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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIENTATION TOWARDS GROWTH  
IN LAWRENCE DURRELL'S THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET

DISSERTATION

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by

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In this dissertation I argue that in the characters in Lawrence Durrell's The Alexandria Quartet there is consistently evidenced a psychological orientation towards growth. An introductory Chapter One surveys and a concluding Chapter Six summarizes the dissertation, but the body of the text is four chapters demonstrating the growth-orientation in four characters.

To begin Chapter Two, "Darley's Growth," I recount the plot of the Quartet relevant to the love affairs of its hero, Lawrence Darley. I then demonstrate that, in brief, the Quartet asserts that the human psyche shares with all life an orientation towards growth. Customarily, the psyche is urged by sexual instincts towards love relationships, perhaps the Quartet's most common means of psychological development. Individual maturation is contained in and reflects a universal process, consisting of both bright and dark principles of growth. Into the psychological and universal growth processes, the artist has unique insight. In the character of Darley the psychological growth process is relatively bright,

for Darley has love affairs with Melissa, Justine, and Clea, and the Quartet ends with Darley's artistic fulfillment. To conclude Chapter Two, I represent Darley's growth by examining four of his descriptions of landscape in which he characterizes the growth process. In one description, Darley portrays nature as mechanistically dictating human will. In another, Darley views the psyche as growing by incorporating primarily pleasurable experiences. In a third, Darley emphasizes the dark or destructive aspects of psychological behavior. Finally, in a sequence involving the wounding of Clea, Darley realizes that both positive and negative experiences further psychological growth.

In Chapter Three, "Narouz's Evil," I examine the darker side of the growth process. I begin the chapter by considering dark principles of growth in various characters, including Capodistria, who states that the universal process has both dark and light principles. The body of Chapter Three relates the unhappy story of Narouz, whose love for Clea is unrequited and whose life ends psychologically unfulfilled. Despite his unhappy life, I demonstrate that Narouz's psyche is clearly oriented towards the bright principles of growth.

In my brief Chapter Four, "Justine's Guilt," I show how Justine's nymphomania, associated with her having been raped as a child, is the result of a

frustration of growth. Justine is freed from her guilt-ridden and compulsive mental illness by acknowledging her natural impulse towards the healthy assimilation of even undesirable experiences.

To begin Chapter Five, "Pursewarden's Death," I identify death as the natural resolution of the growth process. I then consider how even the suicide of Pursewarden is seen to deliberately effect psychological growth in others. Stressing his emphasis on self-autonomy, I argue that, as a matured artist, Pursewarden is the Quartet's primary symbol of the self; and in the concluding portion of the chapter, I show how Pursewarden's character reflects a fulfilled psyche, formed of bright and dark principles of growth, which principles I tangentially equate with Durrell's concept of ultimate or "heraldic reality."

Scholars have frequently noted that Durrell portrays the psyche as variable rather than fixed. In this dissertation, I demonstrate that, besides remarkable flexibility, Durrell's characters consistently display a psychological orientation towards growth.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Scholars have noted the importance of psychology as a theme in Lawrence Durrell's The Alexandria Quartet and have concluded that Durrell portrays the personality, not as fixed, but as variable. My present purpose is to elaborate the psychology universally found in Durrell's Quartet by the single proposition that the universal psychological orientation in the Quartet is an orientation towards growth.

I have divided my dissertation into six chapters. The first chapter briefly surveys the dissertation's contents. In the second chapter, "Darley's Growth," I develop Durrell's theory of a psychological orientation towards growth as evidenced in the maturation of Darley, the Quartet's hero. In this chapter I demonstrate that the psychological orientation towards growth is derived from a universal orientation towards growth, and that both the psyche and the cosmos reveal complementary principles of growth. This chapter falls roughly into three parts, an opening section recounting the plot of the Quartet relevant to Darley's love affairs and related maturation, a second section arguing a theoretical basis for the psychological

orientation by gathering together diverse comments of diverse characters, and finally a section specifically tracing Darley's growth as reflected in his changing assessments of landscape.

In the third chapter, "Narouz's Evil," I examine the darker side of the growth process by tracing the story of Narouz, probably the unhappiest character in the Quartet. This chapter is divided into two sections: the first section discusses the dark principles of growth as they are evidenced in various characters, including Darley, Justine, and notably Capodistria; the second half of the chapter deals with the character of Narouz. By examining both Narouz's story and the imagery associated with him I demonstrate that, even in extremely sad situations, the psychological orientation towards growth is still present.

In the brief fourth chapter, "Justine's Guilt," I examine the theory of psychology implied in Pursewarden's resolution of Justine's guilt, depression, and compulsive behavior; in this psychology is again revealed the psychological orientation towards growth. In the fifth chapter, "Pursewarden's Death," I show how even in such a bizarre incident as Pursewarden's suicide, the orientation towards growth is still central to the psyche; and, using Pursewarden as a focus, I then summarize the psyche presented in the Quartet as an



expression of diverse principles of growth. The concluding sixth chapter summarizes the entire dissertation.

## CHAPTER II

### DARLEY'S GROWTH

The Alexandria Quartet is the collective title of Lawrence Durrell's four novels, Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive, and Clea, a tetralogy presenting a wide range of experiences and opinions of a group of people living for the most part in Alexandria, Egypt, near the time of World War II. From having read widely in the scholarship on the Quartet, I observe that, in discussing the importance of the psychology of Durrell's characters as a theme in the Quartet, scholars regularly note that Durrell rejects the idea of a fixed personality in favor of a variable one.<sup>1</sup> The theme of the variable psyche is represented early in the Quartet by one of the passages scholars cite most often wherein Darley, the Quartet's hero, recalls a comment of his lover Justine:

I remember her sitting before the multiple mirrors at the dressmaker's, being fitted for a shark-skin costume, and saying: "Look! five different pictures of the same subject. Now if I wrote I would try for a multi-dimensional effect in character, a sort of prism-sightedness. Why should not people show more than one profile at a time?"<sup>2</sup>

Based on passages such as the above, scholars have sensibly concluded that the proposition of the variable personality implies that there are perhaps as many

systems of psychology as there are psyches. In any case, beyond the theory of the variable psyche, the critics have not proposed a theory of psychology universally applicable within the Quartet. In this dissertation, I broaden the scope of Durrell's consistently portrayed psychology by one simple thesis: that the universal psychological orientation in the Quartet is an orientation towards growth. In the body of this dissertation I develop the theory of the presence of the psychological orientation towards growth in the characters in Durrell's Alexandria Quartet.

Often, in discussing the specific subject of psychological motivation in the Quartet, critics debate the degree of the freedom of the psyche;<sup>3</sup> for the critics have noted that, in important descriptions of nature, nature is portrayed as dictating the individual will. Whatever their view of the quantity of free will present in the Quartet, scholars are consistent in relating the free will problem to Durrell's enthusiasm for theories of Georg Groddeck,<sup>4</sup> who asserts that the individual will is the manifestation of a vaguely defined and largely unconscious power called the It, which critics suggest is a likely concept behind Durrell's descriptions of a dictatorial landscape.<sup>5</sup> Because all I desire to show here is that the psyche's orientation is towards growth, and because I argue that both the psyche and nature are oriented towards growth, whether the psyche is free with

an autonomous growth-orientation, or fated with a nature-guided growth-orientation, does not effect my essential thesis. Accordingly, although I will discuss the subject of nature and the psyche, I will not treat the problem of whether the psyche's actions are fated or free, nor will I make further reference to Groddeck, who is never mentioned in the Quartet.

In later chapters I will discuss the unexpected presence of the growth-orientation in the evil actions of Narouz, the neurotic unhappiness of Justine, and the suicide of Pursewarden. The present chapter is confined to the simpler and more pleasant task of discussing the psychological orientation towards growth in Lawrence Darley, the principal narrator of the Quartet, whose personal growth in love, art, and philosophical understanding is the focal story of three volumes of the Quartet (the third volume, Mountolive, is written in the third person, and therein Darley is a minor character). In Justine, the first volume of the Quartet, Darley writes of three areas of failure: "in art, in religion, and in people" (J, p. 196). By the conclusion of the Quartet, Darley is usually acknowledged by critics to have grown in love for people, as a novelist, and in philosophical, or religious, understanding.

As Darley's growth in love is the main plot and as such frequently discussed by critics,<sup>6</sup> I represent Darley's growth in love here only by a plot summary of Darley's love affairs with three women: Melissa, Justine, and Clea. As Darley's growth as a novelist in technique and theory is also a subject of frequent discussion,<sup>7</sup> I represent Darley's growth in art by a discussion of diverse yet interrelated subjects: sex, love, the psyche, nature, and the artist; in this discussion I reveal the essential psychological orientation towards growth. Finally, as Darley's growth in philosophical understanding is also frequently discussed,<sup>8</sup> I confine my discussion of Darley's religious growth to Darley's changing descriptions of landscape, which illuminate the relationship between psychological growth and nature's growth.

The story of The Alexandria Quartet begins in the text during World War II on an island in the Mediterranean from which Darley looks back upon his immediate past in Egypt and writes a novel titled Justine about his experiences, centering around his love affair with Justine. Darley tells the reader little about himself prior to his experiences in Alexandria, he does not even reveal his name until near the end of the second volume of the Quartet,<sup>9</sup> and we never know his age or what he looks like. Nonetheless, we share in Darley's Alexandria experiences a story of personal growth which we believe, largely owing

to his vivid, poetic, and candid descriptions, as in the following passage in which Darley recalls the moments before he and Justine make love for the first time.

As she took a step forward I said feebly:  
 "This bed is so awful and smelly. I have been drinking. I tried to make love to myself but it was no good--I kept thinking about you." I felt myself turning conscious of the silence of the little flat which was torn in one corner by the dripping of a leaky tap. A taxi brayed once in the distance, and from the harbour, like the stifled roar of a minotaur, came a single dark whiff of sound from a siren. Now it seemed we were completely alone together. (J, pp. 84-85)

Despite the vividness and frankness of most of the Quartet, the story told in Justine is far less easily comprehended than the above-cited passage with its relative straightforwardness implies; for in recounting the past, Darley arranges events without regard for chronological order and includes in his text of Justine, with little evaluative comment, lengthy extracts from other characters' journals, letters, conversations, and even from another novel about Justine written by her first husband, Arnauti. Sufficient difficulties in sorting things through are posed by the Quartet's disjointed chronology and multiple narrators, and further problems arise because a major theme in the Quartet is the flexibility of the psyche. In Justine and throughout the Quartet, the characters are presented by Darley (and Durrell) in a fashion deliberately designed to accentuate the unpredictable behavior associated with

the characters' adaptable psyches. In the following plot summary, I consider Darley's story chronologically, an arrangement which best emphasizes progress in growth, the subject of this chapter.

The story of Darley's love affairs with Melissa, Justine, and Clea, begins chronologically in the Quartet in Justine, as Darley, a poor schoolteacher living in Alexandria prior to World War II, finds himself uncharacteristically and inexplicably stagnant. Darley writes, "In this last year I have reached a dead end in myself. I lack the will-power to do anything with my life, to better my position by hard work, to write: even to make love. I do not know what has come over me. This is the first time I have experienced a real failure of the will to survive" (J, pp. 21-22). Existing at this "dead level of things" (J, p. 23), Darley is befriended by Melissa, a nightclub dancer and sometime prostitute, who chooses "to blow some breath of life into my nostrils" (J, p. 22), and wins Darley's affection with "her charity" (J, p. 18), as she offers to be his "girl" (J, p. 58). Despite her generosity and tender nature, Melissa's simplicity and lack of education make her unsuitable as a permanent companion for Darley; and when he is approached by Justine, the educated and sensual Jewish wife of the wealthy Egyptian banker, Nessim, Darley begins an affair of passion which is to dominate the first novel of the Quartet.

Under the heading of "Consequential Data," which appears as an appendix to Balthazar, Pursewarden, the Quartet's matured novelist, who provides much guidance for the maturing Darley, says, "To the medieval world-picture of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil (each worth a book) we moderns have added Time: a fourth dimension" (B, p. 246). Though this passage is never directly elaborated in the four novels in the Quartet, I regard the passage as providing a helpful approach to the subject matter and descriptive bias of the Quartet's four books. I take Justine to be the novel of "the Flesh," characterized by sensuality and sexuality; Balthazar is the novel of "the Devil," dealing with evil, destruction, and perverted growth; Mountolive is the novel of "the World," representing society and impersonal forces; and Clea is the novel about "Time," representing creativity and growth.

Darley's love affair with Justine indicates the preoccupation of the novel Justine with sexuality and sensuality, a preoccupation Darley testifies to in the novel's opening pages. In introducing the reader to Alexandria, Darley is quick to observe that the "sexual provender which lies to hand is staggering in its variety and profusion." Alexandria is "the great wine-press of love," and those who leave this city "have been deeply wounded in their sex" (J, p. 14). Throughout the Quartet



almost every character is revealed to be sexually active, and though there are no graphic descriptions of sexual acts in the Quartet, each character's preferences and oddities, from heterosexuality to transvestism, are diligently reported. Justine's qualifications to be a major character in a novel preoccupied with sexuality are many. By the time Darley meets her, she has already ended a marriage to a Frenchman named Arnauti, who wrote a novel recounting the events of the marriage including unsuccessful psychoanalytical treatment by Freud for Justine's nymphomania, attributed to her having been raped as a child. With the breakup of that marriage, Justine marries Nessim and shortly afterwards begins the affair with Darley.

For a time Darley enjoys a relationship with both Melissa and Justine, but gradually Justine becomes the focus of Darley's affections. Darley's affair with Justine is deeply wounding to Melissa, and for a brief period Melissa takes consolation from an affair with Justine's husband, Nessim, from which affair a daughter is born. Melissa's health, poor at the novel's beginning, significantly declines, and she leaves Alexandria and enters a sanatorium. As she approaches death, Melissa takes Clea, a painter and the woman towards whom Darley is moving in his growth in love, into her confidence and instructs her, "You have been my friend, Clea, and I want you to love him after

I am gone" (B, p. 135). At the conclusion of Justine, Darley writes, "I realize that what remains unresolved in my life is not the problem of Justine, but the problem of Melissa" (J, p. 231). These passages foreshadow a symbolic resolution of the problem of Melissa in Darley's union with Clea.

The problem of Justine is resolved in a different manner. Growing tensions evident in Nessim cause Darley to fear that, through an uncharacteristic jealousy, Nessim is plotting Darley's death. With an attitude of resignation, Darley goes to Nessim's annual duck hunt believing he may be killed, but at the duck hunt the only human casualty appears to be Capodistria, a lecher revealed to have been Justine's childhood rapist. Clea speculates that Nessim may have had Capodistria murdered in order to destroy the psychological barrier caused by the rape and in this way bring Justine closer to Nessim; but if such was Nessim's intent, it proves futile, for after the duck hunt, Justine flees Egypt, settling as a farm-worker in Palestine. With Justine's abrupt departure, the first novel in the Quartet draws to a close: Darley leaves Alexandria, teaches school in the provinces for two years, and after Melissa's death, retires with Melissa's and Nessim's daughter to an island, where he recounts the above events in the book he is to call Justine. Clea writes to Darley on his island, hinting at a possible love relationship between

herself and Darley, but Darley concludes Justine with "Clea's last letter unanswered" (J, p. 245).

As the novel of "the Devil," in Balthazar, Darley stresses the dark side of the living experience, emphasizing destruction; quick to be destroyed is the truth of the story Darley has told in Justine, because in Balthazar, the second novel of the tetralogy, Darley sends his manuscript of Justine to Balthazar, a doctor, who replies with a lengthy critique which corrects Darley's manuscript in matters of fact. The most important piece of information which Balthazar provides for Darley's understanding of his love affairs is the fact that Justine did not love Darley at all but instead was using Darley as a screen for her love affair with Pursewarden, information which jolts the reader as much as it does Darley, for Pursewarden was a comparatively unimportant and unromantic character in Justine. Apart from his new understanding and his consequent anger at having been used (he calls Justine "the monster") (B, p. 130), Darley fails to progress in his love affairs in Balthazar, in which novel in addition to discussing the unexpected relationship between Justine and Pursewarden, Darley spends much time considering the dark side of growth, with an emphasis on sexual perversions and destructive behavior, and introduces and develops the character of Narouz, Nessim's brother; this material will be considered more fully in my third chapter, "Narouz's Evil."

The third novel, Mountolive, is narrated in the third person, and Darley is treated as a minor character. As the novel of "the World," Mountolive focuses upon David Mountolive, a career member of the British Diplomatic Corps, whose assignment to Egypt at the time of the events recounted in Justine allows the reader to view the political world of the Quartet, which world curiously throws new light upon Darley's love affair with Justine and Melissa's affair with Nessim. Mountolive's own story is tied directly to the characters thus far mentioned because at a previous posting in Egypt, Mountolive was the guest at the house of Nessim and Narouz and had a brief affair with their mother; later in England Mountolive met Pursewarden and began to fall in love with Pursewarden's blind sister, a love which becomes a marriage in Clea. In the novel Mountolive, the third-person narrator reveals that Justine and Nessim are part of a conspiracy to smuggle guns to Palestine, and Justine's affairs both with Pursewarden and with Darley are seen to have the practical purpose of information gathering, in that Pursewarden is employed by the British Diplomatic Corps and Darley has minor employment with the Egyptian Secret Service. The novel also reveals that Melissa was the lover of a man involved in the conspiracy, and thus Nessim's love affair with her is partially a matter of spying. Apart from these new revelations in motivation,

Darley's love affairs in Mountolive are insignificant; the novel carries further the story of Narouz and stresses the repressive and restrictive nature of society.

The novels Justine, Balthazar, and Mountolive have provided different perspectives of events occurring at approximately the same time period; Clea, the final novel of the Quartet, moves the Quartet forward in time and stresses Darley's growth as he moves beyond Justine, finds a satisfactory love relationship with Clea, and at the novel's conclusion feels himself becoming the kind of artist he wishes to be. In Clea, the novel "of Time" or growth, Darley returns to Alexandria near the conclusion of World War II. Darley leaves Melissa's child by Nessim with Nessim and Justine, both of whom are now out of favor in Alexandria because their conspiracy has been discovered and halted. Before returning to Alexandria, Darley receives a letter from Nessim in which Nessim writes, "I gather that Balthazar has recounted all our misadventures,"<sup>10</sup> which I take as applying to the conspiracy, thus implying that Darley understands the possible political motivation behind his love affair with Justine, even though presumably Darley never has access to all the information presented in Mountolive.<sup>11</sup> Darley revisits Justine but finds no attraction in her. "It was as if some huge iron door had closed forever in my heart" (C, p. 62). He seeks out Clea, and they become lovers. Their relationship develops,

and although the Quartet concludes with the lovers apart, the ending implies that they will quickly be united in France; Darley's growth from depression to confidence, his movement from the "dead level of things" to a fuller participation in life spurred by love is, insofar as the Quartet is concerned, now complete. This completion concludes my plot summary of the Quartet relevant to Darley's love affairs and my representation of Darley's growth with people.

To represent Darley's growth in art, I consider the unusual relationship in the Quartet of sex, love, the psyche, nature, and the artist. Briefly, the Quartet argues that sex draws the mortal mind away from depression and towards love, that experiences in love are an essential means by which the self grows, that the growth of the self is contained in and reflects a cosmic growth process, and that this entire process of growth is the broad subject matter and area of particular insight for the artist; this broad relationship is most easily understood by examining comments about love, the Quartet's main subject. In a prefatory note to Balthazar, Durrell identifies the Quartet's "central topic" as "love" (B, p. 9), and the Quartet contains many stories and comments about love. Important passages about love and what love means in the Quartet are provided by Pursewarden, the Quartet's matured novelist, who, in his notebooks, directly addresses Darley,

the maturing novelist in the Quartet, as an artist, about "our topic," which Pursewarden writes, "is the same, always and irremediably the same--I spell the word for you: l-o-v-e" (C, p. 131). Lest Darley interpret the word too narrowly, Pursewarden elaborates: "But in my conception of the four-letter word . . . I am somewhat bold and sweeping. I mean the whole bloody range--from the little greenstick fractures of the human heart right up to its higher spiritual connivance with the...well, the absolute ways of nature" (C, p. 132). In the preceding plot summary, I have mentioned some of "the little greenstick fractures of the human heart" in my presentation of Darley's love affairs. In a letter to Clea, Pursewarden clarifies what "the absolute ways of nature" are, writing that

the world we live in is founded in something too simple to be over-described as cosmic law--but as easy to grasp as, say, an act of tenderness, simple tenderness in the primal relation between animal and plant, rain and soil, seed and trees, man and God. . . . After all, this is not simply what we most need in the world, but really what describes the state of pure process in it. Keep silent awhile and you feel a comprehension of this act of tenderness. (B, p. 238)

I take the "absolute ways of nature" as being related in this passage to the "cosmic law" of "the world we live in," or to "the state of pure process,"

which "in the primal relation between animal and plant, rain and soil, seed and trees, man and God," indicates a process of nourishment and growth. In the Quartet the word "tenderness" is associated with love: Justine's incapacity to love, for example, is described as "an agony of unexpressed yearning that is at the opposite pole from tenderness, pleasure" (J, p. 66), and Clea at one point smiles at Darley "with such tenderness that a passer-by might have been forgiven for imagining that we ourselves were lovers" (J, p. 129). Accordingly I assume that by using the word "tenderness" in a passage designed to characterize "the state of pure process," Pursewarden is clarifying by association his assertion that love has a "spiritual connivance" with the "absolute ways of nature"; I further assume that love's connivance or supportive relationship with the ways of nature logically would be to nourish spiritual or psychological growth, and this assumption is supported by diverse comments in the Quartet.

In Balthazar, Durrell quotes from Eugene Marais' The Soul of the White Ant a passage which describes the orientation of living things towards continuing existence: "What protects animals, enables them to continue living? A certain attribute of organic matter. As soon as one finds life one finds it, it is inherent in life. Like most natural phenomena it is polarized--there is always



a negative and a positive pole. The negative pole is pain, the positive pole sex" (B, p. 131). This orientation towards living here described by Marais I prefer to describe in this paper as an orientation towards growth.

In the passage by Marais, sex is associated with the life process as a stimulus that enables animals to function and to grow, and in the Quartet sexuality is related through love to psychological growth. As the third person narrator of Mountolive, Durrell describes sex as "the one act we human beings most dream of and fear,"<sup>12</sup> which description emphasizes the importance of sex for the psyche instead of the body. Clea continues this emphasis when she describes sex as the act "in which our spirits most divulge themselves" (C, p. 113), and Pursewarden overstates this emphasis by proclaiming that sex is "a psychic and not a physical act" (B, p. 124). In another passage Pursewarden more moderately asserts that in sex humanity can find "the key to a metaphysical search which is our raison d'être here below" (C, p. 139). That this metaphysical search appears to be a search for self-actualization or fulfillment through growth is indicated by passages such as Darley's description of why he and Justine pursue sex, "as if the physical contact could ease the pain of self-exploration" (J, p. 134), or Clea's statement that "it is as if the physical body somehow stood in the way of love's true growth, its

self-realization" (J, p. 129). Clea says that love's "destination lies somewhere in the deepest regions of the psyche where it will come to recognize itself as self-love, the ground upon which we build the sort of health of the psyche" (J, p. 130). In the world of the Quartet, love between the sexes, spurred by sex, may be defined as "a simultaneous firing of two spirits engaged in the autonomous act of growing up" (J, p. 49).

So close is the association between growth and love in the philosophy of the Quartet that even when Durrell has Justine castigate love, Durrell places in Justine's mouth language which continues to relate love to growth: "'Damn the word,' said Justine once, 'I would like to spell it backwards. . . . Call it evol and make it a part of "evolution" or "revolt"'" (J, pp. 74-75). Considering not the tenderness but the pain associated with love, Darley finds some consolation in an observation of Pursewarden about the method and motive of love: "Love joins and then divides. How else would we be growing?" (B, p. 234). When Darley loses his affection for Justine, feeling "disgust for her personality and its attributes," Darley ascribes this "grim metamorphosis" to "the very same love-process" (C, p. 56) which had spurred his affection; this idea of metamorphosis from love to disgust is customarily associated with a process of change or growth rather than a process of love. In

this paper I could call the process of growth simply a process of variation, of adaptability, but since the object of the process seems to be self-realization and thus suggests progressive process, I continue to prefer to designate the process as one of growth. The universality of the process is stressed as Justine discovers that Narouz, Justine's brother-in-law, was in love with Clea but "never had the courage" to propose: "How I laughed!" Justine confesses to Darley, explaining that "I was really laughing at myself, at you, at all of us. One stumbles over it at every turn of the road, doesn't one; under every sofa the same corpse, in every cupboard the same skeleton?" (C, pp. 60-61). "Every turn of the road" suggests the entire process of life, and "every sofa" and "every cupboard" suggest every human being, and in the language of the Quartet which comes to mind by association, the passage implies that in every human being, perhaps in every human action, if one digs deeply enough, one can reveal an orientation towards growth or living which in the Quartet is so often symbolized by the urge to love.

In the Quartet the artist as a creator has unique insights into the process of growth, which special insight helps explain why the clearest statements about growth in the Quartet are provided by the painter Clea and the novelists Darley and Pursewarden. Artists, Darley writes,

are "an uninterrupted chain of human beings born to explore the inward riches of the solitary life" (C, p. 177) or self-growth; artists have both unique insights into growth relating to their "strange techniques of self-pursuit" (C, p. 12) and universal insights into growth in that the artist is, to use Pursewarden's expression, the "servant of compulsions which are ordained by the very structure of the psyche" (C, p. 136). Broadly the artist's study is "life itself"; Darley writes that "we" artists and human beings interpret life "in our different ways, each understanding it according to his nature and gift" (C, p. 177). As an individual interpreter of reality, the artist is a symbol for the mature human being, and creativity becomes a symbol for self-expression; Pursewarden writes that "the artist is you, all of us-- the statue which must disengage itself from the dull block of marble which houses it and start to live" (C, p. 119). When Clea writes near the Quartet's conclusion that she is now "a real human being, an artist at last" (C, p. 281), the concepts of "real human being" and "artist" are interchangeable as concepts representing the individual self fully grown. By broadly studying "process," the artist "unites the rushing, heedless stream of humanity" to the source "from which its own motive essence is derived" (C, p. 153), a study which presumably reveals, as Pursewarden speculates, that cosmos and people are

united in being motivated by principles of growth. Pursewarden writes that art presents "a frame of reference through which . . . one may glimpse the idea of . . . a universe in love with itself" (C, p. 143); this description recalls Clea's description of the goal of love being "self-love," which suggests that an important part of self-realization is self-appreciation, and that both universe and individual participate ideally in this self-delight. After she has captivated a group of child-prostitutes with a well-told story, and thus after she has momentarily and uncharacteristically assumed the role of artist, Justine says, "I suppose we are all hunting for the secrets of growth!" (C, p. 150), a supposition correct in Durrell's Quartet.

In the Quartet then, there is a motivating essence towards growth "inherent in life," and this essence is frequently spurred by sex towards relationships of love; love relationships encourage and further psychic growth; psychic growth is the special study of the artist, who represents the mature human being; and all of these elements are broadly related to and contained in a comprehensive reality described in this paper as a cosmic process of growth. Representing Darley's growth in art, I have approached ideas about growth through the Quartet's central topic of love. I now consider in more detail the specific subject of

Darley's religious growth. Therein the direct link between the cosmic and individual processes of growth is exemplified.

In representing Darley's religious growth, I consider his changing ideas about the relationship between self and cosmos, most often discussed as the relationship between self and landscape that Darley introduces on the first page of text in the Quartet. Darley writes, "I return link by link along the iron chains of memory to the city which we inhabited so briefly together: the city which used us as its flora--precipitated in us conflicts which were hers and which we mistook for our own: beloved Alexandria!" A few lines later on the same page Darley writes that "I see at last that none of us is properly to be judged for what happened in the past. It is the city which should be judged though we, its children, must pay the price" (J, p. 13). The fatalistic dominance Alexandria here exerts over human behavior Darley later relates more broadly to nature itself; Darley writes:

As a poet of the historic consciousness I suppose I am bound to see the landscape as a field dominated by the human wish--tortured into farms and hamlets, ploughed into cities. A landscape scribbled with the signatures of men and epochs. Now, however, I am beginning to believe that the wish is inherited from the site; that man depends for the furniture of the will upon his location in place, tenant of fruitful acres or a perverted wood. It is not the impact of his freewill upon nature which

I see (as I thought) but the irresistible growth, through him, of nature's own blind unspecified doctrines of variation and torment. She has chosen this poor forked thing as an exemplar. (J, p. 112)

I suppose that in simplest terms Durrell means that the human being is a physical and psychological system which, motivated by principles of growth ("the irresistible growth . . . of nature's own blind and unspecified doctrines"), adapts to the environment ("his location in place"). Thus nature dictates both humanity's motivating essence and the material available for the human essence's use. In more complex terms the passage implies a greater degree of manipulation of humanity by nature than is customarily accorded the relationship. This emphasis upon nature's manipulation of humanity is a consistent emphasis in Darley's description of landscape throughout the Quartet, but Darley's description of nature's process will undergo several dramatic revisions as Darley's understanding of nature's ways changes from a characterization of them as "doctrines of variation and torment" to a characterization which includes principles of pleasure and principles of darkness in a process which properly nourishes growth as characterized by Pursewarden, whom Darley describes as "seeking for the very tenderness of logic itself, of the Way Things Are" (C, p. 176). As Darley concludes his description of nature's ways as "blind unspecified doctrines of variation and torment," Darley adds, "You will see in all this the flower of a

perfect scepticism which undermines the will to survive. Only love can sustain one a little longer" (J, p. 113). Darley's philosophical or religious growth reflects his gradual understanding that the ways of nature are not "blind unspecified doctrines" warring against the "will to survive" with bleak scepticism, but that nature itself provides or encourages that very love which helps sustain the threatened will to survive. By the Quartet's conclusion Darley will see tenderness and love in nature's process as symbolized in the Quartet's last line: "I felt as if the whole universe had given me a nudge" (C, p. 282).

The element I wish to stress in the following complex discussion is not the fact of the link between nature and humanity but Darley's eager willingness to accept this link, to identify with some natural process other than his own free will, to willingly submit his will to the landscape and the process landscape represents. Darley writes, "We are the children of our landscape; it dictates behaviour and even thought in the measure to which we are responsive to it. I can think of no better identification" (J, p. 41). This urge to identify with landscape or the process landscape represents is consistent in Darley although unexplained by Durrell.

When recounting the plot of Darley's love affairs in the Quartet, I called attention to Pursewarden's comment that "to the medieval world-picture of the World,



the Flesh, and the Devil . . . we moderns have added Time," and I suggested that Justine represents the book of the flesh, Balthazar of the devil, Mountolive of the world, and Clea the book about time or growth. In each of the Quartet's four books there is an important description of landscape which in tone and subject matter corresponds to the description thus outlined. In Justine the characterization of the landscape is sexual, in Balthazar evil, in Mountolive mechanistic, and in Clea the landscape is properly perceived as nourishing. In Justine and Balthazar the characterizations of sexuality and harm correspond to the positive and negative poles which Marais says help orient the animal towards living and which Marais specifies as sex and pain. In Mountolive, where Darley is absent as narrator, the landscape description corresponds to Darley's initial conception of nature's ways as "blind unspecified doctrines." In Clea, Darley's characterization of landscape corresponds to Pursewarden's conception of a process nurturing growth, and Darley will see how the pleasure he notes in Justine and the pain he notes in Balthazar are collaborators in producing the orientation towards living or growth described by Marais.

In Justine, Darley's characterization of landscape as sexual occurs at a time when Darley is preoccupied with the role sexuality is playing in his life. Marais writes

that sex is the positive pole which helps the animal orient itself towards continued living. Through her willingness to be Darley's sexual partner, Melissa has helped turn Darley away from the depression which had threatened him with "a real failure of the will to survive." Justine also has entered Darley's life, and, almost obscuring Melissa, has come to dominate Darley's mind with the intense sexuality Justine offers. Darley writes that as he was "walking about in the strident native quarter with its jabbing lights and flesh-wearing smells, I wondered as I had always wondered, where time was leading us. And as if to test the validity of the very emotions upon which so much love and anxiety could base themselves I turned into a lighted booth" of a prostitute "and sat down upon the customer's stool . . . to wait my turn" (J, p. 185). Darley's curiosity to understand the "simple, devoid beast-like act" leads him to gaze in upon the prostitute with her customer engaged in intercourse (J, p. 186). Gawking at this sexual activity, Darley observes, "I recognized that this had been fixed immutably, for all time--this eternally tragic and ludicrous position of engagement. From this sprang all . . . aspects of love" (J, p. 187).

Darley turns from the couple thus occupied and walks back into the streets of Alexandria only to find that sexuality is not confined to this prostitute's booth.

The street's "whole length was lined with the coloured booths of prostitutes"; the scene has "the colours of deathless romance" (J, p. 188). As he walks the street, Darley thinks of himself "not as a personal history with an individual accent so much as part of the historical fabric of the place." "At every corner" is "human experience" (J, p. 190). Darley writes, "I took it as a measure of my maturity that I was filled . . . with a desire to be claimed by the city, enrolled among its trivial or tragic memories--if it so wished" (J, pp. 190-91).

Darley's "maturity" leads him to desire to acknowledge himself as a part of the process of nature, of "the city," of "human experience." Gazing at the street of women, Darley realizes that "it was not sex they offered . . . but like the true inhabitants of Alexandria, the deep forgetfulness of parturition, compounded of physical pleasures taken without aversion" (J, p. 189). Just as Darley's earlier characterization of the ways of nature contained the idea of "nature's growth" but was a growth of "blind unspecified doctrines," so here the word "parturition" or "childbirth" suggests the idea of growth, but now instead of being "doctrines of variation and torment," the growth is "compounded of physical pleasures taken without aversion." This designation and the imagery of the entire passage lead me to describe this vision of landscape as "sexual" though perhaps the

broader concept of "pleasure-seeking" might be a more appropriate description. Whatever the best name for this landscape description, the image is shattered in Balthazar as Darley's pleasure-seeking or sexual world is revealed to have been naively conceived, as Balthazar destroys this image of the world with his destructive commentary, a destruction which nonetheless serves as part of Darley's enlightenment or growth.

The pleasure-seeking world of sexuality described in Justine fails to portray, accurately and fully, the ways of nature or the reality which Darley has experienced. Marais notes that the negative pole which orients the animal towards living is pain, and Balthazar provides Durrell's broad treatment of suffering and the evil and destruction which are a part of being. In Balthazar, by means of Balthazar's critique, Darley watches his affair of passion and sex with Justine told in Justine be revealed as simply a screen for Justine's affair with Pursewarden. Darley's interpretation of the reality he believed he knew is thus destroyed in an essential way. As a novel about evil, Balthazar stresses a body of thought which emphasizes dark growth processes or the participation in the growth process of destructive elements.

The landscape description in Balthazar, which presents an evil reality, occurs near the novel's conclusion at the time of carnival, where Narouz will commit murder in

perhaps the most blatant act of individual evil in the Quartet. During carnival, the universe darkens "under the protection of the invisible lords of Misrule who preside at this season." The carnival is "three days of folly" characterized by "a gaiety which by its very shrillness seems to tremble always upon the edge of madness" (B, p. 188). That the period is associated with landscape and Alexandria is indicated clearly by passages such as the following: "the city seems to uncurl like some hibernating animal dug out of its winter earth, to stretch and to begin to drink in the music of the three-day festival" (B, pp. 188-89). From "everywhere" "spring up" the participants of carnival, which include the bulk of the city's inhabitants, protected in "utter anonymity" "by the grim black velvet domino which shrouds identity and sex" (B, p. 188). "And with the emergence of these black-robed creatures of the night everywhere all is subtly altered. The whole temperature of life in the city alters. . . ." The atmosphere is the "spirit of pure mischief." The forces of darkness are represented by "the perversions" which "burst out during carnival" (B, p. 190). One walks "the dark streets, serene as a murderer" (B, p. 191). The murder Narouz commits and further manifestations of the dark principles evident in Balthazar I I discuss more fully in Chapter Two, where I specifically discuss

Durrell's theory of evil, relating evil to suffering as a necessary portion of the psychic growth process.

Darley never asserts that the ways of darkness have permanent rule over earth; the darkness associated with carnival is a seasonal affair. Nor does Darley ever seek to identify himself as part of a natural process dedicated to evil; but, as Darley sees the important role played by evil and destruction in the universe, Darley examines his own life to seek out how he has been influenced by and served as an influence for the growth process's darker principles, including evil. Regarding Justine's deception of him as abuse, nonetheless Darley writes that "I can hardly bring myself to feel regret for the strange ennobling relationship into which she plunged me . . . and from which I myself was to learn so much. Yes, truly it enriched me, but only to destroy Melissa" (B, p. 130).

Darley elaborates: "And Melissa? Of course, she was ill, indeed seriously ill, so that in a sense it is melodramatic in me to say that I killed her, or that Justine killed her. Nevertheless, nobody can measure the weight of the pain and neglect which I directly caused her" (B, pp. 131-32). Melissa told Clea, "'With his departure everything in nature disappeared.' This was when she was dying," Darley adds. He protests to the reader that "nobody has the right to occupy such a place in another's life, nobody! You can

see now upon what raw material I work in these long and passionate self-communings over a winter sea" (B, p. 135).

Durrell's theory of evil essentially is that evil is the result of conflicting growth processes. Darley has been wounded by Justine and has wounded Melissa, but none of them specifically sought to do harm. Even Darley's loss of self-stature imposed by Balthazar's detached intellect becomes less wounding by the novel's end, for Darley writes, "I am surprised to find that my feelings themselves have changed, have grown, have deepened even. Perhaps then the destruction of my own private Alexandria was necessary . . . perhaps buried in all this there lies the germ and substance of a truth . . . which . . . will carry me a little further in what is really a search for my proper self" (B, p. 226).

At the conclusion of Balthazar, Clea shares with Darley the important letter by Pursewarden in which Pursewarden reveals his belief that the universal ways of nature are best characterized by tenderness, using examples which suggest the idea of growth. When Darley returns as narrator in Clea, after a temporary absence in Mountolive, Darley also steps forward to a characterization of landscape more like Pursewarden's. Justine reflects Darley's stress on the sexual or pleasure-pursuing aspect of the universe; Balthazar reflects Darley's stress on the painful, evil, or destructive aspect of nature's

ways; Clea will reflect Darley's united vision in which both pleasure and pain play their respective part in a process which nourishes growth.

But before turning to Darley's progress in Clea, I briefly acknowledge a characterization of nature's ways in Mountolive which is related to the two thus far presented in emphasizing the dictatorial power of nature. In Mountolive, both the participants in the conspiracy and the participants in the government find that they are "drawn along ways not of their choosing, trapped in a magnetic field, as it were, by the same forces which unwind the tides at the moon's bidding or propel the glittering forces of salmon up a crowded river-- actions curving and swelling into futurity beyond the powers of mortals to harness or divert." Nessim and Mountolive, conspirator and diplomat, found "that they were, after all, the servants of the very forces which they had set in play, and that nature is inherently ingovernable" (M, p. 214). "They were both bound now, tied like bondsmen to the unrolling action which illustrated the personal predispositions of neither. They had embarked on a free exercise of the will only to find themselves shackled, bricked up by the historical process" (M, p. 216). Nessim finds that "Helplessness began to creep over him, for every decision now seemed no longer a product of his will but a response to



pressures built up outside him; the exigencies of the historical process in which he himself was being sucked as if into a quicksand" (M, p. 220). Those who had believed themselves free now realize they are dominated by Alexandria's "obsessive rhythms" (M, p. 216).

I wish to make two points about the landscape description in Mountolive. First, even though Darley exits as narrator, the theme of dominance by nature, by laws and principles superior to human will, is constant and thus a part of the total philosophy of the Quartet, not just an observation of Darley's. Second, I assume that this relatively impersonal or mechanistic description is meant to correspond with Darley's original assessment of nature's ways as "blind unspecified doctrines," and thus the view of landscape presented in Mountolive is not meant to be foreign to Darley.

Darley is in the process of characterizing nature's ways in a manner satisfactory to his own understanding of the world. Perhaps, since Mountolive utilizes the traditional descriptive device of the omniscient author, Durrell is indicating that nature's process can only be characterized by the human imagination, that otherwise nature is existent but not endowed with such traits as sexuality, evil, or tenderness, and that when viewed omnisciently without the human imagination as interpreter,

the acts of nature are simply mechanistic, simply deterministic, fated, and that the artistic act of the human imagination is necessary to see in nature anything other than mechanistic doctrines.

Such an interpretation of the human imagination helps clarify statements spoken so often by Pursewarden such as "There are only as many realities as you care to imagine" (B, p. 152) or the more dramatic assertion that through "the poetic act" or the act of interpreting reality the artist give meaning to nature: "If [the artist] were to abandon his rôle all hope of gaining a purchase on the slippery surface of reality would be lost, and everything in nature would disappear!" (C, p. 153). In any case, Darley is the principal guide through the Quartet, and noting that the theme of landscape dominance is present even when Darley is absent, I turn from Mountolive and consider Clea.

At the conclusion of Balthazar, Darley is contemplating Pursewarden's letter to Clea, in which Pursewarden suggests that "tenderness" is "really what describes the state of pure process" in the world. To his characterization of "cosmic law" as tenderness, Pursewarden adds a curious qualification that tenderness is associated with "certainly not Mercy, that vulgarity of the Jewish mind which can only imagine man as crouching under the whip. No, for the sort of tenderness I mean is utterly merciless!" (B, p. 238).

I assume that the presence of such a qualification in Pursewarden's thought is to indicate that when characterizing the cosmos as tender, Pursewarden does not mean to exclude principles of growth not customarily associated with tenderness, or darker principles of growth. In other words, Durrell does not want Pursewarden to appear to be making the naive error of Darley in confining cosmic ways to principles of pleasure as Darley does in Justine.

Prefacing his comments on cosmic law, Pursewarden writes to Clea about the last book of a trilogy on which he is working at the time of his death, writing of

the last volume in which I want above all to combine, resolve and harmonise the tensions so far created. I feel I want to sound a note of ...affirmation--though not in the specific terms of a philosophy or religion. It should have the curvature of an embrace, the wordlessness of a lovers' code. It should convey some feeling that the world we live in is founded in something too simple to be over-described as cosmic law--but as easy to grasp as, say, an act of tenderness, simple tenderness in the primal relation between animal and plant, rain and soil, seed and trees, man and God. (B, p. 238)

The later designation of tenderness as not being "Mercy" implies that Pursewarden sees both pleasure and pain in a process which he still prefers to describe as tender.

Pursewarden never completes his trilogy; Darley completes a sort of trilogy composed of Justine, Balthazar, and Clea; and in Clea the tensions Darley has considered

as the principles of pleasure and pain noted in Justine and Balthazar are combined, resolved, and made harmonious in the sequence representing the domination of landscape in Clea. In Clea Darley gains access to Pursewarden's notebooks and there finds himself addressed by Pursewarden on "our topic" which Pursewarden writes is always love, and in these notebooks Pursewarden specifies that love has a "higher spiritual connivance" with "the absolute ways of nature," which connivance I have previously related to psychological growth.

The landscape vision presented in Clea corresponding to the domination of landscape already discussed in relation to Justine, Balthazar, and Mountolive, is one of the most painful scenes in the Quartet, being associated with the wounding of Clea, and also is ultimately one of the most productive events for Clea's psychological growth. Before presenting the scene, Darley attributes the event to the landscape in a way which connects the image of Alexandria to the idea of God. Darley writes, "It is not hard, writing at this remove in time, to realise that it had all already happened, had been ordained in such a way and in no other. . . . the scenario had already been devised somewhere, the actors chosen, the timing rehearsed down to the last detail in the mind of that invisible author-- which perhaps would prove to be only the city itself: the Alexandria of the human estate" (C, p. 223). Darley writes

that "when at last that fatal day presented itself, it did so under the smiling guise of a spring sunshine hot enough to encourage the flies to begin hatching out upon the window-panes" (C, p. 241), associating the day with dark principles symbolized by the word "fatal" and bright principles symbolized by the word "hatching." The day is further associated with bright principles by being "the first day of summer" (C, p. 243) and a saint's day, devoted to "El Scob" (C, p. 242), an actual friend of Darley and Clea, Scobie, whose character I discuss in chapter two. But, as a day of wounding, the day primarily manifests the dark principles of growth.

Associated with the dark principles of growth are unusual occurrences; and this particular day in summer, when Darley and Clea and Balthazar sail out to a small island in the Mediterranean, is marked by "one of those freak storms so prevalent in the early spring with its sharp changes of temperature born of sea and desert" (C, p. 246). Sea and desert suggest the contrast between the bright and dark principles of growth, for the sea is associated with the origin of life and the desert is a place where things grow only with difficulty. These two elements combine to produce the freak storm which symbolizes the unusual nature of the day.

Darley writes, "But now the afternoon brought us another phenomenon to delight us--something rarely seen

in summer in the waters of Alexandria, belonging as it did to those days preceding winter storms when the glass was falling steeply. The waters of the pool darkened appreciably, curdled, and then became phosphorescent." Clea and Darley leap into the water, "transformed into figures of flame, the sparks flashing from the tips of our fingers and toes with the glitter of static electricity. A swimmer seen underwater looks like an early picture of Lucifer, literally on fire" (C, p. 246). The image of the transformation from darkness in the pool to phosphorescence symbolizes the participation of dark principles in a process of growth; the pool must darken before it becomes light. The image of Darley and Clea in the pool with "sparks flashing from the tips of our fingers" anticipates their assumption of their roles as artists after the events of this "fatal" day, here also associated with principles of darkness with the allusion to Lucifer.

While Darley is surfacing for air and Clea is swimming underwater, Balthazar accidentally drops a harpoon gun, and "the harpoon whistled into the water" (C, p. 247), pinning Clea's hand to a sunken ship. The harpoon "would not be budged by a hair's breath." Darley writes, "I cannot pretend that anything which followed belonged to my own volition--for the mad rage which now possessed me was not among the order of the emotions I

would ever have recognised as belonging to my proper self. It exceeded, in blind violent rapacity, anything I had ever before experienced. . . . It was as if I were for the first time confronting myself--or perhaps an alter ego shaped after a man of action I had never realised, recognised" (C, p. 249). Darley swims to the surface, gets a knife, returns underwater, and cuts off Clea's hand. They rise to the surface "with a concussion that knocked the breath from me--as if I had cracked my skull on the ceiling of the universe" (C, p. 250). Surely if ever a person has acted with apparent volition, such a person is Darley in this situation; yet curiously enough, even while saving the woman he loves, Darley insists that his actions are not of his "own volition," not "belonging to my proper self," not like "anything [he has] ever before experienced," revealing to himself a new "alter ego," never before "realised, recognised."

Darley applies artificial respiration.

But still she lay lifeless. But I would not accept the thought that she was dead, though I knew it with one part of my mind. I felt half mad with determination to disprove it, to overthrow, if necessary, the whole process of nature and by an act of will force her to live. These decisions astonished me, for they subsisted like clear and sharply defined images underneath the dazed physical labour. I had, I realised, decided either to bring her up alive or to stay down there at the bottom of the pool with her; but where, from which territory of the will such a decision had come, I could not guess! (C, p. 251)

Happily, Clea survives.

In this vision of landscape, the landscape presents an environment which forces Darley to grow. Darley is compelled by his love for Clea, or by the Quartet's central symbol for psychological growth (love), to become a new "man of action." The "invisible author" or the cosmic growth process, the comprehensive environment, writes a script containing a terrible event, involving pain and suffering. Darley responds to the demands made upon him by the environment and inflicts pain and destruction on the woman he loves in order to save her life, to enable her to continue living. The themes of love and pain and volition-formed-by-nature are here united as Darley saves Clea with a "forcible rebirth" (C, p. 252). The environment has literally forced Darley psychologically beyond his former self into a new self, has literally encouraged growth. The unvolitional nature of the events is stressed in that Balthazar drops the harpoon gun by accident, Darley's actions are from a new Darley, and Clea, when saved, is unconscious.

The wounding of Clea not only encourages growth in Darley but produces growth in Clea herself. Her lost hand is replaced by a mechanical one, and at the Quartet's conclusion, Clea writes to Darley, "I have crossed the border and entered into the possession of my kingdom, thanks to the Hand. Nothing about this was



premeditated. One day it took up a brush and lo! pictures of truly troubling originality and authority were born.

. . . It is the Hand alone which has contrived to slip me through the barriers into the company of the Real Ones" (C, p. 278). I assume that in addition to the literal mechanical hand Clea is attributing her maturity to the wounding experience and the adaptation which the wounding entailed. Just as Darley utilizes the painful experiences he undergoes, so Clea transforms suffering into growth, a growth made possible by the event of "the Hand." Clea's letter concludes, "I wait, quite serene and happy, a real human being, an artist at last" (C, p. 281).

Darley's full maturation is revealed on the last page of the Quartet's text, when, Darley writes, "the clouds parted before me to reveal the secret landscape of which" Clea had written him. "It had been so long in forming inside me, this precious image, that I too was as unprepared as she had been. It came on a blue day, quite unpremeditated, quite unannounced, and with such ease I would not have believed it. I had been until then like some timid girl, scared of the birth of her first child." Darley begins to write "the old story of an artist coming of age. I wrote: 'Once upon a time...'" (C, p. 282). In other words, Darley begins to write "the old story" of growth, and begins the story with words traditionally associated with the imagination.

Darley has previously written on art and the imagination that "The solace of such work as I do with brain and heart lies in this--that only there, in the silences of the painter or the writer can reality be reordered, reworked and made to show its significant side. Our common actions in reality are simply the sackcloth covering which hides the cloth-of-gold--the meaning of the pattern" (J, p. 17). Art then is an ordered interpretation of natural process. In a passage such as the one where Darley writes that "all ideas seem equally good to me; the fact of their existence proves that someone is creating" (J, p. 41), descriptions, definitions, and theories ("all ideas") are unified as expressions of the imagination ("someone is creating"). In Darley's different descriptions of "the meaning of the pattern," in, that is, Justine, Balthazar, and Clea, are present different descriptions of the relationship between nature and the self, but consistent in the descriptions is Darley's insistence on the interlocking aspect of the relationship, a thought so important in the Quartet that it is contained in the last sentence of text: "And I felt as if the whole universe had given me a nudge!" (C, p. 282). With this feeling of Darley's I conclude my discussion of Darley's religious growth.

Because in a maturation story the psychological orientation towards growth is perhaps inherent in the

theme, its presence in Darley is not a sufficient example from which to argue a psychological orientation towards growth in the Quartet. Certainly Darley responds positively to situations inviting him to grow; if he did not, there would be no main plot. Furthermore, to cite any other maturation story in the Quartet such as Clea's simply repeats the argument, demonstrating a growth orientation in people who grow. Therefore, to elaborate my case, in the next three chapters I will demonstrate a psychological orientation towards growth in the Quartet by discussing the sadder stories of Narouz, Justine, and Pursewarden.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Stanley G. Eskin, "Durrell's Themes in The Alexandria Quartet," Texas Quarterly, 5 (1962), 46-50. John Weigel, Lawrence Durrell (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1966), pp. 85-96.

<sup>2</sup>Lawrence Durrell, Justine (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957), p. 27; hereafter cited as J. All further references to this work appear in the text.

<sup>3</sup>Lionel Trilling, "The Quartet: Two Reviews," in The World of Lawrence Durrell, ed. Harry T. Moore (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), pp. 57-60. A. K. Weatherhead, "Romantic Anachronism in The Alexandria Quartet," Modern Fiction Studies, 10 (1964), 128-32.

<sup>4</sup>Lawrence Durrell, A Key to Modern British Poetry (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), pp. 73-90.

<sup>5</sup>Bonamy Dobrée, "Durrell's Alexandrian Series," Sewanee Review, 69 (1961), 70-79. Frederick R. Karl, "Lawrence Durrell: Physical and Metaphysical Love," in The Contemporary English Novel (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1962), p. 49.

<sup>6</sup>Alan W. Friedman, Lawrence Durrell and the Alexandria Quartet: Art for Love's Sake (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), pp. 83-86 and passim.

<sup>7</sup>Warren Wedin, "The Artist as Narrator in The Alexandria Quartet," Twentieth Century Literature, 18 (1972), 175-80.

<sup>8</sup>J. Christopher Burns, "Durrell's Heraldic Universe," Modern Fiction Studies, 13 (1967), 375-88.

<sup>9</sup>Lawrence Durrell, Balthazar (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1958), p. 206; hereafter cited as B. All further references to this work appear in the text.

<sup>10</sup>Lawrence Durrell, Clea (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960), p. 20; hereafter cited as C. All further references to this work appear in the text.

<sup>11</sup>Other passages indicating Darley's knowledge of the conspiracy are found in C, pp. 18, 30, 53-54, and 57-58.

<sup>12</sup>Lawrence Durrell, Mountolive (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1958), p. 287; hereafter cited as M. All further references to this work appear in the text.

## CHAPTER III

### NAROUZ'S EVIL

If the essential psychological orientation is towards growth, why do human beings harm each other? Further, if there is a natural orientation towards growth in the cosmos, how can a story as unfulfilling as that of the unhappy Narouz occur? In this chapter I discuss Durrell's theory of evil in the Quartet and demonstrate that even this theory supports my thesis of the universal orientation towards growth. Durrell's general understanding of evil is that suffering is inevitable in life, and that what people call evil is a portion of the growth process associated with suffering. On evil the Quartet offers two main points. Durrell argues the unusual notion that evil behavior in human beings is the result of an action essentially compulsive and lacking tenderness though not characterized by a malicious will. Durrell also makes the common observation that in the individual life the growing self can utilize its suffering to strengthen its growth. What is unusual about this latter belief is Durrell's insistence that evil is related to and perhaps derives from a dark side of the growth process, and is associated with unusual processes, or principles of

growth departing from their customary course, broadly including both the sexual perversions and the supernatural.<sup>1</sup>

I begin my discussion of Durrell's theory of evil with a consideration of the inevitability of harm in human experience as evidenced in the stories of Darley and others. I then discuss Capodistria, a lecher and rapist, in whose story is presented the philosophy which relates evil to the dark principles of the growth process. I then consider the presence of evil behavior in diverse characters, stressing the positive effects of harm, the compulsive nature of evil, and the evil associated with the intellect detached from the heart. To exemplify Durrell's theory of evil, I then study the sad fate of Narouz, in whom the growth process is unusually dark, and whose story is the focus for this chapter.

In Chapter One, I cited Durrell's quotation of a passage from Eugene Marais' The Soul of the White Ant, in which Marais identifies an orientation towards living that is "inherent in life" and that Marais speculates is polarized: "The negative pole is pain, the positive pole sex." This orientation towards living I have described as an orientation towards growth, and in Chapter One, I discussed the positive pole of the orientation by discussing the role sex plays in the Quartet, showing how sex spurs love, which in turn furthers growth, and showing how Darley progresses from a state where his

will to live is threatened to a state where he acquires the confidence of selfhood, a process directly associated with sexual experiences or the love experiences resulting from them. In this chapter I broadly consider how the negative pole of pain also furthers the orientation towards living, or how pain and suffering further growth. To describe this broad orientation I use the phrase "the dark side of the growth process."

To narrow this broad topic in this chapter I concentrate upon human evil: the pain and suffering inflicted by one human being upon another. "Nobody wishes to be evil," Darley writes, attributing the statement to "Demonax, the philosopher" (C, p. 64); in other words, no one essentially wishes to cause harm or to inflict pain, and when one does cause harm and pain to others perhaps the evil-doer perceives the evil action as somehow effecting good. How then in the Quartet does human evil occur? In the Quartet the most widely applicable definition of evil is the one Durrell attributes to Paracelsus (J, p. 253) and which early in Justine rings over Darley "like a thunderclap: 'Evil is good perverted'" (J, p. 42).

The sixth edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines the verb to "pervert" as to "turn aside (thing) from its proper use or nature." In the language of this dissertation human evil in the Quartet is the result of



the growth process turned aside from its customary or intended course. Given the symbolism of the Quartet which, for example, associates essentially monogamous heterosexuality with natural growth, logically the dark side of sexuality will tend to be associated with unnatural sexual activity; and in the Quartet the dark side of sexuality is manifested in lechery, nymphomania, homosexuality, transvestism, and even abstinence. The logic of associating evil with uncustomary or perverted growth is supported time and time again in the Quartet as this chapter will detail; but before turning to the main examples of evil in the Quartet, I briefly consider a handful of minor examples showing the diverse ways the dark principles are made manifest.

Durrell's essential understanding of evil I have suggested in Chapter One is evidenced in the ill effects Darley's love affair with Justine has upon Melissa. In that situation Darley's own expansive growth proves destructive to Melissa, though Darley does not intend to harm her. Thus evil seems an inevitable part of the intersecting of simultaneous growth processes. One person's growth can damage another's. In the wounding of Clea is seen the beneficial effect of a process of destruction, for by severing Clea's hand, Darley enables her to continue living, and in such a manner, the dark principles are also associated with growth.

This inevitable harm can result from diverse causes. Darley loses pages of his manuscript of Justine, which he writes on the island while caring for Melissa's daughter; for "some have been converted to kitchen uses, some the child has destroyed. This form of censorship pleases me for it has the indifference of the natural world to the constructions of art" (J, p. 15). The child likely had use for a piece of paper, the writing on the page meaning nothing to the child. Harm is brought through disease as in the example of Narouz's mother, Leila, whose beauty "had been suddenly ravaged by a confluent smallpox which melted down those lovely features" (B, p. 77). One may contribute to harm simply by coincidence as in the case of the French diplomat Pombal, who at carnival in Balthazar dresses up in female clothes and whose hat pin is used by Narouz to commit murder, though how Narouz ever acquires the hat pin is unexplained. Appropriate to the broad theme in Balthazar of a discussion of evil or dark principles is Pursewarden's story of the love relationship between an Italian poet and a vampire. "To have one's blood sucked in darkness by someone one adores" convinces the poet that "she is the very lover for whom I have been waiting all these years. . . . Now at last, with this vampire's love, I feel I can live again, feel again, write again!" The poet dies with his body covered in bites similar to those observed "during the plague of

Naples when the rats had been at the bodies" (B, pp. 196-98). Even this dark and supernatural story is partially associated with a process of growth.

The Quartet has two characters who are emphatically linked to the dark side of the growth process: Capodistria and Narouz. Narouz is the central symbol of the dark principles of growth, but because Narouz is not verbally acute, he does not provide the body of understanding that, for example, Darley, Pursewarden, and Clea bring to the brighter side of the growth process. Accordingly, to understand Narouz's story, a theory of evil must be derived from statements of other characters to explain how darkness furthers growth. Because Capodistria is the other major representative of the dark principles and since he verbalizes effectively, I begin this discussion of evil in the Quartet with a consideration of the character of Capodistria.

Capodistria is a minor character in the Quartet, who as Justine's rapist has an important plot function, and as the chief spokesman for the ways of darkness has an important thematic function. Darley introduces the reader to Capodistria early in Justine: "Capodistria...how does he fit in? He is more of a goblin than a man, you would think. The flat triangular head of the snake with the huge frontal lobes; the hair grows forward in a widow's peak. A whitish flickering tongue is forever busy keeping

his thin lips moist." In Darley's description of Capodistria's unusual features are contained ideas of the supernatural ("goblin"), the serpent of the Garden of Eden ("snake"), death ("widow"), and hunger, dissatisfaction, or inquisitiveness ("flickering tongue"). "His family is noted for the number of suicides in it, and his psychological inheritance is an unlucky one with its history of mental disturbance and illness." "He is ineffably rich and does not have to lift a finger for himself" (J, pp. 33-34).

Yet, in spite of the fact that he has "a sexual prowess reputed to be as great as his fortune--or his ugliness," Capodistria has no satisfactory sexual relationship.

He sits all day on the terrace of the Brokers' Club watching the women pass, with the restless eye of someone endlessly shuffling through an old soiled pack of cards. From time to time there is a flick, like a chameleon's tongue striking--a signal almost invisible to the inattentive. Then a figure slips from the terrace to trail the woman he has indicated. Sometimes his agents will quite openly stop and importune women on the street in his name, mentioning a sum of money.

In Capodistria sexuality has not played its customary role, leading to love and growth; Capodistria's sexual relationships are rather a symbol of stagnation, of "a life of such striking monotony" (J, pp. 33-34).

Yet Capodistria's portrait is not consistently dark or repugnant. His very lechery is described in

language associated with the theme of growth. "He impregnates things. At table I have seen a water-melon become conscious under his gaze so that it felt the seeds inside it stirring with life!" (J, p. 38). "His laughter is the most natural and unfeigned of any I have ever heard" (J, p. 35). He can describe his sexual behavior with wit as when he tells Pursewarden, "Today I had five girls. I know it will seem excessive to you. I was not trying to prove anything to myself. But if I had said that I had merely blended five teas to suit my palate or five tobaccos to suit my pipe, you would not give the matter a second thought. You would, on the contrary, admire my eclecticism, would you not?" (C, p. 137). And Capodistria can describe his sexual behavior with more serious thought, as when he praises Pursewarden's "apology for a voluptuary's life . . . where he says that people only see in us the contemptible skirt-fever which rules our actions but completely miss the beauty-hunger underlying it. To be so struck by a face sometimes that one wants to devour it feature by feature. Even making love to the body beneath it gives no surcease, no rest" (J, pp. 211-12).

Capodistria is a man whose experiences are not nourishing growth but restlessness. Furthermore, Capodistria's lechery has caused specific harm, for his lust moved him to rape Justine when she was a child, and

in the trauma caused by the rape appears to be the psychological cause "of all Justine's misfortunes" (J, p. 210), the source of her nymphomania, which in turn causes pain and harm to others. "What is to be done with people like us?" Capodistria asks near the conclusion of Justine (J, p. 212), and a few pages later he is reported to have been accidentally slain at Nessim's annual duck hunt (J, p. 217). Clea later speculates that Nessim may have had Capodistria murdered in order to avenge Justine's rape and psychologically free her from her compulsive behavior (J, p. 243). In truth Capodistria is one of the participants in the conspiracy to smuggle guns to Palestine, and Nessim helps fake Capodistria's death to enable Capodistria to quietly leave the country, information hinted at in Balthazar (B, p. 102) and Mountolive (M, p. 212), and made explicit in Clea (C, p. 73). Apart from this initial information, Capodistria has no significant role in Justine.

In Balthazar, Capodistria has only two significant appearances, both of which are chronological flashbacks occurring before his faked death. The first appearance of Capodistria in Balthazar relates to his rape of Justine. Hoping to free herself from her compulsion by a re-enactment of the event, Justine asks Capodistria to sleep with her, which he refuses to do. Justine remarks

that "he was so terribly shocked and alarmed to be told he had raped me. . . . I have never seen a man more taken aback. He had completely forgotten, it is clear, and completely denied the whole thing from start to finish" (B, p. 145). From Capodistria's shock and alarm I think we are meant to conclude that the rape was not a typical action on his part, although the dehumanization of the sexual partner implied by rape is representative of Capodistria's promiscuous and mechanical approach to sex. This dehumanization of the sexual partner is also associated with Capodistria's father, also "a great womanizer," who, in his old age, was to spend his time with "a model of the perfect woman built in rubber--life-size," whom he called Sabina (J, p. 34). There is nothing in the Quartet, except the references to the rape, to associate Capodistria with the impulse to inflict pain; and I am inclined to regard the rape of Justine as an act of sexual intercourse in which advantage was taken of the child's inexperience and weakness, and thus as a rape to be associated with the impulse to have sex rather than the impulse to inflict pain with violence.

Capodistria's second appearance in Balthazar occurs near the end of the novel during Carnival, that season presided over by the "lords of Misrule." Most of the characters in the Quartet attend a party hosted by the Cervonis. Late in the evening Darley goes to the library

upstairs and discovers

the long room with its gleaming shelves of books . . . empty save for a Mephistopheles sitting in an armchair by the fire with a book on his knees. He took his spectacles off in order to identify me and I saw that it was Capodistria. He could not have chosen a more suitable costume. It suited his great ravening beak of a nose and those small, keen eyes, set so close together. "Come in," he cried. "I was afraid it might be someone wanting to make love in which case . . . I should have felt bound." (B, p. 207)

In the ensuing brief discussion, Capodistria quotes a passage related to the story of the fall from Eden: "The fruit of the tree of good and evil is itself but flesh; yes, and the apple itself is but an apple of the dust" (B, p. 208). This quotation perhaps suggests that good and evil and the tempter itself are all essentially products of the same material, be it described as "fruit," "flesh," or "dust."

Finishing his drink, Capodistria complains of "this damned carnival year after year . . . an unlucky time astrologically . . . It brings out the devil. That is why I am dressed as the devil. I hang about waiting for people to come and sell me their souls. . . . I must be going home. Beelzebub's bedtime." Capodistria "adjusted his mask" and, "looking like some weird bird-like demon," leaves the party and the novel Balthazar (B, p. 209). At this seasonal period of Carnival dominated by powers of darkness, Capodistria is specifically



associated with Mephistopheles, Beelzebub, and the devil. In Mountolive, Capodistria plays no significant role beyond being identified as one of the conspirators (M, pp. 203, 212).

Capodistria's last appearance in the Quartet is in Clea, where the unusual revelation of his faked death occurs. In Clea, Balthazar receives a long letter from Capodistria, who recounts some of the experiences in his new environment, in which, Balthazar says, Capodistria now "has taken the Luciferian path and plunged into Black Magic" (C, p. 197). In the lengthy letter, Capodistria refers to "the unease and unfamiliarity I always felt at the meetings of the Cabal which sought to drench the world in its abstract goodness. I did not know then that my path was not the path of Light but of Darkness. I would have confused it morally or ethically with good and evil at that time. Now I recognise the path I am treading as simply the counterpoise--the bottom end of the see-saw, as it were--which keeps the light side up in the air. Magic!" (C, p. 198). Such a passage implies that in, presumably, the ways of nature there are two broad paths, one of Light and one of Darkness; these harmoniously balance each other to produce the whole. The entire process I have previously described as oriented towards growth

through sex and pain, and thus this passage implies that in the growth process there are balancing bright and dark principles.

Marais' description of the orientation towards living as being polarized between sex and pain suggests an idea of balance, and other passages also suggest balance between the ways of dark and light or evil and good. Clea refers to "the retributive law which brings good for evil and evil for good" (J, p. 243). Darley asserts that "Some people are born to bring good and evil in greater measure than the rest of us," and suggests that "we must study them, for it is possible that they promote creation in the very degree of the apparent corruption and confusion they spread or seek" (B, p. 57). And Balthazar says, "The most tender, the most tragic of illusions is perhaps to believe that our actions can add or subtract from the total quantity of good and evil in the world," a conclusion which would necessarily follow if good and evil, or more broadly the bright and the dark, were eternally in a state of dynamic balance. Balthazar says, "Acceptance of the world can only come from a full recognition of its measureless extents of good and evil; and to really inhabit it, explore it to the full uninhibited extent of this finite human understanding--that is all that is necessary in order to accept it. But what a task!" (C, p. 71). Such a passage implies that recognizing the

bright and dark principles (of growth) is all one needs to understand the workings of the universe. The emphasis on balance may not be literal but simply a means of poetically dramatizing the essentially dual and opposing orientation of light and dark, good and evil, sex and pain.

In his letter to Balthazar in which Capodistria reveals his new orientation to living spurred by his acquaintance with "Black Magic," Capodistria writes that he has "discovered at last something which eminently fitted my nature! Truthfully, everything in this field seemed to nourish and sustain me!" (C, p. 199). "I have chosen the Dark Path towards my own light. I know now that I must follow it wherever it leads! Isn't that something to have achieved?" (C, p. 204). As Capodistria perceives a universal pattern and his place in it, his spiritual maturation is significantly furthered; stagnation ends and growth begins. But Capodistria does not merely gain understanding of the role of darkness and anticipate growth; he also bears witness to the most conspicuously supernatural event in the Quartet, the existence of "ten homunculi," "prophesying spirits," grown and "preserved in . . . huge glass canisters" (C, p. 200), whose story is recounted in a tale (C, pp. 199-204) which Durrell suggests is an elaboration of "a footnote in Franz Hartmann's Life of Paracelsus"

(C, p. 287). These brief fragments of his life are the essential references to Capodistria in the Quartet.

As a character representing the path of Darkness, Capodistria presents in his traits some aspects of the dark principles. Associated with darkness is the unusual, as represented by Capodistria's appearance, his psychological and financial inheritance, his sexual history, his faked death, and his supernatural studies. Associated with darkness is unfulfilling sexual activity, or in the broader meaning of the Quartet, unfulfilled growth; and I take both Capodistria's lechery and his rape of Justine as impulses towards sex, or growth, that could not find nourishment from the customary bright process of growth, the process by which sex turns into love. His immense wealth enabled Capodistria to indulge a perversion of the natural sexual process, but at the time of his disappearance he "was all but bankrupt financially" (C, p. 73). Being jerked from the environment of Alexandria where he habitually indulged his lechery, and replanted as a cooperative abstemious exile in a windy tower with access to supernatural studies (C, p. 199), may be what salvages Capodistria from stagnation. His transformation recalls and contrasts with the process by which Darley was also saved from stagnation, that is, by the customary bright growth process of love, a process specifically begun by Melissa's sexual favors. The destruction of

Capodistria's Alexandrian life, symbolized by his faked death, reflects a beneficial aspect to destructive principles in a process of growth, as Darley's growth benefits from Balthazar's destructive critique, and as Clea's growth benefits from the loss of her hand. Inasmuch as Capodistria's story ends in growth, his story represents bright or beneficial aspects of the dark principles, and since his philosophy emphasizes balance, perhaps his future behavior will aptly apply the dark principles in such a way as to produce less stagnation and more growth. With this observation I conclude my discussion of Capodistria and turn to examine other manifestations of the dark principles in characters less dominated by darkness, specifically Justine, Pursewarden, Scobie, and Balthazar, and follow that discussion with the central subject of this chapter, Durrell's theory of evil as manifested in the character of Narouz.

The chief harm specifically caused by Capodistria is to Justine, and she like Capodistria is associated with unsatisfactory sexual relationships, which frequently result in wounding her lovers' egos. Darley's story is an example of how Justine's behavior wounds and furthers growth, a consistent theme associated with her sexuality. Thus her husband, Nessim, says to Darley, "'Certainly she was bad in many ways, but they were all small ways. Nor can I say that she harmed nobody. But those she harmed

most she made fruitful. She expelled people from their old selves. It was bound to hurt, and many mistook the nature of the pain she inflicted. Not I'" (J, p. 33). Justine herself says to Darley, "'I have done so many things in my life. . . . Evil things, perhaps. But never inattentively, never wastefully,'" and what she has done has "invited self-discovery" (J, p. 202). Again to Darley, Justine says, "'It would be silly to spread so much harm as I have done and not to realize that it is my role. Only in this way, by knowing what I am doing, can I ever outgrow myself'" (J, p. 87). In other words, harm in Justine's life is a manifestation of principles of growth, presumably dark principles.

Dark principles are emphasized in Justine's affair with Clea, occurring between Justine's marriages to Arnauti and Nessim (B, p. 51). Darley writes that "Justine in pursuing these deeper sexual pleasures was unaware that they would mark Clea for years: enfeeble her in her power of giving undivided love--what she was most designed to give by temperament. . . . And yet [Justine] the wretched creature meant no harm. She was simply a victim of that Oriental desire to please, to make this golden friend of hers free of treasures which her own experience had gathered and which, in sum, were as yet meaningless to her" (B, p. 56). "Yet all this, at any rate, performed one valuable service for her [Clea],

proving that relationships like these did not answer the needs of her nature. . . . She knew she was a woman at last and belonged to men" (B, p. 55). Clea's path is largely the customary bright path with brief, unusual excursions into darkness as in the affair with Justine or the freak occurrence requiring the loss of her hand. Clea's affair with Justine is one of "the strange ways in which people grow up" (B, p. 54) and is as much an expression of Clea's needs as Justine's compulsion, for in the affair "Clea's own body simply struggled to disengage itself from the wrappings of its innocence as a baby or a statue struggles for life under the fingers or forceps of its author." Clea's engagement with sex is "simply a clumsy attempt to appropriate the mystery of true experience, true suffering--as by touching a holy man the supplicant hopes for a transference of the grace he lacks" (B, p. 52).

In Balthazar, Justine, whose customary role is to inflict harm on her lovers, has the unusual experience of finding in Pursewarden a lover "she could not punish by her infidelities--an intolerable but delightful novelty" (B, p. 123). In Justine, Darley observes that Justine appeared to be "really falling in love at last. The whole temper of her personality seemed to be changing" (J, p. 151), a change for the better which Darley attributes to the beneficial influence of his infatuated

love for her, but which in fact is due to Pursewarden's affair with her. In this affair, Pursewarden does not court or pamper Justine; rather Pursewarden uncustomarily assumes the role of being "extremely rude" (B, p. 126) and treating her with "ridicule" and "cruelties" (B, p. 115), calling her once, "you bloody tiresome obsessive society figure" (B, p. 127). Balthazar reports that one day at the beach Pursewarden proclaimed,

"But surely you are making yourself a little self-important about it all? You have the impertinence to foist yourself on us as a problem--perhaps because you have nothing else to offer? It is foolish. Or perhaps it is that the Jew loves punishment and always comes back for more?" And suddenly, but completely, to take her firmly by the nape of the neck and force her down into the hot sand before she could find time to measure the extent of the insult or form a response in her mind. And then, while he was still kissing, to say something so ludicrous that the laughter and tears in her mind became one and the same sort of things, a mixture of qualities hard to endure. (B, p. 117)

Yet Justine is so fascinated and insistent that when she believes that Pursewarden wants to avoid her in order to keep from sexually wounding Nessim, Justine proclaims, "I don't care whether you want to sleep with me or not. . . . And it will not prevent us from meeting. We need never sleep together again if you don't wish it. But at least I shall be able to see you" (B, p. 127). The causes, treatment, and resolution of Justine's compulsive sexual behavior I discuss more fully in my fourth chapter,



"Justine's Guilt"; in Pursewarden's treatment of Justine as elsewhere in the Quartet an effect of harm is the furtherance of growth.

The important trait of compulsiveness in Durrell's theory of evil is presented in the character of Scobie, a seventy-year-old seaman and Officer of the British Empire (J, p. 120), who has retired into the relative obscurity of Alexandria and for fourteen years has been employed by the Egyptian Police (B, p. 28). After his death, Scobie is characterized as "a student of harmlessness!" (C, p. 81). In Justine, Darley affectionately describes Scobie as "the old pirate," who in 1884 "made eyes at another man's wife (so he says) and lost one of them. No one except Clea is supposed to know about this, but the replacement in this case was rather a crude one. In repose it is not very noticeable, but the minute he becomes animated a disparity between his two eyes becomes obvious. There is also a small technical problem: his own eye is almost permanently bloodshot" (J, pp. 122-23).

In Balthazar Darley's portrait of Scobie darkens, for Scobie is revealed to be the victim of certain "Tendencies" (B, p. 35). Scobie confesses to Darley that "sometimes at the full moon, I'm Took. I come under An Influence" (B, p. 40). The result of this influence is that Scobie slips on "female duds" and

pretends to be "a little old tart" (B, p. 41), but, Scobie insists, "only when the Influence comes over me. When I'm not fully Answerable, old man" (B, p. 42).

Scobie is puzzled by his own behavior, and to characterize such tendencies Scobie exclaims, "It's the lack of tenderness, old man!". Scobie cites as an example of tenderness his friendship with Abdul. "I set him up in his business, just out of friendly affection. Bought him everything: his shop, his little wife. Never laid a finger on him nor ever could, because I love the man" (B, pp. 35-36). Scobie's temporary and impulsive participation in the dark principles is activity which Scobie knows "could do me Untold Harm" (B, p. 43), and although I assume that Scobie is here concerned with his reputation and employment, his activity results in his demise, for "dressed in woman's clothes" Scobie is "kicked to death" by sailors from the H.M.S. Milton (B, p. 171).

The emotional detachment implied by Scobie's phrase "the lack of tenderness" is characteristic of Balthazar, the doctor who gives his name to the novel about the dark principles. Balthazar acknowledges his "bloodthirsty interest in the ratiocinative faculty" (J, p. 93) through which he hopes to "be released from the bondage of my appetites, of the flesh. I should at last, I felt, find a philosophical calm and balance which would expunge the

passional nature, sterilise my actions" (C, p. 67). In sexuality Balthazar chooses to avoid the tenderness spurred by the emotional involvement which he associates with heterosexual love and chooses homosexuality because, as Balthazar tells Darley, "Lying with one's own kind, . . . one can still keep free the part of one's mind which dwells in Plato, or gardening, or the differential calculus" (J, p. 96). Balthazar's lack of tenderness associated with his probing intellect has already been shown to have wounded Darley with the revelations about Justine's affair with Pursewarden, which events move Darley to write the novel Balthazar.

A darker portrait of the effect of Balthazar's untender intellect is presented in Mountolive, where Balthazar tells Mountolive, "Now I hated Dmitri Randidi, though not his lovely daughter; but just to humiliate him (I was disguised as a gipsy woman at the carnival ball), I told her fortune" (M, p. 234). Balthazar tells the daughter she will fall in love with a man she would find at "the ruined tower at Taposiris," and arranges to have "a particularly hideous young man" there (M, pp. 234-35). Balthazar says,

And it all turned out as I had planned. For the lovely girl obeyed the gipsy and fell in love with this freckled toad with the red hair. A more unsuitable conjunction cannot be imagined. But that was the idea--to make Randidi hop! It did, yes, very much, and I was so pleased by my own cleverness. He of course forbade the marriage.

The lovers--which I invented, my lovers--were separated. Then Gaby Randidi, the beautiful girl, took poison. You can imagine how clever I felt. This broke her father's health and the neurasthenia (never very far from the surface in the family) overwhelmed him at last. Last autumn he was found hanging from the trellis which supports the most famous grapevine in the city. . . . (M, p. 235)

The recognition of potential danger through abuse of the emotions with the intellect helps explain such a statement of Balthazar's that "even to preach the gospel is evil," although "it is not the gospel but the preaching which involves us with the powers of darkness" (J, p. 177).

Whatever the exact characteristics of the dark principles are, Darley emphasizes their presence in the psyche: "Each of us, like the moon, had a dark side--could turn the lying face of 'unlove' towards the person who most loved and needed us." A few lines further Durrell includes the unelaborated quotation from Marais beginning, "What protects animals, enables them to continue living," suggesting the polarizing orientation of sex and pain. From this preliminary sketch of aspects of Durrell's theory of evil, I emphasize three points: first, that in the Quartet there is a process of growth in which there are bright and dark principles of growth, roughly corresponding to polarizing concepts such as light and dark, good and evil, sex and pain, the happy and the unhappy; second, that Durrell stresses in the dark principles both harm and the unusual, and also stresses

the dark principles' beneficial contribution to growth; and finally, that in the characters of Scobie and Balthazar, Durrell associates human participation in the dark principles with a compelling lack of tenderness. I turn now from this preliminary sketch of aspects of Durrell's theory of evil to the central symbol of that theory, the character of Narouz.

That Narouz is meant to be related to the Quartet's general philosophy of individual and cosmic growth I take as being evidenced by Narouz's participation in the four landscape sequences I stressed in my discussion of Darley's religious growth in Chapter Two. That is, in Justine, when Darley walks the streets of Alexandria, pondering sexuality, and pauses to gaze at a couple having sexual intercourse, Darley is in fact gazing at a prostitute and, so Darley says in Balthazar, Narouz (B, p. 167). In Balthazar at Carnival when Alexandria is dominated by the seasonal "Lords of Misrule," Narouz commits murder. In Mountolive the battle which the conspirators and the diplomats no longer seem able to control has as one unwanted result the murder of Narouz. And in Clea the wounding of Clea occurs on Narouz's private island and is effected by Narouz's harpoon gun.

Linked to Narouz's implied presence in the four landscape sequences is Narouz's love for Clea. In Justine, Narouz beds the prostitute because she has

Clea's voice (B, p. 166). In Balthazar, Narouz attends Carnival in hopes of finding Clea. In Mountolive, at his death, Narouz calls for Clea. And in Clea, Scobie prophesies that Narouz will attempt "to drag [Clea] down into the grave with him" (C, p. 206).

This linkage of Narouz, the Quartet's central symbol of the dark principles, with the four landscape descriptions emphasizing the relationship between individual and cosmos, I assume is meant to stress the important role which the dark principles have in their inevitable relationship with the growth process. That Narouz is consistently linked with Clea in these passages reflects his personal good intent as symbolized by his unrequited love for Clea, even though Narouz's character is largely a functionary for the dark principles.

Narouz's story is the unhappiest in the Quartet. He is marked for suffering from birth by an incompleting upper lip which his parents fail to have sewn together. He is ugly and not mentally acute. He is most successful at farming. He occasionally has mystical visions. He sees Clea and falls in love with her. He is given to spontaneous violent behavior. He commits murder, declares his love to Clea, is rejected by her, becomes a drunkard and a danger to Nessim's conspiracy, and is himself murdered. Materials associated with him result in the wounding of Clea.

Narouz's life is one of suffering, characterized by the unnaturalness of incompleteness. In Justine he is nameless; in fact when Darley sees him in bed with the prostitute, Darley believes that Narouz is Mnemjian, a hunchback (J, p. 190), but later in Balthazar Darley says the man he saw was Narouz (B, p. 167), whose personal ugliness made possible the mistaken identity. In Balthazar Narouz is given considerable space in the text as Darley details the events leading up to and including Carnival. But apart from references to his unhappy birth, the earliest picture of Narouz's life is presented in Mountolive, a novel in which Narouz also plays an important role.

In Mountolive, David Mountolive, a British diplomat at the beginning of his career, is visiting Egypt some years before the events of Justine and the rest of the Quartet. On this visit Mountolive stays at the house of Nessim and Narouz Hosnani, and has an affair with their mother, Leila. Mountolive's initial meeting with Narouz provides one of the Quartet's aptest images which reflect how, in Darley's words, "common actions in reality are simply the sackcloth covering which hides the cloth-of-gold--the meaning of the pattern" (J, p. 17). Narouz's association with the dark principles of growth is represented in the fact that, when Mountolive meets

Narouz, Narouz is in a cellar, underground, in dim light, cultivating growth through the unnatural process of incubation.

To meet Narouz, Mountolive is led "through the rose-gardens and across the palm-plantations to where the incubators were housed in a long low building of earth-brick, constructed well below ground-level. They knocked once or twice on a sunken door, but at last Leila impatiently pushed it open and they entered a narrow corridor with ten earthen ovens" (M, p. 26). The "deep voice" of Narouz greets them "from among a nest of cobwebs and . . . gloom," with a "scowl and hare-lip and the harshness of his shout." Pleased at the visit, Narouz explains the technique of the "hatching of eggs by artificial heat," and in that Narouz explains "an art for which Egypt had been famous from the remotest antiquity," like Capodistria Narouz reveals skill and knowledge in esoteric subjects, discussing "even the strange technique by which egg-heats are judged in default of the thermometer, simply by placing the egg in the eye-socket." "In this underground fairway full of ancient cobwebs and unswept dirt they talked techniques and temperatures. . . ."

This introduction to Narouz associates the man with darkness, with growth, with harshness, and with his essential desire to participate positively in life.



Though harsh at being interrupted, when Narouz realizes the purpose of the visit, he is both "delighted" and "proud," and as he speaks of the growth of the eggs his "beautiful eyes were now alive and brilliant with pleasure" (M, p. 27). Like Capodistria, when Narouz discusses the process of growth nurtured by principles of darkness, Narouz himself is filled with pleasure. Such is the first glimpse provided of Narouz in the Quartet; Mountolive leaves Egypt and returns about the time of the events of Justine. In the following discussion I present Narouz's story largely by collating the data from Balthazar and Mountolive.

A vivid picture of Narouz is presented in Balthazar, when one day Nessim drives out to the country estates. "The Hosnani fortunes were deployed in two directions, separated into two spheres of responsibility, and each brother had his own. Nessim controlled the banking house and its ancillaries all over the Mediterranean, while Narouz lived the life of a Coptic squire, never stirring from . . . the Hosnani lands" (B, p. 66). Nessim "saw the horses waiting . . . and the foreshortened figure of Narouz beside them. He threw up an excited arm in an awkward gesture of pleasure as he saw Nessim" (B, p. 67). Durrell's fullest description of Narouz is the following paragraph:

The younger brother, shorter and more squarely built than Nessim, wore a blue French peasant's blouse open at the throat and with the sleeves rolled back, exposing arms and hands of great power covered by curly dark hair. An old Italian cartridge bandolier hung down upon his haunches. The ends of his baggy Turkish trousers with an old-fashioned drawstring, were stuffed into crumpled old jackboots of soft leather. He ducked, excitedly, awkwardly, into his brother's arms and out again, like a boxer from a clinch. But when he raised his head to look at him, you saw at once what it was that had ruled Narouz' life like a dark star. His upper lip was split literally from the spur of the nose--as if by some terrific punch: it was a hare-lip which had not been caught up and basted in time. It exposed the ends of a white tooth and ended in two little pink tongues of flesh in the centre of his upper lip which were always wet. His dark hair grew down low and curly, like a heifer's, on to his brow. His eyes were splendid: of a blueness and innocence that made them almost like Clea's: indeed his whole ugliness took splendour from them. He had grown a ragged and uneven moustache over his upper lip, as someone will train ivy over an ugly wall--but the scar showed through wherever the hair was thin: and his short unsatisfactory beard too was a poor disguise: looked simply as if he had remained unshaven for a week. It had no shape of its own and confused the outlines of his taurine neck and high cheekbones. He had a curious hissing shy laugh which he always pointed downward into the ground to hide his lip. The whole sum of his movements was ungainly--arms and legs somewhat curved and hairy as a spider--but they gave off a sensation of overwhelming strength held rigidly under control. His voice was deep and thrilling and held something of the magic of a woman's contralto. (B, p. 68)

Although there is earthy beauty in Narouz's "blue French peasant's blouse open at the throat," and emotional warmth in the implied familiarity and utility of Narouz's "crumpled old jackboots of soft leather," and a spiritual "innocence" suggested by his "splendid" eyes, nonetheless "what it was that had ruled Narouz' life" is

his harelip or a manifestation of the growth process's dark principles, here the dark principle of incompleteness. In Mountolive, Narouz is described as being "heavily built and ugly," "tough and brutish as a mastiff and with an indefinable air of being ready at any moment to answer a call to arms," and not offended by "bloodshed, manual work, and bad manners" (M, p. 23).

As a banker, Nessim is luckier to have his life in the city of Alexandria where sex and the love that sex fosters are at hand. As a farmer, Narouz's life is characterized as a war with the uncooperative desert. His life is one of isolation, and he must fight an unnatural battle for existence, for he is not even given naturally arable land to farm, but instead must convert the dull and deadening desert into land capable of furthering growth. Narouz cultivates "the Hosnani lands" up to "the fringe of the desert, gradually eating into it, expropriating it year by year, spreading their squares of cultivation--carob and melon and corn--and pumping out the salt which poisoned it" (B, p. 66). The "Egyptians believe the desert to be an emptiness populated entirely by the spirits of demons and other grotesque visitants from Eblis, the Moslem Satan."

To approach the desert, Narouz must ride "along the tortuous bridle paths," which he accomplishes "quite unerringly, for the whole land existed in his mind . . .

like a battle plan" (B, p. 83). As Narouz reaches "the thinning edges of cultivation--the front line so to speak where the battle was actually being joined at present-- a long ragged territory like the edges of a wound," Narouz can see that "along the whole length of it infiltration from the arable land on the one side and the desert drainage on the other, both charged with the rotten salts, had poisoned the ground and made it the image of desolation" (B, p. 84). "Here only giant reeds and bulrushes grew or an occasional thorn bush. No fish could live in the brackish water. Birds shunned it. It lay in the stagnant belt of its own foul air, weird, obsessive and utterly silent--the point at which the desert and the sown met in a death-embrace" (B, pp. 84-85). Although this dark territory is associated with Narouz, Narouz is clearly on the side of growth, for "he had already mentally planted this waste with carobs and green shrubs--conquered it."

Actually, once the desert is entered, and the war between light and dark yields to the desert's principles, the ways of darkness are less ugly, bearing "the first pure draughts of desert air, and the nakedness of space, pure as a theorem, stretching away into the sky drenched in all its own silence and majesty, untenanted except by such figures as the imagination of man has invented to people landscapes which are inimical to his

passions and whose purity flays the mind" (B, p. 85). As one progresses into the desert, one finds "wild flowers" and "butterflies," and the expansive nighttime sky is "hoary with stars." Under the daytime desert heat, darkness proves conducive to comfort, and Narouz can pause "for a short rest in the shadow of a great rock-- a purple oasis of darkness--panting and happy." Here "smugglers' roads" have "been used for centuries by the caravans" and are regarded as "the 'bountiful highways' which steered the fortunes of men through the wilderness of the desert, taking spices and stuffs from one part of Africa to another or affording to the pious their only means of reaching the Holy City." Through darkness, such descriptions imply, one can reach light. Narouz has a solid "familiarity with the desert" (B, p. 86). On a journey accompanied by Nessim into the desert, Narouz finds in the desert's midst an "oasis" of humans, greeting a sheik and his many tents, from whom Narouz acquires and tames on the spot a beautiful white horse, the color being Narouz's choice. Having conquered the wild horse and made it submissive to his riding, Narouz is "light-headed with joy and felt as unsubstantial as a rainbow" (B, p. 91). Thus the dark desert has also its contribution to growth and light.

Through his harelip and his proximity to the desert, Narouz is compelled to deal with unusually extreme

physical manifestations of the dark principles, but Narouz is also associated with psychological manifestations of the dark principles in his tendency towards spontaneous violence. When staying at the Hosnani country estate, Mountolive "witnessed a short incident which took place in the courtyard under his window":

A dark youth stood uneasily here before a different Narouz, scowling fiercely yet with ebbing courage into those blue eyes. Mountolive had heard the words "Master, it was no lie" spoken twice in a low clear voice as he lay reading; he rose and walked to the window in time to see Narouz, who was repeating in a low, obstinate voice, pressed between his teeth into a hiss, the words "You lied again", perform an act whose carnal brutality thrilled him; he was in time to see his host take out a knife from his belt and sever a portion of the boy's ear-lobe, but slowly, and indeed softly, as one might sever a grape from its stalk with a fruit-knife. A wave of blood flowed down the servant's neck but he stood still. "Now go," said Narouz in the same diabolical hiss, "and tell your father that for every lie I will cut a piece of your flesh until we come to the true part, the part which does not lie." The boy suddenly broke into a staggering run and disappeared with a gasp. Narouz wiped his knife-blade on his baggy trousers and walked up the stairs into the house, whistling. Mountolive was spellbound! (M, p. 34)

Although Narouz's action is brutal, Narouz's intent is not to inflict harm but to foster honesty by inflicting a wound, in a manner similar to the way in which Clea's wound fosters growth, an idea here associated with harvesting and pruning, through the image of cutting the "grape from its stalk." Whether the youth lied to Narouz or not is never revealed in

the Quartet, but the inclination of Narouz to use violence to further the good he understands is revealed more than once.

Prior to her marriage to Nessim, Justine had lost her twelve-year-old daughter from her marriage to Arnauti, and, after Justine's marriage to Nessim, in order to gain information about the girl, Narouz goes to consult a holy man, the Magzub. Following the Magzub and cornering him in "a great deserted yard," "resting upon some rotten wooden beam," Narouz

drove his dagger into the wood, pinning the Magzub's arms to it through the long sleeves of his coarse gown; with his left hand he seized the beard of the man, as one might seize a cobra to prevent it striking. Lastly, instinctively, he thrust his face forward, spreading his split lip to the full, and hissing (for deformity also confers magical powers in the East) in almost the form of an obscene kiss, as he whispered: "O beloved of the Prophet."  
(B, pp. 161-62)

Narouz asks, "in the tone of a man who carries a dagger: 'Now you will tell me what I wish to know, will you not?'" (B, p. 163). Not unexpectedly, the Magzub complies.

These dark principles of using harm to effect good degenerate in Narouz into unproductive manifestations of physical destruction, particularly in Narouz's regular brutality towards animals when "practising"

with his "splendid hippopotamus-hide whip," as when, to display his skill to Nessim, Narouz "rode forward at a trot to where some dozen chickens were. . . . Narouz' arm shot up, the long lash uncurled slowly on the air and then went rigid with a sudden dull welt of sound, a sullen thwack, and laughing, the rider dismounted to pick up the mutilated creature, still warm and palpitating, its wings half-severed from its body, its head smashed" (B, pp. 71-72). Pursewarden is to see Narouz "pick dragon-flies off the flowers at fifteen paces with [the whip]; later in the desert he ran down a wild dog and cut it up with a couple of strokes. The poor creature was virtually dismembered in a couple of blows, by this toy!" (M, p. 118). For whatever reasons, Narouz's intellect does not fully develop, and although he feels "a heavy admiration at the concise way Nessim abbreviated and expressed his ideas," "Narouz felt these abstract words fall dully upon his ear, fraught with meanings he only half-guessed, and though he knew that they concerned him as much as anyone, they seemed to him to belong to some rarer world inhabited by sophists or mathematicians--creatures who would forge and give utterance to the vague longings and incoherent desires he felt forming inside him whenever Egypt was mentioned or the family estates" (B, p. 76).



One aspect of Narouz's participation in brighter principles is his association with intense spirituality. On the "very afternoon" of the day when Narouz cut off a portion of the youth's ear, Narouz and Mountolive examine "the boundaries of the property where the desert began," and at a "dusty little tomb of the lost saint," "Narouz said in the most natural manner in the world: 'I always say a prayer here--let us pray together, eh?'" They pray, "Narouz with his eyes raised to the sky and an expression of demonic meekness upon his face" (M, pp. 34-35). When Narouz attacks the Magzub, the holy man provides the information Narouz wants partially by pointing to the ground and insisting that Narouz allow "his eyes to enter the earth and his mind to pour through them into the spot under the magician's finger," and Narouz sees in the ground "a corner of the great lake" into which Justine's child apparently fell and drowned (B, pp. 163-64).

Nessim believes that Narouz "might be a religious leader, but for the prevailing circumstances of time and place," characterizing Narouz as "a prodigy of nature but his powers were to be deployed in a barren field which could never nourish them, which indeed would stifle them forever" (M, p. 231). And in Narouz, even this spiritual sensitivity is perverted into the service of violence, for Narouz "gets religious fervor" (M, p. 219)

from a "famous woman saint (alleged by the way to have three breasts) who lives in a tiny cave" (M, p. 126); Narouz uses this religious fervor to preach of "a holy war of religion" which "will sweep away the corrupt regime" (M, p. 218).

A more "gentle" aspect of Narouz is implied in the strong "love-allegiance" he feels and the care he displays for his crippled father, Hosnani (M, p. 23), who tolerates Leila's affair with Mountolive and dies between Mountolive's stationings in Egypt, during which time period Leila loses her beauty to smallpox. Narouz's decency and dissatisfaction are both expressed as Narouz watches Nessim and Leila embrace "with such trembling tenderness that Narouz laughed, swallowing, and tasted both the joy of his brother's love for Leila and his own bitterness in realising that he, Nessim, was her favourite--the beautiful son. He was not jealous of Nessim; only heartsick at the melody in his mother's voice--the tone she had never used in speaking to him. It had always been so" (B, p. 75). Thus Narouz's life is seen to have a mixture of bright and dark principles manifested in it, but is also seen to be dominated by the dark.

The primary act which forms my reason for selecting Narouz as the focal character for my understanding of Durrell's views on not merely the dark principles of growth but specifically on evil is Narouz's unnecessary

and gruesome murder of Toto de Brunel; this brutal murder occurs at Carnival under the dominance of the seasonal "lords of Misrule." Toto de Brunel is a harmless homosexual given to playful and giggling advances; his appearance in the Quartet is confined to Balthazar and is minimal and insignificant except for his being murdered. Darley writes that "his fortune was small, his excesses trivial," and with "nothing to be done for him for he was a woman: yet had he been born one he would long since have cried himself into a decline." "He spoke indifferent English and French, but whenever at a loss for a word he would put in one whose meaning he did not know and the grotesque substitution was often delightful. This became his standard mannerism." Among his verbal blunders are "Some flies have come off my typewriter" and "I ran so fast I got dandruff" (B, p. 25). Only token references (B, pp. 31, 128, and 179) precede Toto's falling victim to murder at Narouz's hands.

On the night of the Cervonis' ball at Carnival, Toto and other characters in the Quartet gather at Nessim's house prior to the dance, and there Narouz and Toto cross paths. Narouz enters, and Toto cries, "The farmer." Narouz regards Toto "with distaste," characterizing Toto as "an old lady's lap-dog" (B, p. 195). As the party rides in cars to the ball, Justine requests that later in the evening Toto will wear her ring because Justine

wants "to disappear for an hour or so on my own. Hush... don't giggle. . . . You will have adventures in my name, dear Toto, while I am gone." "Darling, of course," is Toto's reply (B, p. 199). Because all participants in Carnival regularly wear black capes and hoods, which envelop and disguise most features, only by the hands can an individual be recognized. Thus Justine's ring identifies the wearer as Justine insomuch as anyone can observe (B, p. 191). Promising to cooperate, Toto disappears into the crowd.

Later in the evening, under a pile of coats, Toto is found dead.

Toto de Brunel was discovered, still warm in his velvet domino, with his paws raised like two neat little cutlets, in the attitude of a dog which had rolled over to have its belly scratched. He was buried deep in the drift of coats. One hand had half-tried to move towards the fatal temple but the impulse had been cut off at the source before the action was complete, and it had stayed there raised a little higher than the other, as if wielding an invisible baton. The hatpin from Pombal's picture hat had been driven sideways into his head with terrific force, pinning him like a moth into his velvet headpiece. Athena had been making love to Jacques while she was literally lying upon his body--a fact which would under normal circumstances have delighted him thoroughly. But he was dead, le pauvre Toto, and what is more he was still wearing the ring of my lover. "Justice!" (B, p. 211)

Earlier in the evening, during her love-making with Jacques, Athena had thought she had heard a voice crying "Justice...Justice" (B, p. 205).

The identity of the murderer is a mystery (B, pp. 212-18), and though Toto's jealous lover, Amar, is later accused, he is acquitted "due to lack of direct evidence" (B, p. 228). The truth of the mystery is later revealed by Clea to Darley (B, pp. 228-33), and she identifies the murderer as Narouz. By collating the information which Clea provides with other information known about Narouz, a glimpse into Narouz's intentions and feelings throughout the evening may be reconstructed, although the reader is not present at the exact moment of the murder itself.

Narouz comes to Carnival, not to participate in the merrymaking or the drunken license which Carnival offers, but for the sole reason of hoping to accidentally encounter Clea, with hopes that the dark hooded cape will provide a covering for his ugliness and make him a mysterious and acceptable lover to her. Narouz's passion for Clea is an absolute secret; he has never even spoken to her, only seen her twice "when she came down with Nessim to ride on the estate." Narouz's hope of meeting Clea during Carnival is futile, for "Clea loathed the carnival season and spent the time quietly drawing and reading in her studio" (B, pp. 94-95). As Narouz enters the city, he is approached by prostitutes, but avoids them, "thinking suddenly of Clea" (B, p. 194). The pathetic, unexpressed desire for Clea is described as central to Narouz's

fantasy life, forming a significant part of his psychic self, as he is described as "living upon the attenuated wraith of this fond hope as a soldier upon an iron ration" (B, p. 196).

At Nessim's house, Narouz sees Toto and dismisses him as "an old lady's lap-dog," but evidences no greater hostility towards Toto (B, p. 195). Toto, presumably seeking to have adventures in Justine's name, later approaches Narouz, who, believing himself to be sexually solicited by his brother's wife, Justine, plunges the hat pin from Pombal's hat into Toto's head. How Narouz had the hat pin is unexplained. The spontaneity of the act is so typical of Narouz when horrified or angered that one can assume that, if the hat pin were in Narouz's hand, Narouz could have meant to strike a blow, and unthinkingly struck with a weapon. Narouz describes the action to Clea: "I swear I did not mean to do it. It happened before I could think. She put her hand upon me, Clea, she made advances to me. Horrible. Nessim's own wife" (B, p. 230). Asking Narouz to elaborate, Clea is only told, "It is not for you to hear" (B, p. 232). Having committed the murder, Narouz rushes to Clea's house, thinking he has killed Justine.

Narouz's immediate movement towards Clea after the murder is a direct outgrowth both of Narouz's intent in coming to Carnival and of the centrality of his unexpressed

love for Clea in his own psyche. "I have come to tell you that I love you because I have killed Justine" (B, p. 230), Narouz proclaims to Clea, uniting in a sentence love and murder, the light and the dark; Narouz's brutal act enables or compels him to proclaim his love; the dark act necessitates or perversely gives courage for the bright one. "I only came to tell you I loved you before giving myself up to my brother," Narouz tells Clea (B, p. 231). Clea calls the Cervonis' house to confirm Narouz's story, but finds that Justine has not been murdered, and Justine speaks on the telephone to Narouz to assure him of that fact (B, pp. 231-32). "Perhaps you have imagined the whole thing," Clea suggests (B, p. 233).

But Narouz's mind has largely left the murder and the previous events of the evening. At Clea's flat, Narouz is dominated by the delight of being in the presence of his love. "It is better at last," Narouz says, having downed two glasses of cognac; "So this is where you live. I have wanted to see it for years. I have been imagining it all" (B, p. 231). Via darkness Narouz has entered the bright realm, the realm of Clea, and only sentences before I described Narouz's hope of seeing Clea at Carnival as "futile"; the unexpected murder has brought Narouz this unexpected gift.

To Clea's "intense embarrassment and disgust, he began to talk of his love for me, but in the tone of a

man talking to himself." To Clea, Narouz is a "great brown toad," a "story-book troglodyte" (B, p. 232). As Narouz leaves, "he tried once more to express his incoherent gratitude and affection. He seized my hands and kissed them repeatedly with great wet hairy kisses." Narouz tells Clea, "Clea, this is the happiest day of my life, to have seen and touched you and to have seen your little room" (B, p. 233). Yet for Narouz's plight, Clea can "not feel the slightest stirring of sympathy within my heart" (B, p. 232), an uncustomary harshness reflecting Clea's participation in the dark and harmful aspects of life. Like the formation of his body, Narouz's love will never be completed; all he is allowed is an expression of the desire which symbolizes the inherent desire to grow and be fulfilled. Narouz leaves Clea's apartment, never seeks to know whom he killed, if anyone, and retires from Alexandria to the country.

But Narouz's story is not over in the Quartet. Within a few days of Toto's murder, Pursewarden commits suicide, leaving a letter for Mountolive revealing the participation of Nessim in the conspiracy to smuggle guns to Palestine. As a British diplomat, Mountolive cannot control the actions of Egyptian subjects and must work through the Egyptian government, specifically the powerful Minister of the Interior named Memlik Pasha, a man noted for corruption and brutality (M, pp. 253-58). Associated with



"a fanatical zeal of observance" in religion, "Memlik had established almost a court-form for the reception of bribes," which consisted of the petitioner's interleaving "a particularly cherished copy of the Holy Book with notes or other types of currency," which book Memlik would examine in private, accepting books for granted pleas and returning books where the petition failed, in either case keeping the money (M, p. 258).

Nessim approaches Memlik in such a manner in order to delay the Egyptian investigation of Nessim's affairs, and for a time the procedure is successful. When Memlik realizes that he must act soon or face a scandal caused by the pressuring British, Memlik is led by his affectionate barber to consider a method by which the conspiracy may be blamed, not upon Nessim, whose money appeals to Memlik, but upon Narouz, whose farm land has less appeal (M, pp. 272-74). "So now they are going to turn on Narouz. What a muddle of conflicting policies and diversions," says Mountolive to himself when he hears of Memlik's theory. Mountolive "sank despairingly into a chair and frowned at his own fingers for a long moment before pouring himself out another cup of tea" (M, p. 297).

Narouz has become an attractive target for Memlik's plot, for Narouz's combination of fanatical nationalism with religious fervor is troubling the conspirators associated with Nessim (M, p. 218). When Nessim, unaware

of Memlik's plot, approaches Narouz to warn him of the dangers raised by Narouz's too ardent patriotism, Nessim finds Narouz drunk and slaughtering bats with his whip. Nessim approaches the country estate at sunset and gazes "upwards into the darkening sky" as he sees Narouz, "the cloaked figure which stood at the top of the staircase in silhouette, with the long whip coiled at its side." After Nessim's "eyes had become accustomed to the dusk," Nessim sees "that the courtyard was full of the bodies of bats, like fragments of torn umbrella, some fluttering and crawling in puddles of their own blood, some lying still and torn up" (M, p. 222). As "a bat ripped across the light," Nessim sees "Narouz' arm swing with an involuntary motion and then fall to the side again." As a servant sweeps "up the fragments of fluttering bodies," the number of dead bats is counted as thirteen (M, p. 223). Near Narouz "stood a half-empty bottle of gin." "'You have been drinking,'" Nessim says, "quietly but with a profound ringing disgust. 'Narouz, this is new for you'" (M, p. 224). Nessim attempts a reasoning conversation to caution Narouz about his religious and political speechmaking, but Narouz is uncooperative. "'Drunkard' hissed Nessim helplessly. Narouz' eyes flashed. He gave a single jarring laugh" (M, p. 226). Nessim appeals to family loyalty; Narouz proclaims that Nessim "sold our mother" to Mountolive, knowing "it would cause our

father's death" (M, p. 227), an absurd accusation. Nessim departs, frightened at future events, fearing Narouz's death, a death which is forthcoming and provides the subject for the last chapter of Mountolive.

"The day of his death" occurs in "winter" (M, p. 300). Narouz's condition has worsened: "He felt cut off, in a different world." His severance from the bright world has been anticipated by the failure of his love with Clea. "If he thought at all of his love for Clea it was for a love left now like some shining coin, forgotten in a beggar's pocket" (M, p. 302). Denied proper growth, Narouz has festered in a growing darkness. The dying Narouz is found by Nessim and Balthazar on the farmlands. Narouz "was lying on the grass underneath the nubk tree with his head and neck supported by it, an angle which cocked his face forward so that he appeared to be studying the pistol-wounds in his own body. His eyes alone were movable, but they could only reach up to the knees of his rescuers" (M, p. 307). Nessim and Balthazar gaze "down upon the shaggy and powerful body on which the blue and bloodless bullet-holes had sunk like knots in an oak." "Narouz said in a small peevish voice--the voice of a feverish child which can count on its illness for the indulgence it seeks--something unexpected. 'I want to see Clea.' It ran smoothly off his tongue, as if he had been rehearsing the one phrase in his mind for

centuries" (M, p. 308). Approaching death, Narouz does not discuss nationalism, patriotism, religion, or the sins of Nessim against his father; approaching death, Narouz wants Clea, the symbol of the fulfilled life he was not to have. Even in death, Narouz's desire will remain unfulfilled, for though Clea unsympathetically agrees to come (M, p. 309), she is prevented by nature itself, for "a part of the road had been washed away by a broken dyke" (M, p. 312).

"Narouz began to feel the tuggings of the Underworld, the five wild dogs of the sense pulling ever more heavily upon the leash. He opposed to them the forces of his mighty will, playing for time, waiting for the only human revelation he could expect--voice and odour of a girl who had become embalmed by his senses, entombed like some precious image" (M, pp. 311-12).

So it went for a while. Then lastly there burst from the hairy throat of the dying man a single tremendous word, the name of Clea, uttered in the cavernous voice of a wounded lion: a voice which combined anger, reproof and an overwhelming sadness in its sudden roar. So nude a word, her name, as simple as "God" or "Mother"--yet it sounded as if upon the lips of some dying conqueror, some lost king, conscious of the body and breath dissolving within him. The name of Clea sounded through the whole house, drenched by the splendour of his anguish, silencing the little knots of whispering servants and visitors, setting back the ears of the hunting dogs, making them crouch and fawn: ringing in Nessim's mind with a new and terrifying bitterness too deep for tears.  
(M, pp. 312-13)

In his death, Narouz's entire thought is upon Clea, or in the language of this dissertation, upon the growth that was denied him. He cries to Clea as to the creator of his being, "God" or "Mother," accusing the life process itself of having cheated him, in a voice filled with "anger" and "reproof," summarized as "an overwhelming sadness." The cause of suffering and the bearer of suffering, Narouz is an example of the growth process gone awry, grown too dark, with incompleteness as its distinguishing characteristic: a body incomplete, a destiny (as a religious leader) thwarted, and nature's fulfillment via love denied him. The novel Mountolive concludes with Narouz's funeral rites.

But although Narouz's life is over, Narouz's story is not yet complete. In Clea, in the spring, after Darley has returned to Alexandria and become Clea's lover, Clea reveals that Scobie had uttered a prophecy about Narouz. Scobie said that a man would try to drag Clea "down into the grave with him" (C, p. 206). Clea says Scobie "added a description of someone who suggested to me Nessim's brother." Clea adds that Scobie said, "His lips are split here, and I see him covered in little wounds, lying on a table. There is a lake outside. He has made up his mind. He will try and drag you to him. You will be in a dark place, imprisoned, unable to resist him. Yes, there is one near at hand who might aid you if he

could. But he will not be strong enough" (C, p. 207). Later in the summer, Scobie's prophecy is partially fulfilled in the wounding of Clea, a wounding which occurs at Narouz's island, identified by a "deep rock-pool with a wreck." "It was Clea who first discovered the little island of Narouz," Darley writes (C, p. 224). At the island Clea reveals that Nessim had given her Narouz's harpoon-gun, which "had been made to specifications for him in Germany" (C, p. 225). This gun is the one that Balthazar drops, releasing the harpoon which pins Clea's hand to a sunken ship, necessitating Darley's saving her life by cutting off her hand, and also partially fulfilling Scobie's prophecy, for Clea is held underwater by a tool associated with Narouz "in a dark place, imprisoned, unable to resist." Fortunately Darley finds in himself a new man of action and proves false that portion of the prophecy which says the one "who might aid you . . . will not be strong enough." Since the wound results in Clea's acquisition of the artificial hand to which she attributes her new power to paint more effectively, and since by "the Hand" I take her to mean the entire event of the wounding as well as the cure, we can see in the wounding of Clea the more familiar theme of growth by wounds. In a sense then, the principles of darkness and wounding associated with Narouz enable Clea to become fulfilled herself. Thus Clea's growth offers a more positive

if poetic completion to Narouz's unfulfilled life and the principles Narouz represents. The love Narouz bore Clea, which so disgusted her in life, comes to be a portion of the means by which she is enabled to become "a real human being, an artist at last." Between the two loves of Darley, the Quartet's central symbol of the bright principles of growth, and Narouz, the Quartet's central symbol of the dark principles of growth, Clea's own maturation is significantly furthered.

This theme of growth seen in Clea's wounding is more representative of the Quartet's world view than the bare story of Narouz's life, which for practical purposes is confined to the two books Balthazar and Mountolive. In a re-examination of the characters associated with evil mentioned in this chapter, the theme of growth becomes clearly dominant. Darley is cruel to Melissa and suffers at the hands of Justine, but that Darley grows to psychic and artistic maturity is clearly shown in the Quartet. Capodistria's story specifically shows growth; he moves directly from a dark unsatisfactory life to a life nourished by an understanding of the dark principles of growth. Justine, although Darley rejects her, insists that she has helped as well as harmed her lovers, and Darley's story supports this conclusion. Further, Justine herself is freed from the compulsions which largely cause the harm, as will be shown in my fourth

chapter, and at the Quartet's conclusion Justine confides to Clea that she and Nessim are engaged in "something much bigger this time, international," a "break through" which makes Justine "so happy" and evidences growth (C, p. 281). Pursewarden's use of destructive principles in his relationship with Justine proves beneficial to Justine as my fourth chapter will detail, and the beneficial consequences of Pursewarden's suicide will be discussed in my fifth chapter. Scobie, whose perversion hurts primarily only himself, is elevated, through one of the most humorous ironies in the Quartet, to the status of sainthood because his house is revealed to have once been the shrine of El Yacoub, with whom Scobie is combined in the nomer El Scob by the neighborhood, a mythology accepted by the city (C, pp. 79-85). The clergy, for instance, "behave as if they thought [El Scob] was really El Yacoub in a local pronunciation" (C, p. 83). As one of the local saints, Scobie or El Scob is credited with miraculous powers. Balthazar moves away from his destructive intellectual detachment as he grows to respect the flesh or the heart, and now instead of attacking Darley's writing, Balthazar seeks to encourage it (C, pp. 67-73). Even Memlik Pasha, at the Quartet's conclusion, is being led by Justine "like a poodle" because, Justine reveals, "He wants to move in social circles in Alexandria and meet a lot of white women!"



(C, p. 281). Given the association of sex with growth, one may suspect that Memlik, like Capodistria, may turn from a path dedicated to darkness and begin to pursue light, and further that Memlik's true orientation is towards growth rather than towards avarice and cruelty. Only in Narouz's story does darkness seem dominant and without redemption, and if one allows the poetic balance of Clea's wound to serve as good coming from Narouz, then even Narouz's story does not deny the Quartet's broader theme of growth. In any case, Narouz has been shown in this chapter to desire good and growth as symbolized by his love for Clea, and Narouz's failure to effect good has been associated with his bad fate rather than his bad will.

The only other blatant exemplification of evil in the Quartet is the occurrence of the Second World War. I assume that the war is symbolically represented in part by the opposing camps of the conspirators and the diplomats, and that in their essentially good intents is to be suggested the idea that war is a broad-scale result of conflicting growths, associated with the dark principles. In Mountolive Durrell describes war as a "nation-wide exercise in political diabolism" (M, p. 81), and refers to soldiers as "servants of an iron will which exhibits itself in the mailed mask of duty" (M, p. 217). In Clea Darley regrets the "wretched windy words which

war so easily breeds" (C, p. 21). Nonetheless in Clea are also provided theories about the helpfulness of war. One character theorizes that "the desire for war was first lodged in the instincts . . . in order to lodge death in the actual present. Purely helpfully, if you see what I mean!" (C, p. 183). War helps heighten awareness of death, which in turn helps heighten appreciation of life. Darley writes, "If the war did not mean a way of dying, it meant a way of ageing, of tasting the true staleness in human things, and of learning to confront change bravely" (C, p. 106). Inasmuch as war helps reveal insight about death, I delay further quotations about war until my fifth chapter, in which I discuss death's general purpose in the growth process in relation to Pursewarden's suicide. I only mean to suggest here that even war has a utilitarian purpose related to the broader process of growth.

To summarize, I have discussed Durrell's theory that suffering or pain is one of the poles orienting the being towards living, and that this orientation is evidenced in the Quartet by the manner in which the Quartet's characters often utilize their suffering to further their growth. In the individual life, both the bright and dark principles are likely to be manifested. As a part of the dark principles, manifestations of evil or harm are inevitable; people suffer, and people cause others to

suffer. In Durrell's world view, human evil, or the harm one individual causes another, is not associated with a malicious will but with unnatural or misguided growth, and is only a portion of the manifestation of the dark principles, broadly seen to be a part of a process which cultivates and nourishes growth. Thus, even in people associated with evil, is seen the psychological orientation towards growth.

Perhaps one could argue that the degree of evil present in any individual is related to the individual's unsuccessful incorporation of suffering. Mnemjian, for example, Narouz's ugly double, is a hunchback and sexually promiscuous, and both these traits are associated with dark aspects of the growth process. But unlike Narouz, Mnemjian appears to be relatively happy and enjoying a simple and good life despite his deformity and sexual light-heartedness. In fact his deformity seems to attract women, and thus the promiscuity in Mnemjian's case seems almost a boon, a reward for his acceptance of his burden. Mnemjian appears only briefly in the Quartet. He is a barber, and his barbershop is a place where the men in the Quartet frequently gather in the morning for shaves (2, pp. 36-37). At the Quartet's conclusion, it is Mnemjian who brings Darley the message from Nessim, requesting Darley's return to Alexandria, presumably to bring the child. Mnemjian arrives on Darley's island

with "a flower in his lapel, a perfumed handkerchief in his sleeve!" (C, p. 15). In regard to the dark principles of war, Mnemjian actually benefits from the war, which in shaving is "good business" (C, p. 18). Thus, in a sense, Mnemjian like Clea utilizes suffering to further growth, derives from evil as it were the best advantage to which it could be put. Growth is represented in Mnemjian by the fact that in Clea he has recently married (C, p. 17). Although the idea that a successful incorporation of suffering makes for less destructive growth cannot be demonstrated absolutely in the Quartet, nonetheless the thesis does gain support from my next chapter, in which I show that Justine's failure to accept a dark experience frustrates her own growth.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The scholarship I have read treats Durrell's theory of evil in brief comments such as Fraser's statement that Durrell "has to see evil as a dark and puzzling aspect of a cosmic unity which ultimately has to be accepted as good, or as beyond good and evil." G. S. Fraser, Lawrence Durrell: A Critical Study (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), p. 163.

## CHAPTER IV

### JUSTINE'S GUILT

Instead of "Justine's Guilt," I could have titled this chapter "Justine's Unhappiness," "Justine's Mental Illness," or "Justine's Neurosis" because these subjects are so interrelated in the Quartet that to talk about one is to talk about all. The subject for discussion is the frustration of growth in Justine's emotions. Justine is beautiful, intelligent, and has in Nessim an attractive, sensitive, and powerful husband. Through him and the conspiracy, Justine participates in power herself. She also has two attractive lovers, Pursewarden and Darley, for much of the time we view her. Nonetheless Justine's life is marked by psychological unhappiness, a restless dissatisfaction, which, even independently of political plots, tends to express itself as nymphomania. However, because in the course of the Quartet Justine is cured of her unhappiness, the story of Justine's guilt is actually a maturation story. Justine's story is useful in this dissertation in making clearer that the growth orientation is largely directed towards a healthy assimilation of experience; in other words, the growth orientation best expresses itself by utilizing both dark and bright experiences.

In this chapter I discuss Durrell's theory that guilt not merited by bad behavior is a feeling of psychological discomfort associated with the inhibition of growth. I preface my discussion of this topic with a brief analysis of merited guilt or regret for bad behavior and then turn to the subject of unmerited guilt, almost entirely presented in relation to Justine and her compulsive and guilty desire to have many lovers, a desire associated with her having been raped as a child by Capodistria. I begin my discussion of Justine's guilt with a consideration of her relationship with Arnauti, her first husband, and her unsuccessful psychoanalytic treatment by Freud. I then consider the repressive and restrictive nature of society and religious injunctions as contributory factors to Justine's guilt. I finally trace the resolution of Justine's compulsion in her relationship with Pursewarden, by her admission of an essential delight in having experiences which to her are undesirable.

Guilt is a minor topic in The Alexandria Quartet. Various characters display what I call merited guilt or regret for bad behavior at different times. In Balthazar, in recalling the pathetic story of Melissa, Darley writes that "the memory of those days haunts me afresh, torments me with guilts," and observes "that I was not alone in feeling such guilt," citing Clea as feeling "the guilt of the wound we were all of us causing

Melissa," and Pursewarden as one who "must have been feeling guilty," for in his will Pursewarden left Darley money "with the express request that it should be spent with Melissa" (B, p. 134). On his deathbed, Cohen, Melissa's older lover, who was involved in Nessim's conspiracy, expresses to Darley regrets for Cohen's mistreatment of Melissa: "I cheated her over her coat. It was really sealskin. . . . When she was ill I would not pay for her to see the doctor. Small things, but they weigh heavy" (J, pp. 107-8). In Justine, Darley refers to his relationship with Justine as "an attachment for which we felt guilty" because of the deception Darley believes is being practised on Nessim (J, p. 134). In Mountolive, after his quarrel with Narouz, Nessim knows that "in the heart of his rage there was also guilt; he felt unclean, as if he had debauched himself in this unexpected battle with one of his own kin" (M, p. 229). And in Clea, when Darley visits Justine for the last time, Justine tells him, "I used, in my moments of guilt long afterwards, to try and imagine that we might one day become lovers again, on a new basis. What a farce! I pictured myself making it up to you, expiating my deceit, repaying my debt" (C, p. 55). Thus in the Quartet, different characters at times express real, merited guilt over bad behavior towards other human beings. But in such



passages there is no real examination of guilt as a theme; rather the references to guilt are to a known and familiar object like pain or a rock, not requiring elaboration.

The subject of unmerited guilt or feelings of remorse not associated with bad behavior is the more detailed subject in the Quartet, and the subject is usually brought up in relation to Justine's compulsive behavior associated with her childhood rape by Capodistria. In introducing the reader to his affair with Justine in Justine, Darley attempts to provide background material to help explain and characterize his lover. "Nobody," Darley writes, "knew all about her with any certainty," and "it was fruitless to question Justine too closely" about "her age, her origins" (J, p. 61).

Much of the information Darley presents to the reader in regard to Justine's life prior to her relationship with Darley comes from a novel titled Moeurs ("manners," "customs," "behavior") by Jacob Arnauti, Justine's first husband. Arnauti's book contains a "portrait of a young Jewess he meets and marries: takes to Europe: divorces," a portrait commonly acknowledged in Alexandria to be based on Justine. Darley sees in this portrait of "Claudia" "a younger, a more disoriented Justine, to be sure. But unmistakable" (J, p. 64).

In Justine Darley quotes long passages from Arnauti's novel, such as the following one in which

a thumbnail sketch Justine's behavior and psychology is presented. Arnauti writes,

Of her origins I learned little, save that she had been very poor. She gave me the impression of someone engaged in giving a series of savage caricatures of herself--but this is common to most lonely people who feel that their true self can find no correspondence in another. The speed with which she moved from one milieu to another, from one man, place, date to another, was staggering. . . . The more I knew her the less predictable she seemed; the only constant was this frantic struggle to break through the barrier of her autism. And every action ended in error, guilt, repentance. How often I remember--"Darling, this time it will be different, I promise you." (J, pp. 67-68)

In Moeurs, Arnauti includes a description in which Justine characterizes herself:

I hunt everywhere for a life that is worth living. Perhaps if I could die or go mad it would provide a focus for all the feelings I have which find no proper outlet. The doctor I loved told me I was a nymphomaniac--but there is no gluttony or self-indulgence in my pleasure, Jacob. It is purely wasted from that point of view. The waste, my dear, the waste! You speak of taking pleasure sadly, like the puritans do. Even there you are unjust to me. I take it tragically, and if my medical friends want a compound word to describe the heartless creature I seem, why they will have to admit that what I lack of heart I make up in soul. That is where the trouble lies. (J, p. 68)

Arnauti himself characterizes Justine's problem as

a check--some great impediment of feeling which I became aware of only after many months. It rose up between us like a shadow and I recognized, or thought I did, the true enemy of the happiness which we longed to share and from which we felt ourselves somehow excluded. What was it?

She told me one night as we lay in that ugly great bed in a rented room. . . . She told me

and left me raging with a jealousy I struggled to hide--but a jealousy of an entirely novel sort. Its object was a man who though still alive, no longer existed. It is perhaps what the Freudians would call a screen-memory of incidents in her earliest youth. She had (and there was no mistaking the force of this confession for it was accompanied by floods of tears, and I have never seen her weep like that before or since): she had been raped by one of her relations. One cannot help smiling at the commonplaceness of the thought. It was impossible to judge at what age. Nevertheless--and here I thought I had penetrated to the heart of The Check: from this time forward she could obtain no satisfaction in love unless she mentally recreated these incidents and re-enacted them. For her we, her lovers, had become only mental substitutes for this first childish act--so that love, as a sort of masturbation, took on all the colours of neurasthenia; she was suffering from an imagination dying of anaemia, for she could possess no one thoroughly in the flesh. (J, pp. 78-79)

Given this understanding, Arnauti writes that "something else followed: if I could break The Check I could possess her truly, as no man had possessed her" (J, p. 79). Because, Arnauti writes, "I knew as much as could be known of the psychopathology of hysteria at that time" (J, p. 70), Arnauti takes Justine from Alexandria to Europe to see Freud (J, p. 81), "the famous mandarin of psychology" (J, p. 79); Freud is also apparently called "Magnani" (J, pp. 81-83) for a reason I do not understand. Arnauti writes that "Freud . . . hunted with all the great might of his loving detachment" for the name of the man who had raped Justine, saying "over and over again: 'Tell me his

name; you must tell me his name,'" to which Justine repeatedly answers, "I cannot remember. I cannot remember" (J, p. 81).

The undetailed treatment is unsuccessful, Justine's nymphomania and unhappiness continue, and Arnauti and Justine return to Egypt. Arnauti writes,

I was still in correspondence with Magnani and tried to collect as much evidence as possible which might help him elucidate the mystery, but in vain. In the thorny jungle of guilty impulses which constitute the human psyche who can find a way--even when the subject wishes to co-operate? The time we wasted upon futile researches into her likes and dislikes! . . . I remember a whole correspondence based upon the confession that she could not read the words "Washington D. C." on a letter without a pang of disgust! . . . Some of these doubts must also have afflicted old Magnani for I recall him writing: "and my dear boy we must never forget that this infant science we are working at, which seems so full of miracles and promises, is at best founded on much that is as shaky as astrology. After all, these important names we give to things! Nymphomania may be considered another form of virginity if you wish; and as for Justine, she may have never have been in love. Perhaps one day she will meet a man before whom all these tiresome chimeras will fade into innocence again. You must not rule this thought out." (J, pp. 82-83)

Arnauti looks back upon the psychoanalytic search as "a matter of deep regret . . . that I wasted this time when I should have been loving her as she deserved" (J, pp. 82-83). The relationship between Arnauti and Justine proves unsatisfactory, and they separate in divorce.

Although in a lecture entitled "Resistance and Repression," Freud writes, "You must not forget that

psychoanalysis is still a very young science,"<sup>1</sup> the remainder of the passage attributed to Magnani sounds very like the analysis of Justine's problem provided by other characters in the Quartet. Arnauti himself writes, "Perhaps we did wrong in speaking of it openly, of treating it as a problem, for this only invested her with a feeling of self-importance and moreover contributed a nervous hesitation to her which until then had been missing" (J, p. 81).

Arnauti recalls

those tiresome dramas--scenes in furnished bedrooms, with Justine turning on the taps to drown the noise of her own crying. . . . If I fell asleep she might become enraged and shake me by the shoulders, crying: "Get up, Jacob. I am suffering, can't you see?" When I declined to take a part in this charade, she would perhaps break something upon the dressing-table. . . . "I know exactly what this is," I told her once. "I expect that every time you are unfaithful to me and consumed by guilt you would like to provoke me to beat you up and give a sort of remission for your sins. My dear, I simply refuse to pander to your satisfactions. You must carry your own burdens. You are trying hard to get me to use a stockwhip on you. But I only pity you." This, I must confess, made her very thoughtful for a moment and involuntarily her hands strayed to touch the smooth surface of the legs she had so carefully shaved that afternoon.... (J, p. 69)

Darley writes that Arnauti in Moeurs "made the same judgments upon her character" that he and Nessim were later to also make of Justine (J, p. 77). Darley writes, "At times I was almost provoked like Arnauti, on a similar occasion, to shout: 'For the love of God,

stop this mania for unhappiness or it will bring us to disaster. You are exhausting our lives before we have a chance to live them'" (J, p. 133). Balthazar believes that Justine's "own conscience was by its nature and even without reason, a guilty one" (E, p. 128).

Clea observes that

The true whore is man's real darling--like Justine; she alone has the capacity to wound men. . . . It is our disease . . . to want to contain everything within the frame of reference of a psychology or a philosophy. After all Justine cannot be justified or excused. She simply and magnificently is; we have to put up with her, like original sin. But to call her a nymphomaniac or to try and Freudianise her, my dear, takes away all her mythical substance--the only thing she really is. Like all amoral people she verges on the Goddess. If our world were a world there would be temples to accommodate her where she would find the peace she was seeking. Temples where one could outgrow the sort of inheritance she has. . . . (J, p. 77)

Instead, Clea comments, "Justine's role has been taken from her and on her shoulders society has placed the burden of guilt to add to her troubles. It is a pity. For she is truly Alexandrian" (J, p. 77).

The societal burden of guilt is a theme associated in the Quartet with the restrictive and repressive nature of society, and I interrupt Justine's particular story to consider this restrictive nature of society. The subject is presented most fully in Mountolive, the novel of the Quartet dealing with the "World" and largely representing society. When Mountolive comes to Egypt

the first time and has his unexpected and spontaneous affair with Nessim's and Narouz's mother, Leila, Mountolive finds that "his English education hampered him at every step. He could not even feel happy without feeling guilty" (M, 31).

Mountolive "had been formally educated in England, educated not to wish to feel." Mountolive is a master "in codes of manners, forms of address towards the world. He had heard and read of passion, but had regarded it as something which would never impinge on him, and now here it was, bursting into the secret life which, like every overgrown schoolboy, lived on autonomously behind the indulgent screen of everyday manners and transactions, everyday talk and affections. The social man in him was overripe before the inner man had grown up" (M, p. 18). Mountolive is excited as he "began to feel himself really penetrating a foreign country, foreign moeurs, for the first time" (M, p. 22); and in Nessim, Mountolive "instantly recognized in him a person of his own kind, a person whose life was a code" (M, p. 26). Leila encourages Mountolive in the affair "which somehow seemed so innocent, so beyond reproach, that even his sense of guilt was almost lulled, and he began to drink in through her a new resolution and self-confidence" (M, p. 31). After Pursewarden commits suicide, Mountolive is deeply grieved, and one of his subordinates is "shocked to

surprise tears upon the cheek of his Chief. He ducked back tactfully and retreated hastily to his office, deeply shaken by a sense of diplomatic inappropriateness. . . . 'A good diplomat should never show feeling,' the subordinate thinks to himself (M, p. 186).

In the Quartet England and the English education are associated with guilt. Pursewarden confides to Mountolive that he is "always glad to get out of England to countries where I feel no moral responsibility" (M, p. 64). Pombal, a French diplomat, complains of the British, who fill rooms "with their sense of guilt!" (M, p. 159). Nessim too is an example of the stifling character of the rigid English education, for "Oxford . . . had only succeeded in developing his philosophical bent to the point where he was incapable of practising the art he most loved, painting" (J, p. 28). Thus when Nessim attempts to paint, "self-consciousness like a poison seemed to eat into the very paint, making it sluggish and dead. It was hard even to manipulate the brush with an invisible hand pulling at one's sleeve the whole time, hindering, whispering, displacing all freedom and fluidity of movement" (J, p. 160).

The rigid nature of society is not, however, limited to England. As the third-person narrator of Mountolive, Durrell complains of "the feeble dams set up by our fretful legislation and the typical self-reproaches of



the unpleasure-loving" (M, p. 287). Pursewarden in his journals complains, "Society! Let us complicate existence to the point of drudgery so that it acts as a drug against reality." Associating society with religion, Pursewarden speculates that "If once we could loosen up, relax the terrible grip of the so-called Kingdom of Heaven," of "the closed system" (C, p. 139), then "the infant Joy" (C, p. 140) could emerge and become "'joy unconfined.' How could joy be anything else?" (B, p. 239). Thus the psyche could reach its "original innocence--who invented the perversion of Original Sin, that filthy obscenity of the West?" (C, pp. 141-42).

Even in a more primitive state, society is characterized by rigidity and the lack of spontaneity. Thus when Nessim accompanies Narouz into the desert to meet a group of Arabian herdsmen, Nessim recognizes "the tight inbred Arab world--its formal courtesies and feuds--its primitiveness," and its "life-hating, unpleasure-loving strength" (B, p. 87). Here "a knowledge of forms only was necessary now, not insight, for these delightful desert folk were automata," and Nessim suddenly finds himself "thinking of Mountolive" (B, p. 88). In the working out of the war between the diplomats and the conspirators, Alexandrian society also becomes a monster dictating behavior. Thus in society's strictures and structures is to be seen a repression of behavior and

of spontaneity which has as one by-product unmerited guilt. Accordingly one effect of Carnival, where the rules are relaxed, is to provide also a freedom "from guilt" (B, p. 192).

Justine's guilt is removed by coaching from Pursewarden during their affair, which is terminated by his suicide. Pursewarden's assessment of Justine's problem is similar to Clea's. Pursewarden confides to Balthazar, "As for Justine . . . I regard her as a tiresome old sexual turnstile through which presumably we must all pass--a somewhat vulpine Alexandrian Venus. By God, what a woman she would be if she were really natural and felt no guilt! Her behaviour would commend her to the Pantheon--but one cannot send her up there with . . . a bundle of Old Testament ravings" (B, p. 115). In his journals Pursewarden writes that Justine's "compulsion to exteriorise hysteria, reminded me of a feverish patient plucking at a sheet! The violent necessity to incriminate life, to explain her soul-states, reminded me of a mendicant soliciting pity by a nice exhibition of sores" (C, p. 144). Pursewarden, like Clea, is not so concerned about Justine's sexual activity as with the guilt associated with her behavior, her unhappiness rather than her infidelities.

And Pursewarden is the means by which Justine is "reconciled . . . to that whole business of the rape."

When Darley returns to Alexandria in Clea and sees Justine again, Justine confides to Darley Pursewarden's influence:

All that nonsense of Arnauti's in Moeurs, all those psychologists! His [Pursewarden's] single observation stuck like a thorn. He said: "Clearly you enjoyed it, as any child would, and probably even invited it. You have wasted all this time trying to come to terms with an imaginary conception of damage done to you. Try dropping this invented guilt and [begin?] telling yourself that the thing was both pleasurable and meaningless. Every neurosis is made to measure!" It was curious that a few words like this, and an ironic chuckle, could do what all the others could not do for me. Suddenly everything seemed to lift, get lighter, move about. Like cargo shifting in a vessel. I felt faint and rather sick, which puzzled me. Then later on a space slowly cleared. It was like feeling creeping back into a paralysed hand again.  
(C, p. 59)

Thus, by an admission of joy in experience, even in the dark experience of rape, which here is made less dark, Justine's "check" is removed, and she can now begin a proper growth.

This resolution provides the full story of Justine's guilt and allows a summary assessment of the failure of earlier attempts to help Justine and the reasons for Pursewarden's success. First, Justine's problem needs to be viewed as one of unhappiness and compulsive behavior rather than as one of nymphomania; as such the problem is one of frustrated or thwarted growth, of which the excessive sexuality is a symbol. Both Clea and Pursewarden suggest that Justine's sexual behavior could be guiltless and something that would change in a process

of growth were this process freed from the unnecessary burden of guilt, a burden which seems to derive from Justine's attitude towards experience, an attitude in which she cultivates unhappiness as symbolized by her cultivated guilt associated with her rape by Capodistria. This guilt is also encouraged by Justine's fate, including an inclination towards guilt, the societal condemnation of sexual activity, and the complaints of her lovers.

As a problem of growth, Justine's unhappiness is treated by Arnauti and Freud, in the language and philosophy of the Quartet, with inherently wrong principles. In my third chapter I mentioned in relation to the character of Balthazar the destructive nature of the detached intellect which insensitively meddles with life. In her diaries, Justine describes Arnauti's room, where there is

A huge litter of newspapers with holes in them, as if a horde of mice had been feasting in them--A's cuttings from "real life" as he called it, the abstraction which he felt to be so remote from his own. He would sit down to his newspapers as if to a meal in a patched dressing-gown and velvet slippers, snipping away with a pair of blunt nail-scissors. He puzzled over "reality" in the world outside his work like a child; it was presumably a place where people could be happy, laugh, bear children. (J, p. 76)

Arnauti turns to Freud to resolve Justine's problem because Freud is a detached student of the mind, and Freud's intellectual approach mirrors Arnauti's or Balthazar's in seeking the meaning of reality only through rational faculties.

But when Pursewarden refuses to cooperate with Justine's cultivation of unhappiness and speaks to the spontaneous aspect of her psyche which seeks growth, he is able to resolve Justine's illness. Within the framework of the Quartet, the effectiveness of such a resolution seems consistent with the broad theme of growth. Even where guilt is merited, the Quartet's characters usually do not allow guilt to thwart growth. Thus Clea, after an abortion which also symbolizes the end of a relationship, comments that aside from the abortion, "I had nothing to regret. I had been immeasurably grown-up by the experience. I was full of gratitude, and still am" (C, p. 112). So too Darley, although feeling guilty about his treatment of Melissa, does not bog down in grief and regret but moves forward. So too Capodistria, after his change of life, seeks nourishment and does not dwell on guilt.

Guilt is so minor a topic in the Quartet that Frederick Karl in a chapter on Durrell's Quartet complains that "all the main characters lack a sense of guilt." Referring to Clea's attitude towards the abortion, Karl suggests that "Any action appears suitable if it advances her notion of maturity, if it has some effect upon her."<sup>2</sup> I disagree with Karl that the characters lack a sense of guilt, but I certainly agree that, in the world of the Quartet, growth or

the "notion of maturity" tends to excuse behavior, for in the Quartet it seems to me that growth ultimately justifies (utilizes) any experience when the growth orientation is gratified, and accordingly, when Durrell's characters believe they are growing, they are happier than when they feel stagnant.

In the Quartet, earned or unearned guilt is poor experience upon which to dwell. To compound unpleasant experience with later guilt and self-frustrating behavior is only to add unhappiness to unhappiness. The process of growth continues in any case; the question is whether the growth-oriented self will be allowed to delight in the process of growth or whether the self will, sadly, cherish guilt and diverse other forms of mental unhappiness as central experience. The process of growth will manifest itself whatever personal orientation the individual chooses to regard as central. As for the Quartet's orientation, clearly Durrell prefers delight in growth to regret for life's darker experiences, even in extreme cases such as the rape of Justine.

In the Quartet, then, guilt appears to be either understandable regret for bad behavior or psychological discomfort associated with an unnecessary repression of growth, often encouraged by a societally favored restriction of behavior and repression of spontaneity,

often associated with the joy of sexuality. Ironically, despite the fact that Pursewarden is able to free Justine from guilt, Pursewarden himself also has a frustration in growth associated with guilt, but Pursewarden's story is unique and so complex that I have delayed consideration of Pursewarden's guilt until my next chapter, in which I discuss the theme of death, the character of Pursewarden, and the psychology of self that Pursewarden's death implies.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Sigmund Freud, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, translated from the German by Joan Riviere (New York: Pocket Books, 1972), p. 309.

<sup>2</sup>Karl, p. 53.



## CHAPTER V

### PURSEWARDEN'S DEATH

One might expect a strong antagonism towards death to be present in Durrell's characters, given their psychological orientation towards growth. Such, however, is not the case; death in the Quartet is seen to be the natural resolution of the growth process. Implied in the Quartet is the theory that acceptance of personal death is a necessary step in the achievement of psychological maturation, and Durrell's characters often mature psychologically in association with symbolic encounters with death.

In this chapter I discuss Pursewarden's symbolic acceptance of death and his affirmation of death's presence in the growth process, as evidenced in his suicide. Further, insomuch as Pursewarden represents the idea of self in the Quartet, his character invites a summing up of the psychology Durrell presents, a summary in which I relate the psychological orientation towards growth to the idea of the variable psyche. Thus in this chapter I consider Durrell's theory that death is the growth process's natural resolution and that the psyche is essentially variable.

To begin this chapter, I note the literal and frequent presence of death in the Quartet, and I stress in the character of Scobie the natural and proper termination of life presented by death, and the effects of the human being on the living even after the individual's death. I then consider the importance of death as a theme in the Quartet, showing how awareness of death intensifies appreciation of life, and how the encounters with death symbolized by Capodistria's faked death and the wounding of Clea contribute to furthering the individual's growth.

The themes of death and self converge in Pursewarden's suicide, and I begin my discussion of his death by noting its self-willed nature has a poetic appropriateness, for Pursewarden is the Quartet's primary spokesman for self-autonomy. I then consider the diverse reasons offered for Pursewarden's suicide, finally revealing the now familiar orientation towards growth. I then discuss Pursewarden's character more fully, showing how as representative of the self he contains both bright and dark aspects of the growth process. I study Durrell's assertion of the essentially inexplicable nature of Pursewarden's character by a brief examination of his vague guilt, which Durrell never satisfactorily explains. Finally I note that the theory of the variable psyche is one of the major themes in the Quartet, and to this theory I relate the psychological orientation towards growth.

Death is an important presence in the Quartet, and death is consistently treated as a solemn subject. Probably the death described in most detail is the death of Narouz, discussed in my third chapter, but to my mind the most painful death is not the death of a person but of an animal:

A camel has collapsed from exhaustion in the street outside the house. It is too heavy to transport to the slaughter-house so a couple of men come with axes and cut it up there and then in the open street, alive. They hack through the white flesh--the poor creature looking ever more pained, more aristocratic, more puzzled as its legs are hacked off. Finally there is the head still alive, the eyes open, looking round. Not a scream of protest, not a struggle. The animal submits like a palm-tree. But for days afterwards the mud street is soaked in its blood and our bare feet are printed by the moisture.  
(J, p. 62)

This grim scene contains Durrell's central idea on death: it is the nature of the material world that living things grow old, lose their strength, lose their usefulness, and die, sometimes aided by another part of nature; and other times, as in Narouz's murder of Toto, death is premature.

Death may result from natural causes, as in the case of Cohen, Melissa's older lover, who participated in Nessim's conspiracy, and to whose death bed Darley goes when Melissa refuses to visit the dying man (J, pp. 103-12). Death can be accidental, as in the bad fate of Fosca, lover to the French diplomat Pombal;

Fosca's "unexpected--completely unmerited death" (C, p. 208) is the result of soldiers firing warning shots at the boat Fosca is in, and by chance hitting her (C, pp. 210-11). Death may be a meaningful loss to others, as the passing of Melissa wounds Darley, who goes to her death bed only to find a corpse with "enormous deafness and rigidity." Darley "sat down beside her on a chair to make a long study of her face, comparing it to all the other faces of Melissa which thronged my memory and had established their identity there. She bore no resemblance to any of them--and yet she set them off, concluded them. This white little face was the last term of a series. Beyond this point there was a locked door" (J, p. 238). Or death may be a more peripheral emotional matter, as in the case of Maskelyne, a military man mentioned in Mountolive, who in Clea is reported "killed in a desert sortie, but [Darley writes] this was a passing without echoes for me--so little substance had he ever had in my mind as a living personage" (C, p. 231). And of course, in the Quartet, death can be associated with personal growth, as in the death of Leila, mother of Nessim and Narouz; Nessim is "exhilarated by the news," and says that "her death has freed me in a curious sort of way. A new life is opening before me" (C, pp. 265-66).

Presumably to brighten this gloomy subject, to represent several ideas he associates with death, Durrell selects the ever-humorous Scobie. One of the first things Darley writes about Scobie is that "Scobie is getting on for seventy and still afraid to die; his one fear is that he will awake one morning and find himself lying dead. . . ." Accordingly, "when the watercarriers shriek under his window before dawn, waking him up . . . he dare not open his eyes . . . for fear they might open on the heavenly host or the cherubims hymning" (J, p. 120). The younger Darley writes that Scobie "reminds me of some ancient wedding-cake, waiting only for someone to lean forward and blow out the candles!" (J, p. 126). "Ripeness is all" (J, p. 125). Scobie is likely, even in current conversation, to drift off into "a cat-nap" (B, p. 33). "This appearance and disappearance into the simulacrum of death was somehow touching. These little visits paid to an eternity which he would soon be inhabiting" (B, p. 34). Darley's vision of the propriety of Scobie's leaving reality and entering eternity is reflective of the Quartet's ultimate judgment on the appropriateness of death in the growth process. Balthazar comments, "First the young, like vines, climb up the dull supports of their elders who feel their fingers on them, soft and tender; then the old climb down the lovely supporting bodies of the young into their proper deaths"

(B, p. 20). Scobie joins eternity one evening while being his influential self, having dressed up as a woman and been beaten to death by angry sailors.

The influence of the individual after death is seen in Scobie's influence on his friends, who have fun mimicking his tales, voice, and eccentricities of speech, as for example Clea does (C, pp. 85-86), Darley does (C, pp. 86-87), and a "policeman who had been one of the old man's [Scobie's] superiors in the Police Force" does so effectively that for a moment Darley thought that Scobie had "come to life" (C, p. 261). Scobie is remembered in association with his parrot, which Clea takes after his death. Balthazar asks Darley: "Do you think one's soul could enter the body of a green Amazon parrot to carry the memory of one forward a little way into Time? I would like to think so" (B, p. 175). Clea comments on the parrot's skilled imitation of Scobie that the parrot's

memory gradually wore out, like an old disc, and he seemed to do it less often and with less sureness of voice. It was like Scobie himself dying very gradually into silence: this is how I suppose one dies to one's friends and to the world, wearing out like an old dance tune or a memorable conversation with a philosopher under a cherry-tree. Being refunded into silence. And finally the bird itself went into a decline and died with its head under its wing. I was so sorry, yet so glad. (B, p. 242)

This gradual fading from memory or existence seems part of the nature of things, for Darley is shocked to realize in Clea that in his emotional present Melissa "had utterly vanished. The waters had simply closed over her head" (C, p. 40). Darley "had worn her out like an old pair of socks, and the utterness of this disappearance surprised and shocked me." Darley concludes that "Melissa had simply been one of the many costumes of love" (C, p. 41), or in other language of the Quartet, Melissa was simply part of a total experiential process, a process which seems to shift participants about with the ease of flexing muscles.

Yet this totality of experience has a continued existence, for as Darley later writes, "Somewhere, surely, the sum of these things will still exist" (C, p. 223). After his death, Scobie enjoys a "marvelous immortality" (C, p. 84) as the mystic saint El Scob, and Melissa has left behind a child, born of her relationship with Nessim. Death then is the conclusion of the process of growth associated with the physical nature of the body. Though there can be lingering spiritual effects as in the case of Scobie's parrot or sainthood, or a physical inheritance such as Melissa's child, even these things will pass away as part of a process which grows, reaches ripeness, and finally is

as "some ancient wedding cake, waiting only for someone to . . . blow out the candles."

As a destructive process, death is associated with the dark principles of growth, and Capodistria, the spokesman for the dark principles, is given the Quartet's description of the death of the cosmic growth process, which is presented through Balthazar in "Capodistria's exposition of the nature of the universe":

The world is a biological phenomenon which will only come to an end when every single man has had all the women, every woman all the men. Clearly this will take some time. Meanwhile there is nothing to do but to help forward the forces of nature by treading the grapes as hard as we can. As for an afterlife--what will it consist of but satiety? The play of shadows in Paradise--pretty hanoums flitting across the screens of memory, no longer desired, no longer desiring to be desired. Both at rest at last. But clearly it cannot be done all at once. Patience! (C, p. 70)

This passage implies that even the universe will eventually come to rest, or as Balthazar says of a love affair, "Then of course it came to an end, as everything does, even presumably life!" (C, p. 69). Darley wonders "for a moment" about Scobie's "ghost" (C, p. 79), but all the data in the Quartet point toward death being present as a literal phenomenon which terminates physical presence and contributes to the gradual fading of the person's influence on the living, though this lingering influence in diverse ways (Melissa's child, Scobie's sainthood, Narouz's harpoon-gun, Pursewarden's



bequest of money to Darley, and Pursewarden's bequest of wisdom contained in his journals) may be significant.

Turning from the literal presence of death in the Quartet to death's thematic significance, I find the Quartet's thematic assessment of death to be that "death always refreshes experience. . . . that is its function" (J, p. 118). During the war, Darley sees "that death (not even at hand, but in the air) sharpens kisses, adds unbearable poignance to every smile and handclasp," providing "a way of ageing, of tasting the true staleness in human things, and of learning to confront change bravely" (C, p. 106). Darley's and Clea's "kisses themselves became charged with the deliberate affirmation which can come only from the foreknowledge and presence of death" (C, p. 96).

A minor character in the Quartet, Johnny Keats, a journalist, speculates that "the desire for war was first lodged in the instincts as a biological shock-mechanism to precipitate a spiritual crisis which couldn't be done any other how in limited people. The less sensitive among us can hardly visualize death, far less live joyfully with it. So the powers that arranged things for us felt they must concretise it, in order to lodge death in the actual present. Purely helpfully, if you see what I mean!" (C, p. 183). As a witness of the battlefield, Keats says that "the

presence of death out there as a normal feature of life--only in full acceleration so to speak--has given me an inkling of Life Everlasting! And there was no other way I could have grasped it, damn it" (C, p. 183). Keats continues, "I look around that...battlefield at night, . . . and I say: 'All this had to be brought about so that poor Johnny Keats could grow into a man'" (C, p. 182). Keats concludes his speech on death and war and his personal maturation with the comment, "Life only has its full meaning to those who co-opt death!" (C, p. 183). Recalling how he and Clea united in kisses while the "whirlwind" of war raged outside, Darley writes, "It would have been good to die at any moment then, for love and death had somewhere joined hands" (C, p. 96).

When Clea discovers that near Narouz's little island, under the water, "There are dead men down there," and when Darley and Clea later learn that these are the bodies of seven Greek sailors buried at sea, Darley writes, "It will sound strange, perhaps, to describe how quickly we got used to these silent visitants of the pool. Within a matter of days we had accommodated them, accorded them a place of their own. We swam between them to reach the outer water, bowing ironically to their bent attentive heads. It was not to flout death--it was rather that they had become friendly and appropriate

symbols of the place, these patient, intent figures" (C, pp. 230-31). In the Quartet, in the "herd" of humanity, the presence of death may only release "the passions and profligacies which lie buried" (C, p. 104), but in more sensitive spirits such as Darley's and Clea's, death becomes an accepted and intensifying part of life.

Associated with the wounding of Clea is a gradual depression and fright on Clea's part which threatens the demise of her relationship with Darley (C, pp. 232-40). Clea falls "into silence and moroseness, became a nervous and woebegone version of her old self" (C, p. 235). She seemed to be "gnawed by secret fears" and regularly responds with "ill-temper or pique" to Darley's attempts to tease away "this disruptive anxiety" (C, p. 236). Darley realizes, "The poor creature was afraid!" (C, p. 240).

The lovers agree to part for a time, but the day before Darley's departure on a journey, Clea, Darley, and Balthazar go to Narouz's island, where Balthazar drops Narouz's harpoon-gun, resulting in the wounding of Clea described above. This wounding not only provides the means for Clea's becoming an artist, but also frees her from the depression which has burdened her life. After her wounding, Clea is in a hospital and tells Darley to go on with his journey, for, Clea says, "I shall

need a little time to come to myself now that at last I am free from the horror. That at least you have done for me--pushed me back into mid-stream again and driven off the dragon. It's gone and will never come back." Darley asks, "'Clea what exactly was the horror?' But she had closed her eyes and was fading softly into sleep. Her lips moved but I could not catch her answer. There was the faintest trace of a smile at the corners of her mouth" (C, pp. 256-57).

Since the site of Clea's wounding is associated with the dead bodies which are "friendly and appropriate symbols of the place," and since Clea's wounding is caused by the harpoon-gun associated with the dead Narouz, and since Clea is believed to be dead and only through Darley's application of artificial respiration does Clea survive, I speculate that Clea's "horror" is her largely unconscious fear of death, and her freedom from the "dragon" which is "gone and will never come back" is freedom from the fear of death. Unconscious fear of death is implied in the facts that the fear is never specified, and that the freedom from the snare is provided underwater (beneath the surface).

Whether or not fear of death is specifically represented by the horror, I suggest that the wounding symbolizes an encounter with death, and shows how movement from preoccupation with death symbolizes

psychological growth. The movement is the same sort of process which Darley undergoes in the course of the Quartet, moving from the "dead level of things" where he has "a real failure of the will to survive" to his confidence as an artist and human being, detailed in part in my second chapter. In Clea, the process is briefer, more intense, and more cruel, though both Darley and Clea achieve fulfillment at the Quartet's conclusion; in essence the same journey is made by each, the movement from death-preoccupation to life-preoccupation.

Although there are unelaborated ideas about death such as the one of Justine "that the dead think of us as dead" (J, p. 202) and diverse casual phrases such as "the fastidious and (yes, lucky) dead" (J, p. 37), the only other significant body of imagery and ideas about death is the use of death and rebirth as symbols for growth. Writing to Darley at the end of Balthazar, Clea comments that Alexandria "and all it symbolized is, if not dead, at least meaningless to the person I now feel myself to be. Perhaps you too have changed by the same token" (B, p. 243). In Clea, Balthazar refers to his own emotional growth as a "resurrection from the dead" (C, p. 72). In such a spirit I take Capodistria's faked death as symbolizing a dramatic change in his life, perhaps suggesting a symbolic psychological encounter with death as part of his growth, which is

furthered by the death of one environment and the birth of another as it were.

To summarize these initial thoughts on death, I conclude that death is a literal and important presence in the Quartet, which as an experienced event terminates life, and as an observed event intensifies appreciation of life. Fear of death is humorously observed in Scobie and painfully observed in Clea, but the proper psychological attitude appears to be the acceptance of death as a natural and proper part of the growth process.

Nonetheless, Pursewarden's open-armed welcome of death as implied by his suicide goes against the grain of the Quartet's psychology of growth. The symbolic appropriateness of the suicide is apparent in the fact that in the Quartet Pursewarden is largely a symbol for self, for a matured being, and he emphasizes in his view of life the quality of psychic-autonomy. Thus, where Darley is likely to point out the influence of landscape in human action, Pursewarden is given to stressing the effect of the human will, finding "every discord, . . . every calamity in the nature of man himself," the people around him being "the deliberate factors of their own unhappiness" (B, p. 141), a thesis he applies when curing Justine of her self-cultivated guilt. On evil Pursewarden writes without elaboration that "we refuse

to recognise in ourselves the horrible gargoyles which decorate the totem poles of our churches--murderers, liars, adulterers and so on" (C, p. 153). And in discussing God, Pursewarden writes that "If God were anything he would be an art," or a form of self-expression, and suggests that "God's real and subtle nature must be clear of distinctions: a glass of spring-water, tasteless, odourless, merely refreshing" (J, p. 140), or something purely itself. His most dramatic statement on the self is that "There is no Other; there is only oneself facing forever the problem of one's self discovery!" (C, p. 99).

This overstatement perhaps suggests a preoccupation with selfhood which in a world of Self and Other is not necessarily beneficial. In discussing the means of becoming an artist, Pursewarden confides to Darley, "You may be quite right to hang about like this, waiting. I was too proud. I felt I must take it by the horns, this vital question of my birthright. For me it was grounded in an act of will" (C, p. 154). Yet in Mountolive, where Darley as artist and self has all but disappeared, leaving behind the ways of nature, Pursewarden's death is the action which precipitates the circumstances in which conspirators and diplomats find themselves "the servants of the very forces which they had set in play" (M, p. 214).

They had embarked on a free exercise of the will only to find themselves shackled, bricked up by the historical process. And a single turn of the kaleidoscope had brought it about. Pursewarden! The writer who was so fond of saying "People will realize one day that it is only the artist who can make things really happen; that is why society should be founded upon him." A deus ex machina! In his dying he had used them both like...a public convenience, as if to demonstrate the truth of his own aphorism!  
(M, p. 216)

In the Quartet Pursewarden is a representative of both the power and the limitations of the self.

Pursewarden's enthusiasm for selfhood is demonstrated early in his life. His parents die when he is young, when he and his blind sister, Liza, "were almost too small to comprehend it" (C, p. 190). Liza later tells Darley that all she and Pursewarden

knew of our parents, the sum of our knowledge, was an old oak cupboard full of their clothes. They seemed enormous to us when we were small--the clothes of giants, the shoes of giants. One day he said they oppressed him, these clothes. We did not need parents. And we took them out into the yard and made a bonfire of them in the snow. We both wept bitterly, I do not know why. We danced round the bonfire singing an old hunting song with savage triumph and yet weeping.  
(C, pp. 191-92)

In this bonfire of his parents' possessions, Pursewarden asserts his independence and uniqueness as a self.

His enthusiasm for selfhood is further evidenced in his relationship with Liza, which becomes for a time a love



affair. This sexual relationship with Liza is the only satisfactory love affair Pursewarden is to have; for, although he later attempts marriage, Liza reveals that "He could not free himself from my inside hold on him, though he tried and struggled" (C, p. 170). In his life in Alexandria, Pursewarden has no regular sexual partner, and although he tells Darley that "the secret of my novelist's trade . . . is sex and plenty of it" (J, p. 116), he relies on the brothels to provide the sex he requires (B, p. 238). Pursewarden's love inasmuch as it is directed towards Liza is a perversion of the natural process of the celebration of the other by seeking out a partner, into a celebration of the self by seeking out as partner the female correspondent of himself, the woman who shares the same biological origin.

And finally, Pursewarden's character emphasizes the role of the self in death, for in his suicide the self not merely accepts but accomplishes death. Like most occurrences in the Quartet, Pursewarden's death is viewed from different perspectives. In Justine, the novel of sensuality and pleasure, Darley speculates that perhaps Pursewarden's success and fame as a novelist had proved unsatisfying, had "begun to bore him" (J, p. 115). Darley understands "that any artist should desire to end a life which he has exhausted" (J, p. 118).

On the night of Pursewarden's suicide, Darley is with him in the early evening; Pursewarden comments, "One needs a tremendous ignorance to approach God. I have always known too much I suppose" (J, p. 118).

Darley recalls that

as for Pursewarden, I remember, too, that in the very act of speaking thus about religious ignorance he straightened himself and caught sight of his pale reflection in the mirror. The glass was raised to his lips, and now, turning his head he squirted out upon his own glittering reflection a mouthful of the drink. That remains clearly in my mind; a reflection liquefying in the mirror of that shabby, expensive room which seems now so appropriate a place for the scene which must have followed later that night. (J, p. 119)

In Balthazar, where an emphasis is on the dark principles of the universe, Darley writes, "Was it consciousness of tragedy irremediable contained--not in the external world which we all blame--but in ourselves, in the human condition, which finally dictated his unexpected suicide in that musty hotel-room?" The knowledgeable Balthazar has no answer, and to Balthazar Pursewarden's "suicide has remained for me an extraordinary and quite inexplicable freak," which was "surprisingly out of character" (B, p. 141).

In Mountolive, the novel about the world, as the third person narrator, Durrell provides a worldly reason for the suicide. In his capacity as a minor official with the British embassy, Pursewarden has

been informed by Maskelyne, chief of the war office, of suspicions of Nessim's conspiracy, which suspicions Pursewarden has ridiculed. One night when Pursewarden sleeps with Melissa, she reveals that when alive her older lover, Cohen, had talked in his sleep about "helping to take arms into the Middle East, into Palestine, for Nessim Hosnani" (M, p. 178). On the night of his suicide Pursewarden writes a letter to Mountolive, implying a sense of failed honor compels him to prefer death. He writes, "I simply am not equal to facing the simpler moral implications raised by this discovery." "I'm tired, my dear chap; sick unto death, as the living say" (M, p. 184). But even the code-bound Mountolive finds this exclamation unsatisfactory, exclaiming, "Utter folly! Nobody kills himself for an official reason!" (M, p. 185).

In Clea Pursewarden's suicide is revealed to have the purpose of furthering growth. In Clea Darley visits Liza, Pursewarden's sister, and she attributes the suicide to the fear that Liza would be hindered in giving love fully to David Mountolive if Pursewarden were to remain living. Just as Pursewarden "could not free himself" from Liza, so she "could not free myself from him, though truthfully I never wished to until... the day arrived . . . that I had fallen in love, the fated love" (C, p. 170).

When Pursewarden receives Liza's letter telling him of her new love, Pursewarden later writes that he felt

joy--such joy as I never hoped to experience in my life--to think of you suddenly plunging into the full richness of life at last, no longer tied, manacled to the image of your tormented brother! Blessings tumbled from my lips. But then, gradually, as the cloud lifted and dispersed I felt the leaden tug of another truth, quite unforeseen, quite unexpected. The fear that, so long as I was still alive, still somewhere existing in the world, you would find it impossible truly to escape from the chains in which I have so cruelly held you all these years. At this fear my blood has turned chill--for I know that truthfully something much more definitive is required of me if you are ever to renounce me and start living. I must really abandon you, really remove myself from the scene in a manner which would permit no further equivocation in our vacillating hearts. Yes, I had anticipated the joy, but not that it would bring with it such a clear representation of certain death. This was a huge novelty! Yet it is the completest gift I can offer you as a wedding present! And if you look beyond the immediate pain you will see how perfect the logic of love seems to one who is ready to die for it. (C, p. 171)

To further Liza's growth, her "plunging into the full richness of life at last," Pursewarden is willing to sacrifice self in a celebration of the growth process, of "the logic of love."

At the time of this writing (1980), Durrell has published two volumes of a projected sequence of five novels, in which the theoretical or philosophical passages are conspicuously few, brief, and clear. In Monsieur (1975), the first volume, a Gnostic speaks of "the gnostic suicide" in a passage which I quote

here in order to clearly link the concept of suicide with the concept of acceptance of death. On suicide the Gnostic instructs his uninitiated audience thus: "You are forbidden to undertake an act of conscious self-destruction. Suicide in the active sense, a bullet in the mouth, that is not what is meant. Everything lies in the act of acceptance, to join finally the spiritual trust of the mature who have tasted the world to the full and wish to be purged of the physical envelope. They join the inner circle and make an act of acceptance--that is what constitutes the gnostic suicide."<sup>1</sup> In the light of this passage, Pursewarden's death is more clearly seen as a symbolic act of the acceptance of death. That Pursewarden is one "of the mature who have tasted the world to the full" is a proposition I now seek to demonstrate by further examining his character as he represents Durrell's idea of the self, of the matured psyche.

Although Pursewarden's life is represented by events ranging from his childhood to his death, the story is not continuous and the details are often skimpy and usually causally unrelated. After the suicide, Darley writes, "I was to hear people ask whether Pursewarden had been tall or short, whether he had worn a moustache or not; and these simple memories were the hardest to recover and to be sure of. Some who had known him

well said his eyes had been green, others that they had been brown" (J, p. 168). Balthazar writes to Darley of Pursewarden:

Physical features, as best I remember them. He was fair, a good average height and strongly built though not stout. Brown hair and moustache--very small this. Extremely well-kept hands. A good smile though when not smiling his face wore a somewhat quizzical almost impertinent air. His eyes were hazel and the best feature of him--they looked into other eyes, into other ideas, with a real candour, rather a terrifying sort of lucidity. He was somewhat untidy in dress but always spotlessly clean of person and abhorred dirty nails and collars. Yes, but his clothes were sometimes stained with spots of the red ink in which he wrote. There! (B, p. 111)

My presentation of Pursewarden's character in this chapter has emphasized his preoccupation with self, but there are many images of Pursewarden throughout the Quartet which have little to do with preoccupation with self. Experiencing a block in her painting, Clea asks Pursewarden to end her virginity "because I cannot get any further with my work unless you do" (C, p. 109). Saying, "My dear Clea . . . it would be anyone's dream to take you to bed," Pursewarden gallantly declines (C, p. 110). Trying to get rid of Justine, Pursewarden says,

"I'm going to work to-day."  
 "Then I'll come to-morrow."  
 "I shall have 'flu."  
 "The day after."  
 "I shall be going to the Zoo."  
 "I shall come too." (B, p. 126)

Such scenes are many, but to list all here would only prove that although data about Pursewarden's life may be

accumulated, the data never become integrated. To list all the events in Pursewarden's life presented in the Quartet does not explain Pursewarden's character but only broadens the evidence to be explained. Even the self-preoccupation theme does not define Pursewarden's character, but rather helps clarify how Durrell utilizes the character, for the integration noted through self-preoccupation is largely symbolic, revealing one of Pursewarden's roles in the novels.

Actually Pursewarden is less often represented as doing than as speaking. In his book on Durrell, John Weigel writes that "Pursewarden comments, is quoted as commenting, is remembered as commenting endlessly on pretty much everything."<sup>2</sup> Primarily we glimpse Pursewarden through his opinions, his personal interpretations of reality, although his thought is never presented as a coherent system but is consistently presented in fragments, in brief and seemingly random sentences, bursting into conversation with no particular relevance to the subject at hand. Balthazar calls him "an ironist" in his use of "little sayings" which "often appeared to violate good sense" (B, p. 111).

G. S. Fraser complains that "Pursewarden does not seem to me a wholly successful creation," and cites "Henry Miller, Durrell's best friend and critic," as writing to Durrell that "of all the characters in the

quartet Pursewarden is the least interesting to me. . . . I never get the conviction that he was the great writer you wish him to seem. I think he'd come off better--forgive me!--if you sliced down his remarks or observations. They get sententious and feeble sometimes." Yet, Fraser confesses, Durrell "disagrees, he thinks Pursewarden his most successful character creation in the Quartet; he may be right; re-reading my proofs, I notice that I display towards Pursewarden the irritation which one feels, not with a fictional character, but with an actual living person. My annoyance may be Durrell's triumph!"<sup>3</sup> In addition to pleasing and teaching and loving and growing, Pursewarden irritates, and this irritation sets him off from Darley who is largely portrayed sympathetically. Pursewarden as Durrell's representative of the self is more fully portrayed than Darley, not only in the factual data provided but in the range of emotions evoked.

In Durrell's Quartet, which celebrates the experiential process, assuming that experience of one form or another helps form the opinions of Pursewarden, then he can be viewed as "the most successful character creation in the Quartet," for he has the widest range of experience; as Weigel attests, "Pursewarden comments . . . on pretty much everything." Thus, even though his death is self-willed and not a decline brought about by biological process, the death is not premature; for as Fraser writes,



"Pursewarden has had everything, achieved everything, that lay within his life-pattern."<sup>4</sup>

As Durrell's representative of self, Pursewarden participates in the dark as well as the bright manifestations of growth. Accordingly, the presence of darkness in his character is less owing to Durrell's judgmental view than to the fullness of the portrait; if we knew Darley more fully, his life might prove to be equally dark. We are present in Darley's consciousness more often than in Pursewarden's, and we probably feel closer to Darley, but this closeness is encouraged both by the presence of so much bright growth and good will in Darley, and by the omission of anything remarkably offensive. Pursewarden's participation in the dark principles of growth is represented in an observation such as Clea's that "He is unlovely somewhere. Part of the secret is his physical ungainliness" (J, p. 115), or in his unnatural, incestuous relationship with Liza, or in the fact that it is his own hand which brings about his own death, making suicide literal instead of symbolic; but the chief way in which he manifests dark principles is through his irritating, unexpected, and unexplained comments.

In Clea, Darley realizes that he has been instructed (enabled to grow) by the "ironies I had found so wounding. For now I realised that his irony was really tenderness

turned inside out like a glove! And seeing Pursewarden thus, for the first time, I saw that through his work he had been seeking for the very tenderness of logic itself, of the Way Things Are" (C, p. 176). Miller and Fraser are right to be irritated with Pursewarden and particularly with his comments; for his statements irritate in order to ensure that we as readers will find something in his character to dislike, some offensive evidence of the principles of darkness. In Pursewarden this principle of darkness is positively applied and instructs as well as wounds.

The irritating nature of his comments is exemplified in his story of his friend the Venetian poet who was slain by a vampire, a story Pursewarden recites in Balthazar at the gathering at Nessim's house before the party goes to the Cervonis at Carnival.

Pursewarden took a long sip from his glass and went on wickedly. "The story does not end there; for I should tell you how I tried to avenge him, and went myself at night to the Bridge of the Footpads--where according to the gondolier this woman always waited in the shadow....But it is getting late, and anyway, I haven't made up the rest of the story as yet."

There was a good deal of laughter and Athena gave a well-bred shudder, drawing her shawl across her shoulders. Narouz had been listening open-mouthed, with reeling senses, to this recital: he was spellbound. "But" he stammered, "is all this true?" Fresh laughter greeted his question.

"Of course it's true" said Pursewarden severely, and added: "I have never been in Venice in my life." (B, p. 198)

On this extremely dark night, even in context, Pursewarden's statements are blatantly contradictory. Balthazar writes that "This sort of serious clowning leaves footmarks in conversation of a peculiar kind. His little sayings stayed like the pawmarks of a cat in a pat of butter" (B, pp. 111-12). Perhaps part of the wounding nature of the comments is to help secure their being remembered, which experience ultimately, Darley implies, assists the individual in growth.

Even though, as Fraser writes, "Pursewarden has had everything, achieved everything," and even though he has a symbolic fullness through his manifestation of Durrell's bright and dark principles, nonetheless, at his death, his character remains undefined, as is partially symbolized by his unfinished trilogy. To emphasize this lack of clear definition in his character, I turn to the rarely mentioned and never satisfactorily explained (by Durrell) matter of Pursewarden's guilt. Mountolive, whose codified feelings perhaps make him especially sensitive to guilt, suspects that Pursewarden despite his "robust scolding manners" has "a profoundly hidden shyness, almost a feeling of guilt" (M, p. 69). This suspicion of Mountolive is supported by Justine, who, after revealing how Pursewarden helped cure her guilt, tells Darley that Pursewarden "had a so-called check hardly less formidable than mine, something which had

plucked and gutted all sensation for him; so really in a way perhaps his strength was really a great weakness!" (C, p. 59).

This check in Pursewarden's life associated with guilt is related by Liza to their daughter's death; Liza tells Darley, "It was when she died that he was overcome with remorse for a situation which had brought us nothing but joy before. Her death suddenly made him guilty. Our relationship foundered there; and yet it became in another way even more intense, closer. We were united by our guilt from that moment. I have often asked myself why it should be so. Tremendous unbroken happiness and then...one day, like an iron shutter falling, guilt" (C, p. 174). In this passage the source of Pursewarden's guilt seems clear enough, but ironically Liza herself flatly contradicts this interpretation, for Liza later tells Darley how she "read and re-read" Pursewarden's books "with my fingers" "looking for a clue to the guilt which had transformed everything" (C, p. 190). Left to their "own devices" Liza and her brother had "invented a whole imperishable world of poetry" and had lived "in a vast palace of sighs" (C, p. 190). Liza tells Darley that

when the guilt entered the old poetic life began to lose its magic--not for me: but for him. It was he who made me dye my hair black, so that I could pretend to be a

step-sister of his, not a sister. It hurt me deeply to realise suddenly that he was guilty all of a sudden; but as we grew up the world intruded more and more upon us, new lives began to impinge on our solitary world of palaces and kingdoms. He was forced to go away for long periods. When he was absent I had nothing whatsoever except the darkness and what my memory of him could fill it with. (C, p. 191)

Noting that here Liza does not know what caused Pursewarden's guilt, in this passage I see an implication that the demands of the world, the structures of society, encourage guilt over a sexual relationship society would condemn.

And still another interpretation of the source of this mysterious guilt comes from a passage in Mountolive. There as the third person narrator, Durrell reveals a portion of one of Pursewarden's poems: "On the mirror with shaving soap he had written the mocking verses for Justine which began:

Oh Dreadful is the check!  
Intense the agony.  
When the ear begins to hear  
And the eye begins to see!" (M, p. 175)

Pursewarden "repeated them softly to himself, in the privacy of his own mind, as he thought of" Liza, "his sister" (M, p. 175). Here the check or the guilt he shares with Justine, Pursewarden relates to a process of maturation, to intensified awareness, when "the eye begins to see." Perhaps this new awareness is the

intensification of self-consciousness associated with the perception of the isolation of self in nature, an intensification of self that Liza's symbolic blindness never encounters.

Even if the material has such an interpretation, this data merely enlarges the facts, broadening Pursewarden's character rather than explaining it. It is perfectly possible to believe that his guilt irrationally resulted from the death of his child by Liza, from societal responsibilities and society's codes, and from an intensified self-consciousness, occurring in proximity to each other. Pursewarden cannot be explained from the information presented in the Quartet, and because his final work is left unfinished, there is the clear suggestion that final definition is impossible; the data are never complete. If in the Quartet's representative of self, the idea of self is never complete, never stable, what then is the Quartet's idea of maturation? Given all the talk about self-realization and self-development, what is the self that the Quartet's characters can achieve?

One night Pursewarden and Justine go to a house of child prostitutes, and there Justine uncharacteristically assumes the role of artist and infatuates the children with "the story of Yuna and Aziz, of their great many-petalled love," providing Pursewarden with "one of the

most significant and memorable moments of a writer's life," a glimpse into the process of growth. He writes of the children, Justine's

audience. Talk of suspended judgement! They sank into the imagery of her story like plummets. One saw, creeping out like mice, their true souls--creeping out upon those painted masks in little expressions of wonder, suspense and joy. In that yellow gloaming they were expressions of a terrible truth. You saw how they would be in middle age--the witch, the good wife, the gossip, the shrew. The poetry had stripped them to the bone and left only their natural selves to flower thus in expressions faithfully portraying their tiny stunted spirits!

At her parting from Pursewarden that night, Justine says, "I suppose we are all hunting for the secrets of growth!" (C, pp. 149-50).

In the Quartet, the characters' achievement of self is largely the assumption of a role. Clea tells Darley that "If you are born of the artist tribe it is a waste of time to try and function as a priest. You have to be faithful to your angle of vision, and at the same time fully recognise its partiality. There is a kind of perfection to be achieved in matching oneself to one's capacities--at every level" (C, p. 120). As he moves towards his assumption of his role as artist, Darley gains similar insight, writing that "I began to see how mysteriously the configuration of my own life had taken its shape from the properties of those elements which lie outside the relative life--in the kingdom which Pursewarden calls the 'heraldic universe'" (C, p. 177).

The phrase "heraldic universe" Durrell introduced in correspondence with Henry Miller years before the writing of the Quartet.<sup>5</sup> Weigel writes that "The heraldic design is the only real design. . . ." <sup>6</sup> Pursewarden calls "Symbolism!" the "heraldic aspect of reality!" (C, p. 137). Inasmuch as the heraldic aspect of reality provides insight into the psyche the implication is that psychological maturation is the satisfactory assumption of a role, symbolic in that it is shared with many other people from times past, present, and future. People assume the role of artist, and people assume the roles of "the witch, the good wife, the gossip, the shrew." Clea tells Darley that "poetic symbolism" is "the shape of nature itself" (C, p. 119), and Darley refers to "the mythopoeic reference which underlies fact" (C, p. 176).

The only role consistently presented in the Quartet is the role of the artist, which role I have dealt with cursorily in this dissertation; nonetheless I have argued that the artist's chief function is to interpret reality. Pursewarden writes that "The heraldic reality can strike from any point, above or below; it is not particular. But without it the enigma will remain. You may travel round the world and colonise the ends of the earth with your lines and yet never hear the singing yourself" (C, p. 154). In that the artist is to help remove the enigma from reality, the artist's



function then is in part to acquaint the reader with heraldic reality. Pursewarden writes that "About Art I always tell myself: while they are watching the firework display, yclept Beauty, you must smuggle the truth into their veins like a filter-passing virus!" (C, p. 138). And Pursewarden writes that "this act, the poetic act, will cease to be necessary when everyone can perform it for himself" (C, p. 153).

As a perceiver of heraldic reality, the artist represents both the matured practising artist and the person with heraldic insight, no matter what particular role the person predominately plays. Thus when the journalist Keats returns matured from the field of war with insights into the process of nature concerning death's role in life, he proclaims, "I've become a writer at last!" "What have you written?" Darley asks. "Nothing," Keats said with a grin. "Not a word as yet. . . . Somehow whether I do or don't actually write isn't important--it isn't, if you like, the whole point about becoming a writer at all, as I used to think" (C, p. 181). Perhaps when Keats speaks of his "inkling of Life Everlasting!" he is glimpsing the heraldic universe with multiple eternal roles, which will be diversely described and understood in different eras. Thus when Darley and Clea at the Quartet's conclusion become artists, psychological maturation is stressed, for

both were practising artists at the Quartet's beginning. When Darley becomes an artist, he writes "Once upon a time," signifying at once his participation in a tradition of imagination, a tradition of symbolism; Darley writing becomes both self and a tradition, self and symbol.

Given the framework of the role surrounding the self, what is the individual psychological self which finds its fulfillment within the confines of a role? The individual psyche seems largely the spontaneous expression of different aspects of principles of growth, associated with the multiple roles available in reality. The human being is largely defined by a single role, a single conception, a symbolic summary. Within that context, the individual psyche may manifest in some aspect of behavior all other roles, reflecting now this one, now that, now helping to form the roles to come. Such a context is helpful for interpreting Pursewarden's unclarified statement which Clea regards "as his most profound statement on human relationships." Pursewarden says, "I believe that Gods are men and men Gods; they intrude on each other's lives, trying to express themselves through each other--hence such apparent confusion in our human states of mind, our intimations of powers within or beyond us" (B, p. 124).

I interpret Pursewarden's statement as meaning that human beings, the individual psyches ("men"), are associated with symbolic orders of reality ("Gods"), which order of reality Durrell prefers to consider in the Quartet as principles of growth ("Gods"), which principles in relation to the human psyche Durrell prefers to regard in the Quartet as symbolic roles ("Gods"); these individual manifestations of reality ("men") mingle with, reflect, and influence the principles of growth, "trying to express themselves through each other." The remarkably flexible, multiple motivated psyche accounts for "such apparent confusion in our human states of mind, our intimations of powers within or beyond us," intimations, that is, of further principles of growth, such as Darley's discovering a new man of action in himself, an action that to Darley is spontaneous, but in the broader realm of heraldic reality is the manifestation of the principles of growth associated with the symbolic man of action, the heraldic man of action.

The theme of the multiple motivated, the unintegrated, the elastic, adaptable, or spontaneous psyche is one of Durrell's most important themes and is introduced early in Justine where Darley writes of Justine "sitting before the multiple mirrors" and asking, "Why should not people show more than one profile at a time?" (J, p. 27). Not

only the characters but almost every subject in the course of the Quartet shows "more than one profile." In his article "Durrell's Themes in The Alexandria Quartet," the first theme Stanley Eskin lists is "personality." "The proposition is that the human personality as such is an illusion."<sup>7</sup> "The more one discovers the less one knows, until the fabric of reality begins to dissolve."<sup>8</sup> "The shock of unrecognition which many readers feel towards Durrell's characters stems in large part from this deliberate undermining of the norms by which we identify personality."<sup>9</sup> Durrell's characters often behave with an unpredictability proper to their unrigid and sensitive psyches; they respond to their environment and to the myriad principles of growth that their environment presents.

The largely spontaneous nature of the mature psyche is attested to by Pursewarden's journals, where even in solitude, performing without an audience, his thought leaps from subject to subject, presenting frequently illogical juxtapositions. The spontaneous nature of the mature psyche is further emphasized by Darley's enthusiasm for Pursewarden's letters to Liza, for the most part never quoted. Darley writes, "Whatever other masterpieces Pursewarden may have written these letters outshone them all in their furious, unpremeditated brilliance and prolixity. Literature, I say! But these

were life itself, not a studied representation of it in a form--life itself, the flowing undivided stream of life with all its pitiable will-intoxicated memories, its pains, terrors and submissions. Here illusion and reality were fused in one single blinding vision" (C, p. 175). The mature self reflects life itself, reflects the diverse principles of reality, which I have preferred to describe in this dissertation as principles of growth.

In Livia, the second volume of the projected sequence of five novels Durrell is currently at work on, Durrell writes of the multiple motivated psyche in a passage I quote here for three reasons. First, the passage shows that the idea of the multiple motivated psyche is a still viable idea in Durrell's thought and not simply a philosophical consequence associated with the format of the Quartet. Second, the passage specifically identifies the source of the unstable ego as the problem of motivation. Finally, I cite the passage because it suggests that through typology (symbolic roles) the psyche may be best understood. As one of the novelists in Livia, Durrell writes,

What always bothered me was the question of a stable ego--did such a thing exist? The old notion of such an animal was rather primitive, particularly for novelists with an itch to explain this action or that. Myself, I could hardly write down the name of a character without suddenly being swamped by an ocean of

possible attributes, each as valid and as truthful as any other. The human psyche is almost infinitely various--so various that it can afford to be contradictory even as regards itself. How poor is the pathetic little typology of our modern psychology--why, even astrology, however suspect as a science, makes some attempt to encompass the vast multiplicity of purely human attributes. That is why our novels, yours and mine, Robin, are also poor.<sup>10</sup>

Although in Justine Darley writes that "In art I had failed (it suddenly occurred to me at this moment) because I did not believe in the discrete human personality. . . . I lacked a belief in the true authenticity of people in order to successfully portray them," Darley never abandons this view of people. Rather The Alexandria Quartet is largely Darley's success in celebrating as a theme the un-discrete human personality. And Darley suggests that ultimately the "true authenticity of people" derives from multiple participation in diverse symbolic or heraldic roles. In the Quartet people are not "continuously themselves"; rather, as Pursewarden says, they are "over and over again so fast that they give the illusion of continuous features" (J, p. 196). Pursewarden writes, "Human beings are like pipe-organs, I thought. You pull out a stop marked 'Lover' or 'Mother' and the requisite emotions are unleashed--tears or sighs or endearments. Sometimes I try and think of us all as habit-patterns rather than human beings" (C, p. 148). Habits contribute to the illusion of personality.

To summarize Durrell's thoughts on death in the Quartet and the psychology of self which Pursewarden's completed character presents, I first note the literal and meaningful presence of death in the Quartet in the deaths of Melissa, Scobie, Narouz, and Pursewarden, among others. Death is the natural and proper end to the growth process manifested in living things, a "rounding off of being."<sup>11</sup> Durrell's chief observation about the psychological effects of foreknowledge of death is that awareness of death intensifies appreciation of life.

Taking Pursewarden as the character representing self in the Quartet, his suicide has a symbolic appropriateness. The self defined by Pursewarden's death represents Durrell's theory of the variable psyche or the flexible, spontaneous, or multiple motivated personality. Although multiply motivated the psyche is not simply mysterious but, as I have shown throughout this dissertation, is motivated by principles of growth; further, these principles of growth may be understood as being broadly oriented between two poles, frequently symbolized as sex and pain, love and suffering. In the individual life the psyche assimilates experience, utilizing both bright and dark manifestations of being to further growth, to strengthen self. As a self, the personality of the psyche is largely spontaneous,

reflecting multifarious manifestations of motivating principles, best understood through typology, the heraldic reality, or symbolic roles, with one of which roles the individual psyche is customarily associated.

Beyond such a broad theory of universal psychology, Durrell sees the individual psyche as largely inexplicable because of the lack of ultimately complete data, and . the multiplicity of influences acting upon the individual at any given moment. Accordingly an individual's association with any given trait such as Darley's association with the desire to identify with landscape, or Narouz's urge to commit violent action, or Justine's inclination to feel guilt, or Pursewarden's enthusiasm for the self, are attributed to individual circumstances, often the individual's nature, and are not assigned specific psychological rationales that could be applied beyond the individual's unique situation. The intricate and unfathomable growth process itself is the source of human behavior.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Lawrence Durrell's The Alexandria Quartet is unique in its effective portrayal of the variable psyche. In this dissertation, I have tried to show how beneath the general portrait of the variable psyche is a consistent thematic portrait of the human psyche as oriented towards growth. I have demonstrated this theme in the Quartet's main plot, ideas, characters, and imagery.

To summarize, Durrell portrays the psyche in the Quartet as variable, but behind the variable psyche is an orientation towards growth shared with the cosmos itself. In Darley, a gradual understanding of and more satisfactory relationship with the universal process of growth proves to be a significant part of Darley's own maturation. In the sad and unjust story of Narouz, the principles of growth by which the cosmos runs are seen in the darker light of growth perverted, growth departing from the norm, but ultimately effecting maturation. In Justine's freedom from guilt, Durrell's explicit plunge into the world of psychic-healing, the same orientation towards growth is revealed. And finally in the character of

Pursewarden, death itself is seen to be a process which furthers the growth of the living.

Durrell's view of the psyche as oriented towards growth further defines the vague realm Durrell calls the heraldic universe, the heraldic reality. Based on the data I have gathered here, I feel that the heraldic reality may be approximately equated with the principles of growth. To assert and demonstrate the psychological universality of principles of growth in Lawrence Durrell's The Alexandria Quartet has been the purpose of this dissertation.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Lawrence Durrell, Monsieur (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), pp. 145-46.

<sup>2</sup>Weigel, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup>Fraser, pp. 152-53.

<sup>4</sup>Fraser, p. 149.

<sup>5</sup>Lawrence Durrell, A Private Correspondence, ed. George Wickes (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1963), p. 23.

<sup>6</sup>Weigel, p. 33.

<sup>7</sup>Eskin, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup>Eskin, p. 48.

<sup>9</sup>Eskin, p. 50.

<sup>10</sup>Lawrence Durrell, Livia (New York: The Viking Press, 1979), p. 37.

<sup>11</sup>Fraser, p. 149.

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