

**Postgraduate Student Conference 2014, Literature & Culture Colloquium
Tuesday, 6 May 2014, “Kostis Palamas” Building**

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“‘Where Virtue Is Concerned we ... Grow by Looking’: Iris Murdoch’s Morally-Laden Philosophy and Ethical Novels”

In this presentation I will focus on Iris Murdoch’s concept of *Attention*, and notably on the moral re-education that attentiveness entails. I argue that *Attention* is generated through the overwhelming liquidity of Murdoch’s plotlines along with her “provocative” male-centredness and male antagonism. These two destabilizers set the stage for the tragic enactment that typically follows in Murdoch’s fiction. Human loss and liquid ordeals invariably entail an *ex post facto* perceptual modification, which becomes apparent in Murdoch’s postscripts. The postscript as meta-narrative transforms the novel to an overt moral debate and celebrates the possibility of a reconceptualization. I understand moral reorientation through *Attention*, a notion widely discussed in *The Sovereignty of Good*, as an indication of Murdoch’s re-appropriation of the *Mores* of ancient Greek tragedy. More specifically, the constitutive elements of the Murdochian appropriation of the tragic is Aristotle’s notion of *Anagnorisis*, and the notion of sight or insight as expressed in the interplay between physiological opticality and moral vision. This interplay is the cornerstone of ancient Greek dramaturgy and also informs Murdoch’s theorizing of ethical seeing.