverts is her materialism. Therese covets objects of furniture in Canetti's novel and the first of these is a table: "Das sag' ich ja immer, der Tisch muß her. Wo gibt's das in einem anständigen Haus, daß ein Mensch auf dem Schreibtisch ißt" (*DB*, 61). Later on she coerces Kien into buying a bed: 'Auf dem Schlafdiwan könnt' ich nicht schlafen. Wo paßt der zum Schreibtisch? So ein teures, altes Stück und der schäbige Diwan. In ein anständiges Haus gehört ein anständiges Bett. Man muß sich schämen, wenn Leute kommen' (*DB*, 62). Similarly, Annette, for a time, adheres to this stereotype when we learn that she collects precious gems (*FE*, 60). However, she later throws the gems into the Thames. Casement, on the other hand, lives from the outset in relative austerity, occupying only a single room (*FE*, 182). Although in the course of the novel she purchases a red M.G. car, this event is also part of her breaking with conventions of gender which would dictate that the woman is chauffeured by the man. In this way also, Murdoch's female characters are inversions of Canetti's Therese. They defy the definitions of gender and in doing so see themselves and the world more clearly.

As the women move closer to attaining equal status to the men, they are seen to be actively trying to replace themselves. Their endeavours in this regard are viewed as wholly mercenary by the men. After her marriage to Kien, Therese is seen to reiterate her new status and states that she is not a servant (as she had been) but is now mistress of the house. She suggests on two occasions that they need to install a replacement for herself (*DB*, 107). As mistress, she is condescending to others on a par with her would-be successor as servant. Similarly, following Casement's promotions, she announces that a new typist needs to be installed. When the new recruit is found, Rainborough notes:

The girl, whom Miss Casement always referred to, and Rainborough soon found himself following her example, as 'the little typist', was very often to be found in tears. With the arrival of the typist, Miss Casement became even more confident. Rainborough, who had always behaved to her with the utmost formality, suddenly began to find himself being driven more mad than usual by her perfume, the lemon-coloured expanse of her neck [...] He at first attributed this disturbance to the cumulative effect of living in the proximity of so many provocative harpies; but later he realized that it was perhaps rather the result of some subtle change of tactics on the part of Miss Casement (*FE*, 94).

Murdoch's text also inverts Canetti's with regard to the possession of space and rooms, which in the first instance belong to the men. This is represented in both novels as part of a power struggle between the sexes. Soon after Therese's promotion, she demands that the four rooms of which the apartment consists be split equally between them: "Der Mann behält das schöne Schreibzimmer und das große daneben. So ist es am einfachsten. Die Einrichtung bleibt, wie sie ist. Da braucht man nicht viel herumrechnen [...] Das schöne Schreibzimmer gehört dem Mann allein" (*DB*, 61-62). Later on, she annexes yet more space to her own quarters by dividing Kien's room in two; eventually she gains complete possession of the property. With Casement's promotion from the rank of typist to that of Organizing Officer, and her recruitment of her own substitute, she also reorganises the office which results in Rainborough's space being reduced:

When he returned he found that the office had been re-arranged. Previously he had occupied the larger room, which gave on to the corridor, while Miss Casement occupied a smaller inner room which gave only on to his room. He now found that his desk had been moved into the inner room while Miss Casement and the typist were installed in the other one. 'I thought you'd rather have the single room,' Miss Casement explained vaguely (*FE*, 93).

Again, whereas Therese's lust for possession of parts of the flat is part of the stereotypical female's make-up, with Casement, it is a matter of practical necessity since there is an extra member of staff. Murdoch's text again inverts the stereotype.

One of the most critical comparative motifs in the portrayal of male stereotypes of the female, is Therese's favourite character 'O'. This character and motif encapsulates two major aspects of this composite of stereotypes of the female - her enormous sexual appetite and her avarice. Therese's fondness for writing the figure 'O' stems from her school day (*DB*, 122). It is synonymous with success for her. However, where 'O', the letter, would have more significance for Kien, the sinologist, '0', as a figure, gains more significance for Therese as she hunts for Kien's millions. When the balance of his bank account becomes known to her, she is determined to add another '0' to the end of the figure, so that it more closely resembles the balance she was expecting.

Therese's lust for 'O's also expresses the female's perceived desire for sex.¹⁶⁵ The description of letters has sexual overtones:

Weiche Konsonanten zu Anfang eines Namens, B, D, oder G wurden hart und härter. Sie hatte für alles Harte eine Vorliebe, es kostete sie Mühe, mit ihrem harten Bleistift das Zeitungspapier nicht zu zerreißen. [...] Ihr liebster Buchstabe war das O. [...] Die O müßt ihr so brav schließen wie die Therese, hat die Lehrerin immer gesagt. [...](*DB*, 122).

In *The Flight from the Enchanter*, Casement is given the title 'O.O.'. 'O.O.' is the abbreviation of Organizing Officer, Casement's title after her promotion (*FE*, 84, 89, 91). Casement and the other O.O.s, in the minds of Rainborough and his male colleagues, come to embody the stereotypes of the female which they hold. They are overtly sexual creatures and are set on improving their lot. However, in reality, the position of O.O. represents women who do not view themselves in such limiting terms, and are set on developing themselves so that they do not need to 'catch' a husband. In short, the

¹⁶⁵ Kirstie Foell, p. 134.

significance of 'O' in Murdoch's novel is the inverse of Canetti's, which sums up Therese, a composition of stereotypes; in Murdoch's novel the motif signifies women who break the conventions of their gender. Whereas the figure of Therese is characterised by blindness due to self-interest, Casement, and certainly by the end of the novel, Annette, are outward looking.

In summary, this section has drawn comparisons between both authors' male characters' blindness to women, through the objectification of women, and by viewing women as a homogenous group rather as individuals. In both novels, this form of blindness to the other is underlined by Kien's and Rainborough's failure to see the women they encounter in the novels. Furthermore, whereas Canetti's figure of Therese represents the unreal within the novel, in Murdoch's novel the women represent the real. For this reason, Murdoch's female characters are the inverse of Canetti's in many important respects. They are characterised by change and contingency, as is reality according to both authors. Therese, on the other hand, does not transform and thus represents the world of selfish distortion and the unreal. Blindness to women is one aspect of the malaise which Murdoch and Canetti mutually diagnose through their fiction, with the hope of promoting its opposite, vision, which they both associate with moral advancement.

(vi) Blind Portraits of the Self: *Komödie der Eitelkeit* and *The Flight from the Enchanter*

Murdoch attempted to translate Canetti's play in January 1954, around the time she heard him read it on the radio from Stuttgart.¹⁶⁶ The play, written in 1933/34, has as its premise an imagined society where mirrors, photographs and all representations of the human form have been banned by the state. A great fire is created where the photographs are burned and where the looking-glass is smashed. The state's purpose is to stem the growing vanity in the nation. However, rather than achieving this objective, it actually

¹⁶⁶ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 370.

accentuates the vanity of the people who find more and more ways of studying their own images. We can note that while Kien may be questing after great intellectual truths as he sees it, he has no grasp of anything real, earthly and physical, not even his own physicality. There are no mirrors in his apartment and he has only a vague knowledge of what his own face looks like. By the end of the play the situation has worsened so much that the state considers blinding its inhabitants. The play addresses the issues of the day, as the Nazi regime in Germany had introduced legislation which purported to improve society, but which curtailed civil liberties.¹⁶⁷ At the centre of the play is a question of identity: Canetti argues against simplistic views of human identity symbolised by the mirror image. This kind of vanity is a blinding obsession with the self. Rather for Canetti, identity is to be found in looking beyond the self towards the other. Some sense of self through mirrors or photographs is important. The characters in the play suffer greatly because of the ban: for example, because the couple, Egon and Lya cannot *see* themselves, but are fixated on themselves, they do not communicate with one another.¹⁶⁸ So great is the emphasis on the self, that the characters become more and more isolated from one another as they desperately seek flattery and some fundamental attention from others about how they look, which they would otherwise get from a mirror or photographs. As a result communication breaks down.

LYA: Was soll ich mir heute anziehen, Egon? EGON: Die Hemdbrust ist wieder zu steif, ganz einfach. Jetzt sag ich das schon zum hundertsten Mal! LYA: Was soll ich mir heute anziehen, Egon? EGON: Ganz einfach. Ich brauch mir das nicht gefallen zu lassen. Ich verzichte auf eine solche Hemdbrust. Ich verzichte, ganz einfach, und ich geh nicht. So.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ In *Das Augenspiel*, Canetti describes the genesis of the play. He notes that at first he thought the idea of banning mirrors might encourage those men he saw in the barber shop staring at their own reflections to look around at others instead. However, after the Nazi book burnings in May 1933, the dangers of banning mirrors came into view and he began writing the play soon thereafter. pp. 100-101.

¹⁶⁸ Helga Kraft, 'Staging a Critique of Modernism: Canetti's Plays', in *A Companion to the Works of Elias Canetti*, ed. by Dagmar C. G. Lorenz (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2004), pp. 137-155. Referring to *Komödie der Eitelkeit*, Kraft notes that '[b]y understanding oneself as an objective other, as a reflection in the mirror, one becomes an intersubjective cultural being and is at the same time able to interact meaningfully with human beings within a culture and language' (p. 150).

¹⁶⁹ Elias Canetti, *Dramen* (Frankfurt/M: Fischer, 2004), p. 115. All quotations are from this volume. Henceforth *KdE*.

Marie, their cook, testifies that her employers now fight all the time. Garaus diagnoses similar problems: “[...] Mannhaft. Denn was ist das heutzutage, ein Mensch? Ein Mensch ist sein Ebenbild. Was sagst? Kusch! Sein Ebenbild. Ja, und ein Mensch ohne Ebenbild brings zu nichts. Die Zeitungen schwimmen von Blut. Das sind Nachrichten. Ein Unglück kommt aufs andere [...]” (*KdE*, 155-56).

Social breakdown results from the taboo. The preacher, Brosam, encourages Marie to get married, but she says that she does not need a man. When she is given a shard of glass and sees herself, she then says that she will marry. Seeing herself, therefore, is a prerequisite for seeing others (*KdE*, 138 & 145). The brother and sister François and Franzl Nada are another example of the breakdown in communication and social isolation. They look for one another but do not recognize each other. Emilie Fant is, on a number of occasions, looking for her son. Fant, a former brothel madame, has set up a new enterprise where rather than meeting women, the clients meet their own image. It is a hall of mirrors and unlike the blood on the streets, when the people see their own images: ‘*So wäre hier alles in gehöriger Ordnung beisammen. Nur weiß es niemand*’ the stage directions tell us (*KdE*, 165). When the characters are denied mirrors, destruction ensues. Communication and acknowledging others breaks down. The comedy of the *Komödie der Eitelkeit* is that in the state’s efforts to stamp out vanity, their measure of banning individuals from possessing an image of themselves makes the issue worse, since it operates on a superficial level only.¹⁷⁰ Vanity does not simply lie in individuals looking in the mirror or at photographs of themselves, but rather in an inability to see that what is outside of oneself is also a part of oneself. As pointed out earlier in this case study, this realisation offers a path to the good for both Murdoch and Canetti.

In the mirrorless world of *Komödie der Eitelkeit*, Hedi Schakerl’s husband falls mute and does not utter a word in response to her for four days as a result of his

¹⁷⁰ Dagmar Barnouw, ‘Utopian Dissent: Canetti’s Dramatic Fictions’, in *Critical Essays on Elias Canetti*, ed. by David Darby, pp. 121-134. Barnouw notes ‘The prohibition on mirrors, which is meant to weaken individual egocentricity, has not brought about the promised good (better) community but rather an extreme of social fragmentation and polarization. In their ever more rigid fixation on an increasingly hollow notion of selfhood, people have lost the ability to engage with each other as individuals’ (p. 127).

‘Spiegelkrankheit’. The remedy for his ailment, according to Franz: “‘Da müssen S’ schaun, das S’ ein Spiegel kriegen. Sonst wird der nimmer gsund, und dann können S’ ihn ganz weggeben. Weil ohne Spiegel wird der nimmer gsund, und da können S’ ihn zu gar nix mehr brauchen. I kenn des. Jetzt hab i das gsehn: schon oft. Da braucheten S’ halt ein’ Spiegel, Fräulein. Sonst nutzt nix.’” (KdE, 151). On seeing himself in a mirror which Franz produces: ‘*Schakerl belebt sich. Er sieht sich. Er erwacht. Aus einem Stein wird ein dürrer Baum*’ (KdE, 151).

Murdoch’s novel is also a meditation on identity. Many of the characters are looking to find themselves and in doing so become caught up in solipsism. For some, mirrors also form part of this exploration:

To the young women at Ringenhall Annette had said, ‘I have no homeland and no mother tongue. I speak four languages fluently, but none correctly.’ This was untrue. Her French and English were perfect. But Annette liked to think of herself as a waif. Even her appearance suggested it, she noted with satisfaction. She would sometimes sit looking into the glass and trying to catch in the depths of her large restless eyes the flicker of a tragic discontent (FE, 59).

In Annette’s case her visual impairment results mostly from her absorption with herself, to the neglect of what is outside her, and this is as a result of her struggle to identify herself in the course of the novel. She is on the cusp of womanhood, but has prematurely dropped out of education. Her intention is to learn from the world, but as her teacher notes on Annette’s departure: “‘As for the institution which you call the School of Life, I doubt, if I may venture a personal opinion, whether you are yet qualified to benefit from its curriculum’” (FE, 12). We note that ‘Annette was completely enchanted [...] by the quiet rhythm of her own movements’ and: ‘Annette was lying on her bed with her legs in the air. She was admiring the extraordinary slimness of her ankles [...]’ (FE, 56). Her intense fixation on herself, to the exclusion of the world around her, as with the characters in Canetti’s play, results in her attempting to take her own life. In this scene, her inability to see the world is underlined when she draws the curtains on the evening

scene outside. Her unsuccessful suicide attempt is directly connected to her image of herself:

She opened the first bottle and poured a number of tablets into the palm of her hand. She filled the tumbler with water. As she did so she saw her own face in the glass. Her eyes had become very large and black and her face stared back at her like a wild face in a dream. As she put one of the tablets into her mouth she watched herself in the mirror. It was easier that way (*FE*, 249).

Annette's suicide attempt is as a result of her concentration on herself to the exclusion of others. She finds herself lonely and isolated. Rosa Keepe ejects her from her house due to her selfish behaviour. Annette cannot communicate with her brother and soon feels that she has nothing left to live for. Similarly in Canetti's play *Garaus* notes:

Hiermit übergeb ich Ihnen feierlich die Zeitung vom gestrigen Tage. Da steht eine Überschrift. Ich bitte zu schauen. Der Blutsonntag. Der gestrige Tag hat bedauerlicherweise zahlreiche neue Opfer gefordert. Wieder sind 98 Menschen einem tückischen Geschick zum Opfer gefallen. Sie warfen das Leben mit leichter Hand dahin. Es hatte ihnen nichts mehr zu bieten (*KdE*, 156).

Photographs, which are outlawed in Canetti's play, are also an important motif in Murdoch's novel.¹⁷¹ They likewise facilitate an opportunity to see outside of oneself and thus to gain a sense of self and reality, which are prerequisites for the good in Murdoch's and Canetti's writing. At the beginning of Canetti's play, an announcement is made that the production and possession of photographs carries heavy penalties. In Murdoch's novel, Calvin Blick is a photographer, and there is a scene where he develops illicit photographs of Rosa Keepe with the Lusiewicz brothers. While Blick uses the photos to blackmail the Keepes into selling the *Artemis*, the photographs have another function, in that they show Rosa to herself. She thereafter gives up her enchantment which is really

¹⁷¹ Franz Schuh, 'The Writer as Model and Rival', in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, pp. 62-80. Schuh argues that the 'ban on mirrors make the Other into a hallucinated mirror image of oneself' in Canetti's play. (p. 71). Therefore, curtailing civil liberties in this way merely fuels solipsism.

self-enchancement. Seeing oneself clearly and dispassionately in the mirror, or in photographs, is viewed as critical by both authors. However, in the scene where Blick develops the photographs with Hunter, the latter again turns away from the reality which they are representing to him, and blinds himself by accidentally wiping his eyes with a chemical-soiled cloth (*FE*, 162-163).

While the situation in Canetti's dystopian play does not show signs of improvement, for some of Murdoch's characters there is a sense of optimism. The idea of seeing outside of the self is continued with Annette when she appears to graduate from her state of self-obsession, where she is compared to a corpse, to the School of Life, where the emphasis is on her vitality. The final images of Annette concentrate on her new appreciation of the external world. When her father asks her to draw the blinds, something which she did in the previous 'suicide' scene, she responds:

'Well, only a little way,' said Annette. 'because I want to look out.' She adjusted the blind and curled herself up, crouching on the seat and leaning her cheek against the lower half of the window. As Andrew saw in profile her fresh untroubled face he felt for a moment a sense of puzzlement, perhaps of awe, almost resentment, at her vitality. Annette was absorbed in watching the landscape. A house, a dog, a man on a bicycle, a woman in a field, a distant mountain. She looked upon them all enchanted, lips parted and eyes wide. It was like being at the pictures [...] And while Annette looked at the world, Marcia looked at Annette and Andrew looked at Marcia (*FE*, 282-83).

Other characters in the novel similarly appear to gain in self-knowledge through a greater appreciation of the world, and for two in particular that is through the world presented in picture form. Mischa Fox spends time with Peter Seward who shows him photographs from his childhood. As with Annette, it is a description of the external world, but is also very close to the identity of the spectator:

‘Oh, if you knew, Peter,’ said Mischa, ‘how this moves me. How astonishing photographs are! There is a thing in my heart which these pictures touch and will soon be restored to me [...]’ Mischa paused over a photograph. ‘Do you see that little street?’ he said. ‘There was a shop there, you can almost see the edge of it, where I used to buy sweets. Our house was that way’ (*FE*, 206).

Similarly, Rosa Keepe is shown photographs of the world by Peter Saward. Having returned from her ill-fated reunion with Mischa Fox, she proposes to Peter Saward, who refuses, knowing her better than she knows herself. In an effort to restore her to herself, he shows her pictures:

Still holding her hair, he reached out with the other hand for the green book of photographs which lay on the desk near by. As he opened it before her and began to turn the pages, she saw the pictures through a gathering haze of tears. ‘See,’ he said, ‘here is the old market square and here is the famous bronze fountain, and here is the medieval bridge across the river...’ (*FE*, 287).

In this respect, Murdoch’s novel demonstrates the inverse of Canetti’s play, which results in destruction because no vision is possible. Contrary to this, Murdoch attempts to show how self-improvement, through seeing what is other than oneself, is possible.¹⁷² Murdoch’s literary connection in this instance can be described as an affinity manifested in inversion, given their shared ideas on the concept of the good.

Canetti’s play, *Die Befristeten*, which he was writing during his affair with Murdoch, has a character called the Keeper (Der Kapselan).¹⁷³ He is a representative of the state which controls people with its system of names. He keeps the people subjugated to the state power. Rosa and her brother Hunter Keepe, on the other hand, represent the antithesis of the Keeper in Canetti’s play, in that rather than keeping the power figure, Fox, in his position, they actually oppose him and help preserve freedom, symbolised by

¹⁷² Sullivan, ‘The Demonic: *The Flight from the Enchanter*’, p. 86.

¹⁷³ Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, pp. 420-421. See also Iring Fetscher, ‘Elias Canetti as a Satirist’, in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, pp. 224-239 (pp. 232-233).

their campaign to safeguard the independence of the *Artemis* newspaper. Murdoch therefore meets Canetti's keeper of oppression with the 'Keepes', who are the keepers of its opposite, emancipation. This represents a tendency in Murdoch's work to invert the world Canetti described in his novel and plays, and which he, of course, also opposed. It marks a point where Murdoch stands beside Canetti in terms of their opposition to the world of solipsistic fantasy. It also marks the point, however, of contrast, because Murdoch's novel does represent the possibility of seeing the world external to the self, whereas Canetti's does not do so directly, but by implication.

(vii) Kien and Saward: Blindness and Vision

Murdoch's intellectual protagonist, Saward, is, in many respects, comparable to Canetti's. Both men are scholars, preoccupied with sinology, in their forties, and neither, notably, appears to have any institutional affiliations. Both live in rented accommodation, and the emphasis in the respective narrators' descriptions of Kien's and Saward's homes is also comparable. Also of interest is that both of these intellectuals have live-in housekeepers, Miss Glashan and Therese Krumbholz, whose main functions are to 'dust' the books and provide food. Kien tells Therese the greater sum of her duties: 'Täglich wird ein Zimmer von oben bis unten gestaubt' (*DB*, 26), and similarly Miss Glashan, we learn, '[...] would dart around the room with the dexterity of a cat and the dirt would vanish as completely as if she had swallowed it' (*FE*, 25). Saward, like Kien, lives his life according to a strict timetable and neither of them leave their desks to eat: 'Während der Mahlzeiten, die er auf seinem Schreibtisch einnahm [...]' (*DB*, 27) and '[a]fter ten-thirty, and during lunch, which he ate at his desk [...]' (*FE*, 22). While the nouns chosen in these sentences are different, the relative clause structure of Canetti's text (and indeed of the translation which Murdoch would also have read) is mirrored by Murdoch, as is the content pertaining to these comparable characters.

Kien is obsessed with his intellectual pursuits. As a sinologist, he spends his time restoring old texts:

Unzählige Texte verdankten ihre Herstellung ihm. An schadhaften oder verderbten Stellen uralter chinesischer, indischer, japanischer Manuskripte fielen ihm Kombinationen ein, soviel er wollte. Andere beneideten ihn darum, er hatte der Überfülle zu wehren. Von peinlicher Vorsicht, monatelang erwägend, langsam bis zum Überdruß, am strengsten gegen sich selbst, schloß er seine Meinung über einen Buchstaben, ein Wort oder einen ganzen Satz nur dann ab, wenn er ihrer Unangreifbarkeit sicher war (*DB*, 16).

Peter Saward not only shares Canetti's protagonist's first name, but is also an intellectual who is interested in sinology and who, in the course of the novel, like Peter Kien, is trying to decipher an ancient script.¹⁷⁴ Saward first began work on the Kastanic script years before the novel begins. However, he set it aside and it came to his attention again some eighteen months before the events of the novel. Following the discovery of a cache of tablets near the Bosphorus bearing the unknown script, and another discovery in Syria of tablets with a cuneiform script in an unknown language, Saward becomes convinced that these two languages are the same. He thought that this would help him solve the problem which had hung over him for so long. However, 'from that moment on he was lost'. Saward perseveres with the task and devises a number of methodologies, but:

How happy he would have been if these procedures had yielded absolutely no results! Unfortunately although they yielded no results worth speaking of, they did seem to provide a number of hints or possibilities which always seemed to be worth following, without as yet leading to anything in the least conclusive. So, cursing himself, Peter Saward went on, until the task of decipherment encroached more and more upon his working day, and the mystery of his sleep was resolved into a dance of nightmare hieroglyphics (*FE*, 25).

¹⁷⁴ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, pp. 391-392. Conradi interprets Saward as Murdoch's good character, employed to oppose the demonic Fox/ Canetti. However, he does not note numerous connections and inversions between Saward and Canetti's Kien.

Despite his obsessive study at the beginning of the novel, Saward, unlike Kien, is aware that trying to decipher scripts can become obsessive and can drive one mad:

He knew, from many distinguished examples, how easily such a thing can become a mania, and how the most sober and balanced of men, once this passion is upon them, can lose completely their sense of proportion and spend years in trying to establish a particular theory the evidence for which could be written upon a postcard. 'It's a mug's game,' he could hear his own voice saying out of the past [...] Life's too short. It's not worth it (*FE*, 23).

In this respect then Saward appears to be a more seeing version of Kien, a hypothesis which is also suggested in his name "Saw'ard", in a novel where most of the characters' names make some reference to vision or the lack of it. While both characters spend their time trying to understand ancient texts, Saward does not lose sight of the outside world as Kien does. Murdoch's character, therefore, appears a more mellow and admirable character than Kien. In many ways Saward, as his name suggests, is an inversion of the blind Kien.¹⁷⁵

The emphasis in the description of Saward's living quarters is also comparable to that of Kien's. Kien's study consists of: 'Ein mächtiger alter Schreibtisch, ein Lehrstuhl davor [...]' and 'der dunkle, schwere Koloß war innen bis zum Bersten mit Manuskripten gefüllt, außen mit Büchern überladen' (*DB*, 22). Similarly Saward's room contains a 'very large writing desk which was covered thickly all over with open books, photographs and printed sheets of hieroglyphic script. The surface of the desk was not visible' (*FE*, 21). Another point of comparison between Peter Saward and Peter Kien pertains to their book collections. Both are in possession of thousands of books. Saward has 'some three thousand volumes', though Kien has many more (*FE*, 21). Kien's library is thus described:

¹⁷⁵ I argue that Saward is one of Murdoch's 'good' characters, a point of view shared by Zohreh Tawakuli Sullivan, 'The Demonic: *The Flight from the Enchanter*', p. 79.

Sämtliche Wände waren bis zur Decke mit Büchern ausgekleidet. [...] In die Decke waren Fenster eingelassen. Auf sein Oberlicht war er stolz. Die Seitenfenster waren vor Jahren nach harterem Kampf mit dem Hausbesitzer zugemauert worden. So gewann er in jedem Raum eine vierte Wand: Platz für mehr Bücher (*DB*, 21).

We learn that Saward's bookshelves similarly '[...] reached in most places to the ceiling [...] the ceiling alone had resisted Peter Saward, and his failure to cover it over with pictures and suspended objects was due solely to a lack of mechanical skill' (*FE*, 21). While both scholars tend to resent the ceiling because of its resistance in terms of housing their books, Saward, unlike Kien, would wish to cover it over with pictures and photographs – objects which are not books and which, importantly, reflect an external reality. Furthermore, whereas Kien has walled up the windows to create more space for his books, Murdoch emphasises the '[...] wide casement windows which gave on to a dark green garden [...]', as well as the fact that Saward was never in a hurry to draw the curtains in the evening (*FE*, 283). Similarly, while Kien's study rooms consist only of shelved books, Saward's room has photographs of statues, reproductions of paintings, a single photograph of his late sister, and pictures of Mommsen and Eduard Meyer. Kien, when asked for a photograph of himself, reveals: 'Er besitze keine, erwiderte er, und denke auch keine zu besitzen. Beides entsprach der Wirklichkeit' (*DB*, 18). There are also notable inversions pertaining to Kien's physique. Where Kien is described as emaciated, Saward's 'fine silhouette' has faded and he is now 'plump' (*FE*, 25). In temperament too, Saward is the inverse of Kien. Kien is moody and rarely laughs, whereas Saward is 'gay' and often laughs 'till the house rock[s]' (*FE*, 25). In terms of demeanour, Kien is 'rigid' and can have a stone-like concentration (*DB*, 171). Following his illness, Saward is 'less rigid', 'looser' yet 'more powerful' because he was 'beyond [...] reach' (*FE*, 28). These differences between Kien and Saward further support the argument that Murdoch's character is an inversion of the blind Kien.

Further support is lent to this argument when considering the manner in which Kien banishes the outside world, a subject dealt with in more detail in the next case study.

This practice of Kien's is encapsulated in the elaborate system of locks on the door of his top-floor flat: 'Die Wohnungstüre war durch drei komplizierte Schlösser gesichert' (*DB*, 21). However, for Murdoch's Saward, the situation is the exact inverse of Kien's in this respect: 'Peter Saward lived on the ground floor, and as the front door of the house was always open, his visitors could come straight to his room' (*FE*, 26). We note also that, in respect of Saward's engagement with the outside world, he resembles Canetti's concept of the good man, embodied by Sonne, who must engage with the world and not be reclusive (*DA*, 138-139).

Several critics have called Kien's claims to academic success into question. They note that in those sections where this success is described, Kien, who we know is metaphorically blind, is in control of the narration.¹⁷⁶ There is other evidence that he is not as wise as we are at first led to believe. Zhang points out how Kien's quotations of Confucius are problematic and in fact serve his own purposes.¹⁷⁷ His self-professed 'Dienst an der Wahrheit' is certainly not what it seems in this respect. Furthermore, despite the fact that there is a great emphasis on his possession of books, it is seldom indeed that we see a book open and/or in use. This is inverted in the case of Murdoch's Saward, however:

The room must have contained some three thousand volumes, of which at least a hundred were open, some lying horizontal, some at an angle of forty-five degrees, and others vertical, opened at a favourite illustration and perched on top of bookshelves or supported ingeniously by pieces of string (*FE*, 21).

¹⁷⁶ David Darby, *Structures of Disintegration: Narrative Strategies in Elias Canetti's Die Blendung* (Riverside, CA: Ariadne, 1992), pp. 18-23. 'Despite the suggestion of the subjective coloring of the first passage of third-person narration in *Die Blendung*, Kien's title of "Professor" has never been questioned, although the extent and quality of his scholarship is discussed in the narrative only in those sections of the text where his own focalization is dominant' (p. 23).

¹⁷⁷ Chunjie Zhang, 'Social Disintegration and Chinese Culture: The Reception of China in *Die Blendung*', in *The Worlds of Elias Canetti: Centenary Essays*, ed. by William Collins Donahue and Julian Preece, pp. 127-149 (p. 128). Through comparing passages from Confucius with those that Kien 'quotes' Zhang reveals 'Kien's "service to truth" as self-serving pseudo-scholarship' finding that 'Kien's sinophilia is a reflection of the reception of China by the rationally-orientated Enlightenment period, which interpreted Chinese culture according to its own wishful thinking'.

Furthermore, whereas Canetti's character solves all of the questions of sinology, it seems quite easily, Saward, on the other hand, is seen to toil over his studies. Kien conquers his subject, just as he conquers and rules supreme in his library (*DB*, 16). Saward does not succeed in restoring the text on which he has been working:

'I was off the track anyway. I was quite wrong in thinking that the language was Indo-European. It turns out to be a sort of Mongolian tongue [...] One reads the signs as best one can, and one may be totally misled. But it's never certain that the evidence will turn up that makes everything plain. It was worth trying' (*FE*, 286-287).

However, he is a diligent researcher, and we read descriptions of him at work, compiling his bibliography and carefully discounting his intuitions. His perception of the problem takes its complexity into account. In contrast, Kien swiftly deals with similarly difficult problems with relative ease (*FE*, 23-25). The comparison with Saward again throws Kien's 'scholarship' into doubt and questions the extent to which his success is (like the world) all in his head and therefore not real.

There are further striking resemblances and inversions in these men's relationships to women. Both have a female love interest in the novels, and both of the men attempt to teach these women. Kien gives Therese *Die Hosen des Herrn von Bredow* to read, and Saward tries to tell Rosa about his research (*FE*, 37). However, in both cases the women are uninterested. (Therese has an ulterior motive for feigning interest in learning and Rosa refuses to listen because 'it bores [her] to death') (*FE*, 37). There are also comparisons and notable inversions in their respective love scenes with these women. In both, which take place in the men's studies, the women's seductive approach to the men is almost dance-like and the men eagerly await their arrival: 'Therese nähert sich mit wiegenden Hüften [...] Ich muß auch hingehen, denkt er, und steht schon, er weiß nicht wie, neben ihr. Was soll er jetzt tun? [...]' (*DB*, 59) and 'Then she began to wander around the room. [...] It seemed to Peter Saward that she walked about in the air, [...] He waited patiently. The circle grew smaller and smaller' (*FE*, 36). Importantly,

however, while Kien fails to consummate his marriage to Therese, a fact which is part of the theme of the breakdown of communication in the novel, Saward's and Rosa's love scene is a success. The presence of books in these scenes is also a point of comparison. Peter Kien places a number of volumes on the divan in his attempt to create a romantic atmosphere for his wedding night, and Rosa picks 'her way between the books' in Saward's room (*FE*, 38). Both women disrespect books, much to the abhorrence of the men. On her wedding night, Therese brushes the books, which Kien placed on the bed, on to the floor. Kien, realizing that he was wrong and that Therese really has no respect for the books, storms out of the study (*DB*, 59-60). Similarly, Rosa tosses a book she reads in Saward's room onto the floor and is reprimanded for doing so (*FE*, 33). Later on in the narrative, she arrives at Saward's room soaked through from the rain and begins to shake herself 'like a dog', to which Saward says: "'Don't do that, Rosa,' [...] 'you're throwing water all over the books.'" "Damn the books!" said Rosa' (*FE*, 284).¹⁷⁸ While Kien never communicates his anger at Therese's treatment of the books, Saward is assertive enough to do so.

There are other examples of the inversion of depictions of women from *Die Blendung* in Murdoch's novel. While Therese is Kien's housekeeper (she resides in *his* home), Miss Glashan is Saward's landlady.¹⁷⁹ While Therese is characterized by idle prattling, Miss Glashan is quiet and diligent, allowing Saward a quiet working environment. As the love interest of the intellectual, Rosa Keepe needs to be compared to Therese. The figure of Therese is a composition of gender stereotypes of women. Rosa Keepe, on the other hand, is named after Rosa Luxemburg, had a mother who was a Fabian, and by the end of the novel is the editor of a feminist publication. She is an inversion of male stereotypes of women. Although there are many possibilities for suitors, she chose not to marry Mischa Fox, or any of the others. She is a mature woman, like Therese, but is highly independent. Whereas Kien proposes to Therese as is traditional, Rosa, unstereotypically, proposes to Saward.

¹⁷⁸ Sullivan, 'The Demonic: *The Flight from the Enchanter*'. pp. 71-86. (p. 86). Sullivan traces Rosa's state of blindness in the course of the novel and finds that she is the only character who may have the potential for vision. Her lack of interest in books may be interpreted as another aspect of her blindness.

¹⁷⁹ Similarly, in *Under the Net* Madge is Jake's landlady (*UN*, 8).

In addition to attempting to teach the women, both Kien and Saward also attempt to teach others, and these scenes are also characterised by similarities and inversions. In the opening chapter, Kien shows some Chinese characters to a young boy, Franz Metzger, and also promises to show him pictures of China and India. Saward similarly shows Rosa and Mischa Fox pictures of foreign places. However, while Kien promises to show Metzger, he never fulfills his promise to the young boy. Again, Murdoch's text is an inversion of Canetti's in this respect. Her character succeeds in helping and communicating with others. Kien does not. It is noted that he does not attend academic conferences and will not meet young scholars who allegedly admire his work. He also turns down a position at a university which would give him the opportunity to teach others. On the other hand, Sonne is one of Canetti's teacher figures in the autobiographies, thereby representing the antithesis of Kien.

While there are fundamental similarities between Kien and Saward, their differences are also a vital part of a comparison of them, since they are the exact inverse of one another in other respects, most importantly in terms of their ability to see. Kien's blindness to anything or anyone external to himself is summed up in points already noted at the beginning of this chapter; this is unlike Saward who is aware of the mania that can result from the kind of work he does. Although he admits that he succumbs to this madness for a time, he sees it for what it is (*FE*, 23).

Saward as the inversion of Kien is an important component in understanding Murdoch's literary relationship with Canetti. As we have already noted, *Die Blendung* was written as a social satire. There are virtually no characters that the reader can hold up as a positive example in the course of the novel. All suffer from the blindness of the title and behave immorally as a result. However, as Stieg notes, Canetti's aim in *Die Blendung* was not purely destructive.¹⁸⁰ Rather, the novel suggests that a new way of considering ourselves and our world must be found. Donahue refers to Canetti's objective

¹⁸⁰ Gerald Stieg, 'Die Blendung 1935-2005', in *The Worlds of Elias Canetti: Centenary Essays*, p. 10.

as the 'foundation for the cultural renaissance' which he sees the novel as seeking.¹⁸¹ While Donahue maintains that Canetti 'exposes a whole series of cultural practices as essentially subjectivist, escapist and therefore fundamentally antisocial', he also claims that Canetti does not offer any remedy.¹⁸²

I would argue, however, that the remedy is already built into the problem: Kien's solipsism simply needs to be inverted. It is arguably only when one compares Canetti's novel with Murdoch's that this obliquely presented remedy becomes clear. In *The Flight from the Enchanter*, some of the characters manage to move beyond their immediate obsessions, and the manner in which they do so, by 'seeing' what is other than themselves, represents an attempt to suggest their movement beyond their blind solipsism. Peter Saward as an inversion of Canetti's Kien can thus be seen as part of the remedy.

Contrary to the view of the relationship as purely personal, indeed a case of art imitating life in terms of the dominant monster and the maiden portrait outlined in the introduction, this first case study has demonstrated that this assessment omits important literary affinities between Murdoch's and Canetti's writings. The following case studies will explore their continued exploration of shared interests, as manifested in the affinities between their works. We will note that as Murdoch grew and developed as a writer through the 1960s and 1970s, her portraits of power and darkness, which really begin with the very under-developed Mischa Fox in *The Flight from the Enchanter*, become richer and more artistically complex with villains like Carel Fisher and Charles Arrowby. In the forthcoming discussions of these power figures, parallels with Canetti's portraits of power, especially in *Masse und Macht*, will be drawn. The affinities between these texts will enable us to reassess the extent to which these figures can be understood as modelled on Canetti, whilst also strengthening one of the thesis's central claims, namely, that Murdoch and Canetti had shared intellectual interests.

¹⁸¹ Donahue, *The End of Modernism: Elias Canetti's Auto-da-Fé*, p. 3.

¹⁸² Ibid. p. 5.

Chapter Two

Isolation and Communion:

Die Blendung, Masse und Macht and The Time of the Angels

(i) Introduction

This chapter begins by documenting Murdoch's personal and intellectual communication with Canetti between *The Flight from the Enchanter* (when her relationship with him is said to have ended) and the publication of *The Time of the Angels*.¹⁸³ It finds that after the end of their relationship, Murdoch continued to engage with Canetti personally and intellectually, as her letters to him, her marginalia in her copy of *Masse und Macht* and her review of that text all testify. In light of these sources, the chapter explores how Murdoch's and Canetti's shared interests are substantiated by her marginalia on his work and by affinities between the themes, plots and characterisations in *Die Blendung* and *The Time of the Angels*. These affinities can also be viewed as an extension, though not necessarily a conscious one, of Murdoch's repeated endorsement of Canetti and his work.¹⁸⁴ Contrary to the findings of all previous scholarship on Murdoch's relationship with Canetti, these arguments break new ground by exploring intellectual rather than merely personal connections between them and their work.

This part of our study develops the hypothesis that a common philosophical problem underpins these writers' work; this affinity becomes most apparent in *The Time of the Angels*, which was written after Murdoch's reading of *Masse und Macht* and *Die Blendung* and while she was in personal communication with Canetti. In these works, and indeed elsewhere, Murdoch and Canetti problematise the conception of the individual derived from the philosophical tradition of the Enlightenment and its descendants. In particular, they both criticise the tendency of the autonomous individual (subject) towards

¹⁸³ Bayley, *The Iris Trilogy*, p. 9. Murdoch's husband claims that her relationship with Canetti ended upon their marriage in 1956.

¹⁸⁴ Murdoch's review of *Masse und Macht* was published three times and we noted in the Introduction that she also endorsed Canetti's novel.

self-insulation and the resultant failure to acknowledge or to see the other (object).¹⁸⁵ (This is the blindness which we discussed in the previous case study). In this chapter, we will concentrate on the problematic picture of the isolated and powerful individual having previously discussed his metaphorically blind disposition. Though the relationship between the individual and others, and the consequential problems of their separation, are central to both authors' writing, this connection has not been identified by commentators such as Conradi and Liebrand, as noted in the introduction to this thesis. Through a comparison, this chapter explores Canetti's and Murdoch's theoretical discussions and novelistic representations of the isolated, powerful individual.

The post-Enlightenment, autonomous man is also viewed as a 'monarch of all he surveys', and the chapter proceeds to consider Canetti's central concept of the command which is part of the exposition of this powerful figure whose literary equivalents are Kien, Pfaff, and Carel Fisher in *The Time of the Angels*. It is clear from Murdoch's marginalia on *Masse und Macht* and extracts from her diary that she was favourably struck by this most quintessential of Canetti's ideas. I argue that Canetti's command theory is echoed in *The Time of the Angels*, that it is thus further evidence of their shared interest in power, and of the affinities between their work.¹⁸⁶ In respect of Canetti's focus on commands, it will be demonstrated that Murdoch's novel is also reminiscent of pertinent passages from *Die Blendung* in that the commands given have the purpose of further isolating the power figure and his victim.

This chapter will also illustrate how Murdoch's use of the symbol of the hand in her depiction of power resembles Canetti's use of it both in *Die Blendung* and *Masse und Macht*; significantly, Murdoch repeatedly underlined and indexed the discussion of 'The Hand' in *Masse und Macht*. I will argue that Murdoch's use of names and their connection to the overall theme of power is analogous to Canetti's employment of the same motif in *Die Blendung*. The discussion of the use of names points out another aspect

¹⁸⁵ For Murdoch see Maria Antonaccio, *Picturing the Human: The Moral Thought of Iris Murdoch* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), pp. 103-104. For Canetti, see Stefanie Wieprecht-Roth, pp. 27-50 (p. 33).

¹⁸⁶ Rather than merely connecting the recurrent motif of the monster and the maiden in Murdoch's work with Canetti, the thesis, having already called this claim into question, finds more compelling connections between these authors' intellectual interests.

of textual affinity; through parallel processes of the re-naming of the subjected figure, both authors illustrate the power figure's inability and unwillingness to commune with what is outside of him.

The next section investigates stylistic similarities. It demonstrates how Murdoch's use of elements of the fairytale in *The Time of the Angels* mirrors Canetti's use of the genre in *Die Blendung*. For both, the purpose of employing stock features of fairytale is to subvert them and thereby challenge the patriarchal stereotypes which such texts reflect and perpetuate. A second effect of this parallel subversion of this genre is that the authors' shared realist commitments are furthered. In addition, the employment of fairytale intertexts in these novels contributes to the binary of isolation and communion with others. Unlike the fairytale which ends in a happy union, the women in these novels (especially Canetti's) know of no such outcome. This section brings to light another important comparison between these authors' expositions of power.

The penultimate section of this chapter concentrates on the autonomous man's inability to experience others: his powerful nature means that he sees everything and everyone in relation to himself rather than as separate and different. He is thus isolated and isolating in these novels. I shall argue that, although Murdoch's marginalia and annotations indicate that she did not see the potential of Canetti's concept of *Verwandlung* for curbing the cycle of power, her depiction of Carel Fisher's subjects' escape from him echoes this idea of transformation. This is set against the power figures' and their victims' (previous) inability to transform and in this respect there are parallels and inversions of both *Masse und Macht* and *Die Blendung* in Murdoch's novel.

(ii) In Between Times: Intellectual Contact 1956-1966

With Murdoch's marriage to Bayley in 1956, Conradi believes her relationship with Canetti ended and that from then onwards they 'seldom met'.¹⁸⁷ However, despite this

¹⁸⁷ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 429.

alleged paucity of communication between the two, Murdoch chose to write to Canetti for help when she was struggling to write in 1959. She wanted to 'try again to understand and feel the impact of things which I find only in him'. She noted his advice in her diary, commenting 'C's talk was invigorating. I feel unutterably tired and limp at present, but things *will* live again'.¹⁸⁸ Though it is impossible to verify what it was that she found 'only in him', she clearly perceived him as a force of good for her, stimulating a reflex with which she could return to her work afresh. However, though her writing *did* resume soon after their meeting, Murdoch's publishers became increasingly frustrated in the mid-1960s when she accepted recommendations to improve work, but did not act upon them. Again, Canetti's name appears as a possible source of help. Norah Smallwood, Murdoch's publisher at Chatto & Windus, considered contacting Canetti, who, it was believed, had a 'considerable influence' on Murdoch.¹⁸⁹ In spite of the claims that their relationship ended and that they rarely saw each other, the connections between them during these years which Conradi does mention indicate that Murdoch and Canetti continued to be in contact.

Based on two other major sources evidencing Murdoch's personal and intellectual connection to Canetti during these years, I argue that there is more to their relationship than the biography indicates. Indeed this is probably the most intense stage of their relationship, at least in terms of Murdoch's intellectual engagement with Canetti's work. The first of these sources is Murdoch's annotated copy of the translation of Canetti's central work, *Masse und Macht*. The other is a selection of the letters which Murdoch sent to Canetti during the period. Both the letters and the annotations remain unpublished in their entirety and one short article on each constitutes the sum of research hitherto undertaken.¹⁹⁰ We shall return to the annotations when we come to the textual analyses in the next section. What is significant at this point, however, is that Murdoch's annotations form no part of Conradi's discussion of Murdoch's relationship to Canetti. The result is

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. Quoting Murdoch's diary.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 460.

¹⁹⁰ Anne Rowe, "'I embrace you with much love': Letters from Iris Murdoch to Elias Canetti", *The Iris Murdoch Review*, 1 (2008), 37-40 and Mark Luprecht, 'A Most Uncritical Critique: Looking at Iris Murdoch's Textual Notes for Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power* (1962)', *Iris Murdoch Society Newsletter*, 19 (2006), 33-35.

an at best incomplete, at worst inaccurate depiction of the relationship which this thesis seeks to correct.

Murdoch's letters to Canetti remain buried in Conradi's materials for the biography and, inexplicably, are not detailed in his chapter on Canetti in the biography. More recently, Anne Rowe observes: 'As a whole, these letters divulge very little about the relationship between Murdoch and Canetti, but they do reveal the extent of Murdoch's dependence on Canetti simply being in the world'.¹⁹¹ However, the letters do slightly alter previous assessments of Murdoch's and Canetti's relationship; they show that following Murdoch's review of *Masse und Macht*, she sent Canetti a series of letters in efforts to arrange assignations with him in London where she then lived two days a week between 1963 and 1970, due to work commitments at the Royal College of Art.¹⁹² During their relationship, Murdoch noted in her diary that she wrote to him at least once a day, 'sometimes twice'.¹⁹³ After the assumed end of their affair, she continued to write to him and even though this may not have been to the same extent as during their relationship, it can nevertheless be reasonably presumed that the surviving twenty-four letters at the Kingston archive represent a tiny proportion of the letters she sent to him. This view would also be supported by Murdoch's noted conscientiousness as a letter writer.¹⁹⁴

Rowe's article on the letters appears to blame Canetti for Murdoch's dependence on him: 'The [...] letters [...] suggest that Murdoch, during her subsequent relationship with Canetti, would herself be transformed – into a dependent, even predatory lover, living to a great extent under Canetti's spell'.¹⁹⁵ The passive voice 'be transformed' and 'under Canetti's spell' suggests that he was actively and manipulatively casting a spell on and transforming Murdoch which, given his reluctance to meet and have contact with her as revealed by her letters, is probably unlikely.

¹⁹¹ Rowe, "'I embrace you with much love'", p. 39.

¹⁹² Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 469.

¹⁹³ From extracts of Murdoch's diary KUAS 6/1/13/3

¹⁹⁴ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 201.

¹⁹⁵ Rowe, "'I embrace you with much love'", p. 37.

Conradi refers to this and the other letters Murdoch sent to Canetti only fleetingly. All they merit is: 'There are scattered signs over the years that Canetti's friendship continued to matter to Iris. Her letters to him are loving and respectful. One, probably in 1966, acknowledges that there are things she can only say – or best say – to him'.¹⁹⁶ The letter to which Conradi here refers should be quoted more fully in order to reveal what he omits:

My dear, it's too many centuries since I saw you (I get small exasperating fragments of news of you.) mea culpa. Please let us meet. I suggest dinner on Tuesday February 15th – me to come to Thurlow Rd. about 7.30-45. Wd that be ok? I'm so sorry we missed each other last time. That was my fault too. I will try to telephone you this time, but I may not get you. I would be very grateful if you would, if you are in England and can manage Feb 15, if you would post the enclosed. If I do not receive it & do not get onto you by telephone, I won't come. But may it be that you can make 15th all right. I have a lot to talk to you about – nothing particularly dramatic or urgent – but just the sorts of things I can only say to you, or best say to you! And I want you to tell me – oh marvellous things. I hope you are v. well – and that H- is well!

V.much love

[...] ¹⁹⁷

Bayley and Conradi claim that after Murdoch's marriage in 1956, her meetings with Canetti were rare.¹⁹⁸ That may well be the case; however, it was not for want of Murdoch trying to arrange meetings. Virtually each of her surviving letters has a common theme: her desire to meet and talk to Canetti. She even enclosed a stamped addressed envelope which Canetti was to post if he could make the date she suggested in her letter. In possibly the earliest letter (not all are dated) from 1952, while they were simultaneously in Paris, Murdoch wrote to Canetti at his hotel: 'Just to say that I am really here and

¹⁹⁶ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 581.

¹⁹⁷ KUAS 6/1/12/3.

¹⁹⁸ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 429.

would be very pleased to see you'.¹⁹⁹ In the latest letter dated 1968, the theme has not changed: 'I shall be around more regularly in London later this month and in Nov & I will suggest a time beforehand [...]'.²⁰⁰ Her initial pursuit of Canetti continued for a considerable number of years and this fact alters the temper of the relationship as critics have hitherto known it. While Canetti is said to have refused to let go of Murdoch in the 1950s, there is no doubt that in the 1960s and even into the 1970s she was reluctant to relinquish him. The utter desperation of her desire to see Canetti during these years is most obvious and dramatic in the following example, dated 13 November 1965:

My dear, I was so very sorry to miss you on Tuesday. My own silly fault. I was so sure you were in London. (No evidence except that someone said Julius Hoy was meeting you - & I received a card from the Austrian Institute saying you'd be reading there, on, I think, Friday) I should have been warned by failure to get you on telephone! Anyway, I arrived just after 7.30, tried door, shouted. Your windows were dark. Waited a bit. Then I went to the King of Bohemia till just before 8 & tried again. Then tried again about 8.30, waited in pub, telephoned. I felt so intensely disappointed. I'd been holding on for some time to the idea of meeting you & there was so much I wanted to say. I'm sorry. I do hope you are ok & all's well. I have been thinking about you a lot. It's nearly end of term, alas. Forgive my inefficiency. And much love

Yr

I²⁰¹

During their love affair, Murdoch is considered to have been obsessed with Canetti, noting in her diary that he '[...] is the only reality these days'.²⁰² What has not been known until now is that this intense connection to Canetti remained for a long time after. Her actions which she describes above (waiting outside his house for hours, shouting at the window) are at best eager and persevering, at worst obsessive and compulsive. The

¹⁹⁹ As cited by Rowe, "I embrace you with much love", p. 37.

²⁰⁰ KUAS 6/1/12/17.

²⁰¹ KUAS 6/1/12/19.

²⁰² Extracts from Murdoch's diary KUAS 6/1/13/1

letters reveal that she often asked others about him and listened out for references to his whereabouts:

My dear, John Simopoulos tells me you have gone abroad & will be away for some weeks [...] If by any chance JS is wrong perhaps you wd employ that postcard! And I will try ringing you again. But if no communication [sic] established. I'll take it that Feb 2 is off. Oh dear. I much wanted to see you. I embrace you with much love. Your Iris²⁰³

and another letter sent two days later:

My dear, I now gather from Marie-Louise you are in England after all! But she said you were very busy. I asked her to find out if you'd like lunch with me Tuesday (Feb 2) & if I don't hear to contrary I'll come along 12.30ish Tuesday to Thurlow Rd. But don't mind saying no via M.L. (or postcard to me!) – in which case I'll try again later. Much love²⁰⁴

There is a real sense that a considerable amount of her mental energy was spent trying to contact him, particularly because, for the most part, she was not very successful in tracking him down.

Murdoch's respect for the other women in his life, (even though she admits that she is jealous of Hera, Canetti's second wife) can also be interpreted as part of her conscious desire not to lose him.²⁰⁵ As Rowe points out, she seems indifferent to her position 'lower down in the pecking order' to other women.²⁰⁶ She is aware that he is avoiding her with the help of others covering for him, but nevertheless doggedly persists in her pursuit, thus suppressing her pride and self-respect. For example, in 1965 when Hans Heveri tells her that Canetti is in Germany, Murdoch questions whether that is the

²⁰³ KUAS 6/1/12/10.

²⁰⁴ KUAS 6/1/12/10.

²⁰⁵ KUAS 6/1/12/15.

²⁰⁶ Rowe, "I embrace you with much love", p. 38.

truth, saying 'I wonder if you are'.²⁰⁷ For these reasons, there is indeed something unconvincing about Murdoch's apparent abjection before Canetti. She apologises profusely for not seeing him, even when the infrequency of their meetings and communications is down to him. Murdoch became suspicious of others saying he was out of the country. She continues to shower him with flattery, writing in 1966: 'I had a dream last night in which you were Socrates. I've never made this identification before, but it seems a good one. (Of course, you are much handsomer) [*sic*] In the dream, you looked like yourself except for having white hair. You made a very good Socrates'.²⁰⁸ She also mythologises him with expressions such as 'beloved Titan' and 'Great lion and the mark of Agamemnon'.²⁰⁹ At times, her letters appear to imply that she felt subservient to him, for example in the following note where Murdoch invites Canetti to a soirée at her flat in London:

My dear, just to remind: there will be a party at my flat, 59 Harcourt Terrace, next Wednesday June 9 between 5.30 & 8! And it wd be v.? [illeg] to see you there. But I won't necessarily expect you. It was very wonderful to see you. You always communicate power to me & I do love you.
I'm jealous of Hera but I do want to meet her. How beautiful she is.
With very much love to you, beloved Titan
Your humble [...] ²¹⁰

However, in reality, as Rowe suspects, she kept her own life going on quite well, despite the apparent desperation and abjection of some of her letters. The letters show that Murdoch was very much steering the relationship and assignments had to happen at certain times to fit in with her other activities in places specified by her.²¹¹ As Bayley noted, his wife was '[...] far too sensible to ever become enslaved' and that though she 'needed', indeed 'craved' adopting a position of subservience (in order to understand her

²⁰⁷ KUAS 6/1/12/11.

²⁰⁸ KUAS 6/1/12/3.

²⁰⁹ KUAS 6/1/12/15 & 6/1/12/8.

²¹⁰ KUAS 6/1/12/15.

²¹¹ Canetti also made this observation in his chapter on Murdoch in *Party im Blitz*: 'Erstaunlich war auch ihr Verhältnis zur Zeit. Sie hatte alles eingeteilt, wie seinen Stundenplan ein Lehrer. Wenn sie anrief, sagte sie gleich, sie käme um 3.15 und müsse um 4.15 wieder fort', pp. 181-82.

fictional enchanted characters better, as he astutely implies), in real life '[...] she could get away when she wanted: common sense was the final arbiter of her emotional impulses'.²¹²

Why exactly she sought to maintain a relationship with Canetti can only be conjectured. Conradi's opinion is that Canetti's malign nature inspired her villains and he implies that this was why she would not forego him. Rowe similarly describes Canetti's personality as 'fodder for her art'.²¹³ Their meetings and conversations would, therefore, have revolved around Murdoch observing Canetti. However, what these opinions overlook is that those letters and the excerpts of Murdoch's diary which are in the public domain show that she definitely discussed her work with Canetti, that he offered inspirational advice and also that he discussed his ideas. We note, for example, that she recorded his discussions about the concepts of stings and transformations.²¹⁴ There is little doubt, then, that Murdoch's attempts to arrange meetings with Canetti were, though perhaps not solely, motivated by her desire to discuss work and ideas with a fellow literary mind. This is probably what she is referring to when she wishes to be told '[...] marvellous things' and to 'hear what you have been doing'.²¹⁵ It is this dimension of the relationship which this present thesis explores.

During the period from 1959 to the late 1960s Murdoch can be repeatedly connected with Canetti and his writing. The next subsection of this chapter prepares the ground for the subsequent literary comparison which explores the affinities in their depictions of the post-Enlightenment, solitary, powerful individual. As a prelude to that analysis, I demonstrate that Murdoch and Canetti approach the European post-Enlightenment philosophical tradition in similar manner and arrive at a similar problem with it.

²¹² Bayley, *The Iris Trilogy*, pp. 67-68.

²¹³ Rowe, "'I embrace you with much love'", p. 40.

²¹⁴ Extracts from Murdoch's diary transcribed and held in Conradi's file at the Kingston Archive reveal this. On 31 March 1953, Murdoch wrote 'He spoke about giving orders. How every order leaves a stachel in the spirit, of the exact form of that order; how the primitive form of the order is the roar of the hunting beast that makes others flee'. KUAS 6/1/13/3. Conradi also notes that when they met on Christmas night, 1952, Canetti was talking about *Verwandlung*. *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 345.

²¹⁵ KUAS 6/1/12/3 and 6/1/12/17.

(iii) A Philosophical Affinity

Since the Enlightenment, the completely isolated self forms one of the constant *topoi* of philosophy ‘from the thinking ego of Descartes, the windowless monads of Leibniz, and from the Kantian subjects of cognition to the solitary individuals of existentialist philosophy’.²¹⁶ Canetti and, as we shall see, Murdoch take issue with this particular philosophical picture of the human as an absolute monarch over his surroundings, alone, rigid, with no real relationship to what is other than itself. Stefanie Wieprecht-Roth outlines the basis for Canetti’s argument with the Enlightenment in her study of his criticism of ‘aufklärerische Weltaneignung’. For Canetti, the unifying character of the myth is set against the separating and isolating tendency of the Enlightenment whose most enduring principle is: ‘Isolieren um zu beherrschen’.²¹⁷ This tendency began with the subject-object split. Put in opposition through their separation, the subject learns to exercise power over the object: ‘Subjektwerdung bedeutet zugleich Macht über die Natur und Entfremdung von ihr. Parallel dazu vollzieht sich die Subjektspaltung in Leib und Seele, in Körper und Geist’.²¹⁸ Next came the Enlightenment’s separation of the world of the senses and of reason, where reason came to dominate. The scientific methods of the Enlightenment are associated with ordering and breaking things down as the subject-object split testifies. Wieprecht-Roth finds that Canetti continuously rejects this Enlightenment view of the world, ‘welche die Einzigartigkeit des Menschen durch Erklärung und Einteilung nivelliert’.²¹⁹ There is an obvious paradox here in that Canetti criticises the increasing dominance of the subject, but at the same time is dissatisfied with its intolerance of the individuality of humans. Opposed to the Enlightenment view, Canetti advances the mythical view of the world which does not isolate and allows for individuality:

Die mythische Form der Weltaneignung besteht in der universellen Teilhabe der Einzelnen an der Welt. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl bezeichnet sie mit dem Prinzip der

²¹⁶ Johann P. Arnason, David Roberts, *Elias Canetti’s Counter-Image of Society – Crowds, Power, Transformation* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), p. 15.

²¹⁷ Wieprecht-Roth, p. 29.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid. p. 33.

“Partizipation”, das heißt, der Einzelne, als Teil der Welt, ist weder aus dem Gesamtzusammenhang herauszlösen noch als festumschreibbares Subjekt erkennbar.²²⁰

Antonaccio's important study *Picturing the Human: The Moral Thought of Iris Murdoch* (2000) situates Murdoch in relation to contemporary moral philosophy, but also in terms of her relationship to the philosophical tradition. She finds that Murdoch's thinking about the human is vital for her understanding of the good. I would like to concentrate on Murdoch's view of the human for the moment. Antonaccio notes that Murdoch regards the central tension in the philosophical inheritance of the modern west as a kind of tug-of-war between a Liberal emphasis on the separateness and autonomy of the individual, represented especially by Kant, and a Romantic urge to overcome or absorb the individual in a larger organic unity, associated especially with Hegel's philosophy. 'Throughout her writings, the point of the contrast is to bring into sharper focus what she perceives to be the dangers to the concept of the individual. [...] The weakness of Kant's liberalism is that he fails to recognise others as unique individuals, but rather only as rational agents'.²²¹ Murdoch's essays from the late 1950s and 1960s onwards persistently indicate that the problem of the autonomous, powerful individual also perturbed her greatly. As 'heirs of the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and the Liberal tradition', she argues we have been left with 'far too shallow and flimsy an idea of human personality'.²²² She finds that '[w]e have never solved the problems about human personality posed by the Enlightenment [...] we confront in a particularly dark and confusing form a dilemma which has been with us implicitly since the Enlightenment, or since the beginning, wherever exactly one wishes to place it, of the modern Liberal world'.²²³ Murdoch and Canetti, therefore, problematise the Enlightenment view of the human due to its intolerance to individuality. This was discussed in terms of the metaphor of blindness in Chapter One above. As we shall see in this chapter, this view of the human as powerful, autonomous and separate from his/her fellow human beings is

²²⁰ Ibid. p. 31.

²²¹ Antonaccio, *Picturing the Human: The Moral Thought of Iris Murdoch*, pp. 103-104.

²²² Murdoch, 'Against Dryness' in *Existentialists and Mystics*, pp. 287-295 (p. 287).

²²³ Ibid. pp. 290-291.

problematic for both authors. This aspect of their critiques is central to our comparative discussion.

In addition to this, the paradox we identified in Canetti's critique is also in existence in Murdoch's. While she states that since the Enlightenment 'we have far too shallow and flimsy an idea of human personality', she also criticises the dominance of the subject. Our conception of the individual as derived from Kant portrays him as a 'free rational will', 'alone' because s/he is 'not confronted with real dissimilar others', and as 'monarch of all he surveys' while 'the virtue which is fundamental to her/him is sincerity'.²²⁴ Positioning herself against this view, Murdoch says:

We are not isolated free choosers, monarchs of all we survey, but benighted creatures sunk in a reality whose nature we are constantly and overwhelmingly tempted to deform by fantasy [...] what we require is a renewed sense of the difficulty and complexity of the moral life and the opacity of persons. We need more concepts in terms of which to picture the substance of our being [...] ²²⁵

Murdoch argues that we need a concept of man '[...] as free and separate and related to a rich and complicated world from which, as a moral being, he has much to learn'.²²⁶ Antonaccio notes that in this quotation we see the 'fundamental tension that Murdoch is seeking to preserve in her own position: a view of the individual as free, but also related; as separate, but also situated in a moral world that is an object of knowledge'.²²⁷ In this respect, we note the similarity with Canetti's position where he too wishes the individual to be separate but a connected participant. Both Murdoch and Canetti represented the problematic picture of the human which they identified in the novels *Die Blendung* and *The Time of the Angels*. In this case study, we will concentrate in particular on the isolation and power which characterise their fictional representations in order to emphasise the similarities in these authors' portrayals of this philosophical figure. These

²²⁴ Ibid. pp. 288-289.

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 293.

²²⁶ Ibid. p. 290.

²²⁷ Antonaccio, *Picturing the Human*, p. 101.

parallels are further evidence of Murdoch's and Canetti's intellectual affinity in relation to their critiques of this picture of the human.

That Canetti critically engaged with the Enlightenment view of the subject – embodied as he saw it in the Kantian rational man – has been pointed out elsewhere.²²⁸ Indeed, the working title of *Die Blendung*, *Kant fängt Feuer* – the central solitary character Kien was originally called Kant – indicates that Canetti's argument is indeed with the Enlightenment inheritance of the isolated, powerful human as epitomised in his protagonist Kien. However, the exact nature of the novel's connection to the philosopher has been viewed in a variety of ways by critics. Dissinger lists a catalogue of similarities between the philosopher and Kien and he finds 'Kien darf deshalb bestenfalls als eine einseitige und bösertige Karikatur Kants angesehen werden'.²²⁹ Others, while pointing out these parallels between Kien and Kant, argue that *Die Blendung* can also be read as a criticism of the folly of the Enlightenment emphasis on pure reason.²³⁰

More recently, Donahue claims that with Kien, Canetti was criticising the neo-idealists of his day, who misconstrued and even used elements of Kant's thinking in order to serve themselves.²³¹ Focussing on an aspect of the cultural critique in *Die Blendung*, Donahue argues that Canetti's satire was directed at the pseudo-intellectuals of the time who employed specific elements of neo-idealist and neo-empiricist philosophy to serve their own needs. In the novel,

[...] Canetti has singled out only those two aspects of contemporary neo-idealist thinking which he held to be most suspect: (1) the tendency towards self-insulation and historicizing retreat, which tempted less discriminating devotees to bracket out rather than embrace the modern world; and (2) the inherent propensity

²²⁸ Arnason and Roberts, p. 15. See also Zhang, pp. 127-149. Zhang notes 'Moreover, the novel's intended earlier title, "Kant fängt Feuer" (Kant Catches Fire) suggests a critical engagement with the ideals of the Enlightenment, which, in Canetti's eyes, were embodied by Kant', p. 142.

²²⁹ Dissinger, p. 128.

²³⁰ Darby, *Structures of Disintegration*, p. 49.

²³¹ Donahue, *The End of Modernism*, p. 104.

of all idealist philosophy to subordinate the 'world' to abstract and potentially self-serving formulations.²³²

It is the first of these critiques that is the focus of this chapter. Arnason's and Roberts' study of Canetti's novel takes the view that Canetti was not merely criticising neo-Kantian philosophy: the autonomy of the individual has been a standard feature of all post-Enlightenment philosophy and therefore Canetti's criticism has considerably more reach.²³³

In *Das Augenspiel*, Canetti indicates that the figure of Kant (Kien), the arch-Aufklärer, is employed in a merely representative capacity. Hermann Broch was not in favour of the name Kant for the central character and Canetti found his indignation difficult to comprehend. He wrote of Broch: 'Auch der Titel "Kant fängt Feuer" irritierte ihn, so als wolle ich damit implizieren, daß der *Philosoph* Kant ein kaltes, fühlloses Geschöpf gewesen sei [...]' (DA, 47-48). The implication here is that Canetti did not mean that the *philosopher* Kant was like Kien but rather Kien was the philosophical picture of the human which Kant's thought perpetuated, the autonomous, powerful man. That Kien's routines, for example, mirror those of Kant is deliberately ironic. The irony is that while Kant, the man, was a very sociable individual, the human, (represented by Kien) according to his idea of autonomy, is anything but. The apparent points of contact between Kien's life story and Kant's biography therefore ironically emphasise the gulf between Kant's autonomous individual, as adopted and intensified by the post-Enlightenment world, and real life.

The novel presents the post-Enlightenment world of power and isolation in the hope that it will be rejected so that an alternative way to understand the world and the individual can be found. In his essay on the novel, Canetti sets out his aim to show the dissected world and its solitary, disconnected individuals:

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Arnason and Roberts, p. 15.



Eines Tages kam mir der Gedanke, daß die Welt nicht mehr so darzustellen war wie in früheren Romanen, sozusagen vom Standpunkt *eines* Schriftstellers aus, die Welt war *zerfallen*, und nur wenn man den Mut hatte, sie in ihrer Zerfallenheit zu zeigen, war es noch möglich, eine wahrhafte Vorstellung von ihr zu geben. Das bedeutete aber nicht, daß man sich an ein chaotisches Buch zu machen hätte, in dem nichts mehr zu verstehen war, im Gegenteil, man mußte mit strengster Konsequenz extreme Individuen erfinden so wie die aus denen die Welt ja auch bestand, und diese auf die Spitze getriebenen Individuen in ihrer Geschiedenheit nebeneinanderstellen. Ich faßte jenen Plan einer Comedie Humaine an Irren und entwarf acht Romane, um je eine Figur am Rande des Irrsinns angelegt, und jede dieser Figuren war bis in ihre Sprache, bis in ihre geheimsten Gedanken hinein von allen anderen verschieden. Was sie erlebte, war so, daß keine andere dasselbe hätte erleben können. Nichts durfte austauschbar sein, und nichts durfte sich vermischen (*GW*, 229).

In his major treatise on power, *Masse und Macht*, Canetti identifies the two eponymous 'biological drives',²³⁴ and finds that isolation and the exercise of power go hand in hand. While *Die Blendung* ends with Kien's world of power self-destructing, *Masse und Macht* ends with Canetti calling for more ways (other than those he proffers, namely crowds and transformation) to deal with the destructive power drive of humans. *Masse und Macht*, therefore, represents Canetti's response to the world where the powerful man has come to dominate (the world of *Die Blendung*), and for this reason there are some parallels in his depiction of power here and his portrayal of Kien in *Die Blendung*.²³⁵ For this reason, we shall draw on the representations of the phenomenon in both *Die Blendung* and *Masse und Macht*. Therefore, the meditations on power in *The Time of the Angels* and *Die Blendung* are part of these authors' critiques of this particular view of the human, but they are also part of their studies of power more generally.

²³⁴ Ritchie Robertson, 'Canetti and Nietzsche: An Introduction to *Masse und Macht*' in *A Companion to the Works of Elias Canetti*, ed. by Dagmar C.G. Lorenz (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2004), pp. 201-216 (p. 213).

²³⁵ For further connections between these two works, see Dagmar C.G. Lorenz, 'Elias Canettis *Masse und Macht* und *Die Blendung*: Bezüge zwischen Roman und Massentheorie', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 16:1 (1983), 81-91.

In the figure of the autonomous, powerful man, the power drive is not curbed. The aim of the survivor is to be alone, the last person standing. The aim of the Nazis was to eliminate all others so that only the 'master race' survived, which involved the elimination of 'crowds' of Jews, for example. The king is always characterised by his solitude and inaccessibility. On the other hand, in order to transform, others are required since the concept emphasises one's empathy, respect and tolerance of others, of difference, of that which is indeterminate as epitomised by an amorphous crowd. Crucially this requires the individual to be both connected to the other, but also to respect their separateness. The problem of the isolated, powerful human is the reason why Canetti places some hope in the crowd.²³⁶ Neither the main protagonist of *The Time of the Angels*, Carel Fisher, nor Peter Kien are capable of transformation. We will return to this later in our comparison of Murdoch's and Canetti's depictions of power.

In 'The Sovereignty of Good over other Concepts', Murdoch also connects the picture of the individual as solitary, disconnected and powerful to the Enlightenment: 'Kant abolished God and made man God in his stead. We are still living in the age of the Kantian man, or Kantian man-god'. She goes on to say that 'Kant's man had already received a glorious incarnation nearly a century earlier in the work of Milton: his proper name is Lucifer' (*EM*, 363-385). Pointing to the political implications of this concept of the individual, Murdoch argues that even 'in spite of Hitler' we cannot properly imagine evil and that this is a consequence of the 'optimistic picture of ourselves with which we work' (*EM*, 294). Murdoch connects Hitler with this Kantian model of the individual: 'We combine this with a romantic conception of "the human condition", a picture of the individual as stripped and solitary: a conception which has, since Hitler, gained a particular intensity' (*EM*, 291). In this respect also, her view has affinities with Canetti's in that the analogy between Canetti's model of the autonomous *Machtmensch*, his Kien, and the figure of Hitler is explicit.²³⁷ His political commentary is most apparent in the chapter 'Mobilmachung' where Kien appears as commander-in-chief within his library.

²³⁶ Ibid. pp. 210-211.

²³⁷ Stefan Kasynski, 'Canetti and Hitler' in *Elias Canetti: Londoner Symposium*, ed. by Adrian Stevens and Fred Wagner (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz / Akademischer Verlag, 1991), pp. 147-157 (p. 149).

Furthermore, of the philosophers to whom Kien alludes in *Die Blendung*, he distinctly refers to Kant using his first name, Immanuel.²³⁸ One reason for this is arguably its religious origins, a hypothesis supported by the fact that Kien, the self-styled disciple of Kant, is analogously named Peter, the fisherman and disciple of Immanuel. Canetti plays on the deep irony of the name; Immanuel, the son of God and his disciples are supposed to be the salvation of humankind, as Kant is to be for Kien. However, these names are used ironically. In her philosophical writings, Murdoch likens Kant's man to Lucifer; considering this together with Canetti's ironic employment of Kant's first name, Immanuel, it is again apparent that these erstwhile lovers are at one in their contempt for this post-Enlightenment, autonomous, powerful human which is also part of their more general critique of power.

The figure of the powerful man in Murdoch's fiction, is, according to Conradi, modelled on Canetti's actual personality. However, both authors evoked and criticised this figure. Understanding her power figures (about whom Canetti also wrote and in a similar way) in terms of her critique of the philosophical figure of the autonomous man, affords an alternative to Conradi's view of this figure being Canetti. Rather than it representing her 'latent' argument with her life-long friend, I demonstrate that the powerful, autonomous figure represents a philosophical figure and, as such, is a shared interest for these writers.²³⁹ As we shall see, a number of affinities exist in these authors' evocations of the lonely, powerful man. This chapter compares the ways in which Murdoch and Canetti approach this power figure and its subjects in their writings in terms of characterisation, style and motifs employed. Whereas Murdoch's figure, Saward, represented an inversion of Kien, this is not the case with Carel Fisher. The affinities between this novel and *Die Blendung* are less characterised by inversion; rather they involve Murdoch's text echoing Canetti's rendering of the isolated, autonomous power figure in *Die Blendung* and *Masse und Macht*.

²³⁸ Dissinger, p. 128. Dissinger also points out this use of Kant's Christian name but argues that it was employed to distinguish between the philosopher and the protagonist who was originally also called Kant.

²³⁹ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 350.

(iv) Affinities in Characterisation

Having established that Murdoch and Canetti share a critical attitude to the view of the human as isolated, disconnected and power-driven, I will now argue that both writers, in *The Time of the Angels* and *Die Blendung* respectively, base their central characters on this dangerous figure. My aim is to work from the mutual philosophical problem, outlined in the previous section, to explore affinities between the two novels which appeared some thirty years apart. These affinities could also be viewed as, in part, an extension of Murdoch's public endorsement of Canetti's work which began with her review of *Masse und Macht* four years previously.²⁴⁰ Her review may not have been favourable merely because she was unable to be critical of Canetti given her emotional attachment to him, as Luprecht suggests.²⁴¹ Rather she endorsed the book and its ideas to help him but also, and more importantly, because there are affinities between his work and her own.

While the reclusive Peter Kien's energies appear to be taken up with his scholarly pursuits, in reality they are spent on the protection and preservation of his isolated world from the external influences of the world which is other than himself and which would threaten his position as absolute monarch over his library. As an embodiment of the autonomous man, Kien resembles the solitary ruler, which Canetti describes in *Masse und Macht*, within the confines of his study. Kien imagines himself as ruler of his army of books preparing them for battle against Therese. Addressing his 'men', he says: 'Eurer Zustimmung entnehme ich, daß ihr unter meiner Führung zu kämpfen gewillt seid. Ich erkläre: 1. Wir befinden uns im Kriegszustand. 2. Verräter verfallen der Ferne. 3. Das Kommando ist zentralisiert. Ich bin oberster Kriegsherr, einziger Führer und Offizier [...]' (DB, 98). His position in this imagining is one of solitariness. He must be alone in order to attain absolute power over his universe for there can only be one ruler. In *Masse und Macht*, Canetti points out that solitariness is also what characterises the survivor

²⁴⁰ Iris Murdoch, 'Mass Might and Myth', pp. 337-338.

²⁴¹ Luprecht, 33-35. Though I do not view the discrepancy between Murdoch's annotations and her review to be as dramatic as he suggests, it may easily be accounted for with the reasons he proffers. Consideration may also be taken of the fact that in the preparation of a review, initial opinions set down in notes may indeed change.

(also a power figure) whose aim is to be the last person remaining, thus alone.²⁴² Indeed all of his power figures are characterised by solitude. The conductor stands alone before his orchestra and 'Einzigkeit, Isolierung, Distanz und Kostbarkeit' are the critical attributes of kings and rulers. (MM, 493) As we noted in the previous section, these are also the attributes of the post-Enlightenment, Kantian man which both authors are depicting in these novels. The caretaker in *Die Blendung*, Benedikt Pfaff, is charged with keeping the external world away from Kien. Though Pfaff differs ostensibly from his employer, he actually has much in common with the intellectual. He too forms part of Canetti's critique of the autonomous, powerful individual. If Kien reigns supreme over his library, Pfaff does so in his household. There he is executioner: he beats his wife to death, and holds a position above all laws: he conducts an incestuous and horrifically abusive relationship with his young daughter, Anna, who also dies prematurely. Like Kien, Pfaff also sees the external world as an enemy which must be held at bay. He limits his daughter's movements and contact with the outside world, referring to her as 'die Arrestantin', the arrestee. This is in order to protect his secret and ultimately, like Kien, to ensure his solitary existence and power.

Even this bare outline brings to light a string of parallels between *Die Blendung's* and *The Time of the Angels'* protagonists. Carel Fisher, an intellectual and a man of the cloth, resembles a conflation of Canetti's Kien and Pfaff. Like Kien, Murdoch's Fisher spends the entire novel keeping the external world out of the rectory and his life is spent in his darkened study. Both Fisher and Kien struggle to maintain control over their enclosures and inhabitants. Both are also 'am Rande des Irrsinns' as they hurtle towards self-destruction (GW, 229). Murdoch's Marcus Fisher, Carel's brother, mirrors Canetti's Georges Kien, Peter's brother; both visit their mentally unstable siblings in order to help. For both Kien and Fisher, however, death (through suicide) is inevitable and seen to be for the greater good. Kien's and Fisher's downfalls are in part brought about by the relationships they each conduct with their housekeepers. However, it is in his sexual habits that Fisher comes to resemble Pfaff. The religious parallel is obvious as is the crassness of both characters' hypocrisy. Both are widowers and both have carnal

²⁴² See Chapter Three for further discussion of the idea of survivorship.

knowledge of their daughters whose movements they control and over whose lives they rule absolutely.²⁴³

(v) Shard motifs I: 'Der Befehl'

An important part of Murdoch's and Canetti's depictions of these powerful men (and a feature of power more generally, as documented by *Masse und Macht*) are the commands which they issue in the course of the novels. Before we come to the comparisons, it is important to note that Murdoch's interest in this most central of Canetti's ideas can be traced back to 1953, when her diary reveals that it was a subject they discussed during their courtship and in which Murdoch was interested enough to write down²⁴⁴:

He spoke about giving orders. How every order leaves a stachel in the spirit, of the exact form of that order; how the primitive form of the order is the roar of the hunting beast that makes others flee. I said – but if you gave me an order I should obey it with joy. He said – you think you would. I gave orders to Friedl for years – and in the end she built up a tremendous resentment & resistance – tho' at times she had asked to be told what to do.²⁴⁵

While Murdoch depicts herself as playing the role of an obsequious, flirtatious female in this quotation, Canetti's reaction reveals that the tone of the relationship was one of parity; he was not giving orders, as is the standard view, nor was he purely a teacher figure. Murdoch attempts to draw him into flirtations with her, but he is unwilling in this instance. That she remembers specific terms (*Stachel*) and details and that she makes a

²⁴³ The monster-maiden relationships in these authors' writings are connected to wider socio-cultural critiques rather than merely referring to Murdoch's relationship with Canetti as we have noted is Conradi's and others' view.

²⁴⁴ Writers taking notes on conversations and those notes finding their way into literary output is a motif which is found in Murdoch's *Under the Net*, the novel she was writing when she was actually taking notes on her conversations with Canetti. (UN, 62).

²⁴⁵ An extract from Murdoch's diary which Conradi was given access to and transcribed for writing the biography. Dated 31 March 1953. KUAS 6/1/13/3.

record of them indicates they are of interest to her and something which she wishes to remember.

In addition to Murdoch's diary, her annotated copy of *Masse und Macht* shows her interest in his central idea of the command: she underlines the key points of the theory but also records page numbers and comments in her personal index at the back of the book. Almost two pages of marginalia (there are nine in total) are devoted to this single topic. Murdoch summarises: 'The sting remains unchanged 305', 'Anxiety of command 308' (IML 1120, 495); criticises: 'Conn. [Connection] of command w. [with] death is very dubious' (IML 1120, 496) but overall approves of the idea: 'Theory of command is vital', 'Conn. [Connection] of this w. [with] morals and religion, cf. SW's obedience'.²⁴⁶ The degree of her engagement with this particular idea can be gauged from the frequency of her note-making, but also from her suggestions for possible solutions to the problem of commands and stings, and the way in which they can be reversed: 'The sting remains unchanged 305/ power of forgiveness (illeg.) here, charity]' and 'EC does not consider the many ways of taming abolishing etc command' (IML 1120, 495). The latter quotation highlights the trend in the marginalia of Murdoch uniting with Canetti intellectually in the search for ways to deal with the problem of power. This is also suggested in her review where Murdoch summarises the concept and notes:

Our most pressing need, as Canetti very movingly and convincingly argues at the end, is to control the 'survivor mania' of our rulers, and the key to this is 'the humanisation of the command.' But how is the command to be humanised? Canetti has not given us a psychology with which to picture the humanisation of command. Here rival science and indomitable morality stand ready to enter the argument.²⁴⁷

It is my contention that Murdoch's attitude to Canetti's work (particularly in this instance to the idea of the command) reflects their literary relationship. She has clearly taken this

²⁴⁶ SW is probably Simone Weil, an agreed influence on Murdoch. See Gabrielle Griffen, *The Influence of Simone Weil on the Fiction of Iris Murdoch* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993).

²⁴⁷ Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', pp. 337-338 (p. 338).

idea on board and wishes to take it further by finding a way of dealing with it. However, Murdoch's charge that Canetti does not offer a solution to the problem of power and the command implies that she does not understand his theory of *Verwandlung* to be offering one. This is also further implied by the brief mention she gives to what is for Canetti a crucial concept: 'In the last part of the book, Canetti introduces another concept, that of "transformation". This specifically human talent has many uses but is most primitively a kind of protection'.²⁴⁸ Other comments in her annotations would also indicate that Murdoch did not see the potential Canetti saw in *Verwandlung* and this is something we shall return to later and in the final section of Part Three of this thesis. For the moment, it is important to note that Murdoch saw the problem of power as Canetti described it, to be encapsulated in the motif of the command; her suggestion to find solutions to it is remarkable, because this is what her writings on goodness attempt to do. It therefore represents a point of affinity.

In *Masse und Macht* Canetti describes 'Der Befehl' (the command) as the kernel of all power. The command consists of an *Antrieb* (momentum) and *Stachel* (sting). The 'momentum forces the recipient to act', to obey the command (IML 1120, 305).²⁴⁹ The *Stachel* or 'sting remains behind in him' when he has completed the order (IML 1120, 305). When the command thus functions correctly, the *Stachel* is not visible in the obedient individual. It

[...] remains in him unchanged' and preserves the original command within it. Sometimes, however, it will manifest itself with a quiet resistance on the part of the subject when a command is issued again. Over time these 'stings' breed resentment in the subjugated person in whom they are lodged. The reproduction of the original power situation, but in reverse, is one of the chief sources of energy (IML 1120, 306).

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ All underlining is Murdoch's in her copy of *Crowds and Power*.

Therefore, by issuing orders to others, the subject can rid itself of its stings.²⁵⁰ In this way, the exercise and abuse of power is a kind of contagion, passed on from power figure to subject. The subject will then proceed to exercise control over others, forming part of an endless cycle of power.²⁵¹

As Murdoch noted in her diary, Canetti traces the phenomenon of commands back to the animal kingdom. The weaker figure in the power situation is spurred into action (flight) (IML 1120, 303). Canetti holds that this original example of the order in the animal kingdom must always be considered in orders between humans because the threat of death is present in all commands. Hence Anna Pfaff's desire to flee from her father (in *Die Blendung*) and the permanent threat of being beaten to death if she does not follow his orders. Canetti wrote: 'The oldest command – and it is far older than man – is a death sentence, and it compels the victim to flee. We should remember this when we come to discuss human commands. Beneath all commands glints the harshness of the death sentence' (IML 1120, 304).

Die Blendung anticipates Canetti's theory of commands as developed in *Masse und Macht*. The relationships between the central male protagonist/s and their

²⁵⁰ The cycle of power as encapsulated in Canetti's command theory is evoked in Murdoch's *Under the Net* which she was writing when Canetti first discussed his guiding insight with her. When describing the power structure in the hospital ward on which he worked, Jake notes: 'The lives of these women, already far advanced, were made a misery, on the one hand by the Matron, who treated them with unrelenting despotism, and on the other by the nurses who repaid them with continual veiled mockery for the pains which the Sisters, in order to recoup their own dignity, felt bound to inflict upon those beneath them' (UN, 205). The Sisters who are commanded (and thus are stung) by the Matron then pass those stings onto the women in order to rid themselves of the original stings.

²⁵¹ In *The Unicorn*, in conversation with Max Lejour, Effingham Cooper states: 'Recall the idea of Ate which was so real to the Greeks. Ate is the name of the almost automatic transfer of suffering from one being to another. Power is a form of Ate. The victims of power, and any power has its victims, are themselves infected. They have then to pass it on, to use power on others. This is evil [...] But Good is non-powerful. And it is in the good that Ate is finally quenched [...]'. (TU, 98-99) Conradi notes that while this passage can be connected to Simone Weil, Canetti's ideas on the command are also echoed. He notes that ideas on power and its victims were topical when *The Unicorn* was published (1963), pointing out that Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* appeared in the same year as Murdoch's novel. I argue, however, that the idea of the command returns more explicitly in *The Time of the Angels* and is an important aspect of Murdoch's and Canetti's discussions of power. Furthermore, in *Under the Net*, there is also a brief reference to the principle of the sting: 'The lives of these women, already far advanced, were made a misery, on the one hand by the Matron, who treated them with unrelenting despotism, and on the other by the nurses who repaid them with continual veiled mockery for the pains which the Sisters, in order to the recoup their own dignity, felt bound to inflict upon those beneath them' (UN, 205).

housekeepers and daughters in *The Time of the Angels* and *Die Blendung* are characterised by commands. These comparable orders pertain to preserving the isolation and power of Fisher, Kien and Pfaff and they have the effect of impeding social interaction and communication. Kien's first words to Therese on her entry to the property are: 'Ich muß es mir ausdrücklich verbieten, daß ein fremder Mensch meine Wohnung betritt' (DB, 26). Later she recalls: 'Als sie damals bei ihm den Dienst antrat, hatte er ihr ausdrücklich erklärt, daß er Besuche, männliche oder weibliche, von Säuglingen angefangen bis zu Greisen, prinzipiell nicht empfangt. Sie solle jedermann wegschicken' (DB, 52). Similarly, Fisher says to Pattie "“If my brother Marcus rings up tell him I'm not available. If anyone rings up tell them I'm not available”" (TTA, 8). By this he also means that she should not give anyone access to the rectory. Pattie later ponders: 'Carel had told her to turn everyone away [...] As Carel had decreed the door should not be answered in her absence, she often came back from shopping to find several hopeful people waiting outside' (TTA, 81).²⁵² When Franz Metzger, a young, local boy to whom Kien once spoke, comes to the door of Kien's apartment, Therese tells him to return later, since Kien is at that point out for his morning walk. When Therese informs Kien of Metzger's visit, Kien orders 'Schicken Sie ihn weg!'. Soon after these words, we note:

Da läutete es heftig. Therese öffnete. Der kleine Metzger steckte die Nase herein. 'Ich darf!' rief er laut, 'der Herr Professor hat es erlaubt!' 'Bücher gibt's nicht!' schrie Therese und schlug die Tür zu. Draußen tobte der Junge. Er stieß Drohungen aus; er war so zornig, daß man kein Wort verstand. [...] Kien stand auf der Schwelle zur Bibliothek; der Junge hatte ihn nicht bemerkt. Freundlich nickte er der Haushälterin zu. (DB, 37)

Similarly, soon after Fisher commands Pattie to turn callers away:

And now the front doorbell was ringing again. Pattie opened the door a crack and saw outside Marcus Fisher, who had already called several times, accompanied by

²⁵² Murdoch's powerful character, Julius King, also issues commands in the course of *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*. His order that Simon should not tell his partner about their meetings has the intention (and nearly succeeds) in destroying the relationship. Here also the orders are divisive and can result in isolation.

a woman whom Pattie vaguely recognized. The woman spoke. [...] Pattie put her knee behind the door. 'I'm afraid Miss Muriel is out. And the Rector and Elizabeth are seeing nobody.' 'I'm afraid we can't quite take that for an answer. [...]' 'I'm sorry,' said Pattie. 'We aren't having any visitors today.' She shut the door flatly against Miss Shadox-Brown's nose. A sturdy foot which had begun to insert itself in the crack of the door, narrowly escaped being crushed. Pattie turned back into the dark hall. [...] She looked up at her master, tall and dense in his black cassock as a tower of darkness (*TTA*, 33-34).

Murdoch's description of the scene mirrors Canetti's in a number of ways. Pattie, like Therese, is following an order given by her master to turn away all callers. In Canetti's novel the caller is irritated at her refusal to admit him and the door is shut against his nose, just as in *The Time of the Angels*. Finally when the housekeeper, Therese, turns back into the hall on shutting the door, her master is there overseeing her fulfilment of his order, and the scene between Pattie and Fisher described above resembles this closely. In both novels, the commands issued bring about isolation and impede social relations.²⁵³

It is also notable that Canetti described issuing commands as comparable to a shower of magic darts or arrows: 'Die Macht sendet Befehle aus wie eine Wolke von magischen Pfeilen; die Opfer, die davon getroffen werden, bringen sich selber dem Mächtigen dar, von den Pfeilen berufen, berührt und geführt' (*MM*, 360). Echoing this symbolism, when Carel issues an order and Pattie carries it out by putting all callers off, a paper dart sails out of the darkness and strikes her: 'A dark figure at the top of the stairs murmurs approval and a paper dart takes the air and sweeps down to tap on Pattie's smock a little above the heart and falls to the ground at her feet' (*TTA*, 10 & 34). The paper dart in Murdoch's text falls, as if by magic, from the commander and is a concrete metaphor for the *Stachel* which is controlling Pattie so that she continues to obey the

²⁵³ Pattie from *The Time of the Angels* returns in *The Green Knight* in the figure of 'Patsie', and again the opening of portals is a crucial motif. Following Peter Mir's 'metamorphosis' due to him remembering god and as a consequence of which he seeks to pursue peace with Lucas rather than revenge, he holds a party at his house. 'Patsie', in complete opposition to her predecessor, Pattie, is charged with admitting guests who were 'encouraged to "stroll everywhere"', and some, not all, eagerly did so, penetrating, on all three floors, drawing room, library, study, cloakrooms [...] All the doors stood open' (*GK*, 330).

command in all similar situations after the initial order. The idiosyncrasy of this motif allows for it to be reasonably traced to Canetti, thereby also indicating Murdoch's intellectual affinity with him.

Kien also commands Therese to undertake specific domestic duties: “‘Morgen wird das Bett für mich gekauft!’ brüllte er’ (*DB*, 64), as does Fisher with Pattie. He orders her to light the fire in Elizabeth's room, set mouse traps and rescue spiders (*TTA*, 7-8).²⁵⁴ Much of the time Kien, as in the case with Franz Metzger, orders those around him away. When the delivery men arrive with the furniture, Kien, growing increasingly exasperated by their presence, tells them: “‘Stellen Sie ihn dorthin, ans Bett!’ [...] ‘So, jetzt können Sie gehen’”. As Therese prattles on idly after the men leave:

Kien sprang auf und befahl, ohne sich umzudrehen: ‘Ruhe! Kein Wort mehr! Die Einrichtung bleibt, wie sie ist. Eine Diskussion erübrigt sich. Von nun an werde ich die Türe zu deinen Zimmern geschlossen halten. Ich verbiete dir, diesen Raum zu betreten, solange ich drin bin. Bücher, die ich von drüben brauche, hole ich mir selbst. Punkt eins und Punkt sieben erscheine ich zu den Mahlzeiten. Ich ersuche, mich nicht zu rufen, da ich die Uhr von allein lesen kann. Gegen Störungen werde ich einschreiten. Meine Zeit ist kostbar. Bitte hinaus!’ (*DB*, 67-68)

He takes a similar tone with the caretaker: ‘Plötzlich befahl jemand scharf und streng, Georges erschrak ein wenig: “Verlassen Sie den Raum, Pfaff!” “Ja, was!” “Bitte, lassen Sie uns allein”, fügte Georges hinzu. “Sofort!” befahl Peter, der alte Peter’ (*DB*, 463). Murdoch's Fisher is given to similar outbursts when his orders are not (successfully) carried out. At one point Pattie goes

[...] through a time of being frightened of him. He was very moody and frequently harsh with her. He had been extremely angry with her for not having locked the door of the coal hole, and so having let in Marcus Fisher [...] After

²⁵⁴ In *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, we note that Julius King also commands Simon to lie to his partner, Axel, and to perform household chores (*FHD*, 170).

scolding her, Carel had shaken her and pushed her away from him. Pattie wept for long afterwards in her own room about this. She felt rejected (*TTA*, 82).

Fisher's relationship with his brother also corresponds to Kien's. Following a telegram stating that his brother is insane, Georges Kien leaves the asylum he runs in Paris to investigate the situation. Marcus Fisher also grows increasingly concerned for his brother's mental health and visits him to assess his condition. Despite the brothers' good intentions, Marcus, like Georges, is not entirely welcome. Kien orders Georges away from him: "[...] pack, dich, wenn du darauf bestehst, fahr in deine Idiotenanstalt zurück [...]" and "Du wirst jetzt wegfahren und dich nicht um mich kümmern". Fisher mirrors these imperatives with his brother: "Marcus, Marcus, Marcus, I told you to leave us alone." and "I'll see you again, Carel." "Go" (*TTA*, 169 & 176).²⁵⁵ Like Kien, Fisher looks upon his brother with condescension and attempts to break off all correspondence (*TTA*, 71&169, *DB*, 51-52).

Benedikt Pfaff's relationship with his family is characterised by commands and they are often also commands aimed at preserving his autonomy by keeping the outside world away. Not only is his daughter designated doorkeeper, a position analogously held by Murdoch's Pattie, but Pfaff also trains her to perform his role at the front of the building keeping outsiders away by barking orders at her: 'Unzählige Male schritt sie vom Haustor bis zur Treppe und zurück. "Langsamer!" brüllte er, oder "Lauf!" Gleich darauf zwang er sie, in seine alten Hosen zu schlüpfen und ein männliches Subjekt zu spielen' (*DB*, 405). Echoing Canetti's text, Murdoch's Fisher also orders Pattie, as we have seen, and his daughter Muriel, to protect the borders of his jurisdiction by not allowing anybody into the rectory or near Elizabeth: "There must be nothing to startle her, no sudden movements, no upsetting of the familiar routine which you have set and maintained so admirably round about her [...] increased care and vigilance is necessary now [...] you will see to it that she is not intruded upon or troubled?" (*TTA*, 133). By commanding Anna and Muriel to keep these vigils, Fisher and Pfaff also attempt to make

²⁵⁵ The issue of orders recurs in Murdoch's other novels. In *The Philosopher's Pupil* we learn that Ruby (the maid) and Alex's relationship might consist 'entirely of orders' (*PP*, 40). Similarly we learn that Rozanov and Pearl never had a conversation and that what he said to her was 'only orders' (*PP*, 256).

their daughters extensions of themselves. Murdoch's female characters mirror Canetti's in that they preserve their fathers' autonomy, power and dark secrets.

The issuing and receipt of commands is not without its consequences, as Murdoch noted in her annotations in *Crowds and Power*. In this respect also, Murdoch's text echoes Canetti's closely. He wrote, and Murdoch marks: 'Those most beset by commands are children. It is a miracle that they ever survive the pressure and do not collapse under the burden of commands laid on them by parents and teachers' (IML 1120, 306).²⁵⁶ The build-up of the stings of suppression often manifests itself in resentment in the subjugated party, as Murdoch, quoting Canetti, also noted in her annotations: 'No child, not even the most ordinary, forgets or forgives a single one of the commands inflicted on it'. The child will, therefore, desire to issue the same commands which it received because in doing so, s/he can rid her/himself of commands and stings.²⁵⁷ This is the contagious nature of power as Canetti describes it which we referred to earlier (IML 1120, 306 & 495).²⁵⁸

Canetti's theory refers to all orders, from the most innocuous to the most injurious. In *Die Blendung*, Anna resents her father's oppression and seeks revenge for herself and her mother (whom he murdered) in her fantasy by allowing her father's death at the hands of 'der edele Ritter Franz': 'Auf einmal trennt er im Kabinett dem Vater das Haupt vom Rumpf. Sie weint vor Freude, wenn ihre arme Mutter das erlebt hätte, sie wär' heut noch am Leben' (DB, 406). Canetti argues that 'das erste und entscheidende Merkmal des Machthabers ist sein Recht über Leben und Tod' (MM, 273), therefore by reversing the stings of suppression, previously subjugated individuals would have this

²⁵⁶ The paragraph from which this quotation is taken is marked in the margin by Murdoch and not underlined. It is underlined here due to the difficulty in representing the marked margin.

²⁵⁷ We learn that Murdoch's character Julius King had a hostile relationship with his parents, perhaps due to their attempts to control him. He appears bitter about their decision to convert to Christianity and about changing the family name from Kahn to King. He is, of course, one of Murdoch's power figures and is another representative of Canetti's command theory in view of the details of his past which we are given (FHD, 429).

²⁵⁸ At the beginning of this chapter we noted how this idea of passing on suffering and subjection is also alluded to in *The Unicorn*.

capacity usually held by their masters.²⁵⁹ Though Anna Pfaff can only imagine such a reversal, Muriel Fisher (within the story) has actual control over her father's life as he lies dying in front of her. When Carel attempts to take his own life, Muriel has the option of seeking medical help or exercising her power – and thereby getting rid of the stings of subjection – by allowing him to die. She opts for the latter and is in this respect a survivor power figure. Muriel thinks to herself 'Yet she *had* the power, and could not deny it, the power of life and death' (*TTA*, 219). The idea of reversal between Carel and Muriel – Muriel ridding herself of her stings – is conveyed through her relations with Carel and Elizabeth. When she learns of Carel's secret incestuous affair with Elizabeth, she immediately has power over Carel and Murdoch indicates this reversal when Muriel takes on the behaviour which previously identifies her father as a power figure.

Carel's identity as a 'commander' is confirmed in the manner in which he summons others to him. He is thereby commanding their presence and attention. Muriel is most often commanded in this manner in the novel. She is called to her father's study on three occasions:

'Muriel.' 'Yes.' Requested when very small to call her father 'Carel' and finding herself unable to do so, Muriel had been thus early deprived of the ability to call him anything. 'Could you come here for a moment?' Carel always said 'Come here' as if his presence were a definite locality. There was also a certain menace in the phrase as if a blow were to be expected. Muriel stood in the doorway. She feared her father. 'Come nearer, please' (*TTA*, 35).

However, when Muriel is seen to rid herself of her stings of subjection and exercise power over her father, this manifests itself in her issuing the same summons to her father:

²⁵⁹ There is further evidence of connections between Julius King and Canetti's ideas. While there are superficial points, Julius is also a Sephardic Jew, for example, there are also less obvious ones. Julius is a survivor figure in the mould of Canetti's descriptions in *Masse und Macht*. He has power over life and death: he is a biologist, but also works in the development of weapons. In this respect, he can preserve life, but also take it away. He survived Belsen, but his later behaviour as a power figure means that he complies with Canetti's command theory whereby the stings of the past, due to past subjection, are passed on later through the exercise of power over others. Murdoch's earliest enchanter figure, Hugo Belfounder in *Under the Net*, is also Jewish and of German descent and is also involved in the weapons business (*UN*, 53).

'She took a gasping breath. Holding on to the edge of the door she called out with all the voice she had, loudly and clearly, uttering her father's Christian name for the first time in her life. 'Carel! Carel! Carel!' (*TTA*, 166) Muriel's role reversal from subjugated to power figure is also suggested by Murdoch through her description of Muriel in terms previously used to describe Carel. Immediately following her discovery of Carel's secret relationship with Elizabeth, Muriel '[...] stood there in the dark room, immobile as a tower, rigid, full' (*TTA*, 165). Carel had previously been described as 'a tower of darkness' (*TTA*, 34). She also takes over Carel's function of playing the 'Swan Lake' record. After Carel's death she, like her father, cuts herself and Elizabeth off from their relatives, a comparison anticipated at the beginning of the novel when Muriel echoes her father's orders to Pattie: "'There's the telephone, would you answer it, Pattie? If anyone wants me say I'm out'" (*TTA*, 9). There are notes of darkness when Muriel's future after Carel is intimated. Muriel thinks immediately after Carel's death: 'There would be no parting from Elizabeth now. Carel had riveted them together, each to be the damnation of the other until the end of the world' (*TTA*, 222). These thoughts suggest that Muriel will repeat many aspects of her father's subjugation of Elizabeth. Her comment that she and Elizabeth will be the damnation of each other is particularly interesting as it is again reminiscent of Canetti's command theory whereby both parties are indeed the damnation of the other.²⁶⁰ The commander needs his subjects and is thus damned by them, but his subjects are similarly damned by him, in the obvious way, and also in that they will potentially become him.

Pattie and Anna are also under orders regarding their speech. By means of linguistic and gesticulative prompts, Anna is commanded to respond to her father's sentences in a specific way: 'Laut und regelmäßig wie in der Schule ratschte sie seinen Satz zu Ende, doch war ihr sehr leise zumute' (*DB*, 404).²⁶¹ Pattie correspondingly rehearses her 'catechism' with her 'father', a description which suggests that, as with Anna and Pfaff, this is a ritual which the male demands from the female. In both texts

²⁶⁰ This interpretation of Muriel's character is highly original. Other critics have largely overlooked the patterns in her behaviour identified above. Conradi, for example, describes her merely as Fisher's 'unloved daughter' and implies that she is attempting to correct the situation at the rectory, *The Saint and the Artist*, pp. 170-173.

²⁶¹ Gerald Stieg, 'Die Blendung 1935-2005', p. 9.

these parallel scenes also serve as situations in which the father re-affirms his daughter's loyalty to him, thus also ensuring his own position. The first question concerns identity: "Der Mensch hat eine Leibesfrucht. Wer ist die Leibesfrucht? Die Arrestantin!" Dabei wies er auf sie, statt des Zeigefingers verwandte er die geschlossene Faust. Ihre Lippen hatten "die Arrestantin" lächelnd mitzuformen' (*DB*, 404). Like Anna and her father, the first question in Murdoch's text concerns the woman's identity and her position as the possession of her 'father'. "What is your name?" "Pattie." "Who gave you that name?" "You did." "Yes, I suppose I am indeed your godfather, your father in God". Similarly, in putting himself on a par with God in this scene Fisher recalls Pfaff: 'Bis zum Herrgott verstieg er sich selten. Er hatte Respekt vor der allerhöchsten Stelle, die ihm zukam. Der Herrgott war mehr als ein Polizeipräsident. Um so mehr ergriff ihn die Gefahr, in der heute Gott selbst schwebte' (*DB*, 411). These comparable powerful characters form part of Murdoch's and Canetti's critique of the philosophical tradition which pictures the human subject as isolated and an absolute ruler over his surroundings, including other people.

(vi) Shared Motifs II: The Hand

These latter command sequences, between Pattie and Carel and Anna and Pfaff, are concerned with asserting power and control over the women. This point of view is also supported by the ensuing, parallel love scenes which the men initiate and control. In both scenes, we also notice a parallel emphasis on the men's hands controlling the woman: 'Er hatte sie gepackt und auf seinen Schoß gezogen, mit der Rechten zwickte er sie in den Nacken, weil sie verhaftet war [...] Stundenlang liebte er sie. Er unterrichtete sie in selbst erfundenen Griffen, schob sie hin und her [...]' (*DB*, 405) and 'Carel's hands descended to her shoulders and he pressed lightly upon her as he leaned forward out of his chair down to the floor, blocking the light. Pattie groaned, relaxing her hold and falling back, wrapped into darkness. She felt his hands fumbling now to undo the front of her blouse' (*TTA*, 158).

The hand as a symbol of power is a subject Canetti outlined more directly in *Masse und Macht* and in which Murdoch was interested (IML 1120, 204).²⁶² As well as Murdoch's underlining, she also referred to Canetti's description of 'the human hand' in her review of the book. Furthermore, she made a note of these passages in her index: 'Arrest, the clutching hand (204), the hand (206)' (IML 1120, 482). The emphasis on the hand of power is present in Canetti's novel in his depiction of Pfaff; as a former police officer he had powers of arrest which he still uses in his position as caretaker. As we have seen, he incarcerates his daughter and refers to her as 'die Arrestantin'. As he beats and controls her, there are numerous close descriptions of his powerful hands: 'An der Tochter rieb er seine rothaarigen Fäuste mit wirklicher Liebe [...]', 'Sie starb unter seinen Händen', 'Seine kauenden Kinnladen waren so unersättlich wie seine Arme', 'Dabei wies er auf sie, statt des Zeigefingers verwandte er die geschlossene Faust' (DB, 401-5). Though he is not as violent as Canetti's powerful character, Murdoch similarly emphasises Carel's powerful hands seizing Pattie:

It seemed to her in retrospect that she must have been welcomed instantly by Carel, as if a long arm had come through the doorway and a reassuring hand had caressed her before she was over the threshold [...] Carel immediately touched her, he caressed her, he loved her. [...] Carel took her in to his possession with a beautiful naturalness and tamed her by touch and kindness as one might tame an animal. [...] Carel's divine hands created her in her turn a goddess [...] (TTA, 27).

While it seems that from Pattie's perspective Carel's hands were loving hands, she is at this point unaware that she will be cast aside by him. She is also unaware that he is conducting an incestuous relationship with his disabled daughter, Elizabeth. The knowledge of this adds menace to the descriptions of his hands. Therefore, while Canetti's text appears the more violent, especially as a result of the descriptions of physical violence, Murdoch's story is not without violence. Father-daughter incest occurs in both novels. Anna's dual role as daughter and house-keeper is split between Pattie and

²⁶² The hands of powerful characters are emphasised in other novels by Murdoch. When Mir is attempting to exact revenge in *The Green Knight* at seizes Clement we note that Clement 'tried feebly to remove the hand, the huge giant hand, which spanned his throat (GK, 219).

Elizabeth in Murdoch's novel.²⁶³ The hand in *Die Blendung* is symbolic of the male's power over the female, Pfaff's over his daughter. The symbolism of the hand is similarly employed in *The Time of the Angels*. We will return to this motif in the context of hunting prey in the next chapter.

As well as providing for their masters sexually, both women also source food for them. Both novels place emphasis on the daily routine of shopping which is central to both women's existences. It represents their only contact with the outside world. For this reason they both look forward to it. Anna '[...] lachte übers bleiche Gesicht' at the prospect of going food shopping, which is correspondingly described as a 'little busy pleasure' for Pattie (*DB*, 402) (*TTA*, 22). Not only do the hands of the men control the women's bodies for their personal, sexual gratification, but the men also control what the women's hands do. Their hands are, therefore, extensions of the men in both these novels and these points represent further affinities between Murdoch's and Canetti's literary evocations of power.

(vii) Shared Motifs III: Names

Benedikt Pfaff re-names his daughter when he attempts to train her to be a caretaker. This is a further example of his efforts to make her an extension of himself. Her real name is Anna. Her father decides to call her Poli, however. Her new name reflects and is a diminutive form of his title, 'Polizist':²⁶⁴

Von da ab nannte er sie Poli, was ein Ehrentitel war. Er drückte ihre Eignung zu seinem Berufe aus. Eigentlich hieß sie Anna; aber da ihm der Name nichts sagte, gebrauchte er ihn nie, er war ein Feind von Namen. Titel behagten ihm besser; auf solche, die er selbst verlieh, war er versessen. Mit der Mutter starb auch die Anna.

²⁶³ The reader is given virtually no insight into Elizabeth's psychology in the novel. The nature of her relationship with Carel in terms of his control over her is never made explicit. However, Carel does actively keep her away from the outside world (Marcus and increasingly, Muriel). Therefore, it can be argued that she, like the other women in the rectory, is in thrall to Carel.

²⁶⁴ Donahue, *The End of Modernism*, p. 145. Donahue views Pfaff changing his daughter's name to reflect himself as part of his desire to reduce her to a function of his fantasy world.

Ein halbes Jahr lang hieß das Mädchen 'Du' oder 'die brave Tochter'. Seit er sie zur Poli ernannt hatte, war er stolz auf sie (DB, 408-409).

Family names are by their very nature political and titles are even more so.²⁶⁵ The tradition of an offspring taking her/his father's name and a wife taking her husband's reflects historical Western socio-political structures. The most extreme example is how a slave was identified by his/her master's name. Pfaff's obsession with bestowing titles and his preference for them as opposed to names implies a preference for an analogous hierarchical structure. Pfaff resembles the king, as described in *Masse und Macht*, who can promote or demote his subjects by giving them a new 'Ehrentitel'.

First names, on the other hand, indicate distinctness, individuality and otherness. Because he will not or cannot perceive his daughter as Anna, as another, different human being, he strips her of that name which means nothing to him, just as Anna as an individual means nothing to him. He can only see her as a potential extension of himself and his re-naming and indeed re-fashioning of her in his own image reflects this.²⁶⁶ Anna's re-naming is part of Canetti's social, political and religious commentary on the exercise of power. Pfaff considers: 'Die Weiber seien doch zu etwas gut, der Mann müsse es eben verstehen, lauter Polis aus ihnen zu machen' (DB, 408-409). In desiring to make a breed of women, Polis, who are actually 'good for something' Pfaff again unequivocally states his rejection of and instinct to suppress the individuality and difference of others. This quotation reveals not only his misogyny but also his hatred and rejection of anyone who is different from himself. He thus cannot experience *Verwandlung*, a term which will be discussed later in this chapter and in the next.

The re-naming of subjugated characters by their masters is a motif which also occurs in *Komödie der Eitelkeit*, which we know Murdoch attempted to translate. The

²⁶⁵ There is another permutation of this motif in Murdoch's writing: Jews changing their surnames. In *Under the Net* we note that Hugo Belfounder's father changed his German surname. Similarly, Julius King's family changed their name from Kahn to King.

²⁶⁶ Preece, *The Rediscovered Writings of Veza Canetti*, p. 95. Preece's study of maids' names in Veza Canetti's writing finds that re-naming is a rite of passage for Veza's maids and is symbolic of her loss of individuality.

subjected characters Franzi and Franzl bear their master's name, François, again suggesting the surrender of their identities to their masters and their roles as extensions of him (*KdE*, 81). In the same play, Lya decides that Milli's name will be Mary (*KdE*, 141). This motif is similarly employed in *The Time of the Angels*. Murdoch's character Pattie is renamed by her Pater, Fisher. Like Poli, Pattie's name is a diminutive and is reminiscent of her master's title. Pattie is to *pater* as Poli is to *Polizist* (*TTA*, 156). While Donahue interprets the caretaker making his daughter speak like him, wear his clothes, do his job and bear his name as part of her father's fantasy world, which it certainly is, the ultimate effect is that he makes Anna the same as himself and thus consumes her identity.²⁶⁷ She virtually becomes her master and, correspondingly, Pattie also on occasion says that she 'is' Fisher, a statement which confirms that she feels herself to be an extension of him: 'She was knitted to Carel by bonds so awful that it was a frivolity even to call them love. She was Carel' (*TTA*, 153).²⁶⁸ Difference and otherness is thereby exterminated by the father-power figures in both of these novels.

Poli's and Pattie's correlating struggle to be called by their own names, to be acknowledged as separate individuals, also analogously reflects the wider power struggles within these novels. Pfaff's daughter longs to be called by her real name and when she learns that she will not be rescued by Franz from the grocery shop, she races home without the groceries only to be confronted by her hungry, angry father who at first suspects that she has lost the ten shilling note with which she left the house:

'Poli!' brüllte er, 'Poli, das Geld ist eh da!' 'Anna heiß' ich', sagte sie kalt und streng. Er wiederholte: 'Poli!', ihre Stimme berührte ihn nah, die flachen Hände ballten sich zu Fäusten, zärtliche Regungen überkamen ihn. 'Was kriegt der gute Vater heut zu essen?' klagte er. 'Nichts.' 'Die Poli muß ihm was kochen.' 'Anna! Anna!' schrie das Mädchen (*DB*, 411).

²⁶⁷ Donahue, *The End of Modernism*, p. 145.

²⁶⁸ Pearl, in *The Philosopher's Pupil*, who is, like Pattie, in love with her employer (Rozanov) notes 'I am empty, I am poured out, all I have is you, all I am is you [...]' (*PP*, 435-436).

From then onwards, he refuses to recognise her as his daughter though he continues to beat her and commit incest with her. After a few years, she dies having never achieved liberation.

Like Poli, Pattie longs for a time of liberation when she is called by her real name, Patricia. She associates regaining her real name and identity with a time beyond Carel when she will escape her life of solitude and commands: 'She would go far away and dedicate herself to the services of humanity and be Patricia for ever and ever after, Sister Patricia, perhaps Saint Patricia' (*TTA*, 31-2). By wishing to become Patricia, she is thus wishing to 'transform'. While Poli never becomes Anna, Pattie, on the other hand, does become Patricia by the end of the novel.

Transformation (*Verwandlung*) in order to circumvent power and its use, represents another point of comparison in Murdoch's and Canetti's thought. Both also attempted to devise ways for humans to move beyond the power which they each described with their comparable, literary depictions of power figures. This will be detailed at the end of this chapter and in the next. While both texts present a powerful male re-naming the subjugated female, their endings differ; Murdoch's seems more optimistic because some of the characters appear to succeed in going beyond the exercise of power. How this circumlocution is achieved brings forth further affinities between these authors' work. Murdoch's later writing, for example *The Sea, The Sea*, concentrates more on solutions and morality, and it is through these subjects especially that she came to identify herself as a writer. Similarly, Canetti's mature period (*Masse und Macht*) saw him attempt to find ways of behaving morally through the rejection of power.

(viii) Stylistic Affinities in Depictions of Power: *Die Blendung* and *The Time of the Angels*

Numerous affinities also exist between aspects of Murdoch's and Canetti's literary style in *Die Blendung* and *The Time of the Angels*. While both always regarded themselves as

realist writers, they both, paradoxically, drew on the unreal, the fairytale, in these novels. It is my contention that elements of the fairytale were employed by both only to be subverted, a technique which in effect not only furthered their mutual self-professed realist commitments, but also challenged the patriarchal gender stereotypes which these fairytales reflected and perpetuated. The style is thus part of the wider argument with patriarchal power and its related theme of isolation as detailed in parts (iii) and (iv) of this chapter.²⁶⁹ In a discussion of Murdoch's fiction, though not particularly *The Time of the Angels*, Fiander rightly points out that the conflict between isolation and communion with others is central to Murdoch's fiction and her moral philosophy. Furthermore, she argues that this dichotomy is also at the nucleus of the fairytale wherein the protagonist moves from a state of isolation (and also immorality) towards the community. For this reason, Fiander's study demonstrates how fairytales guide Murdoch's protagonists towards communion with others, and thus morality. However, the function of the fairytale intertext in *The Time of the Angels* is complex, as it is in *Die Blendung*. While they are used to suggest the common ideal (for Murdoch and Canetti) of a movement from isolation towards uniting with others, their inversion means that the happy ending of a union does not come about. This shared technique highlights the continued loneliness of the characters and indirectly draws attention to the remedy for the problem of power. In this section, I will discuss the employment of the fairytale in both novels and compare how they further these authors' discussions of the power and isolation of the human.

'Der gute Vater' borrows elements from fairytale. Following her mother's death, Anna, like Cinderella, spends her days locked in the dark kitchen cooking for her father, who resembles a cruel giant with his 'rothaarige Fäuste', 'riesige, dicke Ohren' and

²⁶⁹ Lisa M. Fiander, *Fairy Tales and the Fiction of Iris Murdoch, Margaret Drabble and A.S. Byatt*, Studies on Themes and Motifs in Literature (NY: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 1-16. Fiander's study, which does not concentrate on *The Time of the Angels* which she considers to be Murdoch's least optimistic novel, argues that Murdoch's attitude to the fairytale in her novels is ambiguous. On the one hand, her work is in harmony with fairytales in that the journey from isolation to communion with others is central to both. On the other hand, as Deborah Johnson argues, the fairytale elements allow Murdoch to depict culturally induced forms of human misery. See Deborah Johnson, *Iris Murdoch* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987), p. 66.

insatiable steaming mouth. Pfaff's meal time is strongly reminiscent of a giant from a fairytale:

Beim Essen dampfte der Mund des Vaters. Seine kauenden Kinnladen waren so unersättlich wie seine Arme. Sie stand, um seinen Teller rascher wieder zu füllen [...] Während er kaute, war er beschäftigt. Seinen Augen hafteten am Teller, starr und verzückt. Mit der Abnahme des Häufens erlosch ihr Glanz. Seine Kaumuskeln ärgerten sich, man gab ihnen zu wenig Arbeit; sie drohten bald loszubrüllen. Wehe dem Teller, wenn er los wurde! Das Messer hätte ihn zerschnitten, die Gabel durchbohrt, der Löffel zerschellt und die Stimme gesprengt. Aber dazu stand die Tochter daneben. Sie beobachtete gespannt das Treiben auf seiner Stirn. Sobald zwischen den Brauen die erste Spur einer senkrechten Falte erschien, füllte sie nach, gleichgültig, wieviel noch auf dem Teller war (DB, 403-404).

Like the giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk*, for example, Pfaff is extremely territorial. He does not tolerate strangers near his apartment block, saying: 'Ich vertilge die Wanzen! Jetzt ist die Katze zu Haus. Die Mäuse gehören ins Loch! Ich bin der rote Kater. Ich fress' sie tot! Ein Element muß das Zerquetschen spüren!' (DB, 405). Everybody lives in fear of him, especially his young daughter. She dreams of escaping her subjugation with the help of a Prince Charming. In terms of her confinement, Anna resembles Sleeping Beauty. She indulges in wild fantasies of escaping her violent father through a saviour in the form of Franz who works in the local grocery store. Her imaginings include an elaborate rescue episode wherein Franz, the 'edele Ritter' and the 'schöne schwarze Ritter', comes in the night to whisk the girl away from her miserable, violent subjugation:

In der Nacht kommt er sie entführen, der Vater schläft, es läutet, sie geht aufsperrn. Sie nimmt das ganze Geld mit, übers Nachthemd wirft sie ihren eigenen Mantel, den sie nie tragen darf, nicht den alten des Vaters, da sieht sie wie eine Jungfrau aus, vor dem Haustor steht wer? Er. Eine Karosse mit vier schwarzen Rappen wartet. Er bietet ihr seine Hand. Mit der linken hält er den

Degen, er ist ein Kavalier und verbeugt sich. Er hat gebügelte Hosen an [...] Unterm Haustor sagt er: 'Gnädiges Fräulein, heute haben Sie zum letztenmal aufgesperrt, ich entführe Sie heim.' Dann besteigt ihr kleiner Fuß die Karosse. Er hilft ihr hinauf [...] Und der schöne schwarze Ritter steht mitten in der fahrenden Karosse und wirft sich ihr zu Füßen. Er heiratet sie, nur sie, sonst bricht ihm das tapfere Herz (DB, 406-407).

However, there is no happy ending of a romantic rescue for Pfaff's beaten daughter. The abyss between the girl's imaginings and her awful reality is underlined by the tragic-comic image of her actually awaiting Franz's rescue at night and her real plan to whisper: 'Danke, es muß keine Karosse sein, vergessen Sie den Degen nicht!' to him as he writes her receipt for the groceries on her next shopping trip (DB, 409-410).

She soon learns that Franz, in whom she had such high hopes, is nothing but a petty thief and all her dreams of liberation from the iron hand of her father are dashed. She dies, like her mother, prematurely of consumption, having eked out a few more abuse- and terror-ridden years. Anna is denied a fairytale ending. As Donahue has noted, her story fails to abide by a fundamental law of fairytales wherein all the conditions described in the introductory paragraphs are reversed at the end.²⁷⁰ Therefore, through his subversion of the fairytale, he can bring the harsh reality of the girl's subjugation and isolation more clearly into focus.

Due to the theme of incest, Donahue likens Anna to the fairytale figure 'Allerleirauh' who, following the death of her mother, becomes her father's new wife. Unlike this fairytale character, however, 'Anna is a folktale figure who cannot become a fairy tale heroine: she is stuck in that realistic first part of the fairy tale marked by naturalistic exposition. In this case it is an account of brutal victimisation at the hands of her father'.²⁷¹ Through alluding to the fairytale, with its subtext of incest, Donahue sees Canetti as criticising the society out of which such fairytales were born and the female

²⁷⁰ Donahue, *The End of Modernism*, p. 53.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

stereotypes which that patriarchal society perpetuates. Through Anna, Canetti demonstrates the ‘absurdity of the notion that a woman’s power and freedom is rooted primarily in imagination and fantasy’ and draws attention ‘to clichéd cultural representations of women that served [...] to disguise their sources in male interests’.²⁷² The subversion of fairytales therefore is, in Donahue’s view, part of Canetti’s social critique because of what they relay about male stereotypes of females.

In a similar vein, Donahue argues that Canetti wrote the chapter as an indictment of Freud’s ‘Oedipus’ and Jung’s ‘Electra Complex’ which ‘[...] authorize[s] – however inadvertently – a kind of blindness to social reality, one of the principal varieties of ‘Blendung’ in the novel’.²⁷³ He points out that Freud often interpreted cases of father-daughter incest with his Oedipal complex, whereby the incest comes about because of the female’s fantasies about her father. Quoting Freud, Donahue demonstrates how women who reported being seduced by their fathers were branded as ‘hysterics’. Canetti’s chapter, therefore, criticises Freud’s theory by presenting a case of incest where there is no doubt about who the instigator of the abuse is. Furthermore, through the chapter ‘Der gute Vater’, Donahue claims that Canetti is criticising the kind of patriarchal society which accepts and perpetuates stereotypes of women as hysterics given to wild fantasies outlined in Freudian theory.²⁷⁴

By subverting the fairytale of the Cinderella figure, isolated and enslaved, with only her dreams of a dramatic rescue by a Prince Charming leading to eternal happiness, Canetti intensifies the depiction of Anna’s awful isolation and subjugation at the hands of her father and also criticises the stereotypes of females which those tales betray. This narratorial dynamic is mirrored in *The Time of the Angels*.

Using the idea of a daughter and housekeeper, physically and sexually enslaved by her father, Murdoch infuses the female’s storyline with fairytale elements as Canetti’s novel did. The fairytale in *The Time of the Angels* is subverted with similar effects.

²⁷² Ibid. p. 55.

²⁷³ Ibid. p. 149.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 148.

Murdoch also invokes the fairytale to accentuate the plight of the subjugated and enslaved women. Furthermore, the intertext can be considered part of Murdoch's social critique outlined by Grimshaw, just as it is considered part of Canetti's.²⁷⁵ The detail of these intertexts and the similarities in how they function for both writers, I argue, is evidence of the intellectual affinities between their literary projects.

Howard German has identified Murdoch's evocation of the 'world of fairytale and fable' in *The Flight from the Enchanter*.²⁷⁶ However, Murdoch draws, in a similar way, on the fairytale figure Cinderella (who is reduced to a domestic slave by her father's new wife and her step-sisters) in her depiction of Pattie in *The Time of the Angels*. The first description of the character sees her 'clawing at cinders in the bottom of the narrow grate [...] with cramped chilled fingers' and putting 'old rusty misshapen cinders on top of the sticks' (*TTA*, 7). Pattie's attire of a cotton smock, with a soiled synthetic headscarf taming her potentially wayward Afro hair and laddered stockings, is a mark of her position as a domestic hand. Pattie, like Cinderella, covets the sumptuous garments of others, for example the Persian lamb coat of Anthea Barlow, a persistent caller to the rectory (*TTA*, 9). However, Pattie's story, like that of Canetti's Anna, does not quite conform to the happy ending of her joyous liberation from her subjection and isolation and the comeuppance of those who subjugated her, as is the case for Cinderella. The elements of the fairytale which Murdoch alludes to are as follows: Cinderella's enslavement after her mother's death, the images of the lizard and other creatures being transformed into a horse, carriage and fine clothing and the motif of the slipper (falling out of it and fitting back into it in the presence of the prince). In the case of Pattie, however, the lizard is not transformed into fine clothing and the mice do not become horses to transport her away from her misery. Murdoch's references to the creatures of the fairytale in fact serve to underline the pervasiveness of Pattie's wretched subjugation. The connection between the lizard and fine clothing in the fairytale is subverted by

²⁷⁵ Grimshaw, *Sexuality Gender and Power in Iris Murdoch's Fiction*, p. 155. Grimshaw interprets *The Time of the Angels* as Murdoch's commentary on the patriarchal power of society. She does not, however, connect the subverted fairytales in the novel to that social commentary.

²⁷⁶ Howard German, 'Allusions in the early novels of Iris Murdoch', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 3 (1969), 361-377 (p. 365).

Murdoch who associates the lizard with Pattie's paltry clothing: 'As Pattie sighs and sinks back on her heels, a ladder darts up her stocking like a little lizard' (*TTA*, 7). While the metamorphoses of mice into horses ultimately relieve Cinderella of her serfdom, there is no sign of the mice becoming anything other than dead in a mousetrap in Murdoch's realist novel (*TTA*, 8). Similarly one recalls the cruel subversion in Canetti's story when it is revealed that Anna's 'prince' and saviour, Franz, is a common thief.

German's essay, which identifies elements of fairytale allusion in Murdoch's novels preceding *The Time of the Angels*, concludes that one must establish what the effects of such allusions are, and how they may in fact undermine the realism of the novels.²⁷⁷ In the case of *The Time of the Angels*, as in 'Der gute Vater', the allusion to fairytale adds an edge to the realism due to the inversion of the fairytale; a comparison is drawn which accentuates the stark reality of Pattie's bondage. Similarly, Anna's fantasies of a Prince Charming serve to highlight her dreadful plight even more.

There is a hope that Pattie may have met her rescuer and Prince Charming in her co-worker Eugene Peshkov, who fleetingly wishes to marry her. However, the fairytale is again subverted. Rather than receiving orders, as in her relationship with Fisher, Pattie finds herself telling Eugene what to do when he gives her a choice about who will perform certain tasks (*TTA*, 46). Pattie and Eugene even have a shoe-fitting scene which is humorous in its realism, especially when compared to the details of the fairytale. Rather than Cinderella's dainty foot fitting perfectly into the glass slipper, Pattie's 'warm plump foot', is compared to a 'big bird' and struggles to fit into the knee length black boots:

He [Eugene] held the boot for her and with pointed toe she pressed a foot in. The boots, which Eugene had encouraged her to buy and which had been much discussed between them, were of black leather, almost knee length and lined with wool. Pattie had never had such boots before.

'They're too tight, I told you so.'

²⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 377.

‘You always complain your shoes are too big for you!’

‘They aren’t at first. First they’re too tight, then they’re too big.’

‘Come on, push.’

[...] With much pushing and hauling Pattie donned the other boot (*TTA*, 202).

However, because ‘Pattie’s shoes all become mysteriously too large for her very soon after she bought them’ (for which reason she repeatedly falls out of her slippers), a Cinderella shoe scene and fairytale ending of liberation and happiness is ruled out for Pattie from the outset (*TTA*, 8&21). When Muriel, Pattie’s competitor for Eugene’s affections, tells the potential Prince Charming a slanted version of Pattie’s relationship with her father, all hope for Pattie’s union with Eugene is lost. She leaves the rectory of her own accord when she learns of her lover’s (Fisher’s) relationship with his daughter, Elizabeth. Marcus Fisher is aware that Pattie ends up working in an African refugee camp. (*TTA*, 223) This detail may be confirmed in her parting letter to Carel which states:

How could you have done it. You know what I mean about Elizabeth. Muriel told me. It has killed me. You have had the years of my life, all there was of me. You know I love you and I’ve been your slave [...] When you get this I will have gone away and don’t try to find me, well you couldn’t, I’m going right away out of the country I think (*TTA*, 220).

While it would appear from the scant information given that Pattie’s plight does come to an end, Murdoch subverts the fairytale, to produce a modern, realist story for Pattie, as Canetti does in his depiction of female subjugation. However, while Anna dies without attaining any kind of freedom or happiness, Pattie breaks free from the mould of the fairytale completely, by leaving of her own accord and fulfilling her dream of working in a refugee camp. While there are some differences in Murdoch’s and Canetti’s treatment of the themes of power, subjugation and isolation, in terms of their depiction of the figures involved, there are significant commonalities. Both tell of a household where a mother figure dies and a daughter becomes a sex slave to a surviving father. Imprisonment, domestic slavery and incest are part of the subjugation and the theme is

brought more sharply into focus by the writers with allusion to an almost antithetical genre, the fairytale. Elizabeth, Fisher's daughter and sex slave, is presented as a beautiful princess who, like Canetti's Anna, is cut off from the world and sexually abused by her father.

Murdoch also uses the fairytale allusion to make comments on male stereotypes of women. She creates the figure of Fisher, a demonic abusive man who subjugates all the women around him and who thus resembles Canetti's Pfaff. Both men hold views about women akin to the assumptions fairytales make about them. Women are perceived to be weak characters who need to be taken care of or rescued by men. They have little purpose in life other than to serve men's practical and sexual needs. By subverting, and in essence breaking the mould of the fairytale with an unconventional ending, Murdoch's text resembles Canetti's in its means of criticising patriarchal stereotypes of women, thus showing parallels in their thinking. However, the inversion of the fairytales also underlines the pervasive isolation which characterises the lives of the women and also of the powerful men. The final union in love which is typical for the fairytale genre is absent from these novels. There is no hope of it ever coming about in Canetti's text. Murdoch's novel, on the other hand, is more ambiguous in this respect. The social relations so conspicuously absent from these novels indicate where possible solutions to the problem of power might lie for these authors. This will be the focus of our discussion in the next and final section of this chapter.

(ix) Beyond Power and Isolation

Although, as we have seen, Muriel may follow in her father's powerful footsteps and perpetuate the cycle of commands and power, bearing Canetti's theory out, Pattie deals with her subjection differently. Murdoch can thus be seen to represent a possible resolution to the problem of the autonomous individual, with which both she and Canetti were preoccupied. Canetti calls for the need to find ways of dealing with power at the end of *Masse und Macht*: 'If we would master power we must face command openly and

boldly, and search for means to deprive it of its sting' (IML 1120, 470).²⁷⁸ He offers the concept of transformation as a possible solution to this problem and although Murdoch noted this idea in her review, she appears not to have seen the potential for countering the exercise of power which Canetti saw in it.²⁷⁹ Murdoch was acquainted with his concept of *Verwandlung* before she read *Masse und Macht*. In an undated letter she notes:

Dear heart, just a note. I've been thinking so much about you. I hope you will be well. I feel deeply convinced that the ordeal which you see ahead is some sort of dying into life – a good *Verwandlung* where one goes, as it were open-eyed into what seems utter darkness – and then finds one has entered some other & much better world. I am pleased the novel is there, bearing you company. Hold onto it, & it will prove a guide.²⁸⁰

However, the argument that she had reservations about this idea is first clear when Conradi notes that Canetti was speaking of transformation when they met on Christmas Day 1952 and adds 'Iris saw dangers in this, but soon noted in him many aspects and faces – a veritable "Hindu Pantheon"'.²⁸¹ It is difficult to ascertain from this whether or not Murdoch eventually accepted Canetti's theory. However, her annotations support the view that she did not see the potential Canetti sees in it. She notes: 'EC interested in greatness (and the temptatns [temptations] of power) but not in goodness' (IML 1120, 464). Of *Masse und Macht* she notes: 'A pessimistic ethic – he sees the sources of evil & is silent about the sources of good'. This is in spite of the fact that a few lines earlier she notes: 'this is a real work on moral phil. [philosophy]' (IML 1120, 484). Murdoch does not see Canetti's theory of transformation as demonstrating his response to the 'greatness', the 'evil' which he describes in his analysis of power in *Masse und Macht*. However, despite this, the depictions of the responses of the women in *The Time of the Angels* to their experiences of power mirrors Canetti's ideas on transformation closely. In

²⁷⁸ Underlining is Murdoch's on her copy of Canetti's text.

²⁷⁹ Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', *Spectator*, 6 September 1962, 337-338 (p. 337)

²⁸⁰ KUAS 6/1/12/25.

²⁸¹ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 345.

the final section of Chapter Three I will argue that her own idea of Unselfing as a route to the good has much in common with Canetti's transformations.

Canetti offers *Verwandlung* as one means of breaking the cycle of stings and power.²⁸² It is the practice of recognising others through empathising with them, rather than commanding them which would perpetuate the exercise of power.²⁸³ By thus communing with and acknowledging the other – which is the opposite to the rigid, ordered life of power or subjection characterised by isolation and the resultant lack of human relationships – there is a chance of freedom from the stings of subjection. Freedom for Canetti is the ability to metamorphose which is at the same time 'seeing' the other which, as pointed out in the first chapter, is a prerequisite for the good for both authors. Issuing and obeying commands, on the other hand, isolates the subjected individual into a prison-like existence where experience of the outside world, others and by inference *Verwandlung* is impossible.²⁸⁴ We note especially the isolation of the power figures discussed in this chapter, Kien and Fisher, and also of the subjected characters, Anna, Pattie and Elizabeth. These figures' isolation means that they do not have the opportunity to commune with other people and thereby experience transformation. Unlike the exercise of power, Canetti's transformations promote understanding and tolerance of what is other than oneself.

When Pattie in *The Time of the Angels* and Poli in 'Der gute Vater' follow their masters' orders, they compromise their capacity to experience the external world. Poli's time outside is strictly limited and the rest of the time she is locked into the kitchen. Pattie, like Poli, goes out only to buy food for her master. Elizabeth, on the other hand, never leaves the rectory and so never sees the external world. The power figure must

²⁸² Friederike Eigler, *Das autobiographische Werk von Elias Canetti: Verwandlung, Identität, Machtausübung* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 1988), p. 79. Eigler notes that *Verwandlung* is a 'Gegenbegriff' to the exercise of power in Canetti's writing.

²⁸³ J. P. Stern, 'Canetti's Later Work', in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, pp. 239-248 (p. 248). (first publ. in *The London Review of Books*, 8:12, 3 July 1986, 13-15).

²⁸⁴ Dagmar Barnouw, 'Elias Canetti: Poet and Intellectual', in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, pp. 15-34 (p. 31). (first publ. in *Major Figures of Contemporary Austrian Literature*, ed. by Donald G. Daviau (New York: Lang, 1987), pp. 117-138).

carefully control all external situations in order to maintain his/her control.²⁸⁵ All three women are denied their opportunities to experience others through *Verwandlung*. Like Proteus in bondage, they are limited. Metamorphosis, in Canetti's view, would offer a route to their freedom and re-possession of their lives and identities. Understandably, in order for one to know who one is, one must have the opportunity to recognise what one is not. Seeing the other and experiencing empathy with others outside of oneself are essential for freedom and identity. This section demonstrates the affinities between Canetti's theory of *Verwandlung* as a means for circumventing power and Murdoch's characters' similar attempts to escape it.

Canetti scholarship has cited his theory of *Verwandlung* as crucial to an understanding of his oeuvre, a fact suggested in his specifying the position of the modern writer as 'Hüter der Verwandlung'.²⁸⁶ The *Dichter's* stance is anathema to that of the power figure, who curtails his subject's/slave's experience of metamorphosis:

So wie der Herr seinem Hund nicht erlaubt zu jagen, was er will, sondern den Bereich dieser Jagd je nach seinem überlegenen Nutzen einengt, so nimmt er auch dem Sklaven eine ausgebildete Verwandlung um die andere ab. Der Sklave darf dies und darf jenes nicht tun (*MM*, 454).

Canetti also explains his theory of metamorphosis through his readings about African Bushmen. Using examples of physical empathy in a number of stories, he again delineates *Verwandlung* as experiencing the other, as opposed to the isolation of the power figure. A man can sense that his father is coming because he can feel his father's wound. A husband feels that his wife is returning home because he can feel the weight of her baby's sling on his shoulder. All of these are examples of *Verwandlung* for Canetti. The body of the son is the body of the father and the body of the husband is the body of his wife. These are examples of 'saubere Verwandlungen' because the father who is

²⁸⁵ Eigler, p. 82. In a discussion of transformation, Eigler notes 'Der nach Herrschaft Strebende muß sich selbst und andere unter Kontrolle halten, jede unkalkulierbare Offenheit oder Änderung muß ausgeschaltet bleiben'.

²⁸⁶ Elias Canetti, *Das Gewissen der Worte: Essays* (Munich: Hanser, 1975), p. 257.

coming remains himself as does the wife with the baby. (*MM*, 397-403) Canetti's theory concerns seeing the world from the perspective of somebody else as in the examples given above. While going out into the world and physically experiencing the other is one route to *Verwandlung*, experiencing the other in more cerebral ways, including for instance reading and through the arts, is another.²⁸⁷

Verwandlungen always remain discrete for the person who experiences them; their own identity is not confused with those that they have experienced through their communion in transformation. Robertson notes: 'In these transformations, the bushman becomes the other being, and feels the other's sensations in his body. He does not, however, become the other so entirely as to surrender his own identity'.²⁸⁸ What all of these examples have in common according to Canetti is that '*ein Körper dem anderen gleichgestellt wird*' (*MM*, 401). 'Verwandlung' is also compared to wearing a mask of the other.

On the other hand, rulers and their subjects are characterised by an inability to transform and Murdoch underlined the key points of this discussion in *Masse und Macht*. There Canetti argues that '[p]erhaps the most important of all prohibitions on transformation are the social' because no hierarchy can be maintained without them (*IML* 1120, 380). As opposed to creating parity between classes and individuals (which is the aim of *Verwandlung*), by denying certain people their capacity for transformation, inequalities between individuals and classes remain in place. While 'at one pole stands the master transformer', the shaman, at the other stands the 'divine king, who is subject to a hundred restrictions'. The king is a static non-transformer compared to the shaman; the 'difference between the two lies in their exactly opposite relationship to transformation'. It is the static person who has had a 'decisive influence on our whole modern conception of power. The non-transformer has been set on a pedestal'. While he remains the same, he can raise his subjects to higher levels or demote them to lower ones.

²⁸⁷ Preece, 'Canetti and the Question of Genre' in *A Companion to the works of Elias Canetti*, p. 92.

²⁸⁸ Robertson, 'Canetti and Nietzsche: An Introduction to *Masse und Macht*', p. 212.

The result is that 'the man who is himself denied all transformation can transform others as he pleases' (IML 1120, 380-2).²⁸⁹

Canetti's Kien, as a power figure, is characterised by this very inability to transform himself and this is as a reflection of his failure to recognise, communicate and empathise with others. The most obvious expression of Kien's inability to experience 'Verwandlung' is when he wishes to block Therese out of his mind and imagines turning himself into a granite statue.²⁹⁰

Er spürte, wie die Kälte sich durch seinen Körper verbreitete, und schätzte sie nach ihrer gleichmäßigen Verteilung ab. Es gab Tage, da die linke Leibeshälfte rascher erkaltete als die rechte; das versetzte ihn in ernstliche Unruhe. 'Hinüber!' befahl er, und Ströme von Wärme, von der rechten entsandt, machten den Fehler auf der linken gut. Seine Fertigkeit im Erstarren steigerte sich von Tag zu Tag. Sobald er den steinernen Zustand erreicht hatte, prüfte er die Härte des Materials, indem er mit den Schenkeln einen leichten Druck gegen den Stuhlboden ausübte. Diese Härteprobe dauerte nur wenige Sekunde, ein längerer Druck hätte den Stuhl zermalmt (DB, 172).²⁹¹

Correspondingly, Murdoch's powerful, isolated character, Fisher, has a particular stiffness about him. He often appears at the top of the stairs resembling a dark 'tower' (TTA, 34). His daughter also points out that his face always seemed 'a trifle glazed and stiffened' (TTA, 35). On another occasion he again has a 'curiously stiff face' which was

²⁸⁹ All underlining is Murdoch's in her copy of Canetti's *Crowds and Power*.

²⁹⁰ See also Werner Hofmann, 'All Smooth', in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, pp. 3-14 for further discussion of the motif of stone and its function antithetical to transformation.

²⁹¹ Eigler, *Das autobiographische Werk von Elias Canetti: Verwandlung, Identität, Machtausübung*, p. 82. Eigler also notes the opposition of rigidity (Erstarrung) which is associated with the powerful figures, and transformation which is its antithesis. See also Anne Fuchs, 'The Dignity of Difference: Self and Other in Elias Canetti's *Voices of Marrakesh*' in *Critical Essays on Elias Canetti*, ed. by David Darby, pp. 201-212 (p. 203). Fuchs notes 'Canetti attempts to show in *Crowds and Power* that the ability to participate with either nature or another in an intuitive or empathetic manner is a uniquely human quality. In the process of civilization, however, this potential is limited and curbed by the opposite tendency toward *Erstarrung* (petrification), which is closely affiliated with power (CP, 377-79). Canetti analyzes history as a battle between *Verwandlung* and *Erstarrung*: he argues that in totalitarian societies the representatives of power attempt to curb and limit the human potential for *Verwandlung*'.

‘too much in repose, a face such as one might find in a remote mountain cave’ (*TTA*, 128-129). Pattie too notices the ‘curious stiffness’ of Carel’s face (*TTA*, 157). Similarly, her own extreme isolation contributes to her inability to experience transformation which requires interaction with something or someone outside of the self. When she is completely in Fisher’s thrall, she struggles to feel empathy. Following the death of the mother of her charges, Pattie cannot feel their pain:

Pattie did not grieve for Clara. She did not grieve for the children who came weeping out of the room where Clara grew daily thinner. Pattie held her head high and with a ferocity of will stared past the horror of the present into the all justifying all-reconciling future when she would be Mrs. Carel Fisher. Her destiny bore her stiffly up, a stronger force than sentiment or guilt. She was the elect, the Crown Princess. She would become what she had been born for, and let a million women die and a million children wring their hands (*TTA*, 28-29).

The inability to empathise is the inability to experience *Verwandlung* as Canetti defines it. Pattie is characterised by the same ‘stiffness’ as her master. The stifling of her capacity for transformation is also highlighted by Murdoch in the description of Pattie lying ‘inert like a chrysalis, moving a little but incapable of changing her place’ (*TTA*, 31). She cannot transform into a butterfly from her current state. Pattie also sees herself as a prisoner who cannot transform herself into a bird and escape her prison-like world. Murdoch’s text, therefore, echoes one of Canetti’s central ideas. Muriel is another character who cannot experience transformation and is under her father’s sway. Her world is sleepy and enclosed, like ‘the interior of an egg’ (*TTA*, 138). She cannot transform from the egg stage to the next one in her state of subjugation. Elizabeth is also characterised by a lack of transformation when it is pointed out that she has not been reading (*TTA*, 130).²⁹²

²⁹² Robertson, ‘Canetti and Nietzsche: An Introduction to *Masse und Macht*’, notes: ‘In modern culture we have many opportunities for empathy in reading literature about other people and other cultures. The imaginative response of the reader in recreating the novelist’s character’s characters may be seen as an attenuated version of transformation’, p. 213. We note that Kien, the powerful figure and non-transformer, believes that novels ought to be banned by the state noting critically that with novels ‘Man lernt sich in

As Pattie moves away from Fisher towards other people, she regains her capacity for *Verwandlung*. Pattie remembers her reading. It is noted: 'She recalled a little poem which had troubled her at school: "I am black but, but oh my soul is white"; and Pattie decided that she was damned if her soul was white. If she had a soul and souls had a colour, hers was a creamy brown a little darker in hue than a *cappuccino*' (TTA, 25) and 'She read a lot of romantic novels, including some she had been taught to call the classics, she read the women's magazines from cover to cover, and she even read some poetry and copied pieces of it into a black notebook' (TTA, 26). Through her reading, Pattie develops herself and her capacity for transformation and eventually escapes Fisher. Another way that the parallel between Murdoch's and Canetti's ideas is apparent is when Pattie feels empathy with Eugene when he loses his precious icon (TTA, 88).

One of the means through which one can come to 'see' the other is by joining the crowd, according to Canetti. It is a means of changing state from isolation to communion with others, and is thus a means to experiencing *Verwandlung*. He writes:

There is nothing that man fears more than the touch of the unknown. He wants to see what is reaching towards him, and to be able to recognise or at least classify it. Man always tends to avoid physical contact with anything strange [...] All the distances which men create round themselves are dictated by this fear. They shut themselves in a house which no-one may enter, and only there feel some measure of security. [...] It is only in the crowd that man can become free of this fear of being touched. That is the only situation in which the fear changes into its opposite [...] As soon as a man has surrendered himself to the crowd, he ceases to fear its touch. Ideally, all are equal there; no distinctions count, not even that of sex. The man pressed against him is the same as himself. He feels him as he feels himself. Suddenly it is as though everything were happening in one and the same body (IML 1120, 66).

allerlei Menschen einfühlen. [...] Man löst sich in die Figuren auf, die einem gefallen. Jeder Standpunkt wird begreiflich' (DB, 41-42).

In terms of language, we can see the parallels being made here between transformation and joining the crowd: both see the self confronting and 'seeing' the other and both neutralise hierarchies and power dynamics by rendering the two bodies equal. Images of moving through portals and doorways from isolation to the external world are correspondingly used by both Murdoch and Canetti to portray the change towards communion with other/s.²⁹³ This is also of course a means to transformation. In *The Time of the Angels* Pattie keeps the door and protects Carel's domain and rule from callers like Anthea Barlow and Marcus Fisher. Likewise, Anna Pfaff holds the position of door keeper in the house she shares with her father. However, in both novels, the end of the power of the central characters and their deaths are precipitated by the relationships of their subjects and themselves with others outside of themselves. Transgressing thresholds and moving through portals are therefore metaphors for transformation, for changing one's state from enclosure and autonomy to one of community.²⁹⁴ Kien's union with Therese, Fischerle and Pfaff in *Die Blendung* and Elizabeth's relationship with Muriel, Muriel's with Leo Peshkov and Pattie's with Eugene in *The Time of the Angels*, all contribute to the end of Kien's and Carel's reigns. On the symbolic level then, these unions are necessary for the destruction of what Kien and Carel represent, namely the autonomous powerful individual.

The crowd, the other, is symbolised by the river and the sea for Canetti. In her evocation of the solution to their shared problem, Murdoch employs these similar symbols which again demonstrate an affinity between these authors' writings. Her underlining in her copy of *Masse und Macht* indicate that she was interested in these 'crowd symbols' and she also included them in her personalised index at the back of the

²⁹³ Dorothy A. Winsor, 'Solipsistic Sexuality in Murdoch's Gothic Novels', in *Modern Critical Views*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986), pp. 121-130 (first publ. in *Renascence*, 34 (1981), 52-63). Winsor also points out '[t]he spiritual isolation of the Rectory's inhabitants results in their literal inability to make contact with others; the people within the house have difficulty getting out and the people outside the house have difficulty getting in' (p. 128).

²⁹⁴ Conradi, *The Saint and the Artist: A Study of the Fiction of Iris Murdoch*, p. 169. Conradi rightly observes that this novel is the 'loneliest' (emphasis Conradi's) in the Murdoch canon due to its lack of human relationships.

book (IML 1120, 471). Like transformation, crowds, rivers and the sea are characterised by their fluidity and contingency and are in contrast to the stone-like rigid quality of the autonomous powerful men like Kien and Fisher. Pattie's union with Eugene and her freedom from Carel (and Carel's demise) is preceded and brought about by her seeing the river and eventually the sea with Eugene (*TTA*, 146-7). Pattie is brought as a spectator to see the sea by Eugene who is already a crowd participant. Her confrontation with the sea is thus symbolic of her 'seeing' Eugene and her freedom from Carel's influence and power. Murdoch's description of Pattie's and Eugene's journey to the river is not without a resemblance to crowds. We learn that as the pair ramble through the streets people pass them 'bundled up' in their coats. Murdoch emphasises the 'movement', the 'fluidity' of the river and even personifies it as 'running' and having a 'hastening movement', as Canetti had also tended to do, in order to symbolise metamorphosis.

The imagery of movement and fluidity, is, as in *Die Blendung*, contrasted with images of rigidity in Murdoch's novel. The scene on the way to the river is a frozen one and Pattie '[...] walked a little gingerly, as if hesitating to break the dry crust of the frozen snow which the sun now made to look golden as if it were baking'. Eugene leans on the 'granite wall of the quay' and scoops the snow off the 'dry hard ridges of granite'. (Granite was also the stone which Kien wished to emulate as he stiffened his body to distance himself from the world outside of himself.) The sun which would melt this solid scene shines symbolically only twice in the course of the novel and this scene is the first, the other is after Pattie leaves and Carel dies.²⁹⁵ The melting of the snow, the chemical change of state or transformation is suggestive of the breaking and dissolving of the cycle of power resulting in the end of Pattie's isolation. The enormity of the situation is underlined by the comment 'He [Eugene] felt a little giddy with the light and the opened hugeness of the past' (*TTA*, 146). Her communion with the outside world is a huge moment in Pattie's life which facilitates the end of her past, enclosed, subjugated existence.

Other images of contrast in this scene are also connected to Pattie's communion with the outside world, her experience of *Verwandlung*, and her emergence from her life

²⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 172.

of subjection. The cold of the white snow makes '[...] dark red fires glow in the brown of her [Pattie's] cheeks'. The following exchange between Eugene and Pattie is particularly interesting from the point of view of the bringing together (though without a synthesis) of contrasts: "Take your glove off," he said. "You must feel the snow. It's not cold really. There." He took her ungloved hand in his. He wanted to see her brownness against the white. He sank their joined hands slowly into the coping of the granite wall' (*TTA*, 148).

In this respect, Murdoch's plot reverses the situation of Kien and Therese because Pattie grows closer to Eugene. Their relationship is suggested in the physical movement of two bodies moving closer together which closely resembles Canetti's description of joining the crowd, touching and confronting the other. Canetti describes this moment as: '[...] resembling the love-play of two snake-like creatures, the one slowly and tenderly drawing its length through the embrace of the other'. Compare this with Murdoch's description of Pattie joining the crowd (represented by Eugene):

'Let me warm you.' He put an arm awkwardly round her. His overcoat stood up between them like a board. He fumbled his coat a little open and tried to draw Pattie nearer. Her hand, which he was still holding, he tucked in under his arm leaving it to claw upon the material of his jacket. Shifting the pressure from her shoulder and edging back the collar of his coat with his chin he tried to get a grip on her waist and move her nearer in between the flaps of the coat. He held onto the slippery bunchy fur, pulling at it. It was a gauche embrace. They stood face to face, two rotund bundles of clothing, unable to get close enough [...] Then Pattie somehow moved and sidled and got herself inside the overcoat. He felt her weight and the warmth of her leaning body (*TTA*, 148).

The correspondence between these two descriptions of an embrace is striking, especially when one considers the wider meaning and the shared symbolism. For both, the embrace is not easy and is in fact dance-like as they move closer together. Of course, one could use Canetti's phrase, a 'love-play of two-snake like creatures, the one slowly and tenderly drawing its length through the embrace of the other' to describe Pattie's embrace with

Eugene. Pattie virtually becomes Eugene in this scene as she shuffles herself into his coat – they come to resemble one person, but are all the time two. This is an example of transformation taking place.

As with Canetti's command theory and the imagery connected to it, there are affinities between Canetti's concept of transformation and Murdoch's discussion of power and its avoidance, a discussion which, as this case study has shown, echoes many aspects of Canetti's *Die Blendung*. These affinities are a manifestation of their common intellectual interests, namely their shared reaction to the philosophical tradition which pictured the human as autonomous and powerful, as noted in *Die Blendung* and *The Time of the Angels*. Furthermore, Murdoch's annotations and review of *Masse und Macht* indicate that she also shared Canetti's more general interest in the literary portrayal of power figures and this is also borne out in their shared motifs (motifs which she underlined and marked up in her copy of *Crowds and Power*).²⁹⁶ Finally, another major affinity we have established between these writers is their shared urge to find ways of overcoming (avoiding being subjected to and avoiding exercising) power. We noted that while Murdoch appears not to have appreciated the merits of Canetti's theory of *Verwandlung* (in her review and in her marginalia) or his ideas on the potential of the crowd to this end, the *denouement* of *The Time of the Angels* echoes these important ideas from *Masse und Macht*. This is a significant consideration to which we will return in Chapter Three, when we will compare Murdoch's theory of Unselfing (the key to overcoming power and embracing the good) with Canetti's *Verwandlung*.

²⁹⁶ The motif of the monster and the maiden is by now clearly more a critical shared intellectual interest for these authors rather than merely Murdoch writing her alleged experience of Canetti into her novels.

Chapter Three

Possession and Non-Possession: *Masse und Macht* and *The Sea, The Sea*

(i) Introduction

The previous case studies have compared blindness and isolation in relation to power and subjection in the writings of Murdoch and Canetti. These authors' power figures are characterised by blindness towards and detachment from the external world. This third chapter compares literary representations of the possessiveness of the power-hungry figure, concentrating in particular on Charles Arrowby in *The Sea, The Sea* and *Masse und Macht*. Like Mischa Fox and Julius King, Arrowby is believed to have been modelled on Canetti's personality.²⁹⁷ Drawing on Murdoch's annotations from her study of *Masse und Macht*, I argue that Arrowby can also be connected with the prototypical power figure as it is delineated in Canetti's work.

This current case study, therefore, will concentrate on specific attributes which Murdoch's power figures share with those of Canetti's, as outlined in *Masse und Macht*. References to her annotated copy of Canetti's central text add weight to the comparisons, which serve to demonstrate that these authors had shared intellectual interests. The case study commences with an assessment of the intellectual connections between them during the period from 1967 and 1978 (between *The Time of the Angels* and *The Sea, The Sea*). It finds that there is evidence, in the form of letters and meetings, which points to an intellectual relationship that has consistently been overlooked in the previous wholly biographical assessments of the relationship.

The main body of this chapter will take the form of an analysis of the power figure in *The Sea, The Sea* and *Masse und Macht*. The first section argues that for both authors, possession is a key idea in their portrayals of the power-hungry individual. Both

²⁹⁷ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, pp. 345-375. Conradi notes that Murdoch first 'portrayed' Canetti in her fiction through the monstrous figure of Mischa Fox. However, I argue that there is more to this connection than Conradi claims. Rather than portraying Canetti, Murdoch was portraying a figure, a picture of the human which preoccupied Canetti also, hence the comparisons between their writing which this thesis brings forth.

also blend images of interpersonal, political and animal power struggles suggesting many connections between the exercise of power in these realms. This technique allows these authors to discuss and describe aspects of the political despot, for example Hitler, whilst also demonstrating how these particular traits, including the urge to possess, manifest themselves, albeit to varying degrees, in ordinary, everyday, interpersonal exchange.

The fundamental characteristic of the power figure, the urge to possess, is expressed by Murdoch and Canetti in similar ways. Both authors endow their power figures with a passion for eating, which is a metaphor for their consumption of other people as they attempt to control those around them. Furthermore, their consuming natures also extend to other areas. Both Canetti's Schreber and Murdoch's Arrowby suffer from a mania for finding the truth, reasons and causes and this can be interpreted as an extension of their possessive natures.²⁹⁸ In addition to these manifestations of the urge to possess, this case study compares Schreber's and Arrowby's approach to language and words as another means of satisfying this shared urge.

Arrowby, however, is attempting to improve himself and turn away from his life of power. Though he is not really successful, he does, in this respect, represent the point where Murdoch's thinking appears to depart from – and to some extent also react to – Canetti's thought as it is set out in *Masse und Macht*. In the previous novels associated with Canetti and discussed here, Murdoch includes characters who are more successful in their endeavours to be good. For example Peter Saward and Tallis Browne in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*. The power-hungry, evil figures. Mischa Fox, Calvin Blick and especially Carel Fisher are further away from good conduct. Charles Arrowby, however, though certainly not good, is setting about becoming good. By contrast, Canetti appears not to present a route away from power, as Murdoch's writing does. His power figures are characterised by their non-transformative nature, suggesting that they cannot become good. However, through Canetti's theory of transformation and through his discussion of the crowd, he presents possible routes to avoid the exercise of power for both the

²⁹⁸ There are two Arrowbys in the novel, Charles (the narrator and central character) and his cousin James. In order to avoid confusion, I shall refer to Charles as Arrowby and his cousin as James.

exerciser and the victim. As we noted in the previous case study, Murdoch appears to have overlooked these. In the final part of this chapter, I will show that there are many points of comparison between Canetti's theory of transformation and Murdoch's discussion of Unselfing. Transformation, membership of the crowd and Unselfing are fundamentally other-centred concepts; in this respect they are antitheses to the powerful character's activities where he is blind to the other, lives in isolation to avoid confronting the other and attempts to possess the other with a view to rendering it extinct by subsuming it and making it an extension of himself.

By the end of this chapter we will be able to conclude that rather than being two authors who simply had a love affair, Murdoch and Canetti were kindred authors whose shared intellectual interests are manifested in the affinities which this thesis finds between their works. Their respective literary studies of the exercise of power in interpersonal exchanges are set against their differing emphases on the human capacity for self-improvement. In this respect, both authors can be said to take a stand against power precisely through their literary treatments of the theme.

(ii) Intellectual Contact 1966-1978

Murdoch's letters to Canetti continued into the late 1960s. The surviving letters from this period continue to convey Murdoch's requests for meetings with Canetti. However, to date, commentaries on these letters overlook the implied intellectual purpose of these meetings for Murdoch. In terms of content, Murdoch's comment noted above: 'I have a lot to talk to you about – nothing particularly dramatic or urgent – but just the sorts of things I can only say to you, or best say to you! And I want you to tell me – oh marvellous things'²⁹⁹ indicates a considerable degree of warmth and intimacy remained on her part, despite the increasing infrequency of their meetings, her marriage to Bayley and despite Canetti's happy and monogamous relationship with Hera Buschor.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ KUAS 6/1/12/3.

³⁰⁰ Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, p. 525 In ZB 23, Hanuschek notes Canetti 'überlegte auch, daß er völliges Vertrauen zu ihr habe und sie "um keinen Preis täuschen will"'.

However, coupled with this degree of intimacy, the purpose of the meetings is to converse – something which continued to be of great importance for Murdoch.³⁰¹ After one such meeting (post-1963), Murdoch wrote to Canetti: ‘It was very wonderful to see you. You always communicate power to me & I do love you’.³⁰² Communicating power is on a par with the ‘marvellous things’ which she wants Canetti to tell her in the above letter from 1966 and underlines a major shared interest, which represents a much overlooked aspect of her relationship to him. Murdoch’s meetings with Canetti also continued to involve intellectual discussions of their mutual interests. Indeed his comment in *Party im Blitz* tallies with her letters’ descriptions of this aspect of their past and anticipated meetings (though Canetti’s opinion is that Murdoch mostly listened to him). (PB, 183)

Murdoch also continued her custom of sending a stamped-addressed postcard to facilitate Canetti’s reply to the proposed arrangement. This practice indicates that she tended to the relationship more than Canetti did at this stage, but it also suggests a degree of desperation on her part to see him; indeed Murdoch’s evident annoyance at Canetti’s failure to use the postcard again adds weight to this view. In an undated letter, she states: ‘[...] I’m very sorry not to see you. If by any chance JS [John Simopoulos, a mutual acquaintance who told Murdoch that Canetti was away] is wrong perhaps you wd [would] employ that postcard!’ and ‘[...] I wish you would use that piece of paper I left with you!’.³⁰³ The letters also correspond with what Canetti says about the relationship in *Party im Blitz*: ‘So aber blieb es eine einseitige Geschichte, die ich gegen meine Neigung hinnahm und unbeteiligt beobachtete. Es kamen Briefe von ihr, sehr heftige, die ich nie beantwortete’. (PB, 181) Murdoch’s persistence in her correspondence with Canetti, her diligence in facilitating his response and her desire to meet and talk to him all tend towards confirming Canetti’s view regarding the nature of their conversations during this period and his failure to respond to her letters.

³⁰¹ The significance of her dialogue with Canetti during the affair can be measured by the fact that she kept a record of some of the issues they discussed including the ideas of ‘Verwandlung’ and the ‘Stachel’ which are central to Canetti’s work. See Chapter Two.

³⁰² KUAS 6/1/12/15. This quotation is from a letter wherein Murdoch invited Canetti to her London flat which she held between 1963 and 1970.

³⁰³ KUAS 6/1/12/10, 6/1/12/25.

In 1967 Murdoch travelled to Australia and again she found the time to write to Canetti: 'I think of you very often, and I do hope all is well. (I have talked of you several times lately – with G [?] Weiler and with a China man called Lo who sends love!) [...] I do hope you are all right. I want [?] so much to tell you about India. Oh you should have been there. I do love you. [...] Ever with much much love'.³⁰⁴ She complains about her busy schedule and neither having time to reflect nor being left alone but nevertheless she finds time to write to him and reveals the extent to which he is in her thoughts. She tries to give him a flavour of her travels to India and Australia and even her hopes of seeing a duck-billed platypus.³⁰⁵ There is a sense with Murdoch's letters that she is desperately trying to hang onto Canetti which echoes her words to Bayley about him in the 1950s: 'I don't want to lose him at the moment'.³⁰⁶ Even when she was on the other side of the world and very busy more than a decade after their relationship is said to have ended, she still actively sought not to 'lose' Canetti by maintaining her correspondence with him. Her purpose in doing so is less likely to have been romantic, given the fact that she said these words to her fiancé, Bayley. Rather, her desire to maintain contact with Canetti at this stage and her ongoing interest in meeting him to talk suggest their ongoing, shared, intellectual interests.

In another letter, dated 1968 by Conradi, Murdoch again suggests a meeting and also indirectly indicates that she has not seen Canetti for some time:

My dearest Canetti,

Please forgive me? By [*sic*] silence. John had sabbatical leave from Oxford all last year & this meant my visits to London were rather impromptu. I rang you up on a few occasions but got no answer. (I gather from John Simop you will now be in Zurich) I do want to see you and hope you will not be cross with me. I had rather be reproached in person than by your silence. I shall be around more regularly in London later this month and in Nov. & will suggest a time beforehand & send a stamped postcard with for yes/no reply

My work is rather at a standstill at the moment. I am writing poetry, which has an interlude feeling, as I am always very much at sea with this form, I want things to be different but cannot see how this can be. I very much want to see you & to hear what you have been doing & just to look at you.

³⁰⁴ KUAS 6/1/12/2. Dated 25 February 1967.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 389.

I have thought of you a lot. I send my thoughts now, many more than can be written down, and do hope to see you before Friday.³⁰⁷

Apart from revealing a hiatus in their meetings, Murdoch also gives an insight into the kinds of things they discuss, and it is unsurprising to note that the main topic of the letter is Murdoch's intellectual preoccupations which come in the same paragraph as her desire to see Canetti and to 'hear what you have been doing', thus connecting the two activities.

Throughout the 1960s and certainly by the 1970s, Canetti was travelling in Europe continuously and his visits to England were infrequent. While Murdoch suspected that Canetti was deliberately being evasive by not answering her letters, in reality, Canetti *was* out of the country very often during these years.³⁰⁸

Bayley's comment that Murdoch 'was sorry' when Canetti settled in Zurich in the early 1970s surely implies that they still saw each other, albeit infrequently, and that she was unhappy at the prospect of the extra distance between them further lessening their contact.³⁰⁹ By 1966 at the latest, Canetti was living between London and Zurich. While he preferred to spend his time with Hera in Zurich, he also enjoyed returning to London because 'Veza was in London'.³¹⁰ As time went on, and with the birth of his daughter in 1972, Canetti's absences from London continued.³¹¹ Nevertheless, he remained in some contact with Murdoch during these years. They met in 1972.³¹² In 1973, Hanser won the publication rights of *Masse und Macht* and Canetti recommended Murdoch's *Spectator*

³⁰⁷ KUAS 6/1/12/17.

³⁰⁸ Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, pp. 437-542. See also Anne Rowe, "I embrace you with much love", p. 38.

³⁰⁹ Letter to author (EM) February 2008.

³¹⁰ Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, p. 495. Translation mine. Veza died in London in 1963 and Canetti was always connected to London because she died there. Hanuschek also notes that as Canetti's relationship with Hera Buschor continued, he also tended to spend more time with her in Zurich: 'Gleichzeitig [1967] wurde das Verhältnis zu Hera Buschor immer enger und reicher, auch zeitlich ausgreifender' (p. 525).

³¹¹ Ibid. Hanuschek points out that after the birth of his daughter: 'Obwohl ihm die Trennung schwer fiel, zwang sich Canetti, ab und zu nach England zu fliegen und den Schreibtisch in seiner Arbeitswohnung in der Thurlow Road zu nutzen [...] London wurde ihm allerdings fremder, auch Hampstead veränderte sich' (p. 565).

³¹² Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 582. Conradi notes that when the writers met in 1978, they had not seen each other for six years.

review be used to promote the book.³¹³ During these years also, Canetti requested Murdoch's advice in relation to his daughter's schooling.³¹⁴ In May 1978, they met in Vienna where, for the first time, Murdoch read from her work at the 'Gesellschaft für Literatur'. They had arranged to have tea together at the British Embassy but met beforehand by chance at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in front of the Breughel paintings.³¹⁵ After Hera Canetti's death in 1988, Canetti gave up his flat in Hampstead in order to remain in Zurich with his daughter.³¹⁶ In 1990, Murdoch flew to Zurich to visit Canetti and planned to visit again in 1992. That trip was cancelled due to illness, however.

No letters between them from the late 1970s onwards have survived. Nevertheless, the information in the previous paragraph, however fragmentary, indicates that they were in communication during these years and indeed were on good terms, despite Canetti's hostile portrait of Murdoch in *Party im Blitz*. In interview on 12 December 2007, Jeremy Adler, a friend of Canetti's, supported the view that Murdoch and Canetti remained friends in the decades after their affair. Adler also visited Canetti in Zurich in the years before his death and notes that Canetti always spoke of Murdoch with respect for her intellect. In Adler's opinion, the portrait in *Party im Blitz* was prompted by Murdoch's comparison of Canetti with Freud in *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* in 1992.³¹⁷ Indeed this view is supported by the portrait itself which commences with a comment stating her book was indeed the prelude to it: 'Gestern das dickleibige philosophische Buch der Iris Murdoch, ihr Name in Riesenbuchstaben auf dem Umschlag. Ich habe mich – leider – einige Stunden damit beschäftigt'. (PB, 173)

Assessments of this relationship to date all overlook the important point that the evidence which we have indicates that shared intellectual interests formed a major part of this relationship. It is no surprise then that after their love affair, they continued to meet

³¹³ Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, p. 544.

³¹⁴ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 585 and in a letter to the author (EM) from John Bayley dated February 2008.

³¹⁵ Ibid. p. 82.

³¹⁶ Hanuschek, *Elias Canetti: Eine Biographie*, p. 658.

³¹⁷ Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, p. 503.

and communicate. Furthermore, Murdoch also continued to send her books to him which again implies that they would be of interest to him also. In the next section of this case study, I aim to show, through textual analysis, that further affinities between their works support this view of mutual intellectual and literary interests.

(iii) Political and Interpersonal Power

The Sea, The Sea centres on Charles Arrowby, a retired theatre director who is on a pilgrimage of sorts; he is attempting to abjure the life of egotism and power he led in London, in favour of finding a mode of living where he has ‘nothing else to do but to learn to be good’. (*TSTS*, 2) Arrowby’s egotism manifests itself in his urge to exercise power over those around him, a tendency which led to him being described in the press as a “tyrant”, a “tartar” and [...] a “power-crazed monster”. (*TSTS*, 3) However, in many respects he continues the power-hungry life he led in London when he moves to an isolated house (Shruff End) by the sea. Crucial to an understanding of Arrowby is his experience as a teenager when his sweetheart, Hartley, abruptly ended their relationship. Arrowby has never recovered from this experience and it may be directly connected with the hostile, unbalanced relationships which he later had with women.³¹⁸ On relocating to the seaside village of Narrowdean, however, he finds that Hartley now lives in the same village with her ex-army husband, Ben Fitch. Arrowby immediately seizes on the idea that he will finally repossess Hartley and the majority of the novel is given over to this particular power struggle.³¹⁹ In addition to Arrowby, most of the other characters in the

³¹⁸ Conradi, *The Saint and the Artist: A Study of the Fiction of Iris Murdoch*, p. 299.

³¹⁹ Dipple, pp. 274-305. Dipple’s chapter on *The Sea, The Sea* is probably the most comprehensive. She identifies the other power struggles which the novel takes up. Arrowby is writing his memoir and his struggle to impose form on the events of his life is another aspect of his urge to control. In this endeavour, another of his power struggles comes to light; Dipple notes how Arrowby repeatedly attempts to banish reality while preserving the imaginary world of his head. Furthermore, the regular battle as he struggles to get out of the sea represents another thrust of his lust for power and control. Dipple also points out James’s battle with power. An ex-soldier, James sought the path of virtue through Buddhist teachings. However, his vanity (egotism) gets in the way of his attempts at being good. On a trek with his sherpa, Milarepa, James attempts to perform a sort of magic trick common to the Buddhist adept whereby he could generate enough warmth through his body to keep both himself and the sherpa alive. His failure to do so, and the death of the sherpa as a result, was a moral failing caused by James’s egotism. Like his cousin, James is trying to learn to be good.

novel are flawed for similar reasons. Many are trying to get even for a power struggle which they lost to Arrowby (Rosina Vamburgh, Peregrine Arbelow, Ben Fitch) and in doing so perpetuate the power he exercised over them.³²⁰

Critical comment on this novel concentrates on Arrowby's perilous quest for goodness. Dipple notes that the cousins, James and Charles Arrowby, both succumb to the 'disease of power' and in spite of their desire to abjure those lives, the route to goodness is all too easily perverted by one's egotism and vanity.³²¹

The life which Arrowby is attempting to turn his back on is characterised by his will to possess other people. He has a tendency, for example, to steal other men's wives.³²² As a child he coveted his cousin's (James's) mother and wealth. As an adult he had an affair with his friend's (Peregrine Arbelow) wife, Rosina. When he hears that another of his ex-girlfriends, Lizzie Scherer, has found happiness with a companion, Gilbert Opan, he attempts and initially succeeds in ending their relationship. He similarly pursues Hartley's son, Titus, stating for a time that he wishes him to be his son. Like Murdoch's Blick (*The Flight from the Enchanter*), Carel Fisher (*The Time of the Angels*) and Julius King (*A Fairly Honourable Defeat*), Arrowby's urge to power is typified by what Dipple refers to as his 'indifference to others'. In the previous case studies, we discussed this in relation to *The Flight from the Enchanter*, *The Time of the Angels* and *Die Blendung* and *Masse und Macht* as not an indifference but rather an unwillingness really to 'see' what is 'other' than oneself. Conradi points out that James demonstrates a sharp perception symbolised in his recognition of different types of birds. By contrast, his cousin, Arrowby, cannot tell a shag from a cormorant. Conradi notes: '[o]bsession narrows Charles's focus; virtue widens James's', though neither character is entirely successful in their endeavours to be good and to resist the allure of power.³²³

³²⁰ This is very much in keeping with Canetti's command theory whereby those who are subjugated, go on to subjugate others. The comparison between this dynamic and the actions of some of Murdoch's characters was drawn in Chapter Two in relation to *The Time of the Angels*. It recurs here.

³²¹ Dipple, p. 294.

³²² This of course is another recurrence of the monster and the maiden motif. However, I continue you to demonstrate that this motif is infinitely more complexly connected to Canetti's writing rather than merely to his personality as has been previously claimed.

³²³ Conradi, *The Saint and the Artist*, p. 307.

Arrowby is reunited with his cousin, an army general and Buddhist adept who is trying (and seems further along the path) to be good.³²⁴ James's parallel attempts to abstain from the exercise of power are also a manifestation of Murdoch's literary exposition of the human tendency away from the real towards a fantastical picture of 'reality'.³²⁵ For both, their lives have been characterised by the exercise of power and thereby possession of others.

By the time Conradi came to write Murdoch's biography he had knowledge of her relationship with Canetti and decided that Arrowby was created from Murdoch's experiences of Canetti's negative personality.³²⁶ However, the argument of this thesis is that there is more to her connection to Canetti than her simply and allegedly using elements of his persona for her characters. It is the intention of this chapter to argue that any characters assumed to represent Canetti may equally represent his literary interests, which Murdoch shared.

The connections between Arrowby's urge to possess and the political references with which his character is drawn are important when considering the affinities between Murdoch's and Canetti's literary descriptions of power. Political power and possession are key themes which are virtually entirely overlooked in critical works on Murdoch's novels, especially in relation to the novel currently under discussion. These themes are

³²⁴ Diane N. Capitani, 'Ideas of the Good: Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea*', *Christianity and Literature*, 53:1 (2003 Autumn), pp. 99-108. Capitani discusses the influence of Buddhism on the path to goodness as described in Murdoch's novel.

³²⁵ Katherine Weese, 'Feminist Uses of the Fantastic in Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea*,' *Modern Fiction Studies*, 47:3 (2001 Fall), 630-656, argues that Murdoch's use of narratological conventions (like 'History', 'Pre-history' etc. which are the sections into which the book is divided), as well as her employment of elements of the Gothic genre 'suggest[s] not only a collusion between narrativized historical accounts and traditional novelistic form, but also a collusion between the personal and the political, particularly where the social construction of femininity is concerned. The story Charles tells is the larger story of society's patriarchy, its subordination of women to male authority, and its circumscription of female identity to the domestic realm'. (p. 635) Unlike Weese, however, I argue that Murdoch is not only discussing patriarchy, but also subjugation through the exercise of power more broadly. Weese does not take into account, for example, that Rosina also victimises the other characters in the course of the novel. It is true that Murdoch sees women as a historically subjugated group, but I argue that she is exploring political power and possession in more fundamental and universal terms.

³²⁶ Conradi, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 351. In support of this claim, Conradi notes that Murdoch gives Arrowby (and her other villains) some of Canetti's personal habits. For Conradi's most recent enunciation of this theory, see Rowe, *Iris Murdoch: A Reassessment*, p. 198.

critical for Canetti's work also, and I will demonstrate that there are affinities in their evocation of these ideas in *The Sea*, *The Sea* and *Masse und Macht* respectively. We are by now aware that Murdoch had detailed knowledge of this latter text.

Masse und Macht attempts to portray all power through the description of political and animal power. Again and again, Canetti refers to kings, tyrants and generals. In Murdoch's novel, these figures also appear in the character of James Arrowby, an army general, and Ben Fitch who we learn was a 'staff-sergeant' during the Second World War.³²⁷ Arrowby, though a theatre director, is also repeatedly described in political terms. His house is on a promontory and the property also includes of a Martello tower, which Arrowby wishes to restore. Along the front of the house 'a path leads along a steep-sided rocky causeway, a sort of natural drawbridge' (*TSTS*, 11), and following the coast road from the left of his house, the road 'passes through a curious narrow defile, which I have nicknamed "the Khyber pass", where the way has been *cut* through a big outcrop of rock, which here *invades* the land to a considerable distance'. (*TSTS*, 12)³²⁸ Arrowby also notes of his house by the sea: '[p]arts of it I have colonised, other parts remain obstinately alien and dim'. (*TSTS*, 17) Of himself, in his previous life, he notes: 'If absolute power corrupts absolutely then I must be the most corrupt of men. A theatre director is a dictator [...]. I fostered my reputation for ruthlessness, it was extremely useful'. (*TSTS*, 37) There are many other such references and comparisons between interpersonal and political power.

Masse und Macht reacts to the totalitarianism of the twentieth century by studying the phenomenon of power as the perpetuation of ancient elements of human nature.³²⁹

³²⁷ See also *The Philosopher's Pupil* (1983) where Rozanov is described as an 'autocrat' in his attempts to control the lives of those around him. (*PP*, 371) See also *The Green Knight* where the childhood relationship between the central power figure, Lucas, and his brother, Clement, is described thus: 'Lucas enjoyed his absolute power over his brother: absolute because he had soon taught Clement to accept in silence any degree of despotism...The despotism remained a secret between the master and the slave'. (*GK*, 81)

³²⁸ Italics mine. The language here is military and political pertaining to defence and possession and this continues throughout the novel.

³²⁹ Axel Honneth, 'Die unendliche Perpetuierung des Naturzustandes: Zum theoretischen Erkenntnisgehalt von Canettis *Masse und Macht*', in *Einladung zur Verwandlung: Essays zu Elias Canettis Masse und Macht*, ed. by Michael Krüger (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1995), p. 106. Honneth adds that Canetti is

Honneth argues that Canetti's work shares the premise of Hannah Arendt's that the existence of social crowds help us to understand how the destructive dynamic of totalitarian violence comes into being. The human being, according to Canetti's theory, is characterised by a fear of being physically touched which has its roots in the animal kingdom. This first principle explains the anthropological phenomena of crowd formation and the pursuit of power.³³⁰ In the crowd, the threat which being touched poses is neutralised. There, everyone is equal. The power figure reacts differently in that he locks himself away from others in order to avoid the threat of being touched. Kings, for example, live in palaces with many rooms between them and the external world.³³¹ As seen in Chapter Two, Peter Kien lives mostly locked away from others and indeed Murdoch's characters, Fox, Fisher and now Arrowby all try to lock themselves away from others to reduce the risk of being touched and ultimately possessed by others.³³² The power figure, as described by both Murdoch and Canetti, also has another important means of not being touched and that is to be the first to touch, to seize and ultimately overwhelm and subdue the 'other', so that the threat against themselves is removed. The most extreme example of this is the despot who kills others. Indeed his survivorship becomes a mania fundamentally born out of his fear of being touched.

There are significant comparisons to be made between Canetti's 'Der Überlebende' Murdoch's description of Arrowby.³³³ Murdoch's knowledge of this idea

also in agreement with Horkheimer and Adorno in their view that the increase in power of modern totalitarianism is as a result of a logic which is founded in the beginnings of human self-assertion. His essay goes on to demonstrate the convergences and divergences between Canetti's writing on crowds and power and the writings of Hobbes and Freud in particular.

³³⁰ Ibid. p. 107.

³³¹ Murdoch underlines this (and other) features of kings in her copy of *Crowds and Power*: 'The crucial thing about the king is his uniqueness [...] As we have seen it is important that he should be isolated. An artificial distance is created between him and his subjects [...] Uniqueness, isolation, distance and preciousness thus form an important group of attributes which can be recognised at sight'. And 'The sense of personal space, or position, is of cardinal importance for the paranoiac [...] By the very nature of power, the same must be true of the ruler'. (IML 1120, 416&436)

³³² This also applies for Murdoch's other power figures Lucas Graffe in *The Green Knight* and at times also Rozanov in *The Philosopher's Pupil*.

³³³ Elias Canetti, 'Gespräch mit Theodor W. Adorno', in *Die Gespaltene Zukunft: Aufsätze und Gespräche* (Munich: Hanser, 1972), p. 9. In conversation with Adorno, Canetti points out that the significance of death in his thought can be approached through an understanding of his concept of survival. The satisfaction at surviving the deceased, which is masked by funerary conventions, can become dangerously out of control and can sever ties between the individual and their social group leading to the destruction of the self and the

can be traced back to 1953, when she noted in her diary: 'I remembered the conversation long ago at Carol's, C. saying how deep was the desire to survive, outlive'.³³⁴ According to Canetti, the moment of survival is a moment of power because 'In survival, each man is the enemy of every other, and all grief is insignificant measured against this elemental triumph'.³³⁵ By being the first to seize and ultimately possess the (apparently) threatening other, the threat is removed and one party is the survivor: 'The lowest form of survival is killing'. (IML 1120, 227) The survivor, who is the victor and often the hero, strives for invulnerability and Canetti cites Genghis Khan and Napoleon as examples of this phenomenon. Murdoch notes in her index: 'General as addicted survivor (real anti-war conception!) 230'. (IML 1120, 483) It is remarkable for the purposes of the present literary comparison that the main powerful characters in *The Sea, The Sea* (Charles and James Arrowby) are an army general and a man compared to Genghis Khan respectively. (TSTS, 399)

Arrowby, James and Ben Fitch all share many of the characteristics of the political power figure and they are also all survivors.³³⁶ With his 'daylight reconnaissance' trip to Hartley's house, Arrowby is placed on a par with his general cousin and also with the bullying Staff Sergeant Ben Fitch. (TSTS, 193) In addition to surviving the demise of Titus in the novel, Ben and James also survived many men during their involvement in the Second World War.³³⁷ However, not only military members are survivors. The lust to survive can manifest itself in other aspects of human

'other'. Adorno draws a comparison between Canetti's notion of survival and his own thinking on self-preservation.

³³⁴ KUAS 6/1/13/4.

³³⁵ Murdoch also refers to this theme in her review noting 'A fundamental human passion and a key to the nature of all power is the passion to survive. There is always satisfaction in the thought that it is someone else who is dead: and this satisfaction may become an addiction. This is something much more positive than a mere instinct of self-preservation'. Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', p. 337.

³³⁶ Another major survivor-power figure in Murdoch's *oeuvre* is Julius King in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* (1970). King, a Jew, changed his name from Kahn and like Ben Fitch, was a captive in a concentration camp during the war. However, in spite of his experiences at the hands of the Nazis, he takes a position developing nerve gas and 'a kind of anthrax which resists antibiotics'. He survives drowning (as does Arrowby). (FHD, 12) Connecting Canetti's concept of the sting with survival, Jake and Lefty in *Under the Net* note that 'nothing goes on forever [...] except the Jews' (UN, 101). This is the first of instances in Murdoch's fiction where Jewish characters are also connected with the exertion of power.

³³⁷ For a discussion of Canetti's theory of survivorship especially in relation to post-war Germany see Edgar Piel, 'Der Überlebende: Auch ein Versuch über die Unfähigkeit zu trauern', in *Experte der Macht: Elias Canetti*, ed. by Kurt Bartsch and Gerhard Melzer (Graz: Verlag Droschl, 1985), pp. 38-57.

exchange. James describes a later episode where he survived a sherpa on a mountain in Tibet. Furthermore, Arrowby's negative survival instinct comes to the fore in his dreams where Hartley (his prey for the duration of the novel) is dead. Having escaped him in his youth he notes: 'A little while ago the thought came to me that she was dead. That strange pallor, those dilated pupils: perhaps these were presages of a disease, of some quiet killer biding its time? Perhaps really she had died long ago when I was still young? In a way I would be glad to know that she was dead'. (*TSTS*, 86) Arrowby's soubriquet among his friends, 'King of Shadows', also recalls Hades where the dead are shadows.

None of these 'survivor figures' have children and this is also significant when one considers their survivorship.³³⁸ Hartley reveals that even when they failed to have children themselves, Ben did not want Titus. As the child grew up, Ben's hostility towards him increased and probably drove him away. Ben's resentment of Titus's existence in their lives is often apparent and it also echoes *Masse und Macht* where the survivor-power figure (especially political figure) does not want a child which will, in all likelihood, outlive him. Titus also holds the name of a survivor; Rembrandt's only surviving son, whose portrait Arrowby sees at the Wallace Collection, was named Titus. Like Rembrandt's son, however, Murdoch's Titus only survives to adulthood. This is a point which Murdoch also noted in *Masse und Macht*: 'Son-father hostility 244' and underlined: 'The intensest feeling of power is that found in a ruler who *wants no son*'. (IML 1120, 245) While Titus can be connected to Rembrandt's survivor-son, he can also be linked with Vespasian's elder son, Titus. Canetti mentions this Titus in the course of his discussion of the survivor. (*MM*, 277) Bayley's article on Canetti also mentions Titus in the context of the survivor figure.³³⁹ Murdoch's review also devotes a paragraph to the survivor noting that when the passion to survive becomes an 'addiction', it is key to the nature of all power.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ Howard Moss, 'Narrow Escapes: Iris Murdoch', *Grand Street*, (Autumn 1986), pp. 228-240 (p. 233). Without referring to Canetti's work or connecting it to their power-hungry natures, Moss also notes that Murdoch's powerful characters, Arrowby, Fox (in *The Flight from the Enchanter*) and Rozanov in *The Philosopher's Pupil* are all childless.

³³⁹ Bayley, 'Canetti and Power', in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, trans. by Michael Hulse (London: André Deutsch, 1987), pp. 129-145 (p. 141) (first publ. in *London Review of Books* (17 December 1981- 20 January 1982), pp. 5-7).

³⁴⁰ Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', pp. 337-338.

Murdoch's survivor characters also have affinities with Canetti's 'Überlebender' in terms of their connection to cemeteries. Canetti considers the experience of walking through a cemetery as he considers how long those who are buried lived and how long they have been dead. These thoughts give the man who is living a sense of superiority over those who are dead. He has known more of the world than they have. Murdoch was clearly favourably engaged by this idea. She notes: 'meditations of a man in graveyard 276 writer's handbook!'. (IML 1120, 484) She also mentions it in her review: 'In one guise or another – the meditation in the cemetery, the general "throwing in another division" – there is deep satisfaction in the notion: "They lie dead, I stand here alive"'.³⁴¹ The cemetery by the sea is also a place that Arrowby frequents.³⁴² Canetti notes:

Friedhöfe haben eine starke Anziehung; man sucht sie auf, auch wenn man keinen Angehörigen dort liegen hat. [...] Er geht langsam zwischen den Gräbern hin und her, besieht sich diesen oder jenen Stein, liest die Namen und fühlt sich von manchen von ihnen angezogen. Dann beginnt er, sich dafür zu interessieren, was unter den Namen steht. (MM, 326)

Murdoch also describes Arrowby in the cemetery:

To return to the church, there is a most attractive *cimetière marin*, which evidences a more spacious past than one would expect this 'one horse' village to possess. Many of the tombstones carry carvings [...]. One stone in particular attracts me. It bears a beautiful 'foul anchor' and the simple inscription: *Dummy 1879-1918*. This puzzled me until I realized that 'Dummy' must have been a deaf and dumb sailor who never managed to achieve any other identity. Poor chap. (TSTS, 13)

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Conradi, *The Saint and the Artist*, pp. 293-94 Arrowby interprets the cemetery in conjunction with its position by the sea as an intertext from Paul Valéry's poem, 'Cimetière Marin'. However, it can also demonstrate an affinity with Canetti's discussion of the power figure and the cemetery.

Later, on another of Arrowby's trips to the graveyard, the connection with his will to power and survival (and the connection with Canetti's discussion) becomes more obvious. Arrowby has just met Hartley, but has not succeeded in 'possessing her':

I sat for a while until I reckoned Hartley had done her shopping and gone back up the hill, and then emerged from the church and sat on Dummy's grave, leaning against the gravestone which bore the image of the 'foul anchor' [...] I was indeed, as I leaned back against the sun-warmed lichen-spotted surface of Dummy's laconic monument, sketching a kind of programme for survival. Roughly, the programme was like this. There was no doubt that I must now somehow contrive to devote the rest of my life to Hartley. (I quickly banished the idea that Mr. Fitch was seriously ill and would shortly die.) [...] The question which was now, in spite of the programme for rational survival with which I was consoling myself, in danger of becoming agonizingly urgent, was: *is she happy?* (TSTS, 119-122)

In this passage, the ideas of the cemetery and survival are explicitly connected.

While Canetti was writing in the shadows of totalitarianism, and therefore certainly discussing political power, he was simultaneously writing about the less extreme examples of this dynamic which occur all the time in everyday life, and especially in interpersonal relationships. He describes kings in *Masse und Macht*, obvious power figures, but he also discusses the case of Daniel Paul Schreber who spent many years in a mental institution and never seized political power in the real world. It is for this reason that he describes the exercise of power in terms of basic human functions like eating and excreting.³⁴³ Canetti warns:

Jeder hat Appetit und jeder steht als König auf unermeßlichen Leichenfeldern von Tieren. Von Erfolg als Kriterium hat eine gewisshafte Untersuchung der Macht

³⁴³ Arnason and Roberts, pp. 30-41. Arnason and Roberts also point out the connection between ordinary human functions such as eating and the passion to survive.

völlig abzusehen. Ihre Eigenschaften wie ihre Auswüchse müssen von überall her sorgfältig zusammengetragen und verglichen werden. Ein Geisteskranker, der, ausgestoßen, hilflos, und verachtet, seine Tage in einer Anstalt verdämmert hat, mag durch Erkenntnisse, zu denen er verhilft, von größerer Bedeutung werden als Hitler und Napoleon, und der Menschheit ihren Fluch und ihre Herren erleuchten. (MM, 532-533)

Through comparing wielders of power in the political sphere and those who exert control over others in interpersonal relations, a system of alienation is set up by both Murdoch and Canetti; the effect is that the reader is made more self-conscious by thus becoming more other-conscious. This continues to form part of the discussion in the next section where we see the necessary human function of eating used as a metaphor for the exertion of power over others. In addition, further affinities between Murdoch's and Canetti's treatment of the theme of power shall be brought to light.

(iv) Consuming Power

The realms of the political, interpersonal and animal are entwined in Murdoch's and Canetti's writing. The language used to describe the exercise of power in *Masse und Macht* and *The Sea, The Sea* in particular is coloured by these contexts. In both authors' work, animal and human relations are political. Canetti's discussion of animals has two main threads: he equates animals and humans on the one hand and he also shows powerful humans treating fellow humans as if they were animals, in the sense of an inferior being. Before a discussion of these issues, however, it is important to give some background on the debate about animals in Canetti's writing. Lorenz's essay represents the most robust discussion of this subject.³⁴⁴ She argues that Canetti takes issue even with

³⁴⁴ Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, 'Canetti's Final Frontier: The Animal', in *A Companion to the Works of Elias Canetti*, pp. 239-254. Lorenz sees Canetti's interest in the animal in connection with his disagreement with 'Cartesian notions of human superiority' (as discussed as a point of affinity between Murdoch's and Canetti's work in Chapter Two of this thesis) where animals are objectified and the human subject elevated above it. (p. 241) See also Brigitte Kronauer, 'Nachwort', in *Elias Canetti: Über Tiere* (Munich: Hanser, 2002), pp. 107-115.

the designation 'animal' because it immediately separates and opens the way for the activation of a set of dangerous attitudes and assumptions. In short, the title 'animal' permits the subjection of that creature (or person) because with the term comes the view that humans are superior to that inferior 'animal'. In its relation to humans, the animal is akin to the subjected 'other' for Canetti.³⁴⁵ This is another manifestation of not seeing the other as described in Chapters One and Two of this thesis and from which humans are said to suffer. Canetti's writing represents a rebuttal of such borrowed thought patterns through the equation of the animal and the human.

Canetti's analysis of power in *Masse und Macht* pivots on the concept of the self and the 'other', the human and the 'animal'.³⁴⁶ Indeed according to his theory all power relations involving humans do. In his discussion of slavery, which we shall return to later, Canetti notes it is the reverse of transformation because in this instance, one human attempts to turn another into an animal. (*MM*, 455) (Canetti uses the term here in order to express the idea of the 'other', different to the subject) As in the case of the human subjection of the non-human creature (animal), this involves one individual (or race, nation etc.) viewing themselves as superior to all others who are considered inferior. The possibility of experiencing empathy (transformation in Canetti's terminology, unselfing for Murdoch) is removed because of the distance created between the two individuals by these terms and the assumptions which accompany them. This is the second main thread of Canetti's literary preoccupation with animals.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁵ See also Penka Angelova, *Elias Canetti: Spuren zum Mythischen Denken* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 2005), pp. 79-87. Referring mostly to Canetti's *Aufzeichnungen*, Angelova points out that Canetti's writing blends the animal and human worlds: 'Canetti hat in seiner Anthropologie die beiden Extreme des Tierischen und des Göttlichen miteingeschlossen, ohne sie mit dem Wertpotenzial des Positiven (Höchsten) und Negativen (Niedrigsten) zu versehen. Seine Auffassung vom Menschen versucht, den Gott mit dem Tier im Menschen zu versöhnen' (p. 79). Canetti's desire to re-picture the powerful human in terms of their relationship to the animal is another aspect of his consideration of the problem of the self and the 'other' as described in Case Study Two. Angelova notes: 'In seinem Ganzheitsdenken betrachtet Canetti nicht die Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung zwischen Mensch und Welt, sondern versucht eine Subjekt-Subjekt Beziehung aufzustellen' (p. 84). See also Ernst Fischer, 'Bemerkungen zu Elias Canettis "Masse und Macht"' in *Literatur und Kritik*, 1 (1966), 12-20 (p.13). Fischer points out the blurred boundary between the animal and human realms but reacts more cautiously to it.

³⁴⁶ In the previous section of this Case Study, we pointed out the human fear of being touched by the unknown, by the 'other'. The survivor-power figure does not allow itself to be touched and immediately overpowers the 'other'.

³⁴⁷ Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, 'Canetti's Final Frontier: The Animal', p. 242. In the human's treatment of non-human creatures as inferior 'animals', Lorenz detects the same dynamic of the Nazis noting: 'Canetti was

In humanity's subjection of the 'other' (other humans or non-human creatures), Canetti identifies a number of stages. The final stage in the exercise of power is when the powerful creature eats the 'other'. Eating can be literal in the case of animals, non-literal in the case of subjecting another human being.³⁴⁸ Canetti describes eating, a necessary human activity, in all its suggestive, violent detail (seizing, tearing, crushing, grinding). The effect of this is that the human potential for subjection of the 'other' (which eating represents in Canetti's literature) is omnipresent. I propose that eating is a shared metaphor for the exercise of power, for the subjection of another creature or person in the writings of Murdoch and Canetti. It is concerned with possession, with seizing and incorporation, with making someone or something part of oneself (rather than accepting someone as an equal and a distinct individual) and thereby an extension of oneself where one's own will becomes their will.

Before discussing this process, it is necessary to demonstrate how these three realms of the political, personal and animal intermingle to suggest the connections between them. In *Masse und Macht*, Canetti notes: 'Die Psychologie des Ergreifens und Einverleibens – wie die des Essens im allgemeinen – ist noch völlig ununtersucht; es ist uns da alles extrem selbstverständlich. [...] Es gibt nichts an uns, das altertümlicher wäre; daß wir so vieles an diesen Vorgängen mit den Tieren teilen, hat sie uns bis jetzt nicht erstaunlicher gemacht'. (*MM*, 237) In this statement, we note that the animal and human are equated. When describing the stages in the process of 'Ergreifen und Einverleiben', Canetti describes the moment of touch, for example, in animal, personal and political terms with:

Nach dem Heranschleichen und dem Sprung [...] erfolgt dann die erste *Berührung*. [...] Die Finger tasten, was dem Körper bald ganz gehören wird [...]

aware of the way Nazi propaganda manipulated the categories "human", "animal", and "subhuman" to make the exclusion and persecution of Jews and other "undesirables" palatable to the German public. The construct "animal", envisioned as life without conscious awareness, soul or self-determination was invoked to rationalise the murder of the disabled, euphemistically referred to as euthanasia – mercy-killing'.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 253. Lorenz places Canetti's 'aversion to eating' (in his writing of course) on a par with that of Kafka noting that 'ingesting and digesting are discussed as expressions of power'.

Die endgültige Berührung, die Berührung, in die man sich findet, weil jeder Widerstand, und besonders der in der Zukunft, als aussichtslos erscheint, ist in unserem sozialen Leben zur *Verhaftung* geworden. Es genügt, die Hand dessen auf der Schulter zu spüren, der zur Verhaftung legitimiert ist, und man ergibt sich gewöhnlich, noch bevor es zum eigentlichen Ergreifen kommt. (*MM*, 258)³⁴⁹

Murdoch's annotations show that she marked these ideas of the political and animal touch. (IML 1120, 204) She also added the idea to her index: 'Arrest, the clutching hand 204' (IML 1120, 482) Canetti's blending of the animal, human and political is also apparent when he considers the great 'Ergreifer' in the animal kingdom, the lion, and connects this with political power noting (as Murdoch also did): 'all kings have wanted to be lions'. (IML 1120, 206)³⁵⁰ Of course the verb 'ergreifen' is also specifically connected to politics with the term 'die Machtergreifung' denoting Hitler's seizure of power in 1933.

Before we compare the metaphor of eating in Murdoch's and Canetti's work, we must first study the stages which precede it. Eating begins with sourcing food and Canetti describes the hunt, the chase, the first touch, seizing and finally the incorporation (through ingesting) of prey.³⁵¹ While he refers to man hunting animals, he implicitly draws parallels with similar stages in all other (especially inter-personal) power relationships. As we shall detail, Murdoch marked up these steps, made notes and her shared interest in these concepts is finally evident in the parallels between them and events in *The Sea, The Sea*.

The powerful Charles Arrowby spends a good deal of the action pursuing a childhood sweetheart and there are affinities between this pursuit and that described by Canetti in *Masse und Macht*. Arrowby's alleged love for Hartley really masks an

³⁴⁹ Emphasis in original text.

³⁵⁰ As in the previous chapters, all underlining is Murdoch's in her copy of *Crowds and Power*.

³⁵¹ Edgar Piel, 'Putting and End to Power: Canetti's Archetypal Images and New Myth' in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, Ed. by Werner Hoffman, Trans. by Michael Hulse (London: André Deutsch, 1987), pp. 146-166. Piel points to the significance of these stages in Canetti's description of power and draws parallels between the 'lying in wait' phase and Canetti's *Die Blendung* and *Hochzeit*, (pp. 152-153).

obsession which is bound up more with his own ego (since this woman jilted him and married someone else) than it is with any real love.³⁵² His urge to avenge her previous rejection of him is manifested in his desire to repossess her.³⁵³ Charles cannot *see* Hartley in the sense that he can really communicate with her. She is like an object without emotions or attachments which he wishes to possess. As animals are objectified according to Canetti, a similar dynamic occurs in Arrowby's pursuit of Hartley. (We shall see that Arrowby even compares her to an animal in his descriptions, which is reminiscent of Canetti's argument that the power figure attempts to make humans into animals.)

Canetti emphasised the pursuit as a crucial part of the power figure's will to possess, and Arrowby chases Hartley, as if she were a subjected, hunted animal, around the seaside town where they both reside. Arrowby decides to lie in wait for her and he first goes to the church in the hope that he will see her. After more than an hour, he goes into the street and notes: 'I wanted to see her so much that I was nearly moaning aloud'. (*TSTS*, 132) The build-up to Arrowby's sighting of Hartley echoes Canetti's description of this phase of the power struggle which Murdoch underlined:

The watching and lying in wait for prey is a state of such peculiar tension that it can acquire a significance of its own independent of circumstances. It is a state which one tends to prolong. Later it may be induced for its own sake, without any reference to any immediate prospect of prey. But man does not lie in ambush and turn persecutor with impunity. Anything of this kind which he actively undertakes, he also experiences passively himself, in exactly the same form, only more strongly, for his greater intelligence is aware of more dangers and doubles the torment of being persecuted. (IML 1120, 203)

³⁵² For an introduction to the novel see Cheryl Browning Bove, *Understanding Iris Murdoch* (New York: Viking, 1993), pp. 83-92.

³⁵³ See Conradi, *The Saint and the Artist*, p. 302, for a discussion of revenge as a major theme in this novel.

This passage also sums up the pursuit scene in *The Sea*, *The Sea* where there is tension for both characters – Hartley is terrified at the prospect of being in Arrowby's company but he, the pursuant, also experiences a type of tension as he sits 'feeling sick', 'frightened' and almost comes to the point of 'moaning aloud' (*TSTS*, 131). Furthermore, Arrowby goes to the village without anything to suggest that he will see Hartley; he notes: 'I tried not to feel sure Hartley would come into the church' and '[o]f course there was no one there' (*TSTS*, 131). His decision to go into the church has the effect of prolonging the tension of his vigil; the room in the church feels 'weird and uneasy' and he feels 'disturbed [...] with all sorts of deep incoherent unconceptualized apprehensions' (*TSTS*, 131). All of this echoes those sections of Canetti's above description of the powerful character's 'lying in wait' phase in which Murdoch showed interest.

There are further affinities between these authors' descriptions of power figures tracking prey which pertain to the actual chase. Arrowby emerges from the church and positions himself so that he has a good view of the high street, and is somewhat concealed himself:

After a few minutes I saw a woman who looked like Hartley creeping along by the wall on the far side of the street, going in the direction of the shop. I say 'creeping along' because that was part of my first vision of her as an old woman, before I knew who she was, and it was this 'old woman' image of her I was seeing now. I jumped up and set off after her. As she crossed the road she turned slightly and saw me and increased her pace. It was Hartley all right and she was running away from me! She did not go into the shop, but whisked round into what I called the Fisherman's Stores Street. When I reached the corner running, she was nowhere to be seen. I went into the Fisherman's Stores, but she was not there. I wanted to howl with exasperation [...] And there, standing quite still in the middle of this scene, was Hartley. [...] She looked at me out of a sort of resigned trance-like calm, staring and unsmiling, and yet I could see that inwardly she was trembling like a quarry [...] I ran up to her and seized hold not of her arm but of

the handle of her shopping bag. This chase, this catch, had frightened us both
(*TSTS*, 132-33)

On the level of language, in the above passage, the narrator and power figure describes the scene in terms of one animal or human hunting another. Canetti compared the power figure (hunter, king etc.) with the lion and again Murdoch made a note of this. Similarly, in the above quotation, the prey, Hartley, is compared to an animal who ‘creep[s] along’ while her pursuer, Arrowby, is compared to a predatory animal, possibly a big cat, who ‘howl[s]’.

The section dealing with a powerful person or creature pursuing a quarry in *Masse und Macht* is entitled ‘Ergreifen und Einverleiben’ (‘Seizing and Incorporation’) and this same word, ‘seizing’, another stage of the pursuit, is the same verb which Murdoch repeatedly uses to describe Arrowby’s actions with Hartley and indeed many of the other women he controls also: ‘I wanted to seize her [...]’ (*TSTS*, 97), ‘And how much I wanted to seize her’ (*TSTS*, 99), ‘[...] I ran to her and seized her in my arms’ (*TSTS*, 232), ‘I also thought well why not just run down the hill, seize her by the hand, and pull her away with me’ (*TSTS*, 237), ‘I suddenly seized Lizzie’s hand, and for a moment it clasped mine, then it became dead. I seized James’s hand and I forced their two hands together. The hands struggled in mine like small captive animals trying to escape’ (*TSTS*, 411). The aim of the victim, according to Canetti, as Murdoch notes, is ‘to avoid being seized’. (IML 1120, 206)

Arrowby’s seizure of Hartley is preceded by his pursuit of her and also by the initial ‘touching’ of his soon-to-be prey.³⁵⁴ Canetti notes: ‘After the stealthy approach and the leap – treated in another context – the next thing is the first touching of the prey. This is perhaps what is feared most. The fingers of the attacker feel what will soon belong to his whole body’. (IML 1120, 203-204)³⁵⁵ Being seen, heard and smelled by the hunter or

³⁵⁴ For more examples of touching in Murdoch’s writing, see Liesel Hermes, *Formen und Funktionen des Symbolgebrauchs in den Werken Iris Murdochs* (Frankfurt am Main and Wiesbaden: Humanitas Verlag, 1972), pp. 37-43. Hermes points out that touching in Murdoch’s work is most often connected with the exercise of power. She was unaware of Canetti’s discussion of the same theme and the extent of Murdoch’s relations with him.

³⁵⁵ Emphasis in original text.

power figure is not nearly as dangerous as being touched because with these forms of contact there is still space for escape. The predator's intention towards his prey is made concrete at the moment he first touches it. Murdoch also lays particular emphasis on Arrowby's desire and attempts to touch Hartley which indicate his desire to possess her: 'I felt now a frantic desire to touch her, to hold her, but I could think of no way of achieving this, as it would have been an amazing physical feat' (*TSTS*, 133) and the following references to his desire to touch her all occur in a single, brief encounter: 'I reached her, running up from behind, [...] and as I came level with her I touched one of the brown sleeves of her dress' (*TSTS*, 114) and 'I was suddenly breathless and put both of my hands onto the back of the pew. My little finger touched her dress and she moved slightly again. Something black seemed to threaten me from a little way above my head' (*TSTS*, 117) and 'I touched the shoulder of the brown dress, taking the collar of it for a second between my fingers. "Don't, don't," she murmured, moving slightly away' (*TSTS*, 116) and 'I wanted to touch her, but somehow only with my fingertips as if she were a ghost which might dissolve, I had wanted to hold her dress between my fingers. [...] She went quickly out of the church and closed the door carefully. Obeying her I stayed. I went back to the same place and sat down and once more put my hands where her hands had been' (*TSTS*, 119).³⁵⁶

In the case of Rosina, a previous conquest of Arrowby's who seeks revenge and has now become like him in her desire to possess, Arrowby notes: 'The trouble with Rosina is that she wants every man'. (*TSTS*, 161)³⁵⁷ Her will to possess is also expressed

³⁵⁶ In the subsequent scenes between Arrowby and Hartley, as he continues in his quest to possess her, emphasis is placed on him touching and seizing her. In this scene, Canetti's text describing 'the grasping hand' which can increase the pressure around its prey until it 'crushes' it (IML 1120, 204-205) is echoed: 'I put out a grasping searching hand and touched her shoulder. She made a gesture as if she were about to speak, but by then I had grabbed her, clumsily again but effectively enough, in my arms [...] I lifted her off her feet and heard her gasp as almost the whole length of her body was crushed against me'. (*TSTS*, 211) There are further references to touching and seizing in this scene as Arrowby tries to possess Hartley: 'I pulled her into the kitchen and pushed her down into a chair [...] I held her at arm's length, gripping her shoulder with one hand [...] I pulled at the coat [...] I touched her breasts [...] I felt proud, possessive [...] I had an impulse to grab her and tear the dress' etc. (*TSTS*, 212-216).

³⁵⁷ Rosina represents another good example of Canetti's command theory (as discussed in Case Study Two with Muriel and Pattie), whereby those who are subjected by a power figure and are burdened with 'stings', go on to issue commands themselves.

in the emphasis placed on her hands: 'Rosina leaned across the table, laying her hand flat and pointing her long fingernails at me like little spears' (*TSTS*, 105) and:

Rosina did not move, except that she stretched out one hand across the table until the long painted nail of her middle finger touched my shirt sleeve. I sat rigid, not wincing. 'You have not understood,' she said. 'Why do you think I have come to you now? I did not enter your house and break things just to amuse myself and laugh with you afterwards. I want to tell you this. You may or you may not marry me, but I am not going to permit you to marry anyone else. I shall hold you to your promise.' [...] She drew her hand back. A stain of blood appeared on the sleeve of my shirt. (*TSTS*, 107)

and 'I got up suddenly, and she became tense and actually lifted up her glittering hands like clawed paws' (*TSTS*, 109) and in a later scene with Rosina: 'Then just in time I got to my feet and moved hastily round the table. Rosina's vermillion claws, making a slash at my face, just touched my neck as I got out of range' (*TSTS*, 187).³⁵⁸

In his discussion of the touch, Canetti alludes to the political touch and in doing so again reminds us of the underlying issues which move him to write about these aspects of power. Murdoch, who also blends the political and interpersonal (Arrowby describes himself as dictator, for example), marks this: '[t]he touch to which one resigns oneself because all resistance appears hopeless – and particularly so as regards the future – has, in our society, become the arrest. The feel of the hand of authority on his shoulder is usually enough to make a man give himself up without having to be actually seized'. (IML 1120, 204) While their works are different (Murdoch writes fictional stories of interpersonal relations, Canetti, with *Masse und Macht* writes in literary, anthropological and philosophical style about historical and animal power figures), there are similarities

³⁵⁸ In *The Flight from the Enchanter*, the scene where Hunter Keepe's and Calvin Blick's power struggle over the *Artemis* periodical begins, we note: 'He gathered [...] with his pale freckled hands. Calvin always wore several rings, not always the same ones. Hunter had noticed this and despised it. His own hands were dirty and his finger-nails cut roughly to a point. The two men looked with distaste at each other's hands'. Again, in order to underline the power struggle between these two characters for possession of the *Artemis*, their hands, instruments of seizing, are described. (*FE*, 17) See also part (vi) in Chapter Two.

in their descriptions of the exercise of power. These similarities come more sharply into focus with Murdoch's annotations of *Crowds and Power*.

Part of the attempts to possess the other (another animal, person) involves making it comfortable so that the opportunity for its seizure and incorporation comes about. This involves the predator pretending to have something in common with its prey. Some animals/humans have the ability to disguise themselves as their prey in order to further their ultimate objective. Canetti notes: 'He acts it so well that it believes him. This manner of trapping an animal may be termed flattery. The animal is told "I am like you. I am you. You can safely let me come near you"'. (IML 1120, 203) Arrowby's attempts to possess Hartley also involve this practice. In a conversation where Arrowby tries to lure Hartley and her husband to his house, her husband states his refusal: 'We aren't your sort, well, that's obvious isn't it. We don't want to come to your parties and meet your friends and drink your drinks, it's not on [...] I don't know how you live with your friends in your world, but we don't live like that, we're quiet folk and we keep ourselves to ourselves'. (TSTS, 151) Whereas Ben emphasises the differences between them, Arrowby does the opposite in an attempt to persuade them that he is like them in an effort to get closer to Hartley: 'Well, all right, but I hope you'll think it over [...] And if you think I'm some sort of jet set grandee or something you're quite wrong. I'm a very simple person, as I hope you'll discover [...] I wonder if I could see Mary just for a moment'. (TSTS, 151)

Canetti discusses how an animal or human exerts a great degree of pressure on its prey as part of the process of seizing and incorporation. The amount of pressure applied depends on how dangerous the prey is deemed to be. In the case of small creatures, like insects, the human, spurred by contempt for such a small creature, uses more force than necessary:

But, in addition to the desire to get rid of a pest and to be sure it is really disposed of, our behaviour to a gnat or a flea betrays the contempt we feel for a being which is utterly defenceless, which exists in a completely different order of size

and power from us, with which we have nothing in common, into which we never transform ourselves and which we never fear except when it suddenly appears in crowds. The destruction of these tiny creatures is the only act of violence which remains unpunished even *within* us.(IML 1120, 205)

Murdoch also added these points to her index: 'Destructn [Destruction] of insects not punished 205'. (IML 1120, 482) In her novels, the images of crushing, grinding and killing creatures, especially insects, recur. In *The Flight from the Enchanter*, John Rainborough, who has just forced his sexual advances on young Annette Cockayne, 'grinds' the beautiful leopard moth under his heel. In *The Sea, The Sea*, Arrowby repairs his hammer so that he can 'crush a black beetle'. (*TSTS*, 441) On the other hand, his cousin, James, who is more successful than Arrowby in his pursuit of goodness, is more compassionate with these small creatures:

James [...] was examining several moths which were circling about the lamp. 'You have some splendid moths here. I haven't seen an Oak Eggar for ages. Oh dear, I think that poor fellow's had it. Do you mind if I close the window? Then they won't come in.' He deftly caught two of the moths and put them outside, together with the corpse of their handsome companion, and closed the window (*TSTS*, 444).³⁵⁹

For both authors, the destruction of insects is connected to the exercise of power more generally. In the next stage of the process of incorporation, Canetti points out:

[t]he most striking natural instrument of power in man and in many animals is the teeth. The way they are arranged in rows and their shining smoothness are quite different from anything else belonging to the body. One feels tempted to call them

³⁵⁹ Conradi, *The Saint and the Artist*, p. 211. See for more examples of human-insect relations in Murdoch's writing. Conradi argues that Tallis Browne's rescue of a fly from a glass of sherry in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* is evidence of his 'care for all of creaturekind'. He does not connect it to Murdoch's representation of power struggles more generally (interpersonal and political), however.

the very first manifestation of order and one so striking that it almost shouts for recognition (IML 1120, 207).

Murdoch follows up her underlining by noting 'teeth 207' in her index. (IML 1120, 483) Later when Canetti connects the smoothness of the teeth with the development of metal weapons, he thereby continues the connection between political and interpersonal power. The quest for smoothness and order is also connected to the human's exercise of power. Murdoch also marks this:

However much stone was polished, the sword, made first of bronze and then of iron, was smoother. The real attraction of metal lies in the fact that it is smoother than anything else. [...] Today [...] we speak of function, clarity of line and utility, but what has really triumphed is smoothness, and the prestige of the power it conceals. The example of modern architecture shows how difficult it is to separate smoothness from order. Their common history is old, as old as the teeth. The uniformity of the whole row of front teeth and the regular spaces between them stood as models for many different kinds of arrangements (IML 1120, 208).

Murdoch also made a note of these underlinings in her index: 'smoothness: order: teeth 208'. (IML 1120, 483) One of the arrangements modelled on the teeth which Canetti identifies and in which Murdoch had a particular interest is pointed out with:

The teeth are the armed guardians of the mouth and the mouth is indeed a strait place, the prototype of all prisons [...]. When the gaping maws of dragons had been virtually extirpated, man found a symbolic substitute for them in prisons. In times when these used to be torture chambers they resembled a hostile mouth in many respects. Hell still presents the same appearance today. Prisons, on the other hand, have become puritanical. The smoothness of teeth has conquered the world; the walls of cells are all smooth and even the window opening is small. For the prisoner, freedom is the space beyond the clenched teeth, and these are now represented by the bare walls of the cell. The narrow gorge through which

everything has to pass is, for the few who live so long, the ultimate terror' (IML 1120, 209).

As well as underlining, Murdoch notes: 'mouth as prison. Narrow gorge. Incorporation. Image of power in general 209-210'. (IML 1120, 483) In *The Sea, The Sea*, Arrowby, the consumer, keeps Hartley prisoner in a room in the middle of the house which resembles a prison cell. It is small, has no exterior window and he literally locks her in like a caged animal. Additionally, the inner room is one of two identical ones (another on the ground floor of the house) and the other is painted red and both are described as 'extremely dark'. (*TSTS*, 14) The 'inner rooms' therefore resemble not only a prison where Hartley is kept but also the inside of the mouth. Eating, power and possession are therefore also connected in this way for Murdoch and Canetti.³⁶⁰

In Murdoch's writing, the teeth are also emphasised, especially in those characters who exercise power over others. In *The Flight from the Enchanter*, while Mischa Fox voyeuristically sits in on Annette Cockayne's dress fitting, she sees this power figure's 'teeth flash'. (*FE*, 81) When he has the upper hand with John Rainborough, again: 'Rainborough could see his very white teeth flashing under his moustache'. (*FE*, 135) Rainborough himself is in another power struggle in his office with his ambitious secretary, Miss Casement, and when his superiority within the office hierarchy is publicly undermined, he wishes 'to shake her [Miss Casement] until her teeth rattled'; in other words, he wants her teeth to fall out, her power to be reduced. (*FE*, 178) As Hunter Keepe's power struggle with Fox and Blick intensifies in the course of the novel it is considered: 'Hunter was not a man much addicted to harming his fellows. The harm which Hunter had done in his life had usually been done accidentally in the course of seeking the easy and unobtrusive ways forward for himself. He was an animal whose protection was not his teeth but flight and camouflage. However just the cause, he shrank from dealing blows' (*FE*, 229). In this quotation, again power and the teeth as symbols of such power are employed by Murdoch.

³⁶⁰ We have noted other parallel instances of power figures locking women away in Murdoch's and Canetti's writing. Annette is locked in a cupboard in *The Flight from the Enchanter*, Elizabeth is kept in her bedroom in *The Time of the Angels* and Anna Pfaff is also locked in the kitchen in *Die Blendung*.

In *The Sea, The Sea*, the image of the teeth is again employed in the characterisation of those who attempt to exercise power over others. Rosina Vamburgh, an ex-girlfriend of Arrowby, refuses to allow him get on with his life, is possessive and spies on him. Her power-hungry, possessive nature is expressed in description of her teeth, for example: 'She [Rosina] had slightly irregular long, white teeth and a kind of "smile" whereby she advances her lower teeth to meet her upper ones and draws her lips back. The effect is terrible' (*TSTS*, 105) and 'She was smiling again, showing her white fishy teeth' (*TSTS*, 107) and later again, in another stage of her battle with Arrowby where she attacks the car he is travelling in (described in terms of a military/ animal-like ambush): 'A stone flew past my head. I looked up and outlined against the blue sky I saw Rosina. She was kneeling on one knee on top of one of the highest rocks and had evidently provided herself with an arsenal of missiles. She was black, a black witch, wearing something that looked like a peasant woman's shawl. I saw her snarling mouth and her teeth'. (*TSTS*, 345) The teeth are also emphasised in relation to Ben Fitch, the ex-army officer, who exercises considerable power over his wife, for whose affection Arrowby is vying. Similarly, when trying to regain possession of his wife (when Arrowby has taken her hostage), he is described in military and animalistic terms; he is 'bullet-headed' (*TSTS*, 124) and his broad shoulders and short build render him 'reminiscent of a little ram or other smallish but aggressive male animal'. (*TSTS*, 289) Demanding the release of his wife, Ben 'was showing his strong teeth, wet with spittle'. (*TSTS*, 291)³⁶¹

While we tend to concentrate on the more obvious external manifestations of the exercise of power, we give little thought to it in its most basic form, according to Canetti. The final stage in Canetti's metaphorical description of the exercise of power is the act of eating and digesting:

³⁶¹ Furthermore, the teeth are also emphasised in relation to the powerful figures in other novels: we note Lucas Graffe's 'long white teeth' (*GK*, 248) and George McCaffrey's 'small square separated teeth set on a wide arc' (*PP*, 78).

Underneath, day in, day out, is digestion and again digestion. Something alien is seized, cut up into small bits, incorporated into oneself, and assimilated. By this process alone man lives; if it ceases, he dies. So much he has always known. But it is clear that *all* the phases of this process, and not only the external and half-conscious ones, must have their correspondence in the psyche. [...] The excrement, which is what remains of all this, is loaded with our whole blood guilt. [...] It is clear that we are ashamed of it. It is the age-old seal of that power-process of digestion (IML 1120, 210-211).³⁶²

Power and food are closely connected in Canetti's writing as the above quotation outlines.³⁶³ The physical act of ingesting and digesting are metaphors for the exercise of power in Canetti's literary universe.³⁶⁴ Both activities are, at root, concerned with controlling, possessing and making oneself stronger and more powerful. In this sense, eating is the antithesis of Transformation in Canetti's imagination or Unselfing in Murdoch's. Food and power are similarly connected in Murdoch's writing. In her reading of *Crowds and Power*, she was favourably struck by this discussion; she underlined passages of it, added it to her index and again referred to it in her review where she describes it as 'a remarkable section on the psychology of eating' (IML 1120, 482).³⁶⁵ These repeated references indicate her shared interest in this theme which recurs in her fiction.

In his discussion of eating, the person who eats the most in some tribes is taken to be the chief of that group:

³⁶² Canetti also refers to eating and power in his *Aufzeichnungen*. See Elias Canetti, *Der Provinz der Menschen*. See also Edgar Piel, 'Putting and End to Power: Canetti's Archetypal Images and New Myth', in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, pp. 146-166. Piel points out the connection between digestion and Canetti's efforts to 'expose the roots of Fascism' (p. 155).

³⁶³ Kerstin Krachtowill, *Elias Canetti-Experte der Lüge: „Erinnerung“, „Verwandlung“, und „Kitsch“ als komplementäre Prinzipien der Lüge in den autobiographischen Schriften und dem Nachlass* (Würzburg: ERGON Verlag, 2005), p. 203. Krachtowill also points out the connection between food and digestion and the exercise of power in Canetti's work.

³⁶⁴ We have already noted Peter Kien's, Benedikt Pfaff's and Carel Fisher's eating habits and how they are almost an extension of their destructive desires to control – themselves and others. Julius King in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* is another of Murdoch's consuming power figures. The final scene of the novel is of Julius preparing to eat. (*FHD*, 447).

³⁶⁵ Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', p. 338.

Alles, was gegessen wird, ist Gegenstand der Macht. [...] Es gibt Gruppen von Menschen, die in einem solchen Meistesser ihren Häuptling sehen. Sein immer gestillter Appetit erscheint ihnen als seine Gewähr dafür, daß sie selber nie lange Hunger leiden werden. Sie verlassen sich auf seinen gefüllten Bauch, als hätte er ihn für sie alle mitgefüllt. Der Zusammenhang von Verdauung und Macht tritt hier klar zutage. (MM, 257)

The king is the 'champion eater' (IML 1120, 220). Food and political power are connected.³⁶⁶ Murdoch underlines Canetti's comment, '[e]verything which is eaten is the food of power'; thus, 'the king in his character of champion eater has never wholly disappeared'. (IML 1120, 220) Murdoch's Arrowby is also a 'champion eater' in terms of the quantities of food he consumes.³⁶⁷ Indeed he eats like a king most of the time. One meal consists of:

[...] anchovy paste on hot buttered toast, then baked beans and kidney beans with chopped celery, tomatoes, lemon juice and olive oil [...] Then bananas and cream with white sugar...Then hard water biscuits with New Zealand butter and Wensleydale cheese... With this feast I drank most of a bottle of Muscadet out of my modest cellar. (TSTS, 7)

Notably, 'Anchovy paste on hot buttered toast' echoes Canetti's portrait of his powerful friend, Herman Scherchen in *Das Augenspiel*, who feasts on caviar on toast. (DA, 71) Furthermore, as Arrowby describes his food, he frequently connects politics and food as Canetti had. He notes that basil is 'the king of herbs' (TSTS, 27), that '[p]lain boiled

³⁶⁶ Canetti's discussion traces the connection between the consumption of food and power from a socio-historical and anthropological perspective. He considers the eating habits of the Romans, for example, to demonstrate the connection between food and political power.

³⁶⁷ Anna Maria Tomczak, 'Simplicity and Solitude by the Sea? – Food in Iris Murdoch's Novel *The Sea, The Sea*', in *Viands, Wines and Spirits: Nourishment and (In)digestion in the Culture of Literacy – Essays in Cultural Practice*, ed. By Wojciech Kalaga & Tadeusz Rachwał (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2003), pp. 119-129. Tomczak's essay studies the manner in which Arrowby's food tells of his social class. She does not connect his consumption to his portrayal as a power figure as this thesis does.

onions are another dish fit for a king' (*TSTS*, 206) and that 'well-made porridge with brown sugar and cream is a dish fit for a king'. (*TSTS*, 9)

According to Canetti, the most innocuous eating situation is when food is shared. It means that the diners hold each other in a certain amount of esteem. A common dish, a loaf of bread for example is shared. Sharing food with each another and baring one's teeth to them, is reassurance that you will not eat each other. Canetti does not of course mean that they will not become cannibals, he is thereby stressing that they are equal and therefore the exercise of power is suspended (*MM*, 258-59). The point is made specifically that for Arrowby, eating is not a social occasion: 'Food is also spoilt at dinner parties by enforced conversation. One's best hope is to get into one of those 'holes' where one's two neighbours are eagerly engaged elsewhere, so one can concentrate upon one's plate [...] Food is best eaten among friends who are unmoved by such 'social considerations', or of course best of all alone'. (*TSTS*, 9-10)³⁶⁸

Withholding food is also a game that a powerful character may play. By being an individual's sole source of food, not unlike the mother who Canetti saw as powerful for this reason, we have a clear power relationship. (*MM*, 221) This idea recurs in *Die gerettete Zunge: Geschichte einer Jugend* where Fräulein Vogler feeds her poor, unsuccessful and enslaved brother one meal per week after he had completed all the household chores (*DgZ*, 156). In *Die Fackel im Ohr*, we note that Veza also used a similar tactic to control her step-father, Altaras. She locked herself in her room and if he came banging at the door she ignored him. She thus trained him to know that he would not get any food from her until he returned to his room. It took him a while but he soon saw that he got juicier steaks and older wine when he did not leave his room. This tactic exacted obedience from the man and also allowed Veza her own space (*DFO*, 143-155).

³⁶⁸ In *Das Augenspiel*, Canetti places a significant amount of emphasis on Scherchen eating during the 1933 music conference which Scherchen organises. Scherchen eats alone at 'Broglie', one of the most fashionable and expensive restaurants in the city. He eats caviar on toast and champagne while the musicians sit around and watch him with nothing in front of them. Scherchen's position as a power figure is conveyed metaphorically through Canetti's description of him as the 'Meistesser' in this scene (pp. 70-72). Julius King also favours eating alone: 'He found that his digestion always improved when he was completely alone' (*FHD*, 447).

Both authors similarly see food as a source of power. In Murdoch's text, Arrowby also uses food as a way of keeping Titus at his house to assist his (Arrowby's) efforts to repossess Hartley. (*TSTS*, 261) In a further variation on this idea, Arrowby plies both Hartley and Titus with alcohol in his efforts to control them. (*TSTS*, 218)

Murdoch described Canetti's discussion of food and power as 'remarkable' in her review of *Masse und Macht* and her own power figure, Arrowby, is repeatedly described thinking about, preparing and eating food. He does not believe in spending long periods of time preparing food. Indeed he fantasises about writing a cookery book *Charles Arrowby Four Minute Cookbook*. In this respect, Murdoch's text recalls another of Canetti's, *Die Blendung*. One of the characters Fischerle and Kien meet in the Theresianum is a man referred to as 'Das Schwein' who eats books and also has ambitions of publishing a cookery book: 'Er hat ein eigenes Kochbuch zusammengestellt mit vielen Rezepten drin, jetzt sucht er einen Verleger dafür'. (*DB*, 264)³⁶⁹

There are many other instances where Murdoch's novel connects food and power. Arrowby's prey, Hartley, whom he pursues and wishes to possess, lives in a house called 'Nibletts'. In addition, part of the sea near Arrowby's house is known as Minn's Cauldron. This area of the sea, a symbol of power, again connects food consumption and that very theme. The 'cauldron', again connected to food, is likened to a mouth and when Arrowby falls in, it is as if the sea attempts to consume him. The 'cauldron' is described as a 'deep mysteriously smooth round hole' which 'sucks, churns, foams, froths' and 'roars', and as such resembles the consuming mouth. (*TSTS*, 243 & 289) Food consumption as a metaphor for power and possession represents another major and overlooked literary affinity between Murdoch's and Canetti's work, which stems from the bedrock of these authors' shared intellectual interests.

³⁶⁹ We have also mentioned the enormous appetite of Benedikt Pfaff in *Die Blendung* in Chapter Two.

(v) Paranoia and Possession

Another aspect of Murdoch's and Canetti's technique concerns the portrayal of the power figure as a paranoid. I argue that this discussion also forms part of both authors' treatment of the theme of political power.³⁷⁰ Furthermore, I will demonstrate the affinities between aspects of paranoia, as described in *Masse und Macht* and *The Sea, The Sea*. For both authors, paranoia is also connected to the desire for possession which we have already discussed in relation to watching, seizing and eating. Canetti studies the case of Daniel Paul Schreber, who wrote a book entitled *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* (1903) about his paranoid, delusional world and which was published following his release from an asylum after seven years. Freud studied the case of Schreber's mental illness and came to the conclusion that he was suffering from repressed homosexuality. While Freud and Lacan considered Schreber's text a 'record of personal pathology, Canetti reads Schreber's work as a document of cultural pathology'.³⁷¹ On reading Schreber's text, Canetti found that he was in a power struggle with god and the powers which incarcerated him. (*MM*, 519-20) The human soul, for Schreber, was contained in the nerves of the body. Though God is connected to the human through the nerves, he remains at a distance, because human nerves have a very strong power of attraction to him, and this might threaten his position. As a result, God is only connected to the human in death. Schreber criticises God for having no knowledge of human nature and this is part of the reason, according to Schreber, that he can collude with his psychiatrist, Professor Fleschig, and attempt his (Schreber's) destruction. Canetti notes:

Aus Ehrgeiz und Herrschsucht hatte Fleschig ein *Komplott* mit Gott geschmiedet und diesem einzureden versucht, daß es auf die Seele eines Schreber doch nicht

³⁷⁰ Arthur Williams, 'Modes of Restitution: Schreber as Countermodel for Sebald', in *The Worlds of Elias Canetti: Centenary Essays*, pp. 225-245. Williams notes Canetti's influence on the writings of W.G. Sebald pointing out that Schreber served as a counter-model for 'two powerful minds preoccupied with the same phenomenon, the underlying nature of German fascism', p. 225. I would argue, that certainly in the case of Canetti, his analysis of power, though perhaps prompted by the events in Nazi Germany, is more encompassing, hence his use of historical power-figures preceding Hitler and his description of power in terms of ordinary bodily functions, like eating. For Canetti, the dynamic of power, the violence of seizing and incorporating what is external, is very much part of the human condition.

³⁷¹ Erik Butler, 'Canetti, Schreber and the Nervous Voice', in *The Worlds of Elias Canetti: Centenary Essays*, pp. 247-257, p. 249.

ankommen könne. Vielleicht hatt es sich sogar schon um eine ältere Rivalität zwischen den beiden Familien Schreber und Fleschig gehandelt. Irgendein Fleschig mag plötzlich das Gefühl gehabt haben, daß ein Mitglied der Familie Schreber der seinigen den Rang abgelaufen habe. Er stiftete darum eine Verschwörung mit Elementen der Gottesreiche, in der Richtung etwa, daß den Schrebers die Wahl bestimmter Berufe, die sie in nähere Beziehungen zu Gott führen konnten, versagt werden solle. (MM, 520)

Schreber shares his paranoia with all rulers and despots, according to Canetti.³⁷² W.G. Sebald discusses the parallels between Schreber's paranoia and that of the Wilhelmine state in which he was writing: '*Die Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* belegen so gesehen wie kaum ein anderes Werk die Kontinuität der deutschen Ideologie von dem vergleichsweise noch naiven imperialen Traum bis in die äußersten Konsequenzen faschistischer Gewalt. Der Wahn des Paranoikers und der Anspruch auf Macht leben symbiotisch mit der Ideologie der Zeit'.³⁷³ The elements of Schreber's paranoia which Canetti sets out are compared to that of the other rulers he discusses including Muhammad Tughlak and the Sultan of Delhi. There are a number of these symptoms which Murdoch's central self-confessed 'dictator' shares, and which I will discuss as examples of ideas in which she was interested (according to her notes and annotations). These affinities also demonstrate their mutual discussion of political and interpersonal power whilst also being further extreme examples of the human urge to possess. In the previous section of this chapter, we noted how the metaphor of eating, for example is an expression of this desire to possess what is outside of oneself. Aspects of paranoia, as described by Canetti and Murdoch, also underline this urge.

³⁷² Roger Gentis, 'Der Machthunger', in *Einladung zur Verwandlung: Essays zu Elias Canettis Masse und Macht*, pp. 179-189. Gentis points out: 'In diesen *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken*, auf Rechnung des Autors 1903 veröffentlicht, findet Canetti die gesamte Ideologie des Nationalsozialismus vor', noting that Schreber saw the Germans as chosen people who were threatened by Jews, Catholics and Slavs (p. 179).

³⁷³ W.G. Sebald, 'Kurzer Versuch über System und Systemkritik bei Elias Canetti', *Etudes Germaniques*, 29 (1984), p. 269.

Murdoch's review of *Crowds and Power* reveals her interest in Canetti's discussion of Schreber. She devotes two paragraphs to it and notes 'even if we do not always agree, we have certainly been given something to reflect *with*' and Canetti 'presents us with an excellent object of study, since the case of Schreber has also been discussed by Freud'.³⁷⁴ Murdoch states that she does not wish to say that Canetti's theory on Schreber 'necessarily invalidates Freud's or vice versa' but Bayley's article continues to ponder the paranoiac Schreber stating Canetti is 'instructive' on the psychology and powers of the survivor, and has two chapters on the paranoia of Schreber, which are far more illuminating than any of the 'explanations' of Freud'.³⁷⁵ Bayley also spends two paragraphs on the discussion of Schreber, taking up the same discussion (*vis-à-vis* Freud) as Murdoch's review did. These repeated references to Canetti's discussion of the paranoid Schreber demonstrate this couple's particular interest in it.

Canetti notes and Murdoch underlines: 'the importance which plots and conspiracies have for the paranoiac' (IML 1120, 438). Schreber suspects conspiracies and conspirators everywhere. He feels surrounded, and that everybody is in collusion with everybody else against him (*MM*, 520-21). Murdoch's paranoiac, Arrowby, is also given to wild conspiracy theories. The most humorous concerns his cousin, James. When James tells him that he is going back to London after a visit, Arrowby figures that he is lying and that he hasn't really left the army at all but is a secret agent who is undertaking cover to mission to Tibet. If he thinks James is holding back in some way, he puts it down to his status as a secret agent. Even James's death does not put an end to his conspiracy theories. He takes the fact that he never saw his cousin's body to be evidence that he is not really dead but has now gone underground in his capacity as a secret agent:

The whole charade was organised by the intelligence service! I was too upset at the time to see how extremely fishy it all was. I never saw James's body. By the time I arrived the mysterious Colonel Blackthorn was already in charge and the 'body' had been removed [...]. The extremely shifty Indian doctor was also

³⁷⁴ Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', pp. 337-338.

³⁷⁵ Bayley, 'Canetti and Power' in *Essays in Honour of Elias Canetti*, p. 140.

obviously in the pay of British Intelligence. His letter was a masterpiece of bafflement [...]. James was in perfect health when I last saw him [...]. It occurred to me that I never found his passport in the flat. Where is my cousin now? Not in purgatory or Nirvana, but seated upon an army issue yak, proceeding to a snowy rendezvous with some slit-eyed informer [...]. I have noticed several oriental persons hanging around in the streets nearby. I hope they are not the *others* who are mistaking me for James (*TSTS*, 486).

In the manner of Canetti's depiction of the paranoiac *Machtmensch*, Arrowby in this episode develops a conspiracy in his mind between his cousin and the secret service. There are many others in the course of the novel. He is convinced another character has tried to kill him and killed Titus. Titus drowned tragically in the sea but Arrowby continues to convince himself that a 'homicidal madman' is out to get him (*TSTS*, 388). His guests are often described as 'conspirators' against him and they speak in low 'conspiratorial voices' (*TSTS*, 325). So far-fetched are Arrowby's conspiracy theories, that they are very humorous. However, it is certainly the case that there is no humour involved in Canetti's description of Schreber's (and the despot's) propensity for seeing conspiracies everywhere. Nevertheless, both reveal the very serious issue that is the paranoia of the power figure.

The paranoiac's mania for conspiracy theories is another part of the fundamental obsession with possession. Conspiracy theories assume (and in the case of the paranoiac's, mostly wrongly) that there is another, real truth which is hidden from them and they are determined to possess knowledge of it. It is often part of the urge to possess the contents of other people's minds, and is thus connected to the theme of unmasking and the hunt for causes.³⁷⁶

Canetti notes and Murdoch underlines: 'The process of unmasking is of fundamental importance for the paranoiac' (IML 1120, 453). Murdoch also notes this

³⁷⁶ Robertson, 'Canetti and Nietzsche: An Introduction to *Masse und Macht*', in *A Companion to the Works of Elias Canetti*, pp. 201-215. Robertson points out also that the power figure himself is characterised by a mask-like face, an inscrutable expression. (p. 212).

term in her index on a number of occasions: 'unmasking 453', '454 unmasking transformation Basic idea!' and 'Unmasking can make o.[one] overlook transformn [transformation]'. (IML1120, 464) She again referred to unmasking in her review noting that it is the 'passion' of the despot.³⁷⁷ In *Masse und Macht*, Schreber meets a man, Herr Schneider, whom he recognises and even though he is a completely innocent character, Schreber wishes to unmask him to find what it is behind Herr Schneider. He cannot accept that there is nothing and the man is who he says he is. The paranoid power figure believes that everybody is wearing a mask and he is intent on the task of *Demaskieren* (MM, 538). Murdoch's character, Arrowby, like Schreber, sees others as hiding behind masks. Of his friend, Gilbert Opan, he notes: 'When I last saw him he still wore a fresh unselfconscious air of childish conceit. Now his face was full of wary watchful anxiety masquerading as worldly detachment, as if he were cautiously trying out his new wrinkles as a mask' (TSTS, 92). Similarly, he describes Rosina as a mask-wearer: 'Her face was heavily made up, patterned with pinks and reds and blues and even greens, looking in the subdued localized light like an Indian mask' (TSTS, 103-104). In his relationship with James, the image of masks and unmasking recurs also. After Arrowby is pushed into 'Minn's Cauldron', he becomes convinced that Hartley's husband tried to kill him. When James assures him that this was not the case, he notes 'The intensity of James's tone, his eyes, his fierce face, carried conviction into my resisting mind. But I could not believe him. How could he *know* this? Unless- unless- James himself had pushed me in? What after all lay behind that red-Indian mask?' (TSTS, 395) The paranoid character's delusion of masks and his drive to unmask is a trait which Arrowby shares with the power figures, especially Schreber, who is a symbol of political power. Unmasking, like the mania for conspiracy theories these characters share, is a further aspect of their primary will to possess.³⁷⁸ Both want to know, want to possess knowledge of what is behind the mask (though of course, in all likelihood, there is no mask at all).

³⁷⁷ Murdoch, 'Mass, Might and Myth', p. 337.

³⁷⁸ Arnason and Roberts, p. 100. Arnason and Roberts point out that Schreber's desire to possess all others (through 'unmasking' them) is another expression of the power figure's attempts to remove others. They note 'imaginary annihilation is also an act of power'.

Another connected aspect of Canetti's analysis of Schreber as a *Machtmensch* which also appears in Murdoch's portrait of political and interpersonal power, is the idea of the powerful character's '*Kausalitätssucht*' (MM, 537). This was an idea in which Murdoch was interested, according to her annotations. 'Here one should point out that the paranoiac exhibits a mania for finding causal relations' (IML 1120, 452). For Schreber, nothing happens by coincidence, or chance. There is always a reason to be found. Everything unknown can be traced back to something which is already known. '*Das Begründen*' becomes a passion which is exercised on his life. He is looking for reasons and something else behind everything and everyone, even when none exist. Everything that happens in the world is sucked into his world, becomes part of it, and he searches for reasons for it happening. In the attempt to get to the bottom of something that is hidden, this resembles the 'unmasking' described in the last paragraph. It is another attempt to possess what is outside of himself. From 'unmasking' 'derives the mania for identifying causes; and originally all causes were sought for in persons' (IML 1120, 453). Canetti describes the common experience of mistaking a stranger on the street for someone one knows, adding that the obvious explanation is that this person is on one's mind. However, for the paranoiac power figure (like Schreber and Arrowby), it becomes more frequent and intense, where one sees a particular face everywhere: '*Der Irrtum wiederholt sich, man läßt nicht von ihm ab. Es ist klar, man will diesen einen Menschen hinter anderen Gesichtern finden. Man erlebt die andern als Täuschung, die das Richtige verbergen. Beim Paranoiker konzentriert und verschärft sich dieser Vorgang*' (MM, 538-9). For the paranoiac, the distinctions between people and things begin to disappear. What makes them different is a mask which the paranoiac will take away and find the same person underneath: 'He can get to the bottom of everything and he ends by explaining everything away. Finally he is left only with himself and what he rules. What happens here is the exact opposite of the process of transformation. In unmasking, some creature is driven in on itself, limited to a single position' (IML 1120, 454). As well as underlining these ideas, Murdoch also adds them to her index noting: 'mania for finding causal connections unmasking 453', '454 unmasking transformation basic idea!' (IML 1120, 464)

There are also affinities pertaining to these ideas to be found in Arrowby. Mirroring Schreber's desire to get to the true reality of things by unmasking, Arrowby also sees most things as a sign of something deeper. There is always a deeper, hidden meaning or cause that he is trying to possess. When Hartley decided that she wanted to end their teenage relationship, he did not accept her reasons: 'She said certain terribly memorable things. But were these the 'reasons'? [...] Did she mean what she said or did the words conceal other words which she dared not say' (*TSTS*, 81-82). When the girl and her family left the area, he continued to search for her and for answers, noting that he spent his holidays on 'detective work' which involved putting a notice in a newspaper, visiting every place and everyone she had ever mentioned, and writing 'dozens of letters'. He notes:

Some time during this period her parents left the district, then I got a curt letter from her mother, giving no address, and saying that Hartley was married. I did not believe her. The parents were liars, a sinister influence, they hated me because Hartley loved me, I went on searching, I went on waiting. I felt that there must be some particular *cause* for her flight, and that time would remove the *cause* and make things as they were. I conducted myself in such a wild crazy manner that quite a lot of people came to know about my love, and I became quite famous as a mad lover. (*TSTS*, 83)³⁷⁹

In Arrowby's attempts to grasp the real reasons for Hartley's defection, he is, like Schreber and the paranoiac, in search of causes and reasons, thereby using the words which Canetti used in relation to Schreber, and which Murdoch underlined and committed to her index.

The mania for causes and getting to the true reality of situation did not end with Arrowby's loss of Hartley. He notes, and in this respect Murdoch's text again echoes Canetti's on the point of a mania for causes and reasons, that he continued to search for her and 'I kept "seeing" her, seeing shadow forms of her imposed upon quite different

³⁷⁹ Italics mine.

women; her shoulders, her hair her walk, her fey puzzled expression. I still sometimes see these shadows, I saw one lately upon an old woman in the village' (*TSTS*, 86).

A further example of Arrowby's special propensity for imagining conspiracy theories against him comes when James and Lizzie tell him that they have met occasionally. Arrowby imagines that their relationship is not as they tell him and indulges in wild imaginings of what the true nature of the relationship is:

'You've been telephoning and meeting and looking into each other's eyes – I expect you've known each other forever, I daresay you knew Lizzie before I ever met her, you were there first, you were there before me, as you were with – as you were with Aunt Estelle and – and with Titus – you'd met Titus before, he said he'd seen you in a dream. I expect you were the person he was living with for those two years, no wonder he wouldn't say! And you made Lizzie sing that special song of Aunt Estelle's. I'm sure Lizzie dreams about you every night, you're everywhere, spoiling everything in my life, she's the only thing that's absolutely mine!' 'Charles!' 'You've been everywhere before me and you'll be everywhere after me, when I'm dead you and Lizzie will be sitting in a bar discussing me' (*TSTS*, 409).

In this quotation, which is the product of his imagination as he seeks to get to the bottom of the true reality of James's and Lizzie's relationship, it is apparent that what is driving this obsessive thought pattern is a misguided, obsessive desire for possession of knowledge of the 'true' reality of the situation. This also is the case in another scenario in the novel when Titus tragically dies in the sea. Arrowby is obsessed with knowing the 'true' cause of his death. He spends a considerable amount of time looking for the cause (imagining that Ben murdered him, and later that he himself was the cause of the boy's death) even though death by drowning was established. He says that '[t]here is a relentless causality of sin' and concludes that the boy died because he stole another completely unconnected man's wife years before.

Murdoch's portrait of Arrowby as a paranoid tyrant who sees conspiracy theories all around him and who is on a mission to get to the root cause of everything, even if something has happened by chance, mirrors Schreber in a most remarkable manner. The descriptions of Arrowby's paranoia are humorous, and this serves to highlight the madness of his thinking. However, at root, her theme of power and its evil is very serious, as it is for Canetti. These points represent further examples of the strong affinities which exist between Murdoch's and Canetti's shared interest in the problem of both political and interpersonal power.

(vi) Systems, Paranoia and Possession

Another aspect of the exercise of power and possession which both authors address pertains to the exercise of power through language in art. Canetti's discussion 'Der Fall Schreber' points out that the one time 'Dresdener Senatspräsident' is in a battle with God and his psychiatrist. Part of this ongoing power struggle which he believes himself to be waging with his external world (including God and his psychiatrist) involves language and writing. Canetti notes, and Murdoch underlines: 'It is impossible to overrate the importance of words for the paranoiac. They are everywhere, like vermin, always on the alert. They unite to form a world order which leaves nothing outside itself. Perhaps the most marked trend in paranoia is that towards a complete seizing of the world through words, as though language were a fist and the world lay in it'. (IML 1120, 452) Murdoch also committed this idea to her index, noting: 'paranoia: seizure of the world thro' [through] words 452'. (IML 1120, 464) As Canetti points out, paranoia is a disease of power and in Schreber's desire to seize the world through words we see his problem with power in operation. Canetti refers to Schreber's delusional world as his 'system' on a number of occasions and compares it to Hitler's 'system' for political control. The feature of both these systems is that within them the crowd and the world become smaller and the power figures becomes larger.³⁸⁰ In effect, the system never allows for all of reality and so the world is shrunk by the system. Canetti notes on Schreber's relationship to the crowds

³⁸⁰ Gentis, pp. 179-180.

(which I take to represent the world in its all its multiplicity and contingency) in his delusions (Murdoch marks the margin):

But they do not simply continue to stand round him, like an assembled crowd, a people round its leader; they immediately and instantaneously experience what to a people only happens gradually and over the course of years: by contact with him they grow smaller and smaller. As soon as they reach him they shrink rapidly until they are only a few millimetres high. The true relationship between them comes out very clearly here: the one a giant and the others tiny creatures fussing around him. But that is not the end. The great man swallows the midgets; they literally go inside him and disappear completely. His effect on them is annihilating. (IML 1120, 440)³⁸¹

Schreber's paranoid system of viewing the world, represented by the crowd, shrinks and annihilates, because he is trying to control and possess it. This idea is encapsulated in his wish to seize all of the world through the use of words.

Schreber's views on words and their potential to seize the world are connected to his systematic way of thinking. Canetti suggests that all systems are delusional because they can never encompass the whole world in all its richness and variation within them. Systematic thinking of this kind leads to the shrinking of the world and the annihilation of variation and difference. Reality is infinitely too rich and complex to be 'seized' and it does not always comply with a system.

Employment of a system is an attempt to seize, to foist a form on something formless by viewing it in terms of a pre-existing, pre-formulated system. It inevitably does not allow for the multiplicity of individual cases. Gentis notes of Canetti: 'Wenn er in Schreber Hitler wiedererkennt, erkennt er auch sich, Canetti, selbst darin. Oder zumindest erkennt er Anlagen, Neigungen, Versuchungen, die er längst in sich entdeckt

³⁸¹ Murdoch has marked the margin of the text which I have underlined.

hat'.³⁸² Canetti, the writer, also uses words to represent the world. However, he hardly imagines that he can *seize* the world, in all its richness, with his work.³⁸³

However, literary forms, (the novel, for instance) can represent further examples of such systems, and in this context it is important to point out that after writing his only novel, Canetti never again wrote in that form. Sebald discusses Canetti's critique of systems (including literary forms) and notes:

Was Canetti an den Produkten der Kunst und an den sogenannten schöngeistigen Werken vollends irritiert, ist, daß sie die Tendenz haben, von der Wirklichkeit sich zu entfernen [...]. Die Invariabilität der Kunst ist Anzeichen der Geschlossenheit ihres Systems, das wie jenes der Macht die Angst vor der eigenen Entropie in der Imagination affirmativer oder destruktiver Abschlüsse vorausprojiziert. Der systemlogische Autismus fordert zuletzt einen Akt der Gewalt.³⁸⁴

The removal of reality which is part of all systems (and indeed all attempts to seize) and the violence involved in this is the crux of Canetti's problematisation. In reaction to this, the myth of the apocalypse became a frequent motif for twentieth century writers, including, for a time, Canetti, as manifested in the final scene of *Die Blendung*. Sebald argues:

Daß er [Canetti] im weiteren das Schreiben von Romanen unterließ, bedeutet, daß er sich ihrem Systemzwang zu entziehen trachtete, weil ihm die zwischen Kreativität und zerstörerischer Vision schwankenden Aporien der Kunst nicht mehr geheuer waren. In dem Maße, in dem Kunst an ihr eigenes Stereotyp sich

³⁸² Gentis, pp. 179-180.

³⁸³ See Peter Friedrich, *Die Rebellion der Masse im Textsystem: Die Sprache der Gegenwissenschaft in Elias Canettis "Masse und Macht"* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1999), who argues that contrary to the suggestion of Gentis's quotation above, the 'irregular' form of *Masse und Macht* represents Canetti's writing against all forms of 'Endlichkeit' as part of his battle with closed systems. Friedrich notes that Canetti's battles with 'Der Überlebende', death, closedness, subjectivity, identity, for example are waged because of the finiteness, and thus exercise of power, inherent in each one of these concepts, pp. 9-16.

³⁸⁴ W.G. Sebald, p. 273.

hält, gebricht ihr die Fähigkeit, eine andere Welt sich vorstellen zu können, und in dem Maße, in dem sie dies verabsäumt, begegnet Canetti ihr mit Skepsis.³⁸⁵

Sebald notes that Canetti is always sceptical of systems which attempt to be exhaustive, that is, which attempt to explain everything and encompass everything. Large systems obstruct reality and Canetti's intention is to see that his works always remain incomplete because he wishes to work against the gradient of power and particular art forms. By allowing things to remain incomplete and without endings, his work intends to offer new beginnings instead.³⁸⁶ With this avoidance of totalities, Canetti is writing against the use of power which they involve: 'Wie wenige hat Canetti die verhängnisvollen Prozesse unseres Jahrhunderts, den Aufstieg des Faschismus, die hypertrophische Entwicklung der Machtapparate, die Ermordung der Juden, die Ausmaße atomarer Vernichtung überdacht, und wie wenige andere Schriftsteller ist er im Lauf seiner Entwicklung zu der Einsicht gekommen, daß es mit Repräsentationen des Endes nicht getan ist'.³⁸⁷ In this analysis, Sebald connects Canetti's critique of systems with the historical events of his century, especially the events in Nazi Germany and thereby also with the Canetti's own literary discussions of power as concerned with seizing and possessing something and/or someone real and external to the self. Seizing (physically or intellectually through the exercise of power), is part of an attempt to make someone or something unreal because this action always, as Sebald notes, wrings out the real.

A suspicion of systems also forms part of Murdoch's work. She uses the dichotomy of form and contingency to express this tension which has a particular significance for writing novels.³⁸⁸ Murdoch sensed as Antonaccio notes that '[p]hilosophers construct metaphysical systems in an attempt to formalize or unify human

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 274. See also Paul Hatvani, 'Ein großartiger Versuch: Fragment zur Neuauflage von Elias Canetti's "Masse und Macht"', *Literatur und Kritik*, 86-87 (July-August 1974), 408-417. Hatvani notes that *Masse und Macht* avoids adhering to a system arguing that systems lead to the narrowing of the world. He connects this to the power figure's hunger to survive which in effect also results in the shrinking of the world where all other inhabitants are removed, (p. 416).

³⁸⁷ W.G. Sebald, pp. 274-275.

³⁸⁸ Maria Antonaccio, 'Form and Contingency in Iris Murdoch's Ethics', in *Iris Murdoch and the Search for Human Goodness*, ed. by Maria Antonaccio and William Schweiker, pp. 110-137 (p. 111).

life, yet our actual lived experience has no form or unity in itself, but is full of contingent rubble, accident, and unsystematized detail which may resist our attempts at unity'.³⁸⁹ Therefore, both Murdoch and Canetti discerned similarities between forms and systems and the exercise of power in reducing the multiplicity of reality.

This tension is played out in *The Sea, The Sea* wherein Arrowby is writing what he initially wants to be his memoir in the course of the novel. However, as Dipple notes, '*The Sea, The Sea* from its beginning fights against all the strictures of novelistic formal ideas'.³⁹⁰ As Arrowby tries to write, he continuously struggles to put form on the events going on around him; indeed this is evident from the novel's first page. Arrowby notes:

I had written the above, destined to be the opening paragraph of my memoirs, when something happened which was so extraordinary and so horrible that I cannot bring myself to describe it even now after a period of time and although a possible, though not totally reassuring, explanation has occurred to me. [...] I spoke of a memoir. Is that what this chronicle will prove to be? Time will show. At this moment, a page old, it feels more like a diary than a memoir. Well let it be a diary then. [...] I have considered writing a journal, not of happenings for there will be none, but as a record of mingled thoughts and daily observations: my 'philosophy, my *pensées* against a background of simple descriptions of the weather and other natural phenomena [...] Of course there is no need to separate 'memoir' from 'diary' or 'philosophical journal' [...] I shall discover my 'literary form'. In any case, why decide now? Later, if I please, I can regard these ramblings as rough notes for a more coherent account. (*TSTS*, 1-3)

The real events which occur resist incorporation into his fictional, strictly formal world and as Dipple points out this is underlined by 'a literal breaking of objects' throughout the novel.³⁹¹ Arrowby's attempt to force form on reality is an aspect of his

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Dipple, p. 276.

³⁹¹ Ibid. p. 277. Arrowby's life in the theatre is another place where his problematic hold on real and the unreal can be gauged. He identifies himself in terms of Shakespeare's Prospero and the other characters in

characterisation as a power figure which he shares with Canetti's and Murdoch's other characters as described in the previous chapters. His effort to seize and possess reality in this way is an extension of his attempts to possess Hartley and other women in the course of the novel. In this respect, it is also connected to the metaphor of eating which so strongly characterises him.

Arrowby's inability to force form on reality is captured in the ending of the novel, which, in effect, refuses to end. The last few pages consisting of very short paragraphs read like the narrative straining to go on. The final line: '[u]pon the demon-ridden pilgrimage of human life, what next I wonder?', also points to this idea of an ongoing narrative and, according to Conradi, it is a 'perfectly judged ending, pointing to the inability of art to compel life, of consciousness to contain experience, mocking the idea of endings themselves'.³⁹² (*TSTS*, 502) Similarly, the idea of an ending is important when considering Canetti's discussion of this shared theme. As previously noted the closed nature of art (and in this respect its exclusion of reality which is ongoing), encapsulated by the ending to a story was a part of art of which Canetti was sceptical.

Murdoch's and Canetti's problematisations of systems and forms, owing to the inevitable entropy (of the world, the human being) which they bring, represent another important literary affinity between these authors' writing. For both, these phenomena are connected to violence and power, and both sought to find ways of writing (Canetti with *Masse und Macht*, Murdoch with *The Sea, The Sea*) which suggest to some degree the complexity of reality. A major element of this, and one which they both sought to indicate, is the property of reality as something which is complex and never ending.

terms of Ariel and Cordelia, for example. For a discussion of Murdoch's use of Prospero see also Elena Andonova-Kalapsazova, 'Practicing Magic from the margins: Rearticulations of Prospero's Magic in John Fowles's *The Magus*, Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea*, and John Banville's *Ghosts*', *Trans: Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*, 16 (July 2006) <http://www.inst.at/trans/16Nr/05_6/andonova-kalapsazova16.htm> [Accessed 15 July 2009]. Later on, Arrowby also sees the Hartley situation in terms of Titian's 'Perseus and Andromeda'. See Dipple, pp. 281-285ff. This theme of living in a fictional world and attempting to shut out the real world has been with us since the previous case studies. Like Peter Kien, Caryl Fisker and even Mischa Fox who lives shut away in his *palazzo*, the hermitic power figure recurs with Arrowby.

³⁹² Conradi, *The Saint and the Artist*, p. 323. Compare with Friedrich's discussion of this feature of Canetti's writing. Peter Friedrich, pp. 9-16.

While the means through which these authors presented this shared concern differ (*Masse und Macht* and *The Sea, The Sea* in this study), it remains, nevertheless, a critical affinity between their works on the exercise of power.

(vii) Power, Transformation, Unselfing

The final section of this case study compares Murdoch's and Canetti's theories of transformation and Unselfing which enable the human being to abjure the exercise of power over others and their worlds. I propose to highlight the comparable points of these authors' seminal ideas which are to be interpreted as proposed responses to the problem of the powerful, possessive individual and the philosophical figure of the 'Kantian man' as Murdoch refers to him and his most extreme derivative in the political world, the despot, in *Masse und Macht*.³⁹³ Transformation and Unselfing can be brought about through the experience of others, and the section demonstrates how both Murdoch and Canetti expressed this concept through the image of the crowd. The section also considers comparisons between their depictions of how a victim of power may escape through transformation.

Canetti's thesis proffers the concept of Transformation as a means to avoid using and being subjected to power.³⁹⁴ Murdoch was familiar with this idea; she mentions it in a letter to Canetti, in her review of *Masse und Macht* and she also underlines several passages of this discussion in her copy of the book. Furthermore, she commits the key tenets of this idea to her personal index. Despite these instances of Murdoch citing this idea as we note in the last case study, she seems not to have seen the potential it held for Canetti in terms of countering the problem of the exercise of power. Transformation, as Canetti describes it, is fundamentally an experience of empathy, with experiencing the

³⁹³ Murdoch, 'The Sovereignty of Good over other Concepts', in *Existentialists and Mystics*, pp. 363-385. Murdoch sees the power figure, the picture of the human as 'self-enclosed' as having 'occasioned a whole era in the history of philosophy, beginning with Kant and leading on to the existentialism and the analytic philosophy of the present day. The chief characteristic of this phase of philosophy can be briefly stated: Kant abolished God and made man God in His stead. We are still living in the age of the Kantian man, or Kantian man-god', (p. 365). See Chapter Two of this thesis for more on this.

³⁹⁴ Roberston, 'Canetti and Nietzsche: An Introduction to *Masse und Macht*', p. 212.

‘other’ (person or thing) on such a level that both are equal, are one and the same, and yet, at the same time, also different and separate. It is precisely what the figures in *Die Blendung* cannot experience and hence the break-down in communication and lack of meaningful relationships. This is captured in the metaphor of blindness (as discussed in Case Study One); the inability to metamorphose, in Canetti’s sense, is the failure to see and commune with what is outside of oneself. Compare this with Murdoch’s idea of unselfing where she states that humans need to be taught:

[...] how real things can be looked at and loved without being seized and used, without being appropriated into the greedy organism of the self. This exercise of *detachment* is difficult and valuable whether the thing contemplated is a human being or the root of a tree or the vibration of a colour or a sound. Unsentimental contemplation of nature exhibits the same quality of detachment: selfish concerns vanish, nothing exists except the things which are seen [...] It is obvious here what is the role, for the artist or spectator, of exactness and good vision: unsentimental, detached, unselfish, objective attention. It is also clear that in moral situations a similar exactness is called for. I would suggest that the authority of the Good seems to us something necessary because the realism (ability to perceive reality) required for goodness is a kind of intellectual ability to perceive what is true which is automatically at the same time a suppression of the self (SG, 64).³⁹⁵

Like Canetti’s theory of *Verwandlung*, Murdoch’s Unselfing is other-centred because its aim is that the experiencer should ‘cease to be in order to attend to the existence of something else, a natural object, a person in need’ (SG, 58) and to ‘silence and expel self, to contemplate and delineate nature with a clear eye’ (SG, 63).³⁹⁶ When Murdoch writes as above of contemplating nature, she is referring to objects of the natural world in very broad terms. She is certainly here including fellow human beings. (SG, 64) Unselfing in order to avoid the exercise of power over others involves a ‘detachment’ from the self

³⁹⁵ Emphasis is Murdoch’s.

³⁹⁶ Antonaccio, *Picturing the Human: The Moral Thought of Iris Murdoch*, p. 129. Antonaccio uses the term ‘transformation’ as a synonym for Murdoch’s concept of Unselfing.

where 'selfish concerns vanish, nothing exists except the things which are seen'. (SG, 64)³⁹⁷ One might ask here what happens to the seer and the probable answer is that the seer and the seen (the subject and object) are one, through the suppression of selfish desires. In Transformation, as we have noticed, a similar process takes place. The subject and object come together, a point noted by Canetti when he compares Transformation to wearing a 'complete mask'. These concepts of Unselfing and 'Transformation' therefore, are both concerned with bringing individuals together in order to effect understanding of the other and of the self, in particular the essential 'otherness' of the self so that the exercise of power over that 'other' is bypassed.³⁹⁸ Indeed in *The Green Knight* and *The Philosopher's Pupil* Murdoch uses the term 'metamorphosis' to refer to characters attempting to become good. Peter Mir notes that through Buddhism he 'returned to the world' and has gained 'enlightenment'. He describes this event as 'the metamorphosis' (GK, 298-300). Similarly, Rozanov in *The Philosopher's Pupil* is attempting to become good and these are described as 'metamorphoses' (PP, 135).

The means by which one can experience Transformation or Unselfing are also comparable. Both authors name art as facilitating process. In Canetti's 'Münchener Rede' he names the function of the artist to be the 'Hüter der Verwandlung', noting this function to involve 'die Zugänge zwischen den Menschen offen[zu]halten' and '[s]ie sollten imstande sein, zu jedem zu werden, auch zum Kleinsten, zum Naivsten, zum Ohnmächtigsten' (GW, 263).³⁹⁹ For Murdoch also '[a]rt provides an occasion for unselfing in both its creation and its enjoyment'.⁴⁰⁰

As we have now established, the practices of *Verwandlung* and 'Unselfing' are 'other'-centred and this description refers to the fact that in order for them to come about, an individual must come into contact with another person or thing other than itself. Canetti's most contemptible characters are blind to other people and their real, external

³⁹⁷ See also Gordon's explanation of this concept in David J. Gordon, *Iris Murdoch's Fables of Unselfing* (London & Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), p. 7.

³⁹⁸ Ibid. pp. 7-8. Gordon notes that unselfing involves seeing the contingent without wishing to seize and possess it.

³⁹⁹ Emphasis Canetti's.

⁴⁰⁰ Antonaccio, *Picturing the Human: The Moral Thought of Iris Murdoch*, p. 137.

world (and therefore cannot experience metamorphosis). Peter Kien, for instance, crucially avoids contact with others and lives in a dream world in his head where he believes he rules supreme. Because of his unwillingness to confront the real world outside of himself, and his self-absorption in fantasy, Kien cannot unself, or transform. Indeed, his inability to do so is expressed in the images of him as stone, the end point of Transformation. (We have drawn comparisons between images of rigidity surrounding Canetti's and Murdoch's power figures in Chapter Two). Canetti uses the image of the stone and connects it to the power figure's non-transforming ways and the urge to seize, grasp and fix elements of the world. Rocks and stones for Canetti represent the desire for power and control over an ever-transforming world (*MM*, 453-454).

Arrowby, we learn, collects stones and brings them back to his house where he makes a border with them, lining them up like little soldiers around his garden. He boasts that he is the 'owner' of a lot of rocks. The rocks which make his passage from the sea difficult as well as the ebb and flow of the sea represent the two forces central to Murdoch's and also Canetti's work. The sea is a 'crowd symbol' for Canetti which incorporates the fluidity, or contingency (to use Murdoch's term) of the world. Stones and rocks symbolise the opposite, form, which includes the desire to grasp and hold permanently which characterises the power figures. In *The Sea, The Sea*, the rocks and the sea similarly represent these two primal energies. The rocks are connected to power. As he attempts to emerge from the sea, the rocks cut Arrowby's feet (*TSTS*, 5). The rock which Arrowby gives to Hartley is a symbol of his kind of love for her which is an unyielding one, with the potential for destruction. It is stones which Rosina hurls at the car in her vengeful ambush and therein the stone's power is apparent in its use as a weapon. Stones also are significant in the case of Arrowby and his particular penchant for them reflects his desire for the opposite to Transformation which is permanence and fixity. In this respect, stones are also connected to death, the final stage of the exercise of power.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰¹ Stones reappear in relation to Moy in *The Green Knight*. Moy relinquishes the security which the stones offered her in the final chapter near the sea. The permanence of the stone is contrasted with the 'chaos of the waters' which she experiences when she plunges herself into the sea. In this instance, the attempts to

Opposed to this urge to possess is Transformation, which may come about through the individual's experience in the crowd, according to Canetti's theory. Robertson sees the two parts of *Masse* and *Macht* as one offering a solution to the threat of the other.⁴⁰² Within the crowd, (in relations with what is other than the self) the individual is unselfed.⁴⁰³ Due to the close proximity of others, the two bodies are equal. However, depending on who is experiencing this, it is not always successful. The power-figure, for example, fears the crowd experience and typically tries to control and master, rather than be part of it and feel equal to its members. In *Masse und Macht*, Canetti discusses individuals who struggle for control and who, during *Delirium Tremens*, dream of crowds of creatures (insects or vermin, for example) and/or objects smaller than himself. While he draws on the crowd-filled hallucinations of alcoholics, Canetti notes that anyone can experience them (*MM*, 424). Using some examples of documented hallucinations, he notes that the crowds can be considered amusing or frightening by the experiencer, and thus resemble a 'cinematographic show' where crowds of small or large objects (for example, dust, glasses or small insects or creatures) are in 'lively motion'. Quoting Kräpelin, Canetti notes that *Delirium Tremens* "'is remarkable for the masses of homogenous hallucinations and their multiple, lively motion, appearing, disappearing and melting into each other'" (IML 1120, 360). For Canetti, these crowd hallucinations can be a manifestation of the dreamer's power struggle with the external, contingent world, symbolised by the crowd (*MM*, 426). He also proposes the interpretation that the alcoholic or drug abuser, for instance, has a heightened awareness of the 'fundamental condition of the body'. He points out: 'one should remember how numerous and how small are the cells of which the body is composed. These cells are of very different kinds and act on each other continuously. They are attacked by hosts of bacteria and other minute creatures which settle among them and which, being alive, are always active in their own way' (IML 1120, 362). However, these hallucinations also give insight into the

hold onto stones compared with faces the chaos of the world (represented by the sea) are part of the narration of Moy's growing up and facing the world (*GK*, 468).

⁴⁰² Robertson, 'Canetti and Nietzsche: An Introduction to *Masse und Macht*', p. 203.

⁴⁰³ Arnasson and Roberts, note that the crowd is synonymous with self-abandonment and is thus the polar opposite to the exercise of power for Canetti, p. 55.

conflict of crowds and power; Murdoch showed interest in this interpretation. Here Canetti connects these crowd-hallucinations to the over-arching theme of political power:

[...] the basic situation of the delirium - that is, a single large individual seeing himself in opposition to a numberless host of tiny aggressors – does exist and in the course of human history has become increasingly marked. It begins with the particular feeling about vermin, by which all mammals (to speak only of them) are plagued. Whether these are mosquitoes or lice, locusts or ants, they have always occupied men's imaginations. Their threat lies in the fact that they appear in great crowds and very suddenly. They have often stood as symbols for crowds. It is very probable that it was they who first brought man to *think* in terms of great crowds; perhaps his earliest 'thousands' and 'millions' were insects. (IML 1120, 363)

Within this important statement are some of the most central ideas of *Masse und Macht*. While Canetti is discussing power figures like Hitler who actually killed the crowds which he regarded as vermin, Canetti also notes a human tendency which, though it does not always reach such catastrophic conclusions, is comparable in that it is destructive. He connects this idea with the way in which the human understands itself as isolated and detached from his fellow creatures and the world represented by the crowd. (In Case Study Two we have drawn comparisons between Murdoch's and Canetti's literary representations of this view of the human through the figures of Kien and Fisher). Crowd-hallucinations therefore, in Canetti's view, are connected to the fear of the power-hungry individual of all that is formless, fluid, contingent and beyond his control. However, the crowd-hallucination also tells us something fundamental about our own dispositions, namely, that we are always, whether we like it or not, one of a crowd; and although we may seek to eliminate the crowd (by shutting ourselves away from the world), our own bodies are composed of crowds of cells and our surroundings are filled with crowds of bacteria. These hallucinations, therefore, are a vital part of the portrait of the power figure for Canetti.

Murdoch's Arrowby, a power figure like Canetti's, has comparable crowd hallucinations, very often after drinking alcohol.⁴⁰⁴ In this instance, his experience, like the one described by Canetti, is similarly compared to a cinematic experience:

Later I knew that I had been asleep and I opened my eyes with wonder and the sky had utterly changed again and was no longer dark but bright, golden, gold-dust golden, as if curtain after curtain had been removed behind the stars I had seen before, and now I was looking into the vast interior of the universe, as if the universe were quietly turning itself inside out. Stars behind stars and stars behind stars behind stars until there was nothing between them, nothing beyond them, but dusty dim gold of stars [...] All was movement, all was change, and somehow this was visible and yet unimaginable. And I was no longer I but something pinned down as an atom, an atom of an atom, a necessary captive spectator, a tiny mirror into which it was all indifferently beamed, as it motionlessly seethed and boiled, gold behind gold behind gold. Later still I awoke and it had all gone; and for a few moments I thought that I had seen all those stars only in a dream. There was a weird shocking sudden quiet, as at the cessation of a great symphony or of some immense prolonged indescribable din. Had the stars then been audible as well as visible and had I indeed heard the music of the spheres. (*TSTS*, 145-146)⁴⁰⁵

In the course of the novel, Charles has a number of hallucinations which can be divided into two distinct categories. This is the first and is a crowd hallucination. Charles's hallucination bears many similarities with those described by Canetti, perhaps most significantly because they contain crowds, as the above quotation exemplifies, and as is also pointed to more explicitly when it recurs later: 'I walked back over the causeway, aware now of a dreadful headache and a swinging sensation in the head: not surprising since, as I established later, James and I had drunk between us nearly five litre bottles of

⁴⁰⁴ Rozanov who is also attempting to become good in *The Philosopher's Pupil* similarly experiences crowds in his dreams: 'Last night John Robert had dreamt that he was being pursued by a lot of squealing piglets who turned out to be human infants running very fast on all fours' (*PP*, 173).

⁴⁰⁵ Conradi, *The Saint and the Artist*, p. 316. Conradi interprets Arrowby's hallucination as his experience of the sublime, which is another means to Unselfing for Murdoch. I propose, however, to suggest that this episode may also be interpreted as Arrowby Unselfing or Transforming through his experience of the contingent world symbolised by the crowds in the hallucination.

wine. There was also a rapid sliding crowding curtain of spots before the eyes [...] I recalled that I had had a curious dream about freezing to death in a snowstorm'. (*TSTS*, 448) In the original and recurring hallucination, the crowd image is the 'billion billion stars' and later also the snowstorm 'the crowding curtain of spots' (*TSTS*, 475). In the course of Murdoch's novel, there is another hallucination which Arrowby experiences and that is of a power figure which is a projection of himself:

Then, not at once, but after about two minutes, as my eyes became accustomed to the glare, *I saw a monster rising from the waves*. [...] I could also see the head with remarkable clarity, a kind of crested snake's head, green-eyed, the mouth opening to show teeth and a pink interior [...] I was *excessively* frightened [...] Or: was what I had seen an absolutely enormous eel? Could there be such an eel? Did eels ever rise up out of the sea and wreath themselves into coils and balance themselves high in the air? (*TSTS*, 19-20)⁴⁰⁶

The monster as a projection of his own monstrously power-hungry nature is indicated when, as he again gives into his lust for power and holds Hartley captive against her will, she describes him, in terms of the monster of his hallucination, as an 'eel'. (*TSTS*, 300) This hallucination is connected with the earlier crowd dream in that it recurs after another drunken night. It is clear that this episode is related to his crowd-hallucination when a hung-over Arrowby visits the Wallace Collection in London. He notes:

'[a] sort of brown fuzz and some very volatile black spots intermittently marred my field of vision. I felt unsteady and somewhat oddly related to the ground, as if I had suddenly become extremely tall. Then it began that so many of my women were there; but not Hartley [...] Some workmen were doing something or other downstairs, hammering a lot, flashing lights swarmed and receded, blending with my headache. I found myself searching my mind for something that it was important to remember, to do with that night when I had lain out on the rocks and

⁴⁰⁶ Dipple, p. 278. Dipple holds that the image of the sea-monster represents an expression of Arrowby's subconscious mind. Emphasis in this quotation is Murdoch's.

seen the ultimate cavern of the stars when the universe seemed to be turning inside out, and at the time this had reminded me of something, only I could not make out what; only now, as I seemed to see again that vast slowly changing infinitely deep dome of luminously golden stars, stars behind stars behind stars, did I recall what it was that I had been put in mind of. It was the changing lights in the Odeon cinema where I used to go with Hartley as child [...] I seemed to notice suddenly, though I had seen it many times before, the terrible fanged open mouth of the sea dragon, upon which Perseus was flying down head first. The sea-dragon did not quite resemble my sea-monster, but the mouth was very like, and the memory of that hallucination, or whatever it was, was suddenly more disquieting than it had ever been since the first shock of its appearance. I turned quickly away and found myself face to face with, directly opposite, Rembrandt's picture of Titus. So Titus was here too. Titus and the sea monster and the stars and holding Hartley's hand in the cinema over forty years ago. (*TSTS*, 169-171)

The two hallucinations Arrowby experiences in the course of the novel are present in this quotation. The first is the image of crowds, which he connects with a cinematic experience from his childhood friendship with Hartley. The other is the sea monster image which, in this passage, is connected to the myth of Perseus and Andromeda, and is thus concerned with power and metamorphosis. The two ideas of the contingency, characterised by the crowd, fluidity and multiplicity, and power, defined by singularity and hard form, are connected in the above quotation. As we have pointed out the image of the monster in his dream is a projection of himself, and that is the figure of power. Just as the monster threatens Andromeda fastened to a rock, Arrowby goes on to hold Hartley captive in a similar way by the sea. The crowd image, however, is what is in opposition to this course of action which he goes onto pursue. It is associated with light and with 'seeing' into the nature of the universe, images which writing is the opposite to the exercise of power in Murdoch's (and Canetti's) writing. These images are also suggestive of metamorphosis as they are transforming. The above quotation sets out the two options which present themselves to Arrowby: he can continue his monstrous ways or accept the otherness of the world without controlling and possessing it. As we know, however,

Arrowby does not read the signs in this way and though he is attempting to abjure power, he nevertheless continues to exercise it when he tries to possess Hartley as the novel continues.⁴⁰⁷

While the crowds in the hallucination can be objects, stars as in the case of Arrowby in this instance, they are also very often vermin as Canetti points out. Arrowby also is under the impression that his house is infested with rats and this is another manifestation of his crowd hallucinations. (*TSTS*, 22) The significance of these hallucinations for the power figure is that the crowd content is a manifestation of that figure's fear and their urge to control. The crowd, characterised by endless contingency, is what the power figure must control and subdue because it poses a risk to its power. (For Canetti, the crowd and transformation potentially oppose the objectives of the power figure).⁴⁰⁸

The propensity for crowd-hallucinations is another point of comparison between Murdoch's and Canetti's power-hungry individuals. However, Arrowby's reaction to the hallucination is also of importance to our discussion because he is attempting to abjure his power-seeking ways. He is not terrified by his crowd-filled dreams and this reflects the small degree of success which he has in his objective to become good.

A major crowd symbol which Canetti describes in *Masse und Macht*, and in which Murdoch expressed interest, is the sea. In Canetti's Zurich estate, he typed out Xenophon's story 'Das Meer, Das Meer', a direct translation of the title of Murdoch's novel, three times. He also offers an interpretation of it:

Das Meer ist für die Griechen nicht nur die Erlösung, der Weg zur Heimat, es macht aus ihnen, da sie es erblicken, eine wahre Masse. Es ist selbst ein

⁴⁰⁷ Rowe, *Salvation by Art: The Visual Arts and the Novels of Iris Murdoch*, p. 188. Rowe notes that the 'psychological significance' of the painting and the links between the images do not become apparent to Arrowby.

⁴⁰⁸ Arnason and Roberts, p. 91.

Massensymbol; der Zustand, in den sie bei seinem Anblick geraten könnte nicht überzeugender und klarer geschildert sein.

Es beginnt mit dem Ruf der Ersten, die das Meer erblicken. Der Ruf pflanzt sich nach Rückwärts fort. Die noch ausserhalb stehen, missdeuten ihn als kriegerische Gefahr. Aber die Hinteren rücken nach, der Ruf schwillt an, er ergreift immer mehr Menschen, sie geraten ins Laufen, selbst die Zugtiere und Pferde laufen mit, als hätten sie denselben Grund zur Freude, als wüssten sie, was das Meer ist, als gehörten sie zur Masse. Dann sind alle auf der Höhe, alle im Anblick des Meeres, sie umarmen einander alle auch Obersten und Hauptleute, es gibt keine Unterschiede mehr, auch nicht die des Ranges, alles sind gleich [...].⁴⁰⁹

This passage gives more insight into the significance of the sea in Canetti's imagination and there are parallels between this and its significance in *The Sea, The Sea*. Drawing on Xenophon's telling of the story, Canetti finds that the sea not only represents redemption in heaven, but it also makes those who view it part of a crowd. In these ideas, the positive view of aspects of the crowd is brought to the fore. Membership of the crowd which, for Canetti, is associated with equality between individuals and the suspension of the exercise of power, is also connected to goodness; the acknowledgement of what is other as an equal is on a par with goodness for Canetti because it involves seeing what is other than the self and he uses Xenophon's text to demonstrate this view. The sea has a similar significance for Murdoch.⁴¹⁰ Arrowby goes to the sea in order to become good. He swims in the sea regularly at the beginning of his time there. However, as he reverts to his old power-hungry ways, he noticeably and significantly stops swimming in the sea.⁴¹¹ This episode also coincides with an increased sense of his alienation from the other people who force themselves on him. We note for instance, when the guests (Titus, James, Gilbert, Peregrine, Lizzie, Rosina) sing together, that Arrowby cannot take part and

⁴⁰⁹ ZB. 49.10. This material from Canetti's research for *Masse und Macht* is undated and is marked: 'Nur zum Teil verwendet [sic] Manches ungebraucht'.

⁴¹⁰ Conradi, *The Saint and the Artist*, p. 317. Conradi notes that the sea represents 'indeterminacy and flux', the contingency which the power figure opposes.

⁴¹¹ It is also notably that another of Murdoch's power figures, Julius King, also avoids water (symbol of the contingent). (*FHD*, 373) Indeed, he is compared to a 'stone' when he falls into Hilda and Rupert's swimming pool. We note also that another powerful character, Ben Fitch in *The Sea, The Sea*, cannot swim either.

indeed is made anxious by their unity. At the same time, he is attempting to get rid of them so that he can continue his plan of taking Hartley, against her will, from her captivity by him, to London. Therefore, the sea and the crowd (as in, communing with a group of 'others') are also connected in Murdoch's writing.

There is another important aspect of transformation concerning the subjugated figure and their attempts to escape their oppressor. There are a number of points of comparison between Canetti's descriptions of mania in connection to transformations and the power struggle between Arrowby and Hartley. Canetti makes the distinction between linear and circular flight transformations. A linear transformation is when a pursued creature finds itself in a new location with each new transformation. Circular transformations are when the prey has already been seized and continues to metamorphose in the hold of the predator. Hartley's attempts to flee Arrowby are characterised by comparable processes. We have already pointed out a flight scene from this novel where Hartley is being chased around the town by Arrowby. However, when Hartley is seized by him and held prisoner in his home, her struggles with Arrowby result in hysterical scenes as she attempts to escape him. In order to demonstrate the concept of circular flight transformations, Canetti recounts the story of Peleus and Thetis. Thetis resists a union with Peleus but he seizes her and despite her effort to escape him through several transformations, she finally surrenders to him. Canetti notes that the same process occurs in this story as that in the story of Proteus and his confrontation with Menelaus, except for the important fact that the Peleus and Thetis story involves a man attempting to possess a woman. The following quotation shows that Murdoch was interested in this idea:

The story of Thetis does not really add anything new to that of Proteus. I have quoted it here because of its erotic colouring. In this respect it reminds one of an affliction which is widespread and well known, namely hysteria. Major attacks of hysteria are nothing but a series of violent transformations for flight. The sufferer feels seized by a superior power. In the case of woman it may be a man she wants to escape – a man who has possessed her or who, like Peleus, wants to possess her

[...] What is important in each case is the victim's feeling of the physical proximity of the superior power, its immediate grip on him. Everything he does, and especially every metamorphosis he achieves, has as its aim the loosening of the grip (IML 1120, 345).

This is almost an exact description of the events between Arrowby and Hartley wherein a woman wants to escape a man who wants to possess her. Murdoch also committed this idea to her index noting: 'Real light on mental illness Hysteria as flight transformation 345' (IML 1120, 496). There are parallels between the notion of captivity, escape and transformation in the following scene wherein Hartley is being held captive by Arrowby as he attempts to possess her 'inner being', to touch her mind, so that she will finally consent to be with him and not her husband. However, Hartley wishes only to return to Ben. There are a number of scenes where she pleads with Arrowby to allow her to leave:

Tears seemed to stream out of her eyes in torrents, then her wet mouth opened in a sort of strangled shout, an animal cry of tortured pain. Then she gave a low shuddering wail, and fell over side-ways, grasping at her neck, pulling at her dressing gown as if she were suffocating. The wail was followed by a shuddering gasp, and in a moment she was in hysterics [...]. I had witnessed hysterical screaming before, but nothing like this. I knelt again and tried to hold her, to shake her, but she suddenly seemed so strong [...] she was shuddering rigidly with a dreadful damaging electricity [...]. Her voice, raucous, piercing, shrieked out, like a terrified angry person [...] this continuing mechanically, automatically, on and on as if the human creature were possessed by an alien demonic machine. [...] I felt I wanted to silence her even if it meant killing her, I shook her again and yelled at her, ran to the door, ran back again. I shall never forget the awful image of that face, that mask (*TSTS*, 305-306).

In this scene, Hartley wrestles with her captor. We learn from her son and bullying husband that, in the past, she has shown herself to have a tendency towards attacks of hysteria. (*TSTS*, 290 & 292) Arrowby witnesses these attacks as she begs him to allow

her escape. There is also reference to her transformation in these scenes. She comes to resemble 'a frightened animal' (273), a 'sick animal' (293) and is also said to look like a 'dog' and a 'corpse' (281). She is described as appearing 'possessed' and finally her 'transformation for flight' is reflected in the reference to the 'mask' which she wears in this scene. Furthermore, she wishes to have her make-up, and her hair is described as 'wig-like'. (*TSTS*, 294 & 284) Canetti directly compares transformation with wearing a mask and as we have pointed out, Murdoch underlines this idea. In addition, Murdoch's story resembles Canetti's description of circular flight transformation (as in the cases of Proteus and Thetis) because they all occur in one place, where Hartley is held hostage (in the small inner room in Arrowby's house). The fit of hysteria and its transformations is a conscious attempt to escape according to Canetti. It appears that Hartley uses her hysteria in order to effect an escape from Arrowby in a similar manner to that of Thetis in her struggle with Peleus as described by Canetti. Arrowby notes that the performance [Hartley's fit of hysteria] was for me, its violence directed at me. She became exhausted, stopped suddenly and fell back as in a faint. I seized her hand. It was cold. I became panic-stricken and would have run out and shouted for a doctor, only I was too frightened to leave her and too exhausted to make any decision [...] Then I looked at her and saw her eyes open. She was looking at me again with that strange cunning look, as if now she were actually estimating the effect of her 'fit' (*TSTS*, 306).

The suggestion in the above quotation is that Hartley was attempting to 'play dead' in order to effect her escape from Arrowby. Indeed, he often mistakes her for dead and she even suggests that she will soon be dead (*TSTS*, 292-293). The implication is that this is all a part of her efforts to escape his clutches. Canetti also includes the notion of 'playing dead' as part of hysteria in transformations for flight: 'Eine der häufigsten [Verwandlungen] ist die Verwandlung in Tote; sie ist altbewährt und schon von vielen Tieren her bekannt. Man hofft, daß man als Toter losgelassen wird. Man bleibt liegen, und der Feind geht weg' (*MM*, 408).⁴¹²

⁴¹² Emphasis Canetti's.

Part of Canetti's discussion of transformation in *Masse und Macht* takes up the issue of slavery as a perversion of the transformative capacities of humans. As noted with Kien, the power figure does not transform; however, he has the power to transform others. This is achieved in a number of ways, for example, through unmasking which we have previously discussed in relation to Schreber. In extreme cases, transforming others becomes akin to slavery whereby an individual is treated like an animal. Canetti notes and Murdoch underlines:

For both the slave and the dog, commands and food come from the same source, and in this they resemble a young child. Where they are essentially different from a child is in relation to transformations. In its play the child practises all the transformations it may be able to use later and its parents help it with these and continually encourage it to acquire fresh ones. It continues to grow in many different ways and when it has mastered its transformations it is rewarded by being promoted to adult status. (IML 1120, 383)

However, the transformations of a child are the opposite of what happens to the slave, according to Canetti. The slave's transformations are limited in the same manner as what it is allowed to do is. It must perform the same simple chores repeatedly. We remember, for example, the subjected figures of Anna Pfaff in *Die Blendung* and Pattie in *The Time of the Angels* who must answer the door and do the shopping day after day. Similarly, in the novel presently under discussion, Hartley is only allowed out to do the shopping (and this is when Arrowby meets her). It is only possible for her to leave the house on other occasions because Ben is not there. (He is at a woodwork class on one occasion and on the other he is at a nearby farm to acquire a dog). When she is delayed in returning to her husband, her fear of him becomes evident.

Arrowby's desire to transform Hartley is manifested in ways which echo Canetti's ideas on transformation and slavery. Firstly, he limits her movements and activities by locking her into a room. As noted in the above quotation, he is her sole source of food during the period of her incarceration. Canetti compares the slave to a dog, separated

from his pack and under the orders of his master. (*MM*, 454) Hartley is similarly separated from her kin, is described as an ‘obedient dog’ and is under Arrowby’s orders which resemble those one would give to a dog, as do Hartley’s movements as described by Arrowby: “‘Come on, old thing,’ I said, ‘get up. Come on down and we’ll have breakfast. [...] She pulled herself up slowly, and then got onto all fours and rose laboriously to her feet’.” (*TSTS*, 283)

Rather than merely trying to turn a human being into an animal, which is the most extreme situation Canetti describes, Arrowby is trying to transform Hartley into the childlike, carefree person she was when they were growing up.⁴¹³ The objective of his incarceration of her is to force her loyalties to shift from her husband to him. Although Arrowby presents the situation as him liberating her from her brutish husband, he really is attempting to force her into submitting to him; he points out that Hartley has been ‘brainwashed’ by which he refers to her allegiance to her husband. The period of her brainwashing, as he puts it, has been her life since she ran away from him. He is attempting to transform her into the person she was then and he anticipates his success in this regard when he catches glimpses of her as she looked when they were children. His efforts to transform her is probably most apparent in her persistence in calling her by the name he called her when she was a child, ‘Hartley’. (*TSTS*, 129 & 296) Arrowby similarly calls his friend, Peregrine Arbelow, Perry, despite the character’s repeated requests that he be called Peregrine.⁴¹⁴ We have already pointed out the significance of names in Pfaff calling his daughter ‘Poli’ against her wishes, and Pattie O’Driscoll’s fervent desire to be called by her real name, Patricia, in her life beyond her subjection to Carel Fisher in *The Time of the Angels*.⁴¹⁵ Calling characters by names other than those by which they wish to be called is part of the will to power and to possess. Connected to this is the power figure’s desire to transform the other individual, an idea which is

⁴¹³ Dipple, p. 279. Dipple notes that Arrowby tries to persuade Hartley to forget about the decades which have elapsed and ‘join him in his idyll of childhood and the golden world’.

⁴¹⁴ Conradi, *The Saint and the Artist*, p. 301. In his discussion of *The Sea*, *The Sea* Conradi notes Arrowby’s unwillingness to call Hartley or Peregrine by the names they wish to be known by and points out ‘[t]o name the world is to try to compel it’.

⁴¹⁵ See section (vii), Chapter Two.

furthermore captured in the issue of naming for both Murdoch's and Canetti's power figures.

Our comparison of the study of possession and the ways in which this urge can be avoided, as illustrated in *Masse und Macht* and *The Sea, The Sea*, demonstrates that power is a major intellectual shared interest for Murdoch and Canetti. This is manifested in particular in the many affinities which exist in their portrayals of the powerful individual. Using Murdoch's marginalia on *Crowds and Power*, this chapter has demonstrated that Murdoch was interested in particular aspects of that book because they reflected her own interests. The chapter finds that Murdoch and Canetti blend images of political, interpersonal and animal power and thus demonstrate that the urge to possess is common to all these realms. It finds that both authors employ the idea of eating as a metaphor for possessive power and both also associate paranoia with the power figure's urge to possess. Furthermore, the chapter has demonstrated that both authors criticise systems and form in their writing for comparable reasons.

We also found further parallels between Murdoch's and Canetti's solutions to the urge to possess. Their comparable concepts of transformation and Unselfing emphasise the important of relating to what is other than the self. Transformation and Unselfing can be facilitated by experiencing art, according to both authors. In addition, we noted that Canetti's idea of the crowd represents the contingent real world of others, and through an engagement with the crowd, Unselfing and Transformation can take place. The chapter also finds that Arrowby experiences crowd hallucinations which recall Canetti's descriptions of these phenomena in *Masse und Macht* in which Murdoch was interested. There are more parallels between Canetti's description of a captured figure's flight transformations and Hartley's behaviour during her captivity by Arrowby. Finally, the chapter also noted comparisons between Canetti's idea of enslavement as a reversal of transformation and Arrowby's treatment of Hartley as he attempts to possess her.

Conclusion

It is undeniable that there are differences between Murdoch's and Canetti's art, most obviously in terms of the literary traditions with which they are associated. Canetti belongs to the European tradition which admired Karl Kraus, Kafka, Nestroy and Musil, for example.⁴¹⁶ Murdoch, on the other hand, lists Shakespeare, Austen and Dickens as her influences.⁴¹⁷ Canetti wrote *Die Blendung* in pre-war Vienna, whereas Murdoch is a post-war writer. Canetti's novel is a biting satire in the mould of his literary ancestors, while Murdoch's novels' social commentaries are less obviously satirical, bearing echoes of Shakespeare's and Austen's comedies of errors and manners. These differences may stem from the contrasting literary traditions in which these authors were situated, and may also represent the imprint of the unsettled times during which Canetti wrote *Die Blendung*.

There is, however, no doubt that Murdoch had sustained contact with her continental counterparts, and current research in Murdoch studies increasingly acknowledges this.⁴¹⁸ Yet very little work has been undertaken to examine Murdoch's engagement with émigré writers in London after the war, a subject to which this thesis has contributed. Furthermore, no research has been conducted to consider Canetti's intellectual relationships to his literary lovers.⁴¹⁹ A comparative study of Canetti's and Friedl Benedikt's work is urgently required. The present study has approached this task through its concentration on Canetti's and Murdoch's literary relationship.

The first major obstacle concerned fitting the relationship into a pre-existing theoretical framework of literary influence or intertextuality. For reasons detailed in the introduction, neither approach was employed, as it was felt that they would mislead rather than clarify. The second hurdle to be overcome concerned setting parameters

⁴¹⁶ Hans Reiss, 'Elias Canetti's Attitude to Writers and Writings', in *A Companion to the Works of Elias Canetti*, pp. 61-87 (p. 76).

⁴¹⁷ Conrad, *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, p. 524.

⁴¹⁸ This is due to be explored in Miles Leeson's forthcoming study of Murdoch's engagement with Heidegger *Iris Murdoch: Philosophical Novelist* (London: Continuum, 2010). See also Gabrielle Griffen's study of Murdoch and Simone Weil *The Influence of the Writings of Simone Weil on the Fiction of Iris Murdoch* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993).

⁴¹⁹ Julian Preece has investigated Canetti's literary relationship with his first wife, Veza. See *The Rediscovered Writings of Veza Canetti*.

regarding which particular texts were most important for our purposes. I found that as it stands, the criticism on Murdoch's and Canetti's relationship indicates a corpus for study. Conradi connects the authors through specific novels from Murdoch's *oeuvre*. Therefore, in order to engage with the criticism, and to show that there is another way of interpreting them in terms of Murdoch's relationship to Canetti, this thesis concentrates on these novels in particular. On the other hand, Canetti's texts which form part of the corpus of the study are those which can be directly linked to Murdoch. They are works with which we know she engaged (through reading commenting, annotating, reviewing and translating). It can be safely assumed that Murdoch's knowledge of these works and her repeated endorsement of Canetti's major work indicate that their subject matter was of interest to her; they represent, therefore, their shared interests. The thesis set out to investigate these suggestions of shared interests and to cast new light on many affinities between their literary and philosophical works.

Several previous studies have tended to provide biographical portraits of the relationship which simply demonise Canetti as a manipulative, tyrannical monster whom Murdoch sought to portray through a number of her malign, fictional characters. It has even been claimed that Canetti served as an intellectual opposite for Murdoch. Through a re-examination of texts which are typically associated with Canetti, the thesis has demonstrated that there are undiscovered parallels between these authors which indicate a range of shared interests.

The thesis concentrated on three sets of interrelated binaries, the first of which is that of vision and blindness. It compares the significance of the metaphor of vision in these authors' depictions of the 'good' man. By contrast, however, their fictional work, especially *Die Blendung* and *The Flight from the Enchanter*, meditate on the theme of blindness, which, logically, is therefore associated with immoral behaviour. Through a close comparative reading of these novels, we discovered a string of similarities between the literary depictions of Kien's and Annette's metaphorical blindness. We also noted the mutual employment of this motif in relation to the male figures' attitudes to women in the discussions of gender in these novels. The thesis also found that Murdoch's text is

frequently a direct inversion of aspects of Canetti's, and this inversion forms an important part of the comparison. Rather than indicating points of tension, these inversions represent their shared ideal of clear vision. Whereas Canetti conveys this common ideal obliquely through implication in his satire, Murdoch does so more directly through her employment of the 'good' character, Peter Saward, for example, who is the inverse of Kien. The polarity of vision and blindness runs through many of Murdoch's novels, thus underlining the centrality of the motif to her thinking, while also suggesting possibilities for further comparisons beyond the scope of the present thesis.

The second major finding of our study was that Murdoch's power figures do not simply reflect Canetti's alleged demonic personality, but are part of her critique of post-Enlightenment depictions of the human being which help to emphasise its power and isolation. This is a critique which Canetti also levels against the philosophical tradition through his fictional power figures and through the examples of power which he discusses in *Masse und Macht*. This critique, therefore, represents another major point of comparison between these authors' work. The thesis has revealed a web of shared motifs as well as stylistic affinities in Murdoch's and Canetti's literary portrayals of power figures in *Die Blendung*, *Masse und Macht* and *The Time of the Angels* respectively. As a result of these findings, we were able to conclude that Murdoch and Canetti were intellectually allied in terms of their discussions of the human propensity for exercising power. These power figures present a particular philosophical view of the human which both authors were intent on challenging.

In contrast to the problem of isolating power, Murdoch and Canetti advocate communing with the other, and they convey this in a similar manner. Both subvert elements of the fairytale genre in order to emphasise a lack of social interaction. The progression from isolation to engaging with others, which is the pattern of the fairytale, does not come about in these novels. Anna Pfaff dies without being rescued by a Prince Charming figure. The fate of Elizabeth Fisher is more ambiguous. She survives her father, but becomes the charge of Muriel, who, as we pointed out, comes to resemble her father, thus perpetuating the cycle of power in a manner reminiscent of Canetti's

command theory. Pattie O'Driscoll represents the greatest degree of optimism in this novel by virtue of escaping isolation and communing with the world. The use of the fairytale intertext serves two purposes in these novels. It contributes to the thematic discussion of the isolation and communing binary, but the inversion of the fairytales also assists bringing the awful reality of the subjection of these women more sharply into focus. Whilst Murdoch's novel appears more optimistic than Canetti's in terms of the possibility of breaking the cycle of power, there are important similarities in the manner in which both authors suggest this can be accomplished. Joining the world, as represented by the crowd in both novels, means leaving the isolated worlds of power and subjection in favour of communion with others. However, this way forward is merely implied by Canetti's satire, whereas Murdoch's novel is more direct in proposing this conclusion.

The third chapter of the thesis concentrates on a textual comparison of these authors' depictions of the exercise of power in *The Sea*, *The Sea* and *Masse und Macht*. It traces a common nexus between political, animal and interpersonal power in both of these works. Using Murdoch's annotations and review, we demonstrate that there are further parallels between her depiction of power and Canetti's. Both compare the sourcing and consumption of food to the exercise of power, for example. In addition, there are comparisons between the fundamental, competing energies of which they saw the world to be composed. Crowds and power are comparable to contingency and form in Murdoch's work. Both authors criticise a tendency to eradicate the uncontrollable multiplicity of the world (crowds and contingency) through their critique of systems in these works.

The final strand of this comparison concerned these authors' responses to this problematic view of the human. I have shown that Murdoch and Canetti attempt to reconfigure the human in terms of its relationship to what is other than itself. To this end, they devise their theories of *Verwandlung* and Unselfing, which they present as human capacities allowing the individual a way of subverting the exercise of power over others, through experiencing a deep sense of empathy with them. There are further parallels between the means through which Unselfing and Transformation are achieved. For both

authors, art, the making of it and the experience of it, allows the individual to engage fully with something other than the self, which is what is required for both Transformation and Unselfing. The study concluded by re-affirming that, for all their assumed differences, these authors were kindred spirits in terms of their shared intellectual interests and their narrative strategies.

It is to be hoped that the legacy of this study will be that Murdoch's relationship to Canetti can be viewed from a new angle. It is beyond doubt that further connections, alliances and/or dissonances will be discovered within these authors' works. In addition, it will prove useful to compare how other major twentieth-century figures shaped their thinking, especially Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. It is also hoped that this thesis will serve as a starting point for re-/considering Murdoch's position within the wider European tradition, as well as for exploring Canetti's connections with the many other British authors he came to know during his extended exile in this country.

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