

71-21,988

WEDIN, Warren, 1936-  
THE UNITY OF A CONTINUUM: RELATIVITY AND  
THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET.

The University of Arizona, Ph.D., 1971  
Language and Literature, modern

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1971

THE UNITY OF A CONTINUUM: RELATIVITY  
AND THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET

by

Warren Wedin

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
In the Graduate College  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1971

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

I hereby recommend that this dissertation prepared under my  
direction by Warren Wedin  
entitled THE UNITY OF A CONTINUUM: RELATIVITY  
AND THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET  
be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement of the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## PREFACE

The "relativity proposition" is the central thematic and structural element in Lawrence Durrell's The Alexandria Quartet, yet no commentator on Durrell's work has adequately explained Durrell's use of Einstein's relativity. The purpose of this study is to supply that missing explanation. Durrell's use of relativity in the Quartet is by no means simple because the relativity he uses is a free literary "translation" of the scientific theory and because Durrell eventually rejects this "translated" relativistic scheme in favor of what he calls the "heraldic universe." Durrell posits a relativistic world bound by time and limited to the ego in the first three novels of the Quartet and then attempts to transcend that limited world in the last novel. Thus, Durrell establishes a world based on Einsteinian relativity and characters based on the Freudian ego and then replaces these theoretical foundations with the scientific mysticism of Sir James Jeans and the It-concept of Georg Walther Groddeck. This shift from physical relativity to psychological relativity to cosmic mysticism is the key to the themes and structure of Durrell's multiple novel.

I plan, therefore, to examine Durrell's knowledge of scientific and literary relativity and then to investigate his "translation" of that knowledge into the structure and themes of The Alexandria Quartet. Much of this background discussion will be based on Durrell's critical theories developed in A Key to Modern British Poetry. My first chapter will investigate Durrell's knowledge of Einstein's relativity, especially as it relates to the subject-object relation and to the uncertainty principle. Durrell, who was occasionally misled by Sir James Jeans' popularizations of science, often uses a resulting "translation" of science which produces a literary theory and practice that no longer bears any relation to the original scientific theory. Only when we know what Durrell means by relativity, indeterminacy, subject-object relation, and space-time continuum, can we investigate his use of these theories in the Quartet. My second chapter will investigate Durrell's knowledge of Henri Bergson and the Bergsonian novel as the missing link between science and mysticism and will examine some literary analogues to the four-part structure of the Quartet, especially in the works of Proust, Ford, and Faulkner. Durrell's avowed rejection of the Bergsonian novel is generally unquestioned, yet Justine is a Bergsonian novel. After this necessary background discussion, I will turn in the third chapter to Durrell's use

of these scientific and literary theories as they determine the structure of the individual novels and of the entire Quartet. The discussion of the separate novels will focus on the narrator Darley and his growing awareness of the need to experiment with novelistic form; the discussion of the Quartet will focus on the general pattern which Durrell establishes from relativity and which he calls a "space-time continuum." The final chapter will contain a discussion of the four interrelated stories in the Quartet, each representing a different level of awareness: political, emotional, artistic, and archetypic. The political story of the Hosnani intrigue helps carry the reader through the Quartet and represents the outer life of Durrell's composite man. The love story is the avowed topic of the novels and portrays emotional man. The artist story is the unacknowledged topic of the Quartet and traces Darley's growth as an artist. The archetypic story, which unites all the other elements of Durrell's composite portrait, suggests the possibility of transcending the limits of the relative world and finding the universal in the particular. Just as relativity and space-time are the keys to the discussion of the form of the Quartet, so the establishment and rejection of the relativity of truth are the keys to the thematic discussions. Durrell's use of--and in some instances rejection of--the various aspects of relativity is central to our understanding of his Quartet.

In the following study I have decided to use as my primary texts the original four volumes of the Quartet as they initially appeared in the Dutton hardbound series--Justine (1957), Balthazar (1958), Mountolive (1959), Clea (1960)--instead of the 1962 one-volume revision of The Alexandria Quartet. I have found that the single-volume, hardbound editions of the novels are more readily available than the one-volume revision and that the separate novels are available in several paperback editions, while the one-volume edition has not been released in a paperback. Of course, for the present study I have checked all my citations from the individual novels against the one-volume revision and have commented on variant passages. In most instances the revisions are minor.

I have also decided to use the system of parenthetical referencing described in The University of Arizona's publication A Manual for Theses and Dissertations (revised March 1968), pages 27 through 29. I have altered this system slightly so that it produces the following consistent pattern: for citations from Durrell's works, the parenthetical reference gives the title of the work and the page number; for citations from a single work by another author, the parenthetical reference gives the author's name and the page number; for citations from another author with two or more works, the parenthetical reference gives the author's name,

the date of publication, and the page number. Full bibliographic data on all works cited will be found at the end of the text under "Literature Cited."

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## ABSTRACT

Lawrence Durrell believes that Einstein and Freud are the two major influences on twentieth-century literature, for Einstein's theory of relativity and Freud's concept of the unconscious have affected the artist's treatment of time and the ego in his work. In developing this critical theory in A Key to Modern British Poetry, however, Durrell focuses his study on the metaphoric "translation" of scientific theory into literary practice; the resulting "translation" more often relates back to mystics like Giordano Bruno and philosophers like Henri Bergson than back to Freud or Einstein. Second, Durrell will begin his literary discussion with Einstein's relativity and Freudian theory and end with Sir James Jeans' scientific and Georg Walther Groddeck's psychological mysticism. These two points--Durrell's literary "translation" of Einstein's relativity and the suggested transcendence of this relativity into the "heraldic universe"--are the central determinants in Durrell's criticism and in his The Alexandria Quartet. This study examines what Durrell means by this translated science and how he uses this translation in the Quartet.



The first chapter "The Alexandria Quartet and Scientific Tradition," based largely on Durrell's critical theories in Key, examines Durrell's knowledge of relativity and Freudian theory. The discussion focuses on the subject-object relation, the principle of indeterminacy, and the Freudian and Groddeckian theories of the ego, especially as they affect the artist's treatment of time and the ego in literature. Durrell's tendency to link physics with mysticism is revealed in his shift in emphasis from physical to psychological relativity. An understanding of this shift in emphasis is central to understanding The Alexandria Quartet.

Henri Bergson is the obvious missing link in Durrell's shift from physics to mysticism. Bergson's durée could well have supplied Durrell with much of the theoretical background for the Quartet (Justine, in fact, is a Bergsonian novel), yet Durrell chooses to emphasize Einstein's literary influence over Bergson's. Durrell's rejection of Bergson is really a rejection of the subjective novel as the exclusive approach to literature. The second chapter "The Alexandria Quartet and Literary Tradition" explores Durrell's rejection of Bergson and his claim of originality in the Quartet. Several novels by Proust, Ford, and Faulkner offer structural analogues to the Quartet, yet a close examination of the apparent similarities

reveals that Durrell modifies these established techniques to fit his unique relativistic scheme.

These theoretical foundations of "translated" scientific and literary theory are applied to a discussion of the form of the novels in the third chapter "Form: Four Sides, One Continuum," dealing first with the individual novels and the fictitious narrator and second with Durrell and the entire Quartet as a "space-time continuum." The narrator's knowledge of relativity relates directly to the narrative choices he makes in the individual novels, and the structural progression from subjectivity to objectivity to transcendence directly parallels Darley's growth as an artist. For this progression to be consistent, we must see Darley as the invisible narrator of Mountolive. As for the form of the entire Quartet, Durrell's use of the space-time continuum--"three sides of space and one of time"--supplies the consistent rationale behind this general pattern.

The last chapter "Theme: Four Stories, One Man" explores the four consistent stories of political, emotional, artistic, and archetypic involvement and their relationship to Durrell's use of relativity. These four levels of awareness reflect Durrell's attempt to portray characters seen across a continuum and his ultimate attempt

to transcend the limits of time, the ego, and relativity, and enter into his "heraldic universe." Darley's struggle to become an artist becomes the reader's struggle toward self-discovery.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET AND SCIENTIFIC TRADITION

Lawrence Durrell has called The Alexandria Quartet "science fiction." (Balthazar, Note) He seems to mean that the four novels are an attempt to incorporate the basic twentieth-century scientific assumptions about the nature of space and time--from both physics and psychology--into a fictional framework. He specifically tells us in the Note to Balthazar that he has turned to science for a model of unity and is trying "to complete a four-decker novel whose form is based on the relativity proposition." (Balthazar, Note [*italics mine*]) However, Durrell amends the definiteness of this statement in the Preface to the revised, one-volume edition of the Quartet in 1962, where he tells us that "In trying to work out my form I adopted, as a rough analogy, the relativity proposition." (Quartet, Preface [*italics mine*]) Any discussion of the Quartet should therefore take into consideration Durrell's ideas about relativity and his shift from an original emphasis on direct scientific influence to a later stress on metaphoric translation of scientific theory into literature.

This shift in emphasis--even more so than his definition of such terms as "the relativity proposition"--is,

in fact, central to Durrell's method; he will begin with a physical theory like the space-time continuum, translate that theory into psychological terms, and then seek the mystical significance of this translated science. We can see this pattern in his critical work A Key to Modern British Poetry where, after giving a summary of nineteenth-century science, he uses Einstein's relativity as a basis for an explanation of the new concept of time and the subject-object relation in the literary experiments of Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot. But his discussion focuses on the psychological application of relativity to literature. This psychological or Bergsonian application is not a factor in original mathematical or physical application of Einstein's theory; it is a metaphoric translation or a "rough analogy." Having once posited this physical qua psychological relativity, Durrell then explores the mystical implications of liberation from the ego and relativity by blending together the cosmic mysticism of Einstein and Sir James Jeans and the psychological mysticism of Groddeck with Oriental mysticism. This same pattern can be found in the Quartet where relativity provides the structural and thematic ground plan for the novels and the scientific mysticism of Giordano Bruno, Albert Einstein, Sir James Jeans, and Georg Walther Groddeck provides the possibility of transcending this relativistic scheme. Thus, Durrell

uses "the relativity proposition" as a starting point for a series of metaphoric translations of science into literature.

Lawrence Durrell believes that the science of an age has a direct relationship to the literature of that age; the provisional model that a physicist uses to describe the universe, a model like Einstein's relativity and the space-time continuum, will eventually be used as a literary model. Charles Feidelson describes this relationship of science to art in Symbolism and American Literature:

When the philosopher changes his problems, the literary critic changes his method, and the writer also begins to approach the world with new questions. He asks the questions by assuming a new stance vis-a-vis the world, and he receives the answers in a new literary structure. (Feidelson, p. 49)

If we substitute Durrell's scientist for Feidelson's philosopher, we have a good description of Durrell's critical method in A Key to Modern British Poetry and his literary method in The Alexandria Quartet. Durrell's criticism examines the effects of science on twentieth-century literature, and his Quartet demonstrates the way in which he incorporates these physical and psychological theories into his own fiction. Thus, Durrell's "key" to modern literature is twentieth-century science, with a special emphasis on the theory of relativity; our "key" to Durrell is his use

of science in A Key to Modern British Poetry and The Alexandria Quartet.

## I

### Space

Nineteenth-century assumptions about the nature of reality generally dealt with matter as an extension in space and with time as an independent force that seemed, among other things, to be a measure of history. Scientific observation was held to be strictly objective and action to be a simple process of cause and effect. Speaking of the legacy Hobbes left to the nineteenth century, Durrell says in A Key to Modern British Poetry:

Hobbes believed that the whole world consisted simply of matter and motion, and that the only reality was matter. Man was an animal with a body made of matter while his thoughts and emotions arose from purely mechanical motions of the atoms with which it was constructed.

It followed from this of course that when the scientist managed to break down matter to its smallest part he would find it something substantial, something solid however small, a piece of matter. This is what the early Victorians believed. (Key, p. 21)

The material world was thought to be a solid substance, quietly going about its business, inflexibly governed by Newtonian physics and a clear cause-and-effect relationship. In this nineteenth-century world, action and reaction were clearly predictable. Victorian science also assumed "that the observer could observe the object and surprise it in

its pure state." (Key, p. 28) Speaking about this nineteenth-century method, Durrell says:

In the so-called exact sciences subject and object were taken to be two distinct things: so that a description of any part of the universe was considered a judgment quite independent of the observer--or of any subjective conditions in which he found himself. Science claimed an ABSOLUTE OBJECTIVITY in its judgments about the world. (Key, p. 21)

These separate views posit, then, that man, equipped with his intelligence, can observe the material universe with scientific objectivity, establish inherent cause-and-effect relations, and ultimately discover all the secrets of nature.

Time, in this scheme, was viewed as an external phenomenon, a "quietly flowing river . . . moving from here to there along a marked series of stages." (Key, p. 31) Taking Genesis as literal natural history, many Victorians believed that "The earth . . . had been created about 4,000 B.C. by God, and was more or less as we see it today, except that the perfect life we had been meant to lead on it had been corrupted by the Fall." (Key, p. 15) Time, then, began some 6,000 years ago; it was thought of both as a separate force in nature, operating inexorably on indestructible matter and destructible man, and as the history of the earth as the Victorians knew it from Genesis.



Applying these ideas to Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses," Durrell finds that the poem reflects all of these assumptions in the way in which both the poet and his hero look at their world. "Tennyson's broad classical manner and his simple syntax," says Durrell, "stand for a world of clear thinking and precise relations." (Key, p. 9) Ulysses' world is solidly present and knowable; it is a world to be conquered; it is, more importantly, a world external to Ulysses' sense of himself. The central implication of the poem, in fact, is that the world and life are "out there," both waiting to be confronted by the hero as world-in-himself. In this sense, then, the poem deals with a confrontation of two discrete worlds, man and external reality. But this is a confrontation entered upon with what Durrell calls a "faith and affirmation in the human condition." (Key, p. 13) As Durrell puts it:

Ulysses seems to have escaped the disillusion of Gerontion. His hunger is for more life: 'Life piled on life were all too little,' he says, and adds: 'All times I have enjoy'd greatly, have suffered greatly . . . I cannot rest from travel: I will drink life to the lees.' (Key, p. 10)

Ulysses' spirit, like that of the Victorians, is

yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.  
("Ulysses," lines 30-32)

And just as Ulysses pursues life and knowledge without disillusionment, so he, according to Durrell,

feels a part of the historic fabric: 'I am become a name . . . much have I seen and known; cities of men and manners, climates, councils, governments, myself not least, but honour'd of them all.' He is not proud or complacent. He is simply fully aware of himself and alive at all points. (Key, p. 10)

We can see from these examples, Durrell tells us, "how securely grounded in his world Ulysses is. He does not, to give one example, fear for the succession of his son. He is simply bored with old age, bored with the inactivity he is forced to endure. He longs to resume his youthful, adventurous life." (Key, pp. 11-12) Durrell feels that because of these clear relationships between the hero and his world, between subject and object, Tennyson's poem is an accurate reflection of the scientific world view of the 1840's. The structure of the poem itself mirrors the external, irreversible flowing of time: "Ulysses is . . . marked out like a race-course. The poem starts by giving you the idea, the characters, the location, the problem; then it proceeds to move forward towards a definite conclusion. . . . Ulysses has a beginning, middle and end." (Key, p. 49)

But something happened to the nineteenth century's view of the world; something happened to make Ulysses become Gerontion. Science began to expand the bounds of man's knowledge of himself and his world. Durrell summarizes this new knowledge and some of its implications:

In 1857 the first remains of Neanderthal Man came to light. Then came the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species which made man, not the noblest member of the animal kingdom but simply a term in the evolutionary series. . . . Man had been dethroned. He was no longer the noblest animal. . . .

The history of man, then, was suddenly expanded into a region of time so remote that the Victorians might be forgiven for finding the idea so terrifying. Lyell, the greatest geologist, suggested that man was 100,000 years old. When you think that the art and morality of Europe were based upon the Bible you can imagine how deep a shock all this was. But it was not all.

History began to expand in another direction, helped this time by archaeology. In 1874 Schliemann's excavations at Mycenae were begun. You will remember that the poems of Homer were considered mere poetical fantasies. Schliemann was later to prove that Troy existed. In 1895 Sir Flinders Petrie was at work upon ancient remains in Egypt, while in 1899 Sir Arthur Evans began work upon what was to turn out to be a new civilization, until then unknown, called the Minoan civilization. Ancient cultures were coming to the surface, and the chill wind of religious scepticism was blowing hard. First it was the civilization of Europe which began to look remote and tiny set against the historical perspectives opening up. Secondly the history of man on earth, as explained by geologists, began to appear of negligible importance. (Key, pp. 15-16)

Time as history--both of man and of his world--was stretched beyond the imagination. Astronomy expanded that world even further, with a consequent diminishing of man's centrality in the scheme of things.

The concept of time as an external force changed also. In the physical sciences, Einstein and his theory of relativity joined space to time, transforming time from a

constant, inflexible flow into a flexible--or relative--variable in the space-time continuum. Einstein found, for instance, that for certain systems, as they approached the speed of light, time actually slowed down with respect to a system at relative rest. George Gamow, describing this phenomenon in One Two Three . . . Infinity, says:

In fact if you move, for example, at 99.99999999 per cent of the speed of light, your wrist watch, your heart, your lungs, your digestion, and your mental processes will be slowed down by a factor of 70,000, and the 18 yrs (from the point of view of people left on the Earth) necessary to cover the distance from Earth to Sirius and back to Earth again, would seem to you as only a few hours. (Gamow, p. 104)

Time, in Einstein's universe, no longer functioned as an independent force. Time in its psychological sense also changed. Freud had theorized that the unconscious had no conception of time, that unconscious mental processes were timeless, neither arranged chronologically nor affected by the passage of time. Henri Bergson, in his theory of duration, saw man as aware only of the present flow of consciousness, the past and the future being respectively memories or anticipations experienced in the present. Both inner and outer time, then, were altered by the scientific investigations of the turn of the century.

Physics was also altering its ideas of external reality. The established concepts of causality and matter were giving way to a more provisional view of reality. Regarding the idea of a solid core of matter, Durrell says:

It had been known, for example, that a body, a piece of matter, behaved as if it acquired greater mass when it was charged with electricity. Purely as a matter of interest it was decided to determine how much of the mass of the electron was its own, and how much was due to its electric charge. The measurement was made with the truly astounding result that the whole mass of the electron was found to be due to its electric charge. So that the electron was not a piece of 'ordinary matter' at all. It was simply an electric charge. You can see how astonishing this experiment must have been. It was the first indication to come from science that the material universe was not the solid, substantial, objective thing people had taken it to be. (Key, p. 27)

Matter, then, had to be thought of in terms of behavior and not in terms of an inflexible substance. The discovery of electricity and radiation began to undermine the clear causality of the nineteenth century. Speaking of Planck and a later experiment, Durrell says:

In order to frame his ideas satisfactorily he was forced to wonder whether he should not give up two philosophic ideas which, up to then, had been regarded as absolutely fundamental to any understanding of the universe. One was Time, as we visualized it, and the other was causality. This, you will agree, is simply hair-raising. In 1903 Rutherford and Soddy tried to postulate the fundamental laws of radio-activity and arrived at a very astonishing conclusion which seemed to suggest that the ultimate laws of nature were simply not causal at all. (Key, p. 25)

Matter no longer followed the simple cause-and-effect pattern of Newtonian physics; for, as Durrell says, now "when the physicist began to break matter down into its parts, and found that sometimes it behaved like a wave and sometimes like a particle, it became rapidly obvious that

some new conception was needed if we were ever going to make a coherent picture of the universe without neglecting any of these puzzling facts." (Key, p. 27) It remained for Einstein to join together these new ideas of time, matter, and causality in his theory of relativity, a theory which joined up "subject and object, in very much the same way as it joined up space and time." (Key, p. 26)

It is Durrell's belief that these changing scientific concepts altered the course of literature. The modern writer has been forced to see his world and himself in a different light, and his changing perspectives are reflected in his work. "I am not suggesting," Durrell says, "that modern poetry is constructed to illustrate the quantum theory, but I do suggest that it unconsciously reproduces something like the space-time continuum in the way it uses words and phrases: and the way in which its forms are cyclic rather than extended." (Key, p. 26) Durrell feels that nineteenth-century novels and poems were constructed lengthwise, in the direction of time, imitating the concept of time as a steadily flowing stream; Tennyson's "Ulysses," we remember, is "marked out like a race-course"; and in a novel by Scott, "The hero is born, he grows up, acts and dies--or marries." (Key, p. 26) But, turning to Eliot's "Gerontion," Durrell finds that the poem

exhibits in its structure something like the pattern-behavior of quanta. It does not progress

along a line or a series of points, but in a new, a paradoxical way: it progresses by standing still. You leave Gerontion where you found him . . . . Gerontion is simply there in a state of pure manifestation, so to speak. (Key, p. 49)

So, too, in the novels of Joyce and Proust, Durrell finds "something like a slow-motion camera at work. Their books do not proceed along a straight line, but in a circular manner, coiling and uncoiling upon themselves, embedded in the stagnant flux and reflux of a medium which is always changing yet always the same." (Key, p. 31)

This summary of ideas will give us some notion of the relationship Durrell finds between science and literature of the nineteenth and of the twentieth centuries. What Durrell fails to account for, especially in discussing literature, is the philosophy of Henri Bergson; there is discernible in Durrell's theorizings a general tendency to credit the influence of Einstein while discrediting the influence of Bergson. Durrell often slips away from physics and into psychology in his discussion of Einstein without realizing that Einstein psychologized often turns out to be orthodox Bergsonianism. The present discussion will consequently include the missing Bergsonian parallels to Durrell's "translation" of Einstein; Durrell's avowed rejection of Bergsonianism as a literary method in the Quartet will be dealt with in the second chapter.

In examining Durrell's Einsteinian ideas, I find that I must look rather closely at the original scientific application of a specific aspect of the theory in order to point up Durrell's metaphoric method of translating science into literary theory and practice and in order to clear up the confusion surrounding his use of relativity.

Fortunately, Durrell tells us which aspects of relativity he is going to deal with: "As far as we are concerned only two aspects of [Einstein's relativity] interest us: its attitude to time, and its attitude to the subject-object relationship." (Key, p. 28) It is important here to remember Alfred Bork's comment of Durrell's selectivity:

Some parts of the theory of relativity, areas very important in the theory itself, do not appear to contribute to the Quartet. The Lorentz Transformation is absent. The important ideas of tensor, invariant, and covariant play no role. . . . These absences are not surprising when one remembers that Durrell's knowledge of the theory is based on popularizations. It is just these mathematical elements of the theory which are likely to be absent from a book on relativity for the layman. (Bork, p. 202)

As we shall see later, this is precisely the situation; Durrell substitutes metaphor for mathematics.

Durrell, looking first at the subject-object relation, says that the theory of relativity

showed us that the picture which each observer makes of the world is in some degree subjective. Even if different observers all take their pictures at the same moment of time, and from the same point



in space, these pictures will not be alike--unless the observers happen to be moving at the same speed. Only then would they be identical. (Key, p. 28)

The immediate problem with this statement is that it is theoretically true, but physically impossible.<sup>1</sup> If two observers are at the same point in space at the same time, moving at the same speed, they, not the pictures they take, would be identical. Of course, in both Newtonian and Einsteinian physics, no two observers can ever be in the same place at the same time, no matter what their relative

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1. Durrell was probably misled by Sir James Jeans, for this quotation is lifted, for the most part, from Physics and Philosophy (New York, 1943), p. 143. Jeans himself is unnecessarily confusing. I include the full section from Jeans' work for the reader's comparison: "It used to be supposed that in making an observation on nature, as also in the more general activities of our everyday life, the universe could be supposed divided into two detached and distinct parts, a perceiving subject and a perceived object. Psychology provided an obvious exception, because the perceiver and the perceived might be the same; subject and object might be identical, or might at least overlap. But in the exact sciences, and above all in physics, subject and object were supposed to be entirely distinct, so that a description of any selected part of the universe could be prepared which would be entirely independent of the observer as well as of the special circumstances surrounding him.

The theory of relativity (1905) first showed that this cannot be entirely so; the picture which each observer makes of the world is in some degree subjective. Even if the different observers all make their pictures at the same instant of time and from the same point of space, these pictures will be different unless the observers are all moving together at the same speed; then, and then only, they will be identical. Otherwise, the picture depends both on what an observer sees, and on how fast he is moving when he sees it."

speeds; in fact, this is exactly the subjective situation of relativity, that the space-time coordinates for any two observers will always be different, and so too will the pictures they make of any given event. Thus, Durrell has stated a scientific truism, that every observer is in a physical-temporal subjective situation, but he has carried his example beyond Einsteinian probability. Newtonian physics assumed that two separate observations, both from the same point in space, but taken at different times, would yield the same results; relativity predicts that the results would be different because the time factor for each space-time equation must necessarily be different. What Durrell appears to be saying, then, is that each person is in a physically and temporally subjective situation and that his view of reality will therefore be unique; this view is in accord with Einstein's relativity. What Durrell implies, however, is that the subjectivity and uniqueness of the individual's view of reality is dependent upon the observer's psychologically subjective state of mind; this psychological view is not a factor in Einstein's theory. Applying this distinction to the Quartet, we can see that it is not Darley's physically subjective situation in Justine which affects his view of the Alexandrian events, but his psychologically subjective state; Darley could have remained in Alexandria, and still his view of the events

would have been distorted by his emotionality and egocentricity, compounded, of course, by the trickery of his friends. I think we have here an example of Durrell's use of Einstein's words and Bergson's psychology. We will see this again, perhaps more pointedly, with Durrell's discussion of time and of the Principle of Indeterminacy.

A second problem with Durrell's statement about the subject-object relation concerns the degree to which the observation is affected by the relative position of two observers. The general result of the relative position of two observers at two different space-time coordinates is now obvious; it is roughly equivalent to the commonplace situation of two people with two distinct physical points of view. With Einstein's relativity, however, one must also take into consideration the relative speeds of the two observers. As Sir James Jeans says in the passage from which Durrell got his information, "the picture [which an observer makes of reality] depends both on what an observer sees, and on how fast he is moving when he sees it." (Jeans 1943, p. 143) But what both Jeans and Durrell leave out is that only at speeds approaching the speed of light is there a significant effect. At the relatively slow speeds of our everyday life on earth, the consequent effects of contracted space, increased mass, and decelerated time are hardly perceptible. For example, a car traveling at fifty miles an

hour will contract to 99.999999999999 per cent of its length; a spaceship one hundred meters long, traveling at 25,000 miles an hour, will contract only one one-hundredth of a millimeter. (Gamow, p. 101) I mention these examples to point out that the degree to which an individual's physical view of reality will be affected by his subjective situation--his relative position and speed--is virtually non-existent in his everyday life. Thus, when Durrell says that "the picture which each observer makes of the world is in some degree subjective," I believe that he is thinking more of a psychological subjectivity than an Einsteinian physical subjectivity. In fact, in terms of the observer's subjectivity, his vantage point, we really do not need Einstein in this discussion at all.

In terms of Durrell's literary application of these ideas, Bergson's duration--the psychological equivalent of the physical theory--seems to work much better than Einstein's relativity. In The Alexandria Quartet Durrell appears to be using a combination of Einstein and Bergson, but gives credit only to Einstein. The three stories told in Justine, Balthazar, and Mountolive are told from three distinct physical points of view--the Einsteinian application; but they are also told from three psychologically different points of view--the Bergsonian application. Yet it is obvious that Darley's physical isolation on the

island is far less important to the effect of those novels than his psychological and emotional isolation. So, too, in Balthazar, Balthazar's physical presence in Alexandria is less important than his apparently objective view of the action. Thus, while Durrell is correct in stating that the picture every observer makes of reality is "in some degree subjective," in the Quartet we can see that the Einsteinian physical subjectivity merely provides the frame for the more Bergsonian psychologically subjective drama.

I have discussed these rather fine points because they display Durrell's tendency to apply a precise scientific theory in an imprecise way. In Einstein's world, the difference between subjective situations is entirely dependent upon high relative speeds; in Durrell's world, the importance is that each observer is in a discrete subjective situation and has an individual point of view. The two worlds are hardly comparable.

A similar misapplication of a precise concept can be seen with Durrell's use of the Principle of Indeterminacy, which he says "is founded upon the theory that we cannot observe the course of nature without disturbing it."

(Key, p. 29) He goes on to say:

Under the terms of the new ideas a precise knowledge of the outer world becomes an impossibility. This is because we and the outer world (subject and object) constitute a whole. If we are part of a unity we can no longer objectivize it successfully. (Key, p. 30)

Here again what Durrell says is correct, but only within a limited context. The Principle of Indeterminacy--also called the Uncertainty Principle--states that "there is a limit to the accuracy with which we can study the motion of a small object." (Peierls, p. 169) The observer and his testing equipment interfere with the "normal" functioning of the object under investigation. But the Uncertainty Principle comes into effect only when the testing equipment is the same size as the object being tested. If I want to examine a block of coal, I shine a light on it and continue my examination. I know that light quanta from the beam of light exert a force on the block of coal, but I also know that the mass of the coal so far exceeds the mass of the light quanta that the effect of the force is not a factor. But if I want to examine an electron and shine light on it through a microscope, here the light quanta and the electron are of comparable size and mass; as the light photon hits the electron, the photon will change the electron's speed or direction. Thus, there is a lower limit of probable physical interaction where "the disturbance of motion caused by its observation becomes an integral part of the motion itself." (Gamow, p. 141.) But this disturbance becomes significant only when the object being investigated is as small as an atom. Sir James Jeans, Durrell's scientific source, speaks of this subject-object relation

in Physics and Philosophy:

Complete objectivity can only be regained by treating observer and observed as parts of a single system; these must now be supposed to constitute an indivisible whole, which we must now identify with nature, the object of our studies. It now appears that this does not consist of something we perceive, but of our perception; it is not the object of the subject-object relation, but the relation itself. But it is only in the small-scale world of atoms and electrons that this new development makes any appreciable difference; our study of the man-sized world can go on as before. (Jeans 1943, p. 143)

We can see, then, that Durrell has generalized a very specific scientific principle. The Principle of Indeterminacy applies to the interaction between the observer's testing equipment and a very small particle; Durrell makes it apply to the observer and "the course of nature." This process of generalizing the application of a rather limited scientific description is similar to what Durrell did above to the observer's subjective situation. It shows Durrell using the language of science, along with some very specialized concepts, and applying both to everyday life. If, as Durrell believes, the observer's view of reality is affected by his subjective situation, if he cannot observe life without disturbing it, if he and external reality form a unity and he cannot objectivize that reality successfully, then that observer is in a position very similar to Darley's in Justine: Darley is locked in a world of his own subjective preoccupations, disturbing that world by imposing his own patterns and interpretations on it. I

think we have, with these two examples of Durrell's translation of science into life, the beginning of a method which will help us understand Durrell's rationale in The Alexandria Quartet.

The final point I want to make, before turning to Durrell's discussion of time, concerns the cause-and-effect relationship. Durrell says that "Another aspect of the Relativity theory is the manner in which it sidetracks causality." (Key, p. 29) To support this statement, Durrell cites the Principle of Indeterminacy. Speaking of the same principle in The Laws of Nature, R. E. Peierls says:

One of the consequences of the uncertainty principle is that it changes our outlook on the law of causality. By the law of causality, one usually means the statement that the laws of physics determine the fate of a physical system completely, provided that all the relevant information about it is known at one particular instant of time. As we had learnt in Chapter 1, this is certainly true of any purely mechanical system. If, in the solar system, for example, we observe on one day the positions and velocities of all the planets in relation to the sun with perfect accuracy, we could calculate their complete motion at any subsequent or earlier date. . . . The same is true of the laws of electricity. Assume we know at one instant the stage of the electromagnetic field precisely and the motion of any charges contained in it; then the laws of Maxwell explained in Chapter 2 would permit us to predict its future fate. Quantum theory does not deny the statement that we could find the behaviour of our atoms or other mechanical systems at all times if we were given all the information for one particular instant, but it shows it to be quite meaningless because the condition which it assumes can never be met; we cannot ever know the state of the system to an accuracy better than that permitted by the uncertainty principle.  
(Peierls, pp. 171-172)



Causality is affected only when the system being studied is as small as the light quanta used to study it, only when we are dealing with atomic and sub-atomic particles. With the larger mechanical and electrical systems, the uncertainty principle is not a factor. But Durrell, with this slight scientific insight into a specialized instance of disturbed causality, makes a poetic leap into ordinary life and comes up talking Gestalt psychology and Bergsonism. "If reality is somehow extra-causal," he says,

then a whole new vista of ideas is opened up--a territory hitherto only colonized by intuition. If the result of every experiment, of every motion of nature, is completely unforeseen and unpredictable--then everything is perpetually brand new, everything is, if you care to think of it like that, a miracle.  
(Key, p. 30)

I must grant here that Durrell is apparently correct in his application of Einstein, for in the Einsteinian world the individual's space-time coordinates are constantly changing, such that every relationship at every moment of time is new and unpredictable. But in this physical sense the changes are slight, gradual, and--most important--simply physical; on the everyday level this kind of Einsteinian constant change in relative position has little bearing on the life of the individual. Durrell, it seems, is talking about a more realizable newness, a newness more closely associated with mysticism or Bergson's creative evolution than with Einstein's relativity. Every present

situation is a creative interaction between the individual and his environment, an interaction which is "perpetually brand new." In Creative Evolution, Bergson says:

Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And so the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation . . . . From this survival of the past it follows that consciousness cannot go through the same state twice. The circumstances may still be the same, but they will act no longer on the same person, since they find him at a new moment of his history. Our personality, which is being built up at each instant with its accumulated experience, changes without ceasing. (Bergson 1944, pp. 7-8)

It now seems clear that while Durrell uses the words of physics his meaning is closer to that of Bergsonian psychology. Thus, everything is "brand new" and "a miracle," but not because physics has undermined causality; the miracle is due to the psychological uniqueness of every human act. Darcy Kitchin's summary of Bergsonian freedom applies well to Durrell's miracle:

Bergson regards an act as free because it is unique, a new creation, the culmination of a personal history which never repeats itself. It cannot be deduced from a series of causes, because the series is not complete, and the causes cannot be known, until the act has been performed. It springs from the fundamental self, and freedom becomes incredible as soon as the conscious states are separated or spatialised, for they then cease to endure and consequently cease to create. It is the uniqueness of the psychic state, from which the act springs, which makes it free. (Kitchin, p. 134)

Durrell's method up to this point has been to take a specific scientific theory and apply that theory in a

generally psychological way; he also takes from science only what he can use and in many instances avoids mentioning parts of a theory which would negate his application; finally, he follows Sir James Jeans very closely, and Jeans' popularizations often blur the edges. Many of the points dealing with relativity and indeterminacy which Durrell makes in Key can be found in Jeans' summary of his investigation of the atomic nature of radiation and the wave theory of light:

(1) So far as the phenomena are concerned, the uniformity of nature disappears.

(2) Precise knowledge of the outer world becomes impossible for us.

(3) The processes of nature cannot be adequately represented within a framework of space and time.

(4) The division between subject and object is no longer definite or precise; complete precision can only be regained by uniting subject and object into a single whole.

(5) So far as our knowledge is concerned, causality becomes meaningless.

(6) If we still wish to think of the happenings in the phenomenal world as governed by a causal law, we must suppose that these happenings are determined in some substratum of the world which lies beyond the world of phenomena, and so also beyond our access. (Jeans 1943, p. 145)

These six points certainly do seem to disrupt our world.

But, and here is the point which Durrell avoids mentioning, Jeans prefaces these six points with the significant qualification that "It is only in the small-scale world of atoms

and electrons that this new development makes any appreciable difference; our study of the man-sized world can go on as before." (Jeans 1943, p. 143) As far as Durrell is concerned, both in Key and in The Alexandria Quartet, these specialized concepts also affect "our study of the man-sized world."

## II

### Time

Durrell's discussion of time, the second aspect of relativity which interests him, displays a similar translation process. Speaking of Einstein and the new time, Durrell says:

Einstein, in order to give his new theory a shape, suddenly saw that the space and time ideas we were using were not flexible enough to fit the picture. He suggested a marriage of the two into a four-dimensional volume which he called a 'continuum'. Time, then, was given a new role to play--it was not the old extended time of the materialists but a new time-space hybrid. Time and space, fixed together in this manner, gave one a completely new idea of what reality might be. The materialist thought that an object to have existence must take advantage of three dimensions of space: time was added to this picture--very much as the sound-track was added to the cinema, and was made to synchronize with the movement of the actor's lips. But Einstein's time was not a past-present-future object of this kind. It was a sort of time which contained all time in every moment of time. (Key, pp. 28-29)

Durrell adds, within the next few pages, first that "In the space-time continuum, then, time is an 'Is-ness'--a concept which was unknown to the age of [Tennyson's] Ulysses--

except perhaps as always by intuition to certain poets and mystics" and second that "Time has become a thick opaque medium, welded to space--no longer the quickly flowing river of the Christian hymns, moving from here to there along a marked series of stages. But an always-present yet always recurring thing." (Key, pp. 29, 31) We can see from these passages the entire spectrum of Durrell's ideas on time. One interesting point is that this spectrum begins with science and Einstein, blends slowly into Bergsonian psychology, and ends with mysticism and the escape from time. The several steps are as follows: in relativity there is only the present, an "Is-ness"; thus, each moment of time contains all time; time is cyclic, "always recurring," yet "always-present"; the intuition of poets and mystics can apprehend this paradoxical time. This range of ideas on the nature of time shows once again Durrell's tendency to take a strictly scientific idea and to discuss that idea in both psychological and mystical terms.

In Einstein's system, we must remember, time is simply a mathematical variable within the space-time continuum; there is no objective time scale. But we must also remember that Einstein did not distinguish between an external, physical time and an internal, psychological time; Einstein deals exclusively with external clock time. This external time does not flow at a constant rate; but varies

with the relative speeds of two separate observers. The only constant in relativity is the speed of light, the upper limit of all motion. Every object (with or without consciousness), every particle or atom, has a set of space-time coordinates and a velocity relative to an observer. Thus, in any statement describing an object and its motion, an observer must describe that motion (the change from one set of space-time coordinates to another set) in relation to a second object. If I drive a car at sixty miles an hour, I am moving at that speed relative to the ground; if I pass another car which is moving at fifty miles an hour, I am then moving at ten miles an hour relative to the second car. Scientific descriptions, then, must deal with the relationship between the two separate sets of space-time coordinates of the two objects under investigation.

As Bork puts it:

The individual observer clearly distinguishes space and time. But when we consider two or more observers in motion with respect to each other, relativity predicts differing observational results. In particular, two events which appear simultaneous for one observer will not appear simultaneous for another moving with respect to the first. Two observers will assign different values to a measurement of length when they have a relative velocity; and in the same situation they will assign different numerical values to an interval of time. . . . It is in these rather specialized situations that the results of an observation are "relative" to the observer. (Bork, p. 198)

Thus, Einstein's relativity deals with the relation between

two or more objects; time, in this system, is an external variable, differing for each observation. It is not, as Durrell says, "a sort of time which contained all time in every moment of time."

Durrell's idea that Einstein's time is an is-ness comes from Sir James Jeans' discussion of time in The Mysterious Universe. Jeans, as we will see, presents a misleading discussion of time by failing to distinguish between time as a mathematical variable and time as a psychological perception. He begins by speaking of the world lines of large bodies like the sun and earth. "The world line of the sun," he says, "traces out the position of the sun in space which corresponds to each instant of time." (Jeans 1935, p. 138) These lines are like cables containing many fine threads. Thus, "The world line of a large body like the sun is formed of innumerable smaller world lines, the world lines of the separate atoms of which the sun is composed. Here and there these fine threads enter and leave the main cable as an atom is swallowed up by, or ejected from, the sun." (Jeans 1935, pp. 138-139) As the world lines move in the direction of time, "its various threads forever shift about in space and so change their places relative to one another." (Jeans 1935, p. 139) The world line of the earth, of course, would be represented by a cable smaller than that for the sun; this cable would be

"made up of several strands, these representing the mountains, trees, aeroplanes, human bodies and so on, the aggregate of which makes up the earth. Each strand which represents a human body does not differ in any observable essentials from the other strands." (Jeans 1935, p. 139)

This picture of the physical world is represented diagrammatically in Figures 1 and 2, following Jeans and Gamow respectively. These diagrams show that at any instant of time within this system there are corresponding positions in space. The world line thus enables us to picture the physical duration of the sun and earth; this physical duration is, in fact, what is meant by a space-time continuum, the continuous positioning of an object in space and time.

Up to this point Jeans has restricted his discussion to the physical existence of atoms and conglomerates of atoms like the human body, the earth, or the sun. On this purely physical level there is no mention of time either as past-present-future or as "Is-ness." Relativity simply states, to quote Jeans, that

It is impossible to separate the space from the time in any absolute manner. In other words the continuum is one in which space and time are so completely welded together, so perfectly merged into one, that the laws of nature make no distinction between them. . . . (Jeans 1935, p. 121)

Thus, when we talk about world lines, objects, relative positions and speeds, we remain in a purely physical world, a world in which time cannot be separated from space and



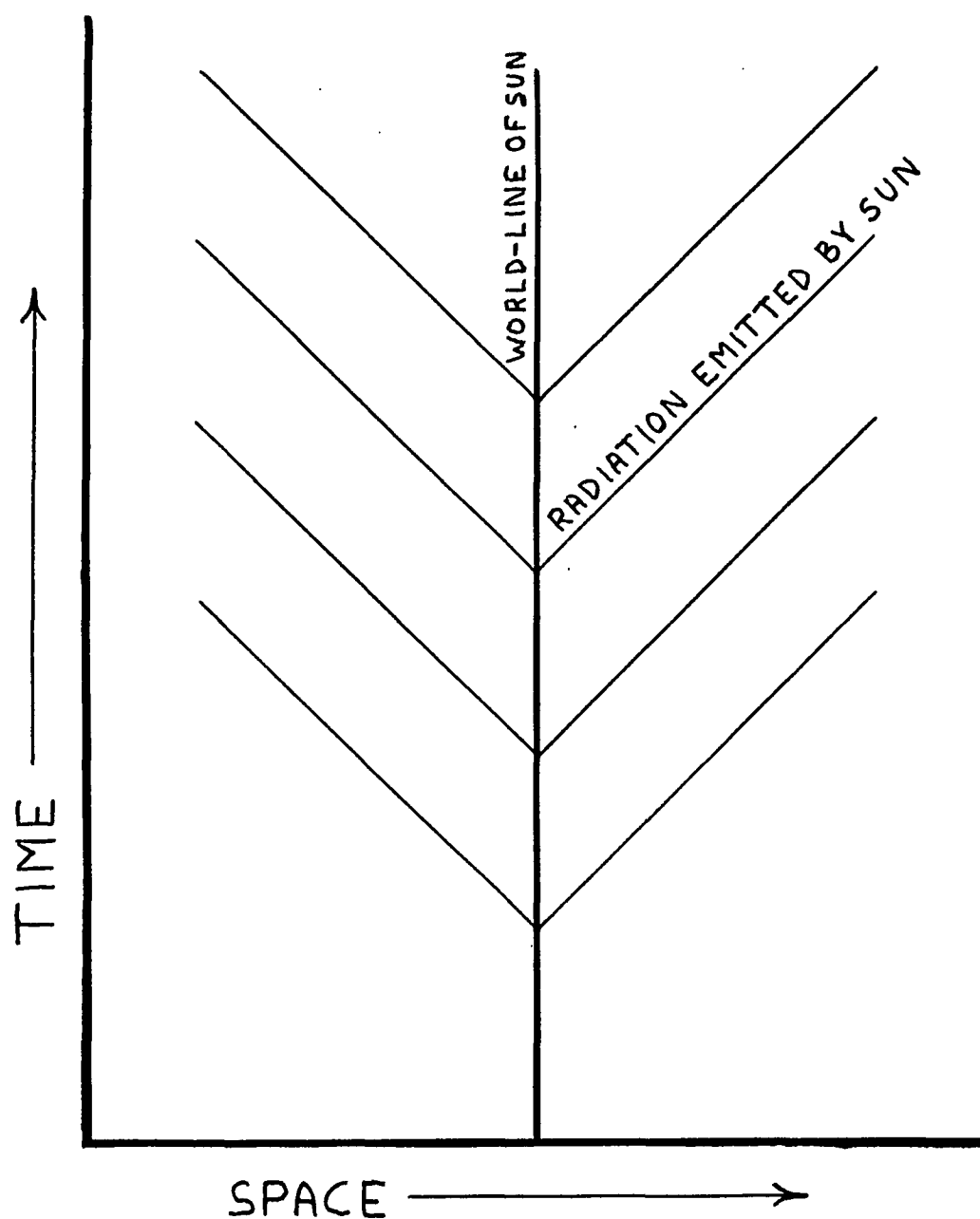


Fig. 1. The World-Line of the Sun and Its Radiation in Space and Time (Jeans 1935, fig. 3, p. 140)

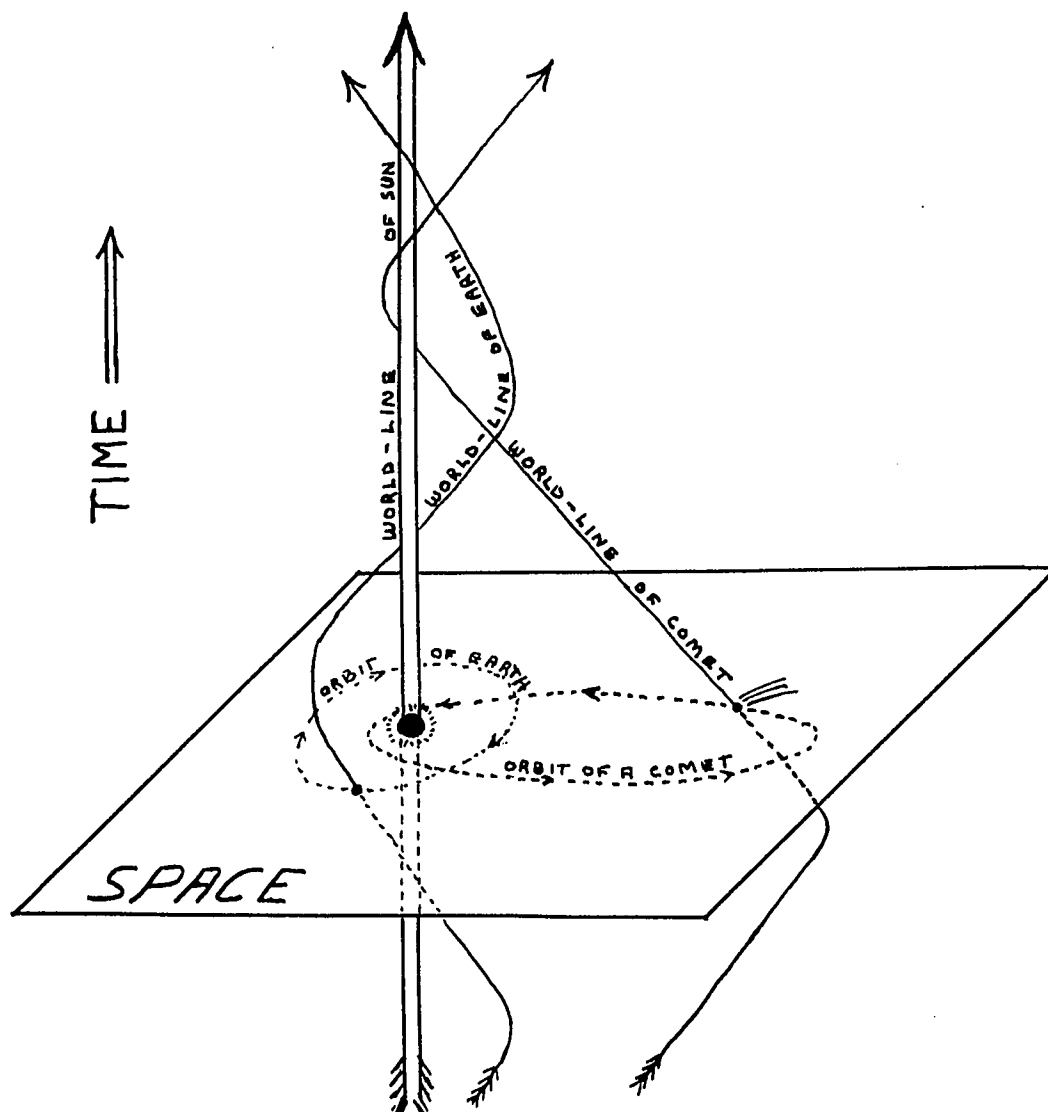


Fig. 2. The World-Lines of the Sun, Earth, and a Comet and a Two-Dimensional Plane of Space Representing Any Given Instant in Time (Gamow, fig. 30, p. 77)

hence cannot be divided into past, future, or is-ness. In a sense, we are describing a world that "is" at every moment in time; and scientifically every experiment is a new one because the space-time coordinates of both observer and observed are constantly changing in the relativistic scheme. But this "is-ness," this eternal present, describes a physical, not a psychological, state.

Jeans, however, confuses this complex situation by introducing consciousness. In the above discussion of physical relativity within the space-time continuum, consciousness does not play a part, and we remember that Jeans says that the world line of a human body "does not differ in any observable essentials" from any other world line, animate or inanimate. Yet, he goes on to say that consciousness is "something residing entirely outside the picture, and making contact with it only along the world lines of our bodies." (Jeans 1935, p. 141) He has therefore shifted the discussion to psychological perception and away from the strictly physical description he dealt with earlier. "Your consciousness," he goes on to say,

touches the picture only along your world line, mine along my world line, and so on. The effect produced by this contact is primarily one of the passage of time; we feel as if we were being dragged along our world lines so as to experience the different points on it, which represent our states at the different instants of time, in turn. (Jeans 1935, p. 141)

The problem here is one of mixed media. Jeans is saying

that each individual has a different physical existence, a different world line. These differing world lines make our separate interpretations of reality subjective--but subjective in that the subject is in a different position, physically speaking, from any other subject. Yet what Jeans leaves out is that each subject is also psychologically unique. This psychological subjectivity is not Jeans' topic, but once he starts to speak of subjective awareness of the passage of time, he is no longer in Einstein's world, a world in which the psychological perception of time is not a factor. The topic has been shifted, in fact, from the space-time continuum of physical objects to the psychological perception of time in man. It is a process in which the Einsteinian physical duration in a space-time continuum has become Bergsonian psychological duration, the psychologically subjective consciousness of an individual.

Bergson's idea of the two times will perhaps clarify this shift from physical to psychological time. Bergson, in all his works, distinguished between an external clock time, which he called "spatialized" time, and an internal, lived time, which he called "duration." As he says in Duration and Simultaneity, "There is a simple real time, and the others are imaginary. What, indeed, is a real time, if not a time lived or able to be lived? What

is an unreal, auxiliary, imaginary time if not one that cannot actually be lived by anything or anyone?" (Bergson 1965, p. 77) This durational inner flow is the function of becoming; outer clock time is the function of being. Thus, outer clock time deals with the static, unlived states and can only give us unreal snapshots of reality momentarily and conveniently stopped in its durational flow; intuition, duration, and becoming all deal with and reflect the actual, lived experience. The true nature of man, so Bergson tells us in Creative Evolution, is change:

Now, life is evolution. We concentrate a period of this evolution in a stable view which we call a form, and, when the change has become considerable enough to overcome the fortunate inertia of our perception, we say that the body has changed form. But in reality, the body is changing form at every moment; or rather, there is no form, since form is immobility and the reality is movement. What is real is the continual change of form: form is only a snapshot view of a transition. (Bergson 1944, p. 328.)

Einstein's relativity deals exclusively with spatialized clock time and is intelligible only in those terms. Sir James Jeans, on the other hand, begins his discussion of world lines and the space-time continuum with this spatialized time and then shifts his discussion to time as durational flow. It is this shifting from external clock time to internal psychological perception in Jeans' discussion which presents the ambiguity in Jeans' explanations and which is similarly reflected in Durrell's formation of his own theories. I have already mentioned

Durrell's tendency to shift the spatial application of Einstein's relativity from the purely physical, scientific, and mathematical aspects to the psychological and metaphoric aspects. Durrell makes a comparable shift in his discussion of time.

In working out his ideas on the nature of time, Durrell quotes Jeans' The Mysterious Universe; I quote the passage in full, bracketing the section which Durrell omitted:

It may be that time, from its beginning to the end of eternity, is spread before us in the picture, but we are in contact with only one instant; just as the bicycle-wheel is in contact with only one point of the road. [Then, as Weyl puts it, events do not happen; we merely come across them. Or,] as Plato expressed it twenty-three centuries earlier in the *Timaeus*: the past and future are created species of time which we unconsciously but wrongly transfer to the eternal essence. We say "was," "is," "will be," but the truth is that "is" can alone properly be used. (Jeans 1935, pp. 141-142; Key, p. 29)

It is with this quotation that Durrell substantiates his ideas on the new time. But this passage, as I have mentioned, deals with consciousness, with our awareness of time, not with the nature of time as a part of the space-time continuum. From this passage Durrell gets his notions of the "Is-ness" of time. But we can see that the "Is-ness" Jeans refers to in Plato, like his own image of the wheel, deals with the conscious awareness of time in the present. Durrell, in his turn, already prone to convert

physics to psychology, says that "Einstein's time was not a past-present-future object," that "It was a sort of time which contained all time in every moment of time," and finally that "In the space-time continuum, then, time is an 'Is-ness'." (Key, pp. 28-29) It is my feeling that Jeans leaves physics behind when he begins to speak about awareness of time and that Durrell, following Jeans and never very close to physics anyway, speaks of time in entirely psychological terms. This idea of the psychological is-ness of time does not have the slightest thing to do with Einstein's relativity or a space-time continuum. But it is an integral part of Bergsonian psychology. Durrell, in an attempt to credit Einstein as a literary force while discrediting Bergson, translates Einstein's physics into Bergson's psychology, but still calls it Einsteinian physics. His next step, as we shall see later, will be to posit the possibility of transcending this new time and of leaping into the greater reality of what he calls the "heraldic universe."

Up to this point, then, Durrell has been following Jeans rather closely. Bork feels that Durrell was attracted to Jeans for what Bork calls Jeans' "intricate mixture of popularization of science and his own personal philosophy, often bordering on an almost pythagorean view of the nature of mathematics and science." (Bork, p. 192) But in

Physics and Philosophy Jeans' view of mathematics leads to a barrier between the human situation and an unknowable ultimate reality:

The study of physics has driven us to the positivist conception of physics. We can never understand what events are, but must limit ourselves to describing the pattern of events in mathematical terms. . . . Physicists who are trying to understand nature may work in many different fields and by many different methods; one may dig, one may sow, one may reap. But the final harvest will always be a sheaf of mathematical formulae. These will never describe nature itself, but only our observation on nature. Our studies can never put us into contact with reality; we can never penetrate beyond the impression that reality implants in our minds. (Jeans 1943, p. 15)

Man can only experience reality through his senses and then formulate mathematical expressions of those sense impressions. But these mathematical formulas themselves are merely descriptive. Durrell, on the other hand, feels that the mathematical formulas are the barrier. He says, "But what of the new space-time idea? We find ourselves up against the barrier of mathematics. Unless we understand the equations, they tell us, we will never understand the relativity principle." (Key, p. 34) Durrell's answer to this problem, a process I have been discussing, is to turn mathematics into metaphor: "The physicist deplores any attempt to deal with space-time in metaphors. Relativity, he claims, is a purely mathematical theory and can only be understood by mathematicians." (Key, p. 32) The physicist has left us embedded, so Durrell says, "in Euclidean space



and time, while his own imagination is busy with the new realm. I do not see why lack of mathematical ability should prevent us from discovering what he is thinking."

(Key, p. 32) Durrell sidesteps this problem of a mathematical barrier by turning to the renaissance philosopher Giordano Bruno because "He had to depend on images and metaphors to express his view of the universe" and because "being forced to think in terms of analogy and metaphor he is better able to give us a picture of the simultaneity, so to speak, of time, than a mathematician would be." (Key, pp. 34-35) Durrell also turns to Bruno because "He resembles Einstein in one thing--he threw Aristotle overboard."

(Key, p. 34) Interestingly enough, the three quotations from Bruno in Key, the sources of which Durrell does not identify,<sup>2</sup> deal exactly with those things he has been trying to find in modern science: the is-ness of time, the

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2. I have not been able to locate the sources of these three quotations either in Bruno's writing or in commentary on his writing. I have, however, found in Antoinette Mann Paterson's work on Bruno, The Infinite Worlds of Giordano Bruno, that Durrell is accurately representing Bruno's ideas in Key. Paterson calls Bruno "the father of relativity," telling us that for Bruno, "each man's intellectual-sensible sun (his brain, his process of reasoning) is the center of his private universe; his knowledge of the macrocosm from this particular frame of reference is for him correct, and the other fellow's knowledge of the macrocosm is correct for him." (Paterson, p. 34) Further, in establishing a philosophical continuity between Bruno and Einstein, Paterson quotes from the 1942 Cambridge edition of Sir James Jeans' Physics and Philosophy (p. 59)--a work which Durrell both knew and quoted--wherein Jeans says that Bruno, "discussing space and time in their astronomical

continual present, and the space-time continuum or the duration of both matter and time. Durrell's first Bruno quotation tells us that "In every point of duration is beginning without end, and end without beginning. It is the centre of two infinities. Therefore the whole of duration is one infinite instant, both beginning and end, as immeasurable space is an infinite minimum or centre." (Key, p. 35) This is Durrell's "Is-ness," not "a past-present-future object" but "a sort of time which contained all time

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aspects argued that the words 'above' and 'below', 'at rest' and 'in motion' become meaningless in the world of eternally revolving suns and planets which know of no fixed centre. Thus all motion is relative--as Einstein subsequently convinced the world--and absolute space and time must be figments of the imagination." (Paterson, p. 49) Finally, I have noted not only a theoretical consistency but a striking similarity between Durrell's short summary in Key of the difference between Aristotle and Bruno and a quotation in Paterson's book on the same subject from Xénia Atanassiévitch's La Doctrine Métaphysique et Géométrie de Bruno. (pp. 3-4) Durrell writes, "For [Bruno] the space and time which Aristotle had regarded as finite in duration and extent though infinitely divisible--took on other proportions. They were unlimited in their dimensions yet consisted of discrete minimal parts." (Key, p. 35) In Paterson's quotation and translation of Atanassiévitch we find: ". . . Aristotle affirms that in the universe matter is divisible to infinity, and that by its division one can in no way arrive at ultimate indivisible parts, just as is the case with time and space, which, although they are finite above, are divisible to infinity. According to Bruno, on the contrary, although the addition of parts of matter can be carried on to infinity, one must arrive by subtraction at ultimate parts which are no longer divisible. Thus Aristotle is the representative of the theory of the finite above and the infinite below. Bruno, however, professes the theory of the infinite above and of the finite below: the infinite universe is the most elevated unity and the last of the infinite number of indivisible monads." (Paterson, pp. 9-10)

in every moment of time." The second quotation from Bruno tells us that God "is not like a finite agent, doing things one by one, with many acts--an infinite number of acts for an infinite number of things--but he does everything, past, present, and future, with one simple and unique act." (Key, p. 35) God, then, is the still point of T. S. Eliot's poetry, duration as is-ness; His nature parallels Durrell's conception of time. From the final Bruno quotation, this time on the monad, we find that "Nothing variable or composite consists at two moments of time wholly of the same parts and the same order of parts; since efflux and influx of atoms is continuous, and therefore not even from primary integrating parts will you be able to name a thing as the same twice." (Key, p. 35) Here we have both the view of time as "always-present yet always recurring" and the view of matter in a state of flux so that "everything is perpetually brand new, everything is, if you care to think of it like that, a miracle."

This, then, is the final step in Durrell's process of translating mathematics into metaphor, or starting with Einstein and ending with Bruno. During a discussion of Eliot's "Four Quartets," Durrell quotes the first ten lines of "Burnt Norton":

Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future,  
And time future contained in time past.  
If all time is eternally present

All time is unredeemable.  
 What might have been is an abstraction  
 Remaining a perpetual possibility  
 Only in a world of speculation.  
 What might have been and what has been  
 Point to one end, which is always present.

Of these lines, Durrell writes in Key:

These opening lines from "Burnt Norton" will remind you of much that I have already said about time: time as the physicist is beginning to understand it, time as Bruno thought of it. All time suspended in an instant of time, always renewing itself yet standing quite still. This is the main preoccupation of the four poems. But in the light of this new awareness, this new time, everything changes its shape and meaning--the past no less than the future, and the poet begins the long trek back through memory and association, to try and paint a picture of his life in terms of the new time he has experienced. (Key, p. 156)

Here again we see Durrell pointing to science as a literary influence, but, in this instance, using science in what can only be described as a mystical and definitely non-scientific way. Durrell's commentary on Eliot and the nature of time seems to derive, as I have shown, directly from Bruno and not from the physical sciences. Durrell seems determined, in his own work and in his commentary, to prove that "these extraordinary descriptions of a territory which we thought inhabited only by visionaries and mystics, are now coming upon us with something like scientific approval." (Key, p. 156) His constant translations of science into mysticism are central to many of Durrell's ideas, especially his attempt to have us see, as he does, "the sciences and religions converging upon a single objective." (Key, pp. 156-157)

In turning from Einstein to Bruno, Durrell also leaves out Bergson as an obvious link. Shiv Kumar's comment in Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel gives us a good indication of Bergson's own interest in the way we experience reality:

According to Bergson, there are two ways of knowing reality: one adopts a point of view in relation to an object and "stops at the relative", while the other seeks an intuitive identification with the object in an effort to "possess the original."  
(Kumar, p. 19)

Here we find the Einsteinian alternative which "stops at the relative" and the mystic alternative which tries to "possess the original" intuitively. Bergson associates the former alternative with intelligence and the latter with instinct or intuition. In Creative Evolution he says:

Instinct is sympathy. . . . For . . . intelligence and instinct are turned in opposite directions, the former toward inert matter, the latter toward life. Intelligence, by means of science, which is its work, will deliver up to us more and more completely the secret of physical operations; of life it brings us, and moreover only claims to bring us, a translation in terms of inertia. It goes all round life, taking from outside the greatest possible number of views of it, drawing it into itself instead of entering into it. But it is to the very inwardness of life that intuition leads us--by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely.  
(Bergson 1944, p. 194)

It seems to be that the barrier which Jeans sees between man and his reality is implicit in the scientific approach; it also seems that the leap into reality which Durrell

speaks about is similar to Bergson's intuition.

Durrell's interest in Bruno's mysticism is, in a sense, the logical conclusion of his interest in science. He says:

In listening to me you must adopt some of the humility of the modern scientist for whom there are no more 'facts' but simple 'point-events' strung out in reality. The relations we see, or think we see, between ideas are only useful if we use them as spring-boards from which to jump into reality ourselves. (Key, p. 39)

Jeans, you will remember, said that there is a barrier between man and reality. But at one point in Physics and Philosophy he does indicate the possibility of a mystical-scientific union with a reality beyond sense impressions. I quote, for clarity, the entire passage from Jeans, of which Durrell quotes only the second paragraph:

In the particle-picture, which depicts the phenomenal world, each particle and each photon is a distinct individual going its own way. When we pass one stage further towards reality we come to the wave-picture. Photons are no longer independent individuals, but members of a single organization or whole--a beam of light--in which their separate individualities are merged, not merely in a superficial sense in which an individual is lost in a crowd, but rather as a raindrop is lost in the sea. The same is true of electrons; in the wave-picture these lose their separate individualities and become fractions of a continuous current of electricity. In each case, space and time are inhabited by distinct individuals, but when we pass beyond space and time, from the world of phenomena towards reality, individuality is replaced by community.

It seems at least conceivable that what is true of perceived objects may also be true of perceiving minds; just as there are wave-pictures for light

and electricity, so there may be a corresponding picture for consciousness. When we view ourselves in space and time, our consciousnesses are obviously the separate individuals of a particle-picture, but when we pass beyond space and time, they may perhaps form ingredients of a single continuous stream of life. As it is with light and electricity, so it may be with life; the phenomena may be individuals carrying on separate existences in space and time, while in the deeper reality beyond space and time we may all be members of one body. In brief, modern physics is not altogether antagonistic to an objective idealism like that of Hegel. (Jeans 1943, p. 204)

Here we have, reflected in Jeans' comment, Durrell's true interest in a reality beyond physics. Interestingly enough, Bergson too indicates the possibility of what he calls a universal duration, a coming together of all the individual durations. In Duration and Simultaneity, he writes:

We perceive the physical world and this perception appears, rightly or wrongly, to be inside and outside us at one and the same time; in one way, it is a state of consciousness; in another, a surface film of matter in which perceiver and perceived coincide. To each moment of our inner life there thus corresponds a moment of our body and of all environing matter that is "simultaneous" with it; this matter then seems to participate in our conscious duration. Gradually, we extend this duration to the whole physical world, because we see no reason to limit it to the immediate vicinity of our body. The universe seems to us to form a single whole; and, if the part that is around us endures in our manner, the same must hold, we think, for that part by which it, in turn, is surrounded, and so on indefinitely. Thus is born the idea of a duration of the universe, that is to say, of an impersonal consciousness that is the link among all individual consciousnesses, as between these consciousnesses and the rest of nature. Such a consciousness would grasp, in a single, instantaneous perception, multiple events lying at

different points in space; simultaneity would be precisely the possibility of two or more events entering within a single, instantaneous perception. (Bergson 1965, p. 45)

Yet, whether we look at this cosmic mysticism in terms of Jeans or Bergson, we can see that in Durrell's construction of a workable "science-fiction," science is actually only a stepping stone which enables him "to jump into reality." As I have tried to show, Durrell's use of science is first psychologically and second mystically oriented. He pointedly differentiates between the absolute materialism of the nineteenth century and the space-time relativity of the twentieth century. Once he has clearly established the world of the relative, his next move is to jump beyond the relative into what might be called cosmic simultaneity. This is exactly the process which Darley goes through in The Alexandria Quartet. He begins with an absolutist approach to character in Justine, based on personal and psychoanalytical methods; he believes that he can capture and codify what people are. In Balthazar and through Mountolive (assuming, as I believe and will later discuss, that Darley is the narrator of Mountolive), Darley is firmly established in the relative and fully exploits that method of character portrayal in the second and third novels. The Justine story, by the end of that novel, stands initially as an absolutist version; during the writing of Balthazar, however, Darley begins to see the Justine



story as another relative version; Mountolive, the seemingly objective view, completes the relative picture. But in Clea Darley enters into the "here and now," the continual present of creative living, and experiences a psychomythical possession of his total self and his new reality; it is what Durrell calls "the non-personality attitude to the human being." (Paris Review, p. 58)<sup>3</sup> By the time Darley finishes Clea, Durrell has enabled Darley to integrate into a total self the fractured and unknowable segments of his personality. In one sense, then, the first three space novels correspond to three different, fragmented, relative portions of Darley's make-up; and if Durrell's true interest was in portraying the relativity of life, he would have stopped with Mountolive. But, just as Darley needs the return to Alexandria in Clea to discover the limitations of relativity and the true depths of his own person, so, too, Durrell needs Clea as a means of negating total relativity and as a means of awakening in the reader the sleeping artist. Durrell needs Darley's transformation in Clea, especially with the change in sexual orientation: the symbolic sex act--"life-saving, life-giving," says Durrell--provides an "awakening of the psychic forces latent in the human being," an awakening which Durrell calls "poetic illumination." ("Kneller Tape," pp. 161-162) Durrell could have stopped with Mountolive at Bergson's

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3. References to the 1960 Paris Review interview (XXII, 33-61)--listed in Literature Cited under Durrell, "The Art of Fiction"--will appear in the text as Paris Review.

"relative" or in Key with Einstein's relativity; but, instead, he continues in Clea with Bergson's intuition, with archetypic drama, and in Key with Oriental mysticism. Durrell's comments in the Paris Review interview touch on the true direction of his thought:

Eastern and Western metaphysics are coming to a point of confluence in the most interesting way. It seems unlikely in a way, but nevertheless the two major architects of this break-through have been Einstein and Freud. Einstein torpedoed the old Victorian material universe--in other words, the view of matter--and Freud torpedoed the idea of the stable ego so that personality began to diffuse. Thus, in the concept of the space-time continuum you've got an absolutely new concept of what reality might be, do you see? . . . I call [The Alexandria Quartet] a continuum, though in fact it can't be quite accurate in the sense that Mercator's projection represents a sphere; it's a continuum but isn't one, if you see what I mean. So that really this is only a kind of demonstration of a possible continuum. But the thoughts which followed from it, and which I hope will be sort of--visible, as it were, in the construction of the thing, will be first of all, the ego as a series of masks, which Freud started, a de-personalization which was immediately carried over the border by Jung and Groddeck and company to end up where . . . but in Hindu metaphysics. In other words, the non-personality attitude to the human being is a purely Eastern one: it is a confluence that is now approaching in psychology. Simultaneously, this fascinating theory of indeterminacy . . . is precisely the same thing in space-time physics, so to speak. So that I regard those two things as the cosmological touchpoints, as it were, of our attitude to reality today. In other words, I see Eastern and Western metaphysics getting jolly close together. (Paris Review, pp. 57-58)

Freudian psychology and space-time science end up in Hindu metaphysics; in Durrell's world, physics leads to metaphysics and ego leads to ego-loss.

## III

Ego

Durrell turns next in Key to a discussion of Freud in a chapter entitled "The World Within." In his attempt to join together inner and outer reality, Durrell sees a similarity between physics and psychology:

while the outside view of things was changing under the impact of new ideas and discoveries in physics, the ego was also being explored. . . . The same forces which were inquiring into the structure of the universe were also busy extending the domains of our understanding within the boundaries of the self. (Key, pp. 49-50)

Durrell continues his discussion with a historical survey of Freudian thought and the psychoanalytical movement.

While the physical world was thought to consist solely of matter, so man was thought to consist of mind and body; mind, in the pre-Freudian era, was the ego, an entity as discrete and autonomous as matter. Freud's investigations, initially with hypnosis and hysteria, enabled him to hypothesize the existence of the unconscious and to investigate the dream as a poetical expression of unconscious thoughts. Durrell is delighted to find in Freud's analysis of dream processes that the dream "has its own attitude to space and time!" (Key, p. 55) Finally, speaking of the effect of Freudian theory on literature, Durrell says that "Poetry and prose alike began to borrow the colours of the

dream, and the new ideas of time can be seen in the loosening causal connections of the action." (Key, p. 68)

Durrell's discussion of Freud indicates once again his method of taking what he needs from a given body of knowledge and applying those selections to his own theory. As with Einstein's relativity where Durrell borrows certain aspects only and applies them in a non-scientific way, so too with Freud: Durrell's primary concern is to show that Freudian theory affects our ideas of time and the ego. Ironically, however, Durrell eventually rejects both Einsteinian relativity and Freudian causation in favor of the more mystical, unifying, and vitalist theories of Bruno and Groddeck. This pattern of selective application and eventual rejection is one of the keys to his method in the Quartet. In the larger scheme of the Quartet, Durrell firmly establishes Darley in the Einsteinian world of the relative and then makes Darley's success as an artist contingent upon his escaping from the relative and transcending time in Clea. In this last novel, Darley says, "It was now only 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'." (Clea, p. 177) And in a smaller context, Durrell takes Darley through a complete acceptance of the Freudian

method of character analysis in Justine with Arnauti's novel Moeurs, only to have Darley reject that method partially in Balthazar and completely in Clea; for Freudian analysis of character motivation, with its cause-and-effect methodology, can give only one facet of personality, one mechanistic explanation of action. But in Clea, Darley comes to see that "If two or more explanations of a single human action are as good as each other then what does action mean but an illusion . . ." (Clea, p. 176) These problems will be discussed more fully in a subsequent chapter; I wish here to indicate simply that Durrell's relativity and Freudianism are temporary or intermediate stages, that they are "spring-boards from which to jump into reality ourselves." (Key, p. 39)

Durrell's praise for Freud, his rejection of Freud's approach, and his interest in spiritual reintegration are then three important concerns which carry over into The Alexandria Quartet. Justine is Durrell's most Freudian novel. In that first novel of the Quartet Durrell has locked his hero Darley in the Freudian world of cause and effect. Darley's central concern is to solve the enigma of his love for Justine; he wants "completely to rebuild this city in my brain" (Justine, p. 15), to find "the meaning of the pattern" (Justine, p. 17), to set down on paper a reality which can be "recorded, reworked and

made to show its significant side." (Justine, p. 17) To complete this task of rebuilding and reordering, Darley filters all the facts through his own romantic ego and then accepts the distorted result as the truth. Everything in the novel is colored by his love for Justine; in fact Darley in Justine is very much like a personification of the Freudian ego, for he wants to interpret the world and reshape it in his own image, making all the action revolve around himself. He sees himself as central in a world of his own remaking.

The influence of Freud can also be seen in Arnauti's novel, Moeurs. This novel, reputedly about Justine, employs an exclusively psychoanalytical approach to character. Claudia-Justine is analysed and categorized in the terms of Freudian psychoanalysis. Clea's reaction against Moeurs is interesting, for it lays the foundation for Darley's own rejection of both the psychological approach and the relative life. Clea says:

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. (Justine, p. 77)

This is the lesson which Darley must learn; it is a lesson he does not learn until after he has struggled through Justine, Balthazar, and Mountolive. But in the context of

Justine, what both he and Arnauti are doing with Justine is portraying only one part of her personality and thinking that that part is the "real" Justine. It is this basic mistake in emphasis which Darley must learn. As Darley says in Balthazar, reflecting back on his love for Justine, "The really horrible thing is that the compulsive passion which Justine lit in me was quite as valuable as it would have been had it been 'real'." (Balthazar, p. 140) The "truths" which Darley and Arnauti discover about Justine are still truths in their respective contexts of emotional involvement and psychiatric distance. But they are truths about Justine; they are not Justine. More importantly, they are truths about the two writers. Yet neither Darley nor Arnauti has the ability to see just how partial his vision of Justine is. In each case, the writer renders Justine's character "within the frame of reference of a psychology or a philosophy." What Darley must learn to deal with is exactly "those elements which lie outside the relative life"; and part of the price which Durrell makes him pay is the rejection of the Freudian or psychoanalytical approach to character and the acceptance of the relatively unstructured process of creative reintegration, largely based on Durrell's reading of Groddeck. In stating the difference between Freud and Groddeck in Key, Durrell gives us a rough-sketch before-and-after version of Darley:

With Freud we penetrate more deeply into the cognitive [sic] process. With Groddeck we learn the mystery of participation with a world of which we are a part and from which the pretensions of the ego have sought to amputate us. The difference is a radical one. (Key, p. 78)

The Darley of Justine is isolated, amputated from his own past, neatly and egocentrically reordering his life from his island; yet, even without the physical isolation of the island, he would still be locked in his own ego-island. In Clea, Darley leaves his island to participate in a world of which he is now a part; and with Clea he acts out the psychic drama which leads to his own reintegration as a man, lover, artist, and avatar. Part of the crucial underwater scene in Clea, in fact, resembles the mystical descriptions of ego-loss. Darley, initially a mock-up of the Freudian ego, leaves the Quartet a whole man.

Part of the reason for Darley's integration is based on the psycho-mystical underwater drama which probably originates from Durrell's interest in the bisexuality of the psyche, a concept common to modern psychology and Eastern religion. As Durrell puts it, "investigations into the unconscious lead us to attribute bisexuality to the psyche; it also reminds us that the Eastern Gods were bisexual. Scientific fact and myth marry up at this point." (Key, p. 152) This idea has interesting implications for Durrell; he points out that while "Eliot appears to owe no debt to Freud, yet it is worth noting that in The Waste



Land the personae behave like characters in a dream, changing their attributes and shapes; and that Tiresias is a bisexual symbol." (Key, p. 146) In this context it is also worth noting in The Alexandria Quartet that Scobie is Durrell's comic Tiresias, that Justine is described in her female and male attributes, and that Darley and Clea act out Darley's own psycho-mythical integration of his male and female parts. One of Durrell's central concerns in the Quartet, then, is the reconciliation of relative truths implicit in the relative life, a reconciliation which takes place beyond the relative, in his "heraldic universe"; there is a corresponding resolution of psychic and mythic opposites which takes place on a personal level in the "total self" of Jung and Groddeck. It is this central concern which leads Durrell away from the rigidity of Freud's mechanistic concept of the psyche and toward Groddeck's "vitalist attitude to the ego and its problems." (Key, p. 71) In a sense, then, Durrell uses his discussion of Freud in Key as a transition from the cosmic integration implicit in his discussion of Jeans and Bruno to his interest in the synthetic theories of Jung, the Occult, Eastern religions, and his discussion of Groddeck in the next chapter of Key called "Beyond the Ego."

Basic to Groddeck's system is his concept of the "It." Durrell says, "Freud saw the psyche as an intricate

two-piece mechanism, consisting of conscious and unconscious. To Groddeck the ego and its works were functions of something else." (Key, p. 73) This something else is the "It." Durrell, quoting<sup>4</sup> from The World of Man, gives one of Groddeck's rare attempts at a definition of the It:

The sum total of an individual human being, physical, mental and spiritual, the organism with all its force, the microcosmos, the universe which is a man, I conceive of as self unknown and forever unknowable, and I call this 'The It', as the most indefinite term available without either emotional or intellectual associations. The It-hypothesis I regard, not as a truth,--for what do any of us know about absolute Truth?--but as a useful tool in work and life; it has stood the test of years of medical work and experiment and so far nothing has happened which would lead me to abandon it or even to modify it in any essential degree. I assume that man is animated by the It which directs what he does and what he goes through, and that the assertion 'I live' only expresses a small and superficial part of the total experience 'I am lived by the It' . . . (Key, p. 74; Groddeck 1951, p. 73)

Man, then, is controlled by this unknown force in him, the It, which Durrell says, "antedates all our intellectual apparatus, our conceptual mechanism." (Key, p. 79) Later, with the growth of the ego, Durrell says that "we

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4. Though Durrell does not identify the sources of his quotations from Groddeck, I have been able to locate them. In checking Durrell's quotations against the Groddeck originals, I have found--in addition to minor deviations--that Durrell occasionally pieces these quotations together, drawing on selections that are several pages apart; despite this overworking of the ellipsis mark, Durrell neither violates the sense of the original, nor does he leave out either significant or non-Durrellian information. In the parenthetical references to Durrell's quotations from Groddeck in the text I will nonetheless cite the pages from both Key and Groddeck's works.

persuade ourselves that our reasoning powers belong to our personality as private property." (Key, p. 79) In a composite quotation, again from The World of Man, Durrell focuses on Groddeck's remarks on the ability of the ego to convince itself that it is in control:

Over and against the It stands the ego, the I, which I take to be merely the tool of the It, but which we are forced to regard as the It's master, for whatever we say in theory there remains always for us men the final verdict 'I am I' . . . We cannot get away from it, and even while I assert the proposition to be false I am obliged to act as if it were true. Yet I am by no means I, but only a continuously changing form in which my 'It' displays itself, and the 'I' feeling is just one of its many ways of deceiving the conscious mind and making it a pliant tool . . . I go so far as to believe that every single separate cell has this consciousness of individuality, every tissue, every organic system. In other words every It-unit can deceive itself, if it likes, into thinking of itself as an individuality, a person, an I. (Key, pp. 79-80; Groddeck 1951, pp. 77, 82, 83)

Durrell goes on to hypothesize that if every cell "has its It-ego polarity, and the whole individual his, so also could any body or community develop its own." (Key, p. 81) If we can speak of the state of the nation, if we can imagine a national ego, "why not a national It?" (Key, p. 81) This will become a key idea in the Quartet, for Durrell portrays Alexandria as the ruling It, a portrait based partially on D. H. Lawrence's spirit of place and partially on Groddeck's communal It.

Behind all of this for Durrell is the identity of warring opposites, the ego-It polarity. He sees Groddeck's

polarity as "a brilliant rationalization of the Eastern mystic's position--who seeks to free himself from the opposites of being, and to emerge into Reality." (Key, p. 83) Here is Durrell's primary interest, the resolution of opposites. In terms of the physical sciences, he wants to resolve the scientific relativism of time into an is-ness, a kind of time known "always by intuition to certain poets and mystics," a kind of time that is beyond the simple equations of space and time; his true interest is to transcend time. In terms of psychology, he seeks to resolve Freud's unconscious contradictory impulses and "the ego as a series of masks" into Groddeck's spiritual reintegration. Durrell finds in Groddeck's ego-It polarity a concept whose "keynote is reintegration and acceptance of warring opposites" (Key, p. 83), a concept which will provide him with several of the major themes in the Quartet. We can see, for instance, in the following quotation from Groddeck's Exploring the Unconscious the theoretical foundations of Durrell's negation of the relative in the one-sidedness of Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive and his affirmation of the whole in The Alexandria Quartet as a "word continuum."

Every observation is necessarily one-sided, every opinion a falsification. The act of observing disintegrates a whole into different fields of observation, whilst in order to arrive at an opinion one must first dissect a whole and then disregard certain parts. . . . At the present time we are trying to recover the earlier conception of a unit, a body-mind, and make it the foundation of

our theory and action. . . . We understand man better when we see the whole in each of his parts, and we get nearer to a conception of the universe when we look upon him as part of a whole. (Key, pp. 83-84; Groddeck 1950b, pp. 53-54, 55-56)

Durrell's interest is with unity and resolution, not fragmentation and relativity. In a world of ego-It polarity, we find the clash of known and unknown, conscious and unconscious, closed and open-ended concepts of human motivation and novelistic form. It is my belief that Durrell presents these problems in the Quartet and then works toward their resolution. We can see Darley, for instance, as ego in the early novels, but his breakthrough does not come until he becomes reintegrated with the Alexandrian It in Clea.

Having found in Groddeck, then, the psychological-scientific-mystical justification, Durrell superimposes his own version of Groddeck's system onto the Einsteinian space-time continuum and Freudian psychology. Thus, Durrell can have three novels of space and one of time, the four of which form a "word continuum," a unity out of diversity; then he can suggest at the end of Clea ways of continuing the story, such as Hamid's story of Darley and Melissa. He gives us four separate novels and then says, "Of course, ideally all four volumes should be read simultaneously . . ." (Paris Review, p. 57), implying that the reader should experience the Quartet as a whole and not as four parts. He

can create character as "a series of masks" and still say, in the end, not that there is a core meaning to a person, but that a person is all his masks and much more; the true self is unknown and unknowable. And, finally, he can suggest exploratory incursions into that world of the unknown self. The Alexandria Quartet, then, seems to present a thesis of absolute materialism, an antithesis of relativity, and a synthesis of Groddeck's scientific mysticism; the warring opposites are eventually resolved on a cosmic, literary, and psychological level.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET AND LITERARY TRADITION

In Chapter 1 I dealt with Durrell's specialized translation of science into literary theory. In most instances, where there was a psychological counterpart to the physical theory, we have seen that Durrell favors the psychological application. He also tends to reject the limitations of Einsteinian relativity and Freudian psychology in favor of a reality beyond the space-time configuration and a concept of personality beyond the ego. He finds the models for these more intuitive ideas in the scientific mysticism of Jeans and Groddeck. But on each count he avoids or rejects Bergson. I think that there is a parallel between his rejection of relativity and "the old stable ego" and his rejection of Bergson and "Proustian or Joycean method." (Balthazar, Note)

To Durrell, as we have seen, relativity and the space-time continuum are ultimately subjective views of reality; Freudian theory, when applied to the novel, leads to a subjective view of personality, while Einsteinian relativity imprisons characters in the time-trap. Durrell believes that the Bergsonian techniques of stream of consciousness and duration also lead in the novel to the same

kind of subjective dead-end. Thus, even though much of what Durrell says about physics and psychology is valid Bergsonianism, Durrell claims both in Key and in the Quartet to reject Bergsonian method. I plan, therefore, to focus now on what Durrell says about Bergson and the Bergsonian novel. By understanding Durrell's rejection of Bergson, we can come closer to understanding Durrell's own method in The Alexandria Quartet.

# I

## Proustian or Joycean Method

Only once in Key does Durrell speak at any length about Bergson, though many times he does speak about the Bergsonian novels of Joyce and Virginia Woolf. At the end of his discussion of the poetry of the Nineties, Durrell pauses to introduce William James and Henri Bergson. Durrell sees William James as a forerunner of Freud, as a scientist who expanded the boundaries of the consciousness, who saw consciousness as a continuous flow. Durrell notes the literary effect of James' Principles of Psychology:

The old stable outlines of the ego were changing, and the novelists were not slow to grasp the fact. We are not one undivided self, they thought, but many selves--in fact a flux of identities without clear and determined outlines. The characters of the novel began, like matter when it was broken down, to radiate not along a series of points but in waves, in wavelets of subjective experience. But if James supplied the artist with that wonderful phrase, 'the stream of consciousness', it was



because he was making popular the new idea that psychology was more concerned with processes than with static forms or faculties. (Key, p. 116)

You will note in this short explanation of James' thought that Durrell introduces an analogy from physics about matter radiating in waves. He is here, in a purely psychological discussion, again opting for physics as the primary literary force in the twentieth century. Durrell's main objection to James and Bergson, as we shall see later, lies precisely with the literary effects of these "wavelets of subjective experience."

Turning next to Bergson, Durrell discusses Bergson's intuition and duration and indicates some of the literary adaptations of these concepts:

Henri Bergson was also among the great rebels against scientific externality and pure reason. By 'intuition' he had discovered reality to exist in the flux--'the indivisible flux of consciousness' which he called 'Duration'. Made continuous only by memory, which charges each moment with its past, 'duration' involves a perpetually recurring present; science, calendars and clocks, claimed Bergson, had no way of measuring reality, which was Duration.

Since the time of Plato, philosophy had been trying to get round the idea of Duration by regarding time as an illusion, and finite being as one with eternity; Bergson suggested that the very being of which the philosopher took account when he reflected might be time itself.

He advised writers to throw reason overboard and depend on 'intuition' which alone was able to capture the qualities of Duration, which was reality. Reality was not accessible to reasoning, Thought set up artificial frames around what was in flux, moving, changing. 'Intuition' alone could bridge the gap. To a certain extent the work of novelists like Conrad, Henry James and Joyce--and also

Virginia Woolf--was an extension of these ideas into the domain of literary form. But where the best of these artists controlled their material much of the weakness and silliness of the minor writers sprang from this article of faith, which had the effect of destroying form. It ruined Lawrence's novels; Joyce had to borrow his form from Homer; and much that is trying in Virginia Woolf comes from the surrender of a feminine temperament to recorded sensation. (Key, pp. 116-117)

Even though this passage is Durrell's fullest comment on Bergson, the main problem with it is that we do not know exactly what Durrell means by Bergsonianism having "the effect of destroying form." Lawrence's novels are not Bergsonian, and Lawrence's use of intuition over reason comes more from his own interest in the occult and from his attempt to portray the "blood-consciousness" of his characters than from Bergsonian psychology. And if Joyce borrowed his form from Homer, he also borrowed his form from all of English literature and from Dublin; the unity of Ulysses comes more from an Aristotelian concept of action taking place in one location during one day than from Joyce's use of Homeric parallels. With Durrell's comment on Virginia Woolf, however, I think that we get closer to Durrell's objection to Bergsonianism in the novel; it is "the surrender of a feminine temperament to recorded sensations." I do not think that Durrell's objection to Woolf's novels is based on her "feminine temperament" but on her "recorded sensation." I believe that Durrell's true

objection to Bergson and the Bergsonian novel involves what he calls "the exhausted subjectivity of the contemporary hero." (Key, p. 14)

The crux of this entire matter, Durrell's objection to Bergsonian method, is implicit in Durrell's attempts to distinguish his own method in the Quartet from the subjectivity of Bergsonian method. As he says in the Note to Balthazar, "This is not Proustian or Joycean method--for they illustrate Bergsonian 'Duration' in my opinion, not 'Space-Time'." (Balthazar, Note) The central problem is that Durrell is never specific in what he means by "Proustian or Joycean method" as it exemplifies Bergson's duration. I think, judging from the few statements Durrell has made about the Bergsonian novel and from what we know about his own interest in portraying a reality beyond the relative, that his key concern is with the novel as autobiography, as rumination, and as a one-sided view of reality. Durrell believes that the exhausted subjectivity he sees in the Bergsonian novel has produced a dead-end in both form and theme. The Alexandria Quartet is Durrell's attempt to rectify this novelistic impasse.

Durrell says during the Hamburg interview, "After Proust the novelist becomes a ruminant when he isn't a plain photographer; I wondered if we couldn't get out of the cyclic memory-groove and recapture the act prime by

applying more modern cosmological ideas." ("Kneller Tape," p. 167) The key word here is "ruminant," which Durrell significantly uses twice during the interview to describe the post-Proustian novelist. It is my feeling that Durrell sees Bergson's duration as the direct cause of the novelist as ruminant, leading to "the exhausted subjectivity of the contemporary hero" and to Virginia Woolf's "recorded sensations." In the Paris Review interview Durrell says that Proust, exemplifying the Bergsonian universe, "summed up a particular air pocket, a particular cosmology really." (Paris Review, p. 55) When this happens, continues Durrell, "When an artist does that completely and satisfactorily he creates a crisis in the form. The artists immediately following him become dissatisfied with the existing forms and try to invent or grope around for new forms." (Paris Review, p. 56) This groping has led to an increased emphasis on time, which in turn has led back to Bergson's duration:

. . . in Joyce, of course, there is such an emphasis on time as to literally block the drains: if you get too much time into works of art you stop the process--so that the focus in the works of Joyce, Woolf and the rest seems like a colossal blown-up image of an incident, which, of course, is the Bergsonian eternity. (Paris Review, p. 56)

Aside from the fact that I think Durrell is working backwards from the novelist to Bergson in his ideas, I think that Durrell's statements above fit into the following chain of associations. Bergson said that real life was the

continuous flow of consciousness, a process he called duration. Proust, ruminating in the flux of Marcel's consciousness, discovered that this flow of life and time could be recaptured. The emphasis in both Bergson and Proust was away from external action and toward psychological reaction; rumination began to replace simple action. Joyce and Woolf, stretching and slowing time, tried to capture the actual flow of life, intensifying the focus more on the hero's thoughts and less on his actions. These novelists became stuck in the subjective "memory-groove," became ruminants, and by slowing down time to portray Bergson's duration, dealt exhaustively with the hero's psychological state and not with external action, so that their works became "a colossal blown-up image of an incident." This entire process, so Durrell would conclude, has led the novel into a dead-end of "exhausted subjectivity." The Quartet, by shifting the focus, by transcending the relative, by using "space-time" as its method, escapes the problem of both author and character subjectivity and opens up the possibility of a novelistic form based on "more modern cosmological ideas."

Durrell believes, then, that Bergson's psychology is responsible for much that he dislikes in the modern novel. Yet, as I have already shown, much of Bergson's thought coincides with Durrell's own theory. The core

conflict between the two theories, however, is subjectivity.

Shiv Kumar, speaking of Proust's A La Recherche du Temps

Perdu, says:

Presumably, Bergson found Proust's novel, in a sense, a conceptual and therefore unmethodical representation of durational flux. The notion of la durée in this novel is analytically studied and formally worked into a theory of the novel towards the end of Le Temps Retrouvé. A real roman fleuve, on the other hand, would have merely presented the durational flow methodiquement without directing it through the channels of reason and analysis. However, the theory of time-novel as developed in this narrative is a faithful rendering of Bergson's theory of "the stream of life". (Kumar, p. 18)

We can see from Kumar's statement that a real Bergsonian novel would present the durational flow of the character directly, much like the stream of consciousness technique used in Ulysses and in Virginia Woolf's novels. And while Bergson would say that this type of character presentation portrayed lived time, the individual's awareness of his durational flow, Durrell would say that this type of treatment presented only one facet of the many facets which comprise personality. In an essay on Henry Miller, Durrell contrasts two types of artist: "The first controls his material and shapes it. The second delivers himself over bound hand and foot to his gifts." ("Studies in Genius: Henry Miller," p. 87) Durrell sees Miller as the second type of artist, the artist who makes use of his art in order to grow. Speaking, however, of the first type of artist, Durrell says:

With the other type of artist, the great formalist who resides in a Joyce or a Proust, you find another attitude--that of the embalmer. Such artists are tied to a memory, to location, to a precise age and cultus. They condense and refine. They sum up their lives in a great complete metaphor from one determined standpoint. ("Studies in Genius: Henry Miller," p. 87)

The limitations of this formalism are very similar to Durrell's description of the Bergsonian novel. But Durrell's objection to this formalism is not to the form, but to the one-sided approach. In a letter to Henry Miller, Durrell warns Miller of the dangers of a single point of view:

To get the best out of your new powers it seems necessary to frame and trim them up like a water colour or else the book becomes a Bergsonian rampage and its positive qualities get lost because they are not contrasted. The clear hard limestone-formation of the thought gets muddled. (Private Correspondence, p. 254)

Durrell feels that if the positive qualities of a work of art "are not contrasted" then the book becomes "a Bergsonian rampage." Durrell's central point, then, is not for or against form or formlessness, artistic control or freedom and personal growth, but against a single angle of vision. Speaking of his own characters in the Quartet, he says in an interview, "I'm trying to light them up from different angles. I'm trying to give you stereoscopic narrative with stereophonic personality." (Paris Review, p. 57) I believe, then, that Durrell's main objection to Bergson and the Bergsonian novel is the immersion into subjective durational flow, an immersion which produces only one view of

character and action. Durrell sees Bergson's lived reality--durational flow--as a partial picture of a greater reality. In psychological terms, paralleling Durrell's rejection of Freud for Groddeck, we can see that Bergson's duration is a function of consciousness, which is equivalent to the ego; but the ego is only a small part of the greater reality of Groddeck's It. A similar parallel can be seen with physics: durational flow can only give us one of the four space-time coordinates needed for a total picture of any individual. Bergsonian method in the novel gives only a limited view of character and action; Durrell's space-time continuum in the Quartet points up the limitations of Bergsonian method and suggests, by varying the narrative focus, a fuller view of reality, ultimately suggesting that we can never know a character or event completely. Durrell's rejection of Bergsonian method is consistent with his earlier rejection of relativity and the Freudian ego. His method also attempts to resolve the differences between the two types of artist mentioned above. Durrell wants to give his novels form without embalming them, and yet have a freedom from rigid form; and he wants to portray Darley's growth as an artist by contrasting several separate angles of vision, including both a "Bergsonian rampage" and a Miller rampage.



One of the interesting things about Durrell's method in the Quartet is the fact that Justine is partially based on Bergsonian method; Darley, very much like Marcel in Proust's work, is trying to recapture and codify the past. But he comes to learn in the subsequent novels that his exclusively subjective method has only personal relevance and that in many instances the information which he based his feelings on was incorrect. In fact, Darley's Bergsonian method in Justine is paralleled by Arnauti's Freudian method in Moeurs; both of these one-sided approaches to character are revised by the relativity of Balthazar and Mountolive and rejected by the archetypic transformations of Clea.

The Proustian or Joycean rendering of Bergsonian theory represents, to Durrell, a one-sided view of reality, but it is still not clear how this method has "the effect of destroying form." Durrell does say in Key:

Here again I suggest we see that the contemporary artist, having reached the end of a subjective cycle in Lawrence, Joyce, (though we might carry the story as far forward as Henry Miller) is turning his face away from autobiographical form. We might even say that a new note of transcendental moralism has begun to creep into his work. Whether his belief is orthodox or not, there is a distinct emergence of moral preoccupation in the new poetry of Eliot and Auden, while Huxley has so far become a propagandist for the Perennial Philosophy that it has completely paralysed him as an artist. Just as the analyst has replaced the idea of cause and effect (as an end in itself) with the idea of creative balance, so the modern artist is shouldering

his responsibility as a creature entangled in opposites which it is his business to resolve in the interests of the general pattern. (Key, p. 67)

Durrell sees autobiography, like the "exhausted subjectivity of the contemporary hero," as a one-sided view of reality; but I think that he also sees this one-sidedness producing a form that is no longer vital: the work becomes a mechanical exercise. Remembering his warning to Miller that the artist's work must be framed and trimmed, must be contrasted, we can also see that Durrell believes that the artist involved in "creative balance" and in resolving opposites will not be destroying form, but will be producing new forms. Subjective literature has reached the end of its cycle by exhausting the available forms; Bergson's time has run out. And though Durrell only hints at an alternative, he seems to be saying that objective literature of contrast and resolution is extending and rejuvenating literary form; his own efforts in the Quartet are an attempt to "discover a morphological form one might appropriately call 'classical'--for our time." (Balthazar, Note)

In terms of his theory and what will eventually become the larger scheme of The Alexandria Quartet, Durrell must reject Bergson and the Bergsonian novel. While he does use Bergsonian method in Justine, just as he uses the omniscient narrative method in Mountolive, in the total scheme of the Quartet he presents contrasting forms; and

Darley, his artist-hero, is "a creature entangled in opposites which it is his business to resolve in the interests of the general pattern." Durrell's own method, then, is to bring Darley through a series of literary realizations, making him see the limitations of Bergsonian method, of Freudian or psychological method, or the omniscient method, and finally of the relative method. In each instance, however, Durrell actually has Darley employ the method which Darley will eventually reject. Thus, while it is true that Durrell's space-time method is not "Proustian or Joycean method," this general statement applying to the Quartet does not preclude the incidental use of these rejected methods in the individual novels. Just as Justine is a Bergsonian novel and the Quartet is not, so too the individual novels employ techniques from the entire spectrum of modern literature, but the Quartet stands as an original work of art, Durrell's space-time novel. Durrell incorporates existing literary techniques into the Quartet, just as he incorporated Bergsonian method, but these techniques are made to subserve the "general pattern" of the Quartet as a unified work of art.

## II

### Literary Analogues

Before turning to a direct discussion of the Quartet, I think it would be helpful to consider some of

the similarities between the narrative structures employed by Durrell and by earlier experimental novelists. What I think we will find is that the narrative structures used by Durrell, while appearing to be similar to those used by Ford Madox Ford and William Faulkner, are actually different in intention; Durrell's various uses of existing narrative methods and structures, like his acceptance and rejection of Bergson, become transformed into new techniques as they are made to fit the "general pattern" of the Quartet. This discussion of similar methods is not meant either to be exhaustive or to imply any direct influence. Just as the discussion of Bergson was intended to throw light on Durrell's own method, so the following discussion, by pointing up the apparent similarities and intrinsic differences between the narrative techniques of novels like The Good Soldier and Durrell's Quartet, will help us see a little further into Durrell's functional translation of relativity into literature.

I do not intend to discuss the question of literary influence or borrowings. The following discussion will suggest certain literary parallels, but we must consider that Durrell himself, in the Réalités interview, seems to deny direct literary influence:

Réalités: Vous insistez vous-même sur le fait que chacun des trois livres est un 'sosie' de l'autre, et non une 'suite dans le temps' (à l'exception de Clea). Quels sont le ou les auteurs qui, à votre

avis, ont approché de plus ou moins loin cette démarche? Pouvez-vous expliquer comment? Leur reconnaissez-vous une influence sur vous?

Durrell: Il est impossible d'être objectif, mais, honnêtement, je ne me souviens de rien qui ressemblerait de près ou de loin au quartet, au point de vue de la forme--sinon le court roman de Ford Madox Ford, The Good Soldier. Peut-être existe-t-il une tentative de ce genre dans la littérature russe ou allemande; si oui, je n'en ai pas pris connaissance. Est-il possible que j'aie fait oeuvre originale? Je serais heureux de le croire.  
(Réalités, pp. 105-106)<sup>1</sup>

Durrell also said of T. S. Eliot that, "The great poet always borrows, but he always pays back with interest; and the production is something more than the sum of his borrowings." (Key, p. 145) The purpose of this study, while often pointedly examining background material, is ultimately to deal with the final production, not the apparent "borrowings." I believe that Durrell's bid for originality in the Quartet validly rests with the creative synthesis he achieves from all of his "borrowings."

One such apparent borrowing is the significant use of the number "four" in the Quartet. In "Durrell and Relativity," Alfred Bork tells us of the importance of the number "four" to relativity:

First, relativity focuses attention on the "event." Four numbers uniquely specify an event; three numbers specify position and one specifies time. In other words, the event-space (the space where each event is a point) is a four-dimensional space. Second, relativistic field theories have become increasingly important in physics; a field can change with both position and time, so a value of

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1. Listed in Literature Cited under Durrell, "Lawrence Durrell Vous Parle."

a field variable is completely determinable only if four numbers (independent variables) are given. (Bork, pp. 194-195)

Bork goes on to tell us that Durrell places great emphasis on four in the Quartet, citing the following examples: there are four books in the Quartet; Justine and Balthazar are both divided into four parts; the quotation from Freud at the beginning of Justine deals with four people; Clea ends with "four words (four letters! four faces!)"; Pursewarden writes, "our topic Brother Ass is the same--I spell the word for you: l-o-v-e. Four letters, each letter a volume."; and, finally, Pursewarden wrote a trilogy and was working on the fourth novel at the time of his death. (Bork, pp. 194-196) I do not wish to deny the scientific origin of the use of four in the Quartet, but I would like to suggest some literary analogues to this use of fourness in the novel. Durrell consistently chooses to acknowledge a debt only to science, yet he could well have based his four-part structure on certain works by Ford, Faulkner, or Proust, modifying these models to fit his translated version of relativity.

Ford Madox Ford's Parade's End is the first such modern work which comes to mind. The Tietjens tetralogy consists of four related novels, each of which deals with the development of the central character, Christopher Tietjens. The most obvious difference, however, between

Parade's End and The Alexandria Quartet is that in Ford's tetralogy the number of novels is not an integral part of the overall design; Parade's End is a multiple novel of the order of Proust's A La Recherche du Temps Perdu or Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage. Ford's four-part novel was, in fact, originally planned as a trilogy. (Cassell, pp. 243-244) Ford's Parade's End consists, then, of four novels more by chance than design. Durrell's Quartet has four parts in order to fit the general pattern of Einsteinian four-dimensional space.

An earlier work by Ford, The Good Soldier, has closer affinities with Durrell's Quartet. After reading Ford's novel at the suggestion of Kenneth Young, Durrell said to Young in the Encounter interview:

I'm so glad I didn't read The Good Soldier before writing Justine or I might never have finished her! This novel is an eye-opener with its brilliant organisation and gathering momentum; it's fit to put beside the best of our time. How the devil didn't I know his work? (Young, p. 65)

The Good Soldier, significantly enough, is divided into four parts, with each part tending to focus on a particular crisis; the central story of the Dowells and the Ashburnhams is continually reiterated and re-evaluated by the narrator John Dowell during the process of his telling the story. Though the novel is narrated from the first person of Dowell, Part III deals almost exclusively with the early history of the Ashburnhams before they met the Dowells, a

history which we assume Dowell has pieced together from information supplied by both Leonora and Edward Ashburnham. Much of the comic irony of the novel comes from Dowell's inability to see clearly the implications of the story he is telling. R. W. Lid, discussing The Good Soldier in Ford Madox Ford: The Essence of His Art, says: "The form of The Good Soldier--disrupted chronology and emergent psychology--evolves from the narrator's conscious attempts to recall a sequence of events, the meanings of which were veiled from him as they occurred." (Lid, p. 34) Carol Ohmann, in her study Ford Madox Ford: From Apprenticeship to Craftsman, sees Dowell as

a double-edged weapon; Ford uses his narrator to ridicule society, and he also renders him ridiculous. Dowell's claim to wisdom, to have "sounded the depths," quickly becomes in itself absurd. In one sense, Dowell knows the facts of the story he tells. In another sense, he does not know them at all, for he cannot see their significance. (Ohmann, p. 75)

Here, briefly, we can see many similarities, not only with Durrell's Justine, but with the entire Quartet. The story in The Good Soldier, as R. W. Lid has noted, "grows as it moves backward and forward through the maze of events." (Lid, p. 35) This much is certainly true of Justine, for Darley recounts events "not in the order in which they took place--for that is history--but in the order in which they first became significant for me." (Justine, p. 115) The four-part structure of The Good Soldier in general



resembles the four-part structure of Justine, where in both novels each part focuses on a central crisis: in The Good Soldier these crises are 1) the intimacy of Florence Dowell and Edward Ashburnham, 2) Florence's suicide, 3) the early history and troubles of the Ashburnhams, and 4) Nancy's offering of herself to Edward; in Justine these crises are 1) Darley's intimacy with Justine, 2) Justine's fear of Nessim, 3) Nessim's madness, culminating with the duck shoot, Da Capo's "death," and Justine's disappearance, and 4) Darley's departure from Alexandria. There are also structural affinities between the four-part development of The Good Soldier and the four novels of the Quartet: each novel of the Quartet presents the central story from a differing narrative focus, yet these differing views add to the general development of the Quartet; and like the shift to a pseudo-objective narrative method in Part III of The Good Soldier, there is a similar narrative shift in Mountolive, the third novel of the Quartet. Darley as narrator of the Quartet, like Ford's narrator John Dowell, is both naive and unreliable. The major difference between the two men is, of course, that we suspect Dowell immediately; with Darley, we must wait for the later novels to see, as Durrell puts it to Kenneth Young, "that Darley was necessarily as he was in Justine because the whole business of the four books, apart from other things, shows the way an artist

grows up." (Young, p. 62) We can see, then, a general resemblance between the structure of Ford's The Good Soldier and the structure of both Durrell's Justine and his Quartet; Durrell's adherence to the relativistic theory of three sides of space and one of time for his form does, however, give the Quartet an organization and variety of perspective lacking in Ford's novel.

Ford's works show how some of Durrell's ideas of form were being put into use without the scientific undercurrent implicit in the Quartet. Had Durrell known of Ford's novels, he might well have seen in them a literary analogue to his own scientific preoccupations. William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury is another such work with a structure strikingly similar to Durrell's Quartet. Like The Good Soldier, Faulkner's novel is divided into four parts. However, in The Sound and the Fury each of the four parts is narrated from a different point of view. Three of the four parts--the Benjy, Quentin, and Jason sections--are first-person narratives; the fourth, the Dilsey section, employs the "naturalistic" third person. On the surface, this pattern is almost identical to the narrative plan of Durrell's four novels, except that in the Quartet the first, second, and fourth parts are narrated in the first person, all by the same person, and the third part, Mountolive, is what Durrell calls "a straight naturalistic

novel." (Balthazar, Note) The three first-person sections of The Sound and the Fury represent three very divergent points of view of the action of that novel, seen first through the associative, reporting mind of the idiot Benjy, who cannot distinguish between the past and the present, then in a flashback to 1910 through the introspective, neurotic mind of Quentin, who wishes to escape from time, and finally through the commonplace mind of Jason, who never has enough time. The central action of this novel takes place over Easter weekend, but the past history of the Compson family is carefully filled in. In Durrell's Quartet, the three first-person novels present divergent views, not by a change in narrative point of view as in Faulkner, but by the growing awareness of Darley the narrator and by his presentation of divergent sources of information--Arnauti's novel Moeurs, Darley's initial version of the story in Justine, and Balthazar's corrected version in Balthazar, to name just a few. The main difference, however, between Faulkner's novel and Durrell's novel is that in The Sound and the Fury the divergent sources of information present three separate yet interlacing views of the action, while in the Quartet these varying sources present conflicting views of the action. Both Faulkner and Durrell are working, as we shall see presently, from different sets of assumptions about the nature of reality, and

as those assumptions differ, so too will the final product. But the narrative pattern used by Durrell in the Quartet very closely approximates the pattern Faulkner used in The Sound and the Fury.

Faulkner uses another device in The Sound and the Fury which appears in Durrell's Quartet: the shift in narration from first person to third person. In Faulkner's novel the fourth section shifts from the diverse but chaotic first-person worlds of the first three sections to the relative calm of third-person narration. In this fourth section of the novel, the events of that Easter Sunday, 1929, are related in chronological order; the fourth section is restricted solely to the events of that day; there are no flashbacks and no subjective ruminations. The narration focuses primarily on Dilsey, the only character in Faulkner's time-tortured chaos who seems to have enough time to get everything done. Olga Vickery has said of Dilsey in The Novels of William Faulkner that "By working with circumstance instead of against it she creates order out of disorder; by accommodating herself to change she manages to keep the Compson household in some sense of decency." (Vickery, p. 48) We see that Dilsey's endurance is thematically related to the orderly structure of the fourth part, that, as Vickery has noted, "Dilsey is meant to represent the ethical norm, the realizing and acting out of

one's humanity." (Vickery, p. 47) Faulkner, then, couples the shift to objective narration with the possibility of thematic resolution. Durrell, as I have mentioned, uses a similar shift to objective narration in Mountolive, but, unlike Faulkner's shift which is linked to an "ethical norm," Durrell's shift to objective narration in Mountolive presents only a temporary resolution.

This temporary resolution in the Quartet, brought about by the narrative shift in Mountolive, is due mainly to the additional information the narrator gives us about the characters and the events surrounding them. The information supplied to the reader in Justine is limited solely to what Darley knows and tells about his friends in Alexandria and to his personal interpretations of their actions. This core of information is augmented in the second novel by Balthazar's version of the Alexandrian events. In Mountolive an omniscient narrator takes over the story and fills in many of the informational gaps left by the first two versions; the reader ostensibly finds out "what really happened" in Alexandria. The objective narration of Mountolive, then, rounds the story out and appears to bring it to its conclusion. But this conclusion is temporary, for when we read Clea we find that some of the interpretations given to us by the narrator of Mountolive are as invalid as Darley's interpretations in

Justine. For example, in Mountolive we are told that Pursewarden's suicide was politically motivated; in Clea we find that the suicide also involved Pursewarden's incestuous relationship with his sister. Thus, even though Faulkner and Durrell both use this subjective-to-objective narrative shift, their resulting statements about the nature of experience differ. By offering an "ethical norm" in the Dilsey section of The Sound and the Fury, Faulkner is presenting an objective standard by which to judge human experience; by offering a temporary resolution in Mountolive and then rejecting that resolution in Clea, Durrell is replacing that objective standard with a relativistic one.

Another, and earlier, example of this narrative shift occurs in Proust's A La Recherche du Temps Perdu. Marcel begins his first-person narration in Swann's Way with the "Overture" and "Combray" sections and then shifts to third-person narration in the "Swann in Love" section. He returns to first-person narration in the final section, "Place-Names: the Name." Again we see the four-part division, with the first, second, and fourth parts in first-person and the third part in third-person narration; this is, of course, the same pattern which Durrell uses in his Quartet. And, as in the Quartet, the third-person narrative shift in "Swann in Love" enlarges the context of the

story. In Proust, the recounting of Swann's earlier life extends the social context of the story beyond Marcel's personal involvement; in Durrell, the third-person account of the story in Mountolive extends the context to include the political and diplomatic world of which Darley is not a part. Without now going into the question of whether Darley is, as I believe, the narrator of Mountolive, we can, however, see an important similarity between Proust's "Swann in Love" and Durrell's Mountolive. Proust's third-person section is essentially a flashback which recounts Swann's earlier life before Marcel knew him; Marcel leaves himself out of the narrative because he was not present during the action and, of course, was not directly involved. Durrell's third-person novel begins with a flashback to fill the reader in on Mountolive's earlier life before coming to Alexandria and then continues up through the action recounted in Justine and Balthazar; Darley is essentially left out of the Mountolive story because, even though he is present in Alexandria at the time of the action, he is not directly involved in the political and diplomatic manipulations which are being dealt with in that novel.

On a more technical level, another similarity emerges. How can Marcel learn enough about Swann's earlier life to write about it effectively? And how, if Darley is indeed the narrator of Mountolive, could he learn enough

about the political dealings of his friends to write the Mountolive story? The answer in both cases is the same. For Marcel, his later association with Swann could have supplied him with this missing information. And for Darley, his later association with Mountolive and with Nessim and Justine after their political plot aborted could well have supplied him with enough information to piece together the Mountolive story. In both cases I think that we are meant to see these third-person narrative sections as a fictional rendering of a situation by the first-person narrator of the entire work. The essential difference between the two works is that Durrell utilizes the irony latent in this fictional situation. In "Swann in Love," Proust uses the third-person narration primarily as a logistical device, an innovation on the conventional flashback; his primary concern is to inform the reader of Swann's earlier life and to enlarge the context of his novel. In Mountolive, Durrell too uses the third-person narration to complete the reader's knowledge of the Alexandrian events; but Durrell's primary concern in using this narrative shift is, I think, an implicit criticism of the third-person form. We find out in Clea that the Mountolive story, rather than being the "objective" version of the Alexandria events, is simply a politically oriented version of the story and is, in fact, just as limited, just as relative, as Darley's egocentric



version in Justine. The narrator of Mountolive presents his version of the story with the complete assurance that his version alone is correct. Durrell's ironic criticism of the third-person form emerges from the reader's realization in Clea that no one version of any story can ever be complete; we see that the Mountolive story is limited solely to one aspect of the characters' lives--their political involvements.

I think we have, in these examples from Ford, Faulkner, and Proust, evidence of Durrell working within a tradition of experimental techniques, but modifying those techniques to fit his own translated version of relativity in The Alexandria Quartet. Durrell's modification of these techniques can be explained in terms of his relativistic theory. And once we understand Durrell's relativistic theory, we are then in a position to understand the reality he posits "beyond the relative." I mentioned that Durrell rejected Bergsonian method because the reality which that method portrayed was a one-sided view of life. This same criticism can be leveled at the relativistic method of the Quartet, that it too presents a one-sided view of life. The major difference--and the key to the general pattern of the Quartet--is the way in which Durrell uses relativity. The Quartet is structured as a series of rejections and modifications in an order of ascending objectivity. The

subjective story in Justine is partially rejected, partially modified by the Balthazar story; this second version, less subjective than the Justine story, is again rejected and modified by the Mountolive story; and the objective Mountolive version is in its turn rejected and modified by the archetypic pattern of the Clea story. By the time we finish the Quartet, we have come to realize that any version of the story is relative to a given context and relevant only in that context. Thus, by increasingly enlarging the narrative focus--emotional, intellectual, political, mythic--Durrell is positing a relativistic view of reality; and yet, by focusing in Clea on the archetypic elements of Darley's struggle for self-realization, Durrell is positing a reality beyond the relativistic confines of the space-time continuum. Relativity, then, is the key to Durrell's Quartet, but it is not the answer.

## CHAPTER 3

### FORM: FOUR SIDES, ONE CONTINUUM

The form of the individual novels of the Quartet and of the Quartet itself depends upon Durrell's use of relativity. He tells us explicitly that the larger scheme of the Quartet is patterned on the relativity proposition with its three sides of space and one side of time. However, he does not explicitly tell us that his relativistic pattern also reflects the psychological or literary aspect of relativity: relative truth. The question of how these separate aspects of relativity are worked out in the novels is a complicated one, for we must take into account that Durrell is the actual author of The Alexandria Quartet and that Darley is the fictitious author of the individual novels. I propose, therefore, to deal first with Darley as the fictitious author-narrator of the individual novels (a discussion which must necessarily include Darley's authorship of the "Consequential Data" of Justine and the "Work-points" of Balthazar) and to deal second with Durrell as the actual author of the entire Quartet. As Darley's struggle to write about Alexandria progresses from novel to novel, the details of Durrell's general pattern for the

entire Quartet begin to fall in place; it is ultimately Darley--and not Durrell--who must learn the limitations of the first-person narrative method.

## I

### Darley and the Individual Novels

Bertil Romberg, in Studies in the Narrative Technique of the First-Person Novel, distinguishes three basic forms of the first-person novel: the memoir novel, the diary novel, and the epistolary novel. Basic to this distinction is his concept of "the epic situation," the place where the narrator is actually doing the writing and the time during which the writing takes place. With the fictional memoir, the narrator usually records past events from his own or another's history. Thus, as Romberg says, "The perspective of recollection and an epic situation long after the events are two important elements in a first-person novel that has the character of a memoir." (Romberg, p. 43) The narrator has already lived through the events he is recounting, and the telling of those past events usually brings the reader up to the narrator's epic situation. For example, in Justine the narrator's recollected story brings us up through his departure from Egypt to his life on the island. With the diary novel, there is not so clear a distinction between the narrator's epic situation and the events he is recounting. The diary novel, as

Romberg distinguishes it from the memoirs novel,

gives the author the opportunity of letting the narrator and the reader come up against the action of the novel simultaneously, or at least experience its future happenings with some degree of uncertainty. . . . The narrator's epic situation does not give him any all-embracing and definitive retrospective view over the events covered by his story, but only some short, concentrated, frequent backward glances. (Romberg, p. 43)

The diary novel, then, gives the impression of the narrator telling the story as it is happening. It is this dramatic aspect of the diary novel which relates it closely with the epistolary novel, especially when there is only one letter-writer, for in both cases "The narrator's point of view dominates within the novel." (Romberg, p. 47) When an epistolary novel has two or more letter-writers, then "different narrative points of view are contrasted." (Romberg, p. 47) Justine, the first novel of The Alexandria Quartet, contains elements from each of these types of first-person novels, a method which Romberg calls "mixed." Romberg's distinctions, however, will help us to see how the separate elements of Justine function in that novel.

The Justine story deals primarily with the narrator's account of his life in Alexandria and with his love affair with Justine. The narrator Darley, whose name we do not learn until near the end of the second novel, is on an island writing about his own past life. The two stories, his life on the island as he is writing the book we are

reading and his recollection of his Alexandrian life, co-exist and interpenetrate. From the epic situation story, we follow Darley during his day-to-day life on the island as he works through the artistic problems of writing about Alexandria and his love for Justine. It is through these writings about his Alexandrian past that we learn that midway in his affair with Melissa, a Greek cabaret dancer, Darley begins an affair with Justine, the wife of the Coptic banker Nessim Hosnani. Many of Darley's memories concern his fear of Nessim's jealousy. The central action of the Alexandria story culminates with Nessim's annual duckshoot, during which Capodistria is "murdered" and Justine disappears. Darley teaches for a while in Upper Egypt, returns to Alexandria at Melissa's death, and retires to his island with Melissa's child by Nessim. The novel ends with Clea's letter to Darley on the island; through this letter we discover that Justine is working on a kibbutz in Palestine and that Nessim is rumored to have arranged Capodistria's death. Justine, then, to use Romberg's terminology, is a memoir novel dealing with Darley's Alexandrian life, written from a distinct epic situation on the island.

But this simplified distinction does not altogether fit. In writing Justine, Darley uses the present tense for both the epic situation on the island and for the

Alexandrian story. This use of the present tense has an effect similar to the diary novel, of which Romberg says, "The fiction in a diary novel is both narrated and experienced gradually." (Romberg, p. 43) Darley, in evoking the past, tells his story as if it were gradually unfolding to himself and to the reader. Even though Darley knows the outcome of Nessim's duckshoot before he writes about it, he tells that story as if it were happening all over again, focusing primarily on his immediate impression and not on his retrospective musings. Romberg sees this narrative device as adding verisimilitude in Justine:

There is no long narrative distance to separate the narrator's experiencing "I" and his narrating "I"; on the other hand the two contrasted planes--the plane of action and memory where the events in Alexandria take place, and the "now"-plane where we see the narrator at work--serve to underline the narrator's uncertainty and hesitation, and give an illusion of reality to the existence and work of the narrator. (Romberg, p. 283)

I also believe that Darley's use of the present tense for both the Alexandrian plane and the "now" plane results from his equating memory with life; it is, as I shall discuss shortly, Darley's use of Proustian method.

Darley also employs techniques from the epistolary novel with the inclusion of extracts from Arnauti's novel, Justine's and Nessim's diaries, and Clea's letter. These writings provide other views of the characters. However, the potentially contrasting views of this narrative method

are not utilized until the second novel Balthazar; in Justine Darley in his secondary role as editor chooses only those written excerpts which agree with his own view of the characters.

Justine, then, according to Romberg's scheme, is a first-person novel with a mixed form, containing memoir, diary, and epistolary elements. But Justine is also Darley's attempt to recapture and codify the past; the true significance of the form of this novel is therefore not what structural devices he uses but how and why he uses them. The Justine manuscript is a tangible extension of Darley's ego; the novel, in this instance, is the man. It is my belief that Darley's ego-involvement with Justine and Alexandria and his method of writing about them are synonymous. We must check Darley's novelistic expectations against what he has written to see whether his plan and his practice coincide.

Darley believes, like Proust, that memory is the key to time. Situated on his island, he returns "link by link along the iron chains of memory" (Justine, p. 13) to Alexandria and his past life. His goals are three-fold: to completely rebuild the city in his brain; to reorder and rework reality so that it shows its significant side; and to discover the meaning of the pattern. His method is entirely subjective and associational: "What I most need



to do is to record experiences, not in the order in which they took place--for that is history--but in the order in which they first became significant for me." (Justine, p. 115) These aspirations and expectations are the determinants of the form of Justine. Implicit in this method is the Proustian belief that the subjective ordering of memory is more important than the historical fact. If Darley remembers an experience and feels its emotional significance, then that experience also has artistic relevance. Darley, then, exemplifies what Durrell calls the "ruminant," the "cyclic memory-groove," the "Bergsonian rampage." He will re-create a world based on his ruminations and ordered by emotional significance.

The most obvious effect these considerations have on the form of Darley's novel is a disrupted or distorted chronology. Immersed in the subjective memory-bath, Darley gives the impression of recording sensations as he remembers them. These memories, like the memories of all people, are not attached to a date, but may be vaguely associated with a season or another memory. Thus, Darley will say "autumn" or "that second spring." His memory of the events is the important thing, not when the events occurred. So, too, single events are more important to him than sequences of events, and very seldom does one scene chronologically follow another.

Yet, in reading Justine, we can piece together the story. We may not know exactly when an event happened or even, for that matter, how long Darley knew Justine. This uncertainty about time reflects Darley's own emphasis on the intensity of a relationship over the length of duration. But we do know the general development of the story: Darley is involved with Melissa, meets Justine, enjoys the friendship of Nessim, spends some time with Justine and Nessim at the Summer Palace, goes to Nessim's duckshoot, teaches in Upper Egypt, and eventually retires to his island. The general movement of the novel is, in fact, chronological. Justine is divided into four parts, and the story focus in each part moves the action chronologically to its conclusion: Part I focuses on the beginnings of intimacy between Darley and Justine; Part II focuses on Justine's fear of Nessim; Part III intensifies Darley's intimacy with Justine, explores Nessim's madness, and ends with the duckshoot; Part IV brings Darley to the island, back where he started from in the beginning of Justine.

The internal ordering of events in the novel, then, is arbitrary, dictated primarily by Darley's emotional needs. We weave back and forth from the island to Alexandria, while Darley writes about the present and the past in exactly the same way. His search, in a sense, begins where Proust's left off; Darley has recaptured his past and is

now trying to codify it as he relives it in the present. His memory of Alexandria is as real to him as his daily life on the island. Thus, as he records this relived past, he experiences it, draws associations from it, and writes about it as his memories well up inside him. This associative method has the effect of initially confusing the reader. We learn, for instance, that Melissa is dead before we ever know who she is. And yet, though she is dead, though Pursewarden has committed suicide, they live on in Justine because they live on in Darley's memory. Darley tells us that the sea is his clock: "Its dim momentum in the mind is the fugue upon which this writing is made." (Justine, p. 16) This fugue metaphor is reminiscent of Joyce's method for the "Sirens" episode in Ulysses: the first two pages contain cryptic references to all the elements to be developed later in the section. Similarly, in Justine, during the first forty-five pages we are introduced to most of the main characters and many key scenes. It is at this point that Darley, to continue the musical metaphor, says of Justine: "All this I have come to regard as a sort of overture to that first real meeting face to face . . ." (Justine, p. 45) Darley, then, feels that he is giving us enough information so that we can follow the story, though this information may not necessarily be in chronological order.

We can see two general chronological patterns in Justine. The first deals with Darley in the epic situation on his island. Within this pattern there is a consistent chronological development; Darley begins writing Justine sometime during the winter and ends his novel with Clea's letter the following summer. During this period we follow Darley's musings on the writing he is doing. The continuity of these isolated sections gives the novel a sense of form and development. The second pattern deals with the remembered Alexandrian events. Looked at episode by episode, these events appear to have no inherent order, except as they become significant to Darley; his mind circles back through his memory to a winter scene with Balthazar, that second spring with Justine, the late summer lecture at the Atelier des Beaux Arts. But as we fit the episodes together and look at the novel as a whole, we can also see a consistent development as events almost fatalistically rush toward Nessim's duckshoot, Justine's disappearance, and Darley's eventual departure from Alexandria. That we have to guess how long Darley spent in Alexandria is unimportant; his love and loss of Justine are central, and by stressing scenes and not chronology, he patterns the structure of his novel on the associative workings of his own mind. In many ways the structure which Darley gives to Justine parallels Balthazar's caballistic definition of

the fons signatus of the psyche and "its ability to perceive an inherent order in the universe which underlay the apparent formlessness and arbitrariness of phenomena. Disciplines of mind could enable people to penetrate behind the veil of reality and to discover harmonies in space and time which corresponded to the inner structure of their own psyches." (Justine, p. 100) Justine is Darley's initial attempt to give form to the essential formlessness of his memories and emotions.

Thus, Darley becomes the editor of his own memories, selecting and reordering only those details which aid his reconstruction of his love for Justine. This editorial function includes selecting passages from certain written matter at his disposal. In Part I, where Darley is most concerned with depicting Justine, he includes several passages from Jacob Arnauti's novel Moeurs. Justine, who was married to Arnauti before Darley knew her, is supposedly the central figure of Moeurs. With the inclusion of the passages from Moeurs, Darley gives an added dimension to his portrait of Justine. But we must remember, and the same is true for Justine's diaries, that Darley is selecting only those passages which confirm his own image of Justine. Thus, both the choice of his memories and the choice of passages from Moeurs and the diaries must conform to the pattern he has established for his novel; everything

must contribute to the subjective truths he is searching for, "the meaning of the pattern." There is in Justine a consistent narrative focus, a focus which we could call Darley's editorial policy. His goals, we must remember, are to rebuild the city and reorder and understand reality, but in practice these goals are qualified by his love for Justine; Justine becomes Darley's touchstone for recreating the reality of his past. Just as Darley ignores the growing hints of Nessim's political activities and completely omits any mention of the Cervoni ball, during which Toto de Brunel is murdered, so, too, does he refuse to deal with those parts of Moeurs or Justine's diaries which do not illumine Justine or his love for her. Darley's novel is about Justine, but the selected content and the form that content takes reflect Darley's romantic ego.

Darley's selectivity is further illustrated by the "Consequential Data" at the end of the novel. I think that we must see Darley, functioning within the convention of the fictitious author-narrator, as the author or compiler of these short accounts of and by the characters in the novel; when I come to deal with Durrell as the author of the entire Quartet, I will consider these selections from a slightly different angle. For the present discussion, within the limitations of the fictitious narrator convention, these short selections appear to be some of Darley's

notes for his novel, but they are notes which he did not develop in Justine because they did not fit into his associative scheme. It is a mistake to imagine that the story told in Balthazar is based entirely on Balthazar's Inter-linear; much that occurs in the second novel is part of Darley's knowledge as he was writing Justine. the entire incident of the Cervoni ball, for instance, in which Darley took part, is omitted from the Justine story. I believe that the "Consequential Data" section is one of the more obvious hints that Darley has severely edited his material. It is interesting to see that several of the "Consequential Data" entries are later developed by Darley in Balthazar: Justine's accident, Clea dancing with her father, and Pombal's affair with Sveva. (Balthazar, pp. 186, 277, 177) These later developments of the earlier sketches suggest a structural continuity between the two novels in addition to the thematic continuity of the progressing story.

Justine is Darley's memory book, his attempt to give form to the apparent formlessness of memory and yet retain the freedom of formlessness. Arnauti's aspirations for Moeurs coincide with Darley's plan for Justine.

Arnauti writes:

I dream of a book powerful enough to contain the elements of her--but it is not the sort of book to which we are accustomed these days. For example, on the first page a synopsis of the plot in

a few lines. Thus we might dispense with the narrative articulation. What follows would be drama freed from the burden of form. I would set my own book free to dream. (Justine, p. 75)

It is of course ironic for Darley to pattern his Justine on a model which he will eventually come to reject. The form and content of Justine are necessary, however, to place Darley clearly in the subjective tradition, a tradition which is attacked and negated by the novels which follow.

If Justine is Darley's memory novel, Balthazar is his relativity novel. Justine firmly established Darley as the artist of memory, using the subjective method. In Balthazar Darley comes to see another facet of the prism. The second novel begins with Darley in his epic situation on the island. He finishes writing Justine in early summer; then, probably the following winter, he receives a letter from Balthazar. Instead of replying, Darley sends Balthazar the Justine manuscript, that is, the manuscript of the novel we have just finished reading. Several months later, on an evening in June, Balthazar appears on the island with the Justine manuscript. But Balthazar has annotated, corrected, and added to Darley's novel. Darley calls this amended version "the great interlinear to Justine. . . . cross-hatched, crabbed, starred with questions and answers in different-coloured inks, in typescript." (Balthazar, p. 21) The novel which follows this introduction consists of four main elements: Darley writing in his epic



situation on the island; a continuation of Darley's memories about his Alexandrian past, but without the intensive focus on his love for Justine; direct quotations from Balthazar's Interlinear; and a third-person narrative section written by Darley, but based on information gathered from the Interlinear. Recalling Romberg's scheme, we can see that Balthazar, like Justine, has the epic situation and the remembered past of the memoirs novel and with Balthazar's Interlinear, the alternate point of view of the epistolary novel. The second novel does not, however, have the characteristics of the diary novel; for Darley now uses the past tense to record the Alexandrian events, whereas he used the present tense in Justine. In using the past tense for his remembered past, he is making a clear distinction between his present life on the island, written in the present tense, and his past life in Alexandria, written in the past tense. Thus, those sections in which Darley writes about Alexandria fit Romberg's definition of the memoir, not the diary, novel. Finally, Balthazar, unlike Justine, contains sections of third-person narrative, a method not usually associated with the first-person novel.

This mixed form of the second novel reflects Darley's progression as an artist; the form represents a shift away from the subjective "memory-groove" of Justine to a more objective or eclectic view of the characters and

actions in Balthazar. Darley begins Balthazar in much the same mood as he wrote Justine: "The city, half-imagined (yet wholly real), begins and ends in us, roots lodged in our memory." (Balthazar, p. 13) But, as we saw in Justine, Darley chose only those memories which dealt directly with his passion for Justine. This subjective approach placed the truth of his feelings above all other considerations. Balthazar asks, "After all, your concern--was it with us as real people or as 'characters'? . . . was your object poetry or fact?" (Balthazar, p. 19) This is a question which Darley never put to himself in Justine. Now, with new and conflicting information on hand, Darley sees that he must "try to see a new Justine, a new Pursewarden, a new Clea," that he must "try and strip the opaque membrane which stands between me and the reality of their actions." (Balthazar, p. 28) And for a new method, he sees that he must replace memory with imagination: "I must record what more I know and attempt to render it comprehensible or plausible to myself, if necessary, by an act of the imagination." (Balthazar, p. 29) Thus, musing later on Coleridge's reliques of sensation which "may exist for an indefinite time in a latent state in the very same order in which they were impressed," Darley can now see that "the order of the imagination is not that of memory." (Balthazar, p. 225) This reliance on imagination, springing from Balthazar's

intrusive information, also makes Darley take another and more objective look at himself: "I must learn to see even myself in a new context, after reading those cruel words of Balthazar." (Balthazar, p. 47) And with this increased objectivity, Darley comes to realize "that in all this Justine had surrendered to me only one of the many selves she possessed and inhabited--to this timid and scholarly lover with chalk on his sleeve!" (Balthazar, p. 130)

Darley's increasing objectivity comes, then, from realizing that the truth he thought he codified in Justine was a personal and provisional truth, relative to a given context; the truth was accurate enough as it had emotional significance to him, but missed the mark when he tried to codify the motivations of his friends. He comes to see that his relative truth was subjective: "The really horrible thing is that the compulsive passion which Justine lit in me was quite as valuable as it would have been had it been 'real'." (Balthazar, p. 140) But only in this highly personalized sense does he discover truth in Justine. What he discovers in Balthazar is the relative nature of truth, the importance of one's point of view. He comes to see the relevance of Pursewarden's relativistic dictum:

We live . . . lives based upon selected fictions. Our view of reality is conditioned by our position in space and time--not by our personalities as we like to think. Thus every interpretation of reality is based upon a unique position. Two paces east or west and the whole picture is changed. (Balthazar, p. 15)

In Balthazar Darley's position is changed by the new information made available to him from a variety of sources.

Unlike the source material in Justine, which Darley used to confirm his own interpretation of the action, the Interlinear forces him to see his friends through the eyes of someone not emotionally involved in the action; and just as the Interlinear focuses on relationships other than Darley's affair with Justine, so too is Darley pulled away from his obsessive concern for Justine. In a sense, then, the Interlinear gives Darley the opportunity to step back and take a new look at himself and his Alexandrian past. The form of Balthazar reflects Darley's admission of other possible interpretations of the past.

Like Justine, Balthazar is divided into four parts. But, in the second novel Darley now adds the more formal structural device of chapter subdivisions, fourteen in all. This use of chapters seems to indicate that Darley is attempting to give a more objective organization to his material, an organization more dependent on chronology and artistic continuity than on associative subjective significance. Darley also displays a tendency, in the individual chapters, to focus on a consistent scene, with fewer interruptions from the epic situation on the island than in Justine. Whole chapters now are devoted entirely to other people, chapters in which Darley leaves himself out

completely. There are Nessim's trip to the farm to discuss his proposed marriage to Justine, Narouz' activities during Sitna Mariam, and Balthazar's account of Scobie's death. Even when Darley himself is present, the chapters become more unified and coherent. In addition to the use of chapters, both the chronology and the narrative flow are more orderly than in Justine. In this second novel we learn of Clea's friendship with Justine, Nessim's proposal and marriage to Justine, Pursewarden's relationship with Justine, and Toto de Brunel's murder at the Cervoni's ball. As a general pattern, incident tends to follow incident in chronological order, with greater emphasis on narrative articulation.

The narration itself, in conjunction with these structural devices, reflects Darley's increased objectivity. The inclusion of large sections from Balthazar's Inter-linear gives, of course, a more objective tone to the second novel; from the Interlinear we get, as Darley says, "the determined view of another eye upon events which I interpreted in my own way . . ." (Balthazar, p. 185) But it is with the other two types of narration that we see the real change in Darley's approach to the novel. First, there are those sections in which Darley adds to the Alexandrian story from his own memories, notably the barber shop scene and Scobie's Tendencies in Chapter Two and the

Cervoni ball, with the eventual recovery of Justine's ring, in Chapters Ten, Eleven, and Twelve. These scenes, as I mentioned earlier, are written in the past tense. The tense shift from the present tense in Justine to the past tense in Balthazar reflects Darley's ability to look at himself and his past more objectively, to locate his Alexandrian memories clearly in the past and not have them weave continuously in and out of his present thoughts. Also, in these scenes, Darley's narration tends to focus more on other people, less on his subjective concerns. Keats' photograph of the characters at the barber shop, the narrative device which Darley uses to begin Chapter Two, is an appropriate symbol of Darley's growing objectivity; the photograph, like many of Darley's narratives in Balthazar, is not involved with subjective considerations. Thus, the narrative focus of these memory sections becomes vaguely political and definitely more concerned with artistic considerations. Darley's objectivity, then, springing from his awareness of the relativity principle, is seen in the shift of narrative focus from the emotion and passion-love in Justine to the imagination and politics in Balthazar.

The second type of objective narration used by Darley is, of course, those sections written in the third person, notably Nessim's proposal to Justine and his trip

to Karm Abu Girg in Chapters Three and Four and Narouz' adventures with the Magzub during Sitna Mariam in Chapter Seven. Darley tells us at the beginning of Chapter Five, after having written about Nessim's trip to Karm, "So much have I reconstructed from the labyrinth of notes which Balthazar has left me." (Balthazar, p. 98) The key word here is "reconstructed," for we do not know how much Balthazar could have told Darley about Nessim's courting of Justine. Balthazar could probably have given Darley some factual information, but it is Darley who renders these facts into third-person narration. Darley has already given us a subjective portrait of Nessim in Justine; now he gives us an objective portrait, based on Balthazar's information. That Darley's account of Nessim's trip is essentially a fictionalized reconstruction will be discussed in the next chapter; for now, it is important to see that Darley's awareness of the need to be more objective results in his use of the third-person narration. A clearer statement of this process occurs at the beginning of Chapter Seven:

I turn to another part of the Interlinear, the passage which Balthazar marked: "So Narouz decided to act," underlining the last word twice. Shall I reconstruct it--the scene I see so clearly, and which his few crabbed words in green ink have detonated on my imagination? Yes, it will enable me to dream for a moment about an unfrequented quarter of Alexandria which I loved. (Balthazar, p. 151)

What follows this statement is a fictionalized account of Narouz at Sitna Mariam, an account written in the third person. Though Darley has some of the facts, I think we have to see that his major concern in this chapter is with objective narration and not objective truth. He could not, for instance, know what Narouz was thinking, but as an artist, he could imagine Narouz' thoughts; he could, as he has already told us, "render it comprehensible or plausible to myself, if necessary, by an act of the imagination." (Balthazar, p. 28) Thus, as Darley progresses as an artist, he begins to see action in its duality; as he comes to see the value of relative truths, he is pulled away from his exclusively subjective approach; and as he becomes more objective in his view of the world, his narrative method also becomes more objective.

Darley also retains his editorial function in Balthazar, but his editorial policy has changed. In Justine he selected materials and memories which focused on his passion-love for Justine. In Balthazar he selects passages from the Interlinear which focus either on the thoughts and actions of the other characters or on Balthazar's criticism and analysis of the Justine manuscript. He then augments many of these selections with a new selection of his Alexandrian memories. But now his editorial method, as in the scene with Narouz at Sitna Mariam, is dependent upon the



way this new information is "detonated" on his imagination and not, as with his earlier method, dependent upon the way information keyed subjective associations in his emotionally charged memory. And when he does omit material, it is now more for considerations of artistic unity than for emotional significance. Speaking of Semira and Amaril, he decides not to tell their story in the present book which is "too tangled already by the record of ill-starred loves." (Balthazar, p. 191) The Semira-Amaril story does not properly fit the central focus of the second novel with its emphasis on the imagination and the growing awareness of political manipulations; nor does their story throw any light on Darley's struggle with the relativity of truth. As editor, then, Darley is grappling with contradictions and experimenting in more objective narrative forms.

As editor, too, Darley again knows more than he tells us. We can see this with the relationship of Semira and Amaril, which Darley decides not to explain. But there are also certain hints which Balthazar gives Darley and which Darley does not follow through with. I am thinking primarily of Da Capo's "death" and Nessim's parties. Balthazar tells Darley that his account of Da Capo's death in Justine is the version everyone accepted: that it was accidental but possibly arranged by Nessim. Then Balthazar reveals that the corpse in the lake had false teeth and

Da Capo did not. "Da Capo," writes Balthazar,

had an almost perfect set of teeth and certainly no false teeth which could possibly have fallen out. Who, then, was it? I don't know. And if Da Capo simply disappeared and arranged for some decoy to take his place, he had every reason: leaving behind him debts of over two million. (Balthazar, p. 102)

This revelation has interesting implications, but Darley edits his curiosity; he does not try to piece together the facts. So, too, in the scene immediately following this new version of Da Capo's death, the scene in which Pombal speaks cautiously about Darley being in the British and he being in the French Secret Service, Darley changes the subject. (Balthazar, p. 103) For Darley to speak now about these growing political implications would be to violate the planned unity of his book; he would have to gather together all the political information and begin to draw political conclusions. But Darley's relativity will not yet carry him that far: his imagination is fixed solely on a reworking of the Justine story.

Later, again in the Interlinear, writing this time of Nessim, Balthazar says:

Of his more serious preoccupations at this time I could write a fair amount, for I have in the interval learned a good deal about his affairs and his political concerns. They will explain his sudden change-over into a great entertainer--the crowded house which you describe so well, the banquets and balls. But here . . . the question of censorship troubles me, for if I were to send you this and if you were, as you might, to throw this whole disreputable jumble of paper into the water, the sea

might float it back to Alexandria perhaps directly into the arms of the Police. Better not. I will tell you only what seems politic. Perhaps later on I shall tell you the rest. (Balthazar, p. 147)

Aside here from the interesting parallel that Balthazar is also editing his information, that the Interlinear is not the complete story, we can see another strong suggestion of "political concerns"; but again Darley does not choose to speculate on this topic.

Finally, as with Justine, Darley-as-editor includes addenda at the end of Balthazar with "Consequential Data," "Scobie's Common Usage," and "Workpoints." These three separate sections also reflect Darley's growing objectivity. The "Consequential Data" is comprised of "Some shorthand notes of Keats's, recording the Obiter Dicta of Pursewarden in fragmentary fashion." Darley includes these notes, written by Pursewarden and collected by Keats, as a supplement to Balthazar's portrait of Pursewarden in the Interlinear. This inclusion by Darley seems to be an attempt to let Pursewarden speak for himself, this time without any editorial comment by either Darley or Balthazar. I would think that "Scobie's Common Usage" is an attempt to achieve the same end. These entries at the end of the second novel are yet another indication of Darley's developing ability to step back from any immediate subjective involvement with the characters and action. Unlike the "Consequential Data" at the end of Justine, which Darley edited out because they

did not fit the passional subjectivity of the narrative focus, these items are left out of Balthazar because they do not appear to be immediately relevant to the context of that novel.

The "Workpoints" have more in common with the "Consequential Data" of Justine, for both appear to be jottings from a novelist's notebook and both point forward to the next novel. As I mentioned earlier, several sections from the Justine "Consequential Data" appear later in Balthazar; so, too, four of the five Balthazar "Workpoints" appear in Mountolive. The scenes with Clea and Semira appear in Mountolive on pages 149 and 153, Narouz with his father on page 37, Mountolive's illusion that he is free to act on page 75, and a supplemental reason for Nessim's marriage to Justine on page 202. These "Workpoints," however, also continue Darley's trend toward objective narration, serving as a link between the partially objective narration of Balthazar and the completely objective narration of Mountolive. Darley, who at all times knows more than he tells us, appears to be suggesting in these third-person narrative "Workpoints" further developments of the other characters.

Thus, Darley's Balthazar, fraught with contradictory information and fixed on the imagination, portrays Darley's increasing awareness of relative truth and the

need for more objective narrative methods; this growing pattern of objectification is reflected in his shift in narrative focus away from purely subjective considerations in his use of third-person narrative techniques. Even as editor, he shows by his editorial inclusions and exclusions his awareness of the need for a more eclectic method. And, finally, his third-person "Workpoints" lead directly to the omniscient narration of Mountolive, the next step in this progressive pattern of narrative objectification. Balthazar, then, is the necessary transitional step from the subjective "memory-groove" of Justine to the omniscience of Mountolive.

In Mountolive, the focus shifts away from memory in Justine and imagination in Balthazar to the outer life of politics and intrigue. We follow the diplomatic career of Mountolive, learn of the Hosnani plot, and see Pursewarden in his official role as Political Officer. The central concern of the novel is, in fact, the conflict between the characters as political figures. There is also a shift in narration from the first-person method in Justine and the mixed narrative method in Balthazar to the third-person method in this third novel. The unknown narrator has limited omniscience, choosing to focus his attention solely on the political life of the characters. This novel, like the first two, also contains edited selections written by

some of the characters, notably Mountolive's diary and the letters of Mountolive, Leila, Pursewarden, and Maskelyne. The story unfolds in an orderly, chronological manner, with the exception of a few conventional flashbacks. The novel ends with Narouz' murder, which takes place approximately a month after the duckshoot at the end of Justine and several months after the Cervoni ball at the end of Balthazar. Thus, except for the earlier career of Mountolive, the time covered in the Mountolive story is about the same as that in the first two novels. Looked at then in terms of its structure, Mountolive appears to present no extraordinary problems. Still, there is a problem: we want to know what happened to Darley, the fictitious narrator of the first two novels; we want to know who this new omniscient narrator is.

This question of the identity of the narrator is an important one, especially with respect to the evolution of form and the development of theme. There are three possible ways of looking at this matter. First, the narrator is omniscient and unknown; he is a fictional device employed by Durrell to give us a third version of the story. This approach has the severe limitation of simply evading the issue. Though the narrator has been important in the first two novels, this view suggests that he is not important in the third novel. Second, we can say, as have most

comentators on the Quartet, that Durrell himself intrudes into his fictional world as the omniscient narrator of Mountolive. After all, Durrell is really the author of both Justine and Balthazar, hiding, of course, behind the convention of Darley as narrator; in Mountolive he steps forward and shows his hand. This second view, like the first, does not take into consideration Darley's slow growth as an artist, reflected in the form and narrative focus of the first two novels. If Durrell violates the integrity of his fictional world, he also breaks the pattern of objectification he has carefully developed in Justine and Balthazar. Durrell does not need to write his way through the structural problems which culminate in Mountolive, but Darley does. The third view is that Darley, continuing to function within the convention of the fictitious author-narrator, is the omniscient narrator of Mountolive. We have willingly accepted Darley as the author-narrator of the first two novels, writing in each instance a novel that reflects the relationship he sees between himself and his material; we are now asked to accept a new relationship, the objectification of experience in the omniscient narration of Mountolive. I plan to discuss this third view only in terms of the fictitious author convention and the internal evidence in the first three novels. Later in this chapter, when I come to

discuss Durrell and the structure of the Quartet as a whole I will consider this question of Darley-as-narrator in terms of external evidence.

I have been speaking of the pattern of objectification which reflects Darley's growth as an artist. As Darley comes to learn the relative nature of truth, his narrative methods become more objective through the use of the third person, and his narrative focus expands to include scenes in which he is not directly involved. The next logical step in this pattern would be for Darley to write a completely objective novel, a novel which would reflect his own awareness that he is not central to the larger scheme of the action. In Justine he is the central interpreter of the action, concerned with emotional significance. In Balthazar he shares the role of interpreter with Balthazar, but his method is more eclectic. If we see him as the narrator of Mountolive, then this trend toward objectification is continued. Now he becomes the artist interpreting the actions of other people, while also being able to see himself as a relatively minor character in the political machinations of this third novel. Thus, as narrator of a third-person novel, his view of himself and his material once again coincides with his narrative methods, an extension of the parallels we have seen in Justine and Balthazar.



In addition to this objective trend, there are several internal clues which indicate that Darley is the invisible narrator of Mountolive. Three-quarters of the way through Balthazar Darley says:

So much has been revealed to me by all this that I feel myself to be, as it were, standing upon the threshold of a new book--a new Alexandria. The old evocative outlines which I drew . . . were subjective ones. I had made the image my own jealous personal property, and it was true yet only within the limitations of a truth only partially perceived. Now, in the light of all these new treasures . . . what should I do? Extend the frontiers of original truth, filling in with the rubble of this new knowledge the foundations upon which to build a new Alexandria?(Balthazar, p. 184)

We wonder what this new book is, this book which is not going to be based on "evocative outlines" as was Justine. Surely, Darley is not referring to Balthazar, the book we are reading when we come upon this passage, for by the time Darley writes this passage he is almost finished writing Balthazar. I believe that the new book refers to Mountolive, in which Darley will "Extend the frontiers of original truth."

A little later, speaking of Amaril and Semira, Darley says, "Yet years later, in another book, in another context, he will happen upon her again, almost by accident, but not here, not in these pages too tangled already by the record of ill-starred loves."(Balthazar, p. 191) The story of Amaril and Semira appears in both Mountolive and Clea. We can assume, then, that the other book Darley is

referring to is either Mountolive or Clea. But we can also see that this reference could not possibly be to Clea.

First, Darley has not lived through the events in Clea because they have not yet occurred. The Clea story records the events after Darley's return to Alexandria; during the writing of Balthazar he is still on the island. Second, the Amaril-Semira story in Clea is part of the general transformation which takes place in the final novel:

Amaril has successfully given Semira a nose, they are married, and she is introduced to Alexandrian society; later, in Clea's letter, we find out that Semira is to have a child. Even looked at briefly, this story could never be construed as an "ill-starred" love. The earlier Amaril-Semira story in Mountolive is, however, "ill-starred."

After having found Semira again, Amaril discovers that she has no nose; he plans to operate, to give her a nose, but must first study abroad to learn the proper techniques. This much of the Amaril-Semira story takes place before Darley leaves Alexandria to go to the island. In addition to the above considerations, if we consider, as I feel we must, that Darley in his role as the fictitious author-narrator of Balthazar is also the fictitious author of the "Workpoints" at the end of that novel, we can then see that the Amaril-Semira "Workpoint" at the end of Balthazar points directly to Mountolive. Darley writes:

"How many lovers since Pygmalion have been able to build their beloved's face out of flesh, as Amaril has?" asked Clea. The great folio of noses so lovingly copied for him to choose from--Nefertiti to Cleopatra. The readings in a darkened room. (Balthazar, p. 249)

In Mountolive Clea tells the Amaril-Semira story to Mountolive as he poses for a painting. During her narrative she mentions the portfolio of noses she has collected and her reading to Semira "in the darkened rooms." Finally, she says, "You see, he is after all building a woman of his own fancy, a face to a husband's own specifications; only Pygmalion had such a chance before!" (Mountolive, p. 153)

Thus, both of Darley's references to Amaril and Semira in Balthazar point forward to Mountolive. I believe, therefore, that Darley is the narrator of Mountolive, that he refers several times to this third novel, and that he is in fact planning it even before he finishes writing Balthazar.

Darley's "Workpoints" are clearly the link between Balthazar and Mountolive. We saw earlier how Darley uses the third-person method in the "reconstructed" scenes with Narouz and Nessim in Balthazar. With the four "Workpoints" written in third person at the end of Balthazar, I believe that Darley is once again "reconstructing" and that these "Workpoints" are Darley's notes to himself on scenes to be developed later in Mountolive. The clearest example of this continuity is with the scene between Narouz and his father; the "Workpoint" is repeated almost exactly in

Mountolive. In Balthazar Darley writes in the "Workpoint":

Narouz always held in the back of his consciousness the memory of the moonlit room; his father sitting in the wheelchair at the mirror, repeating the one phrase over and over again as he pointed the pistol at the looking-glass. (Balthazar, p. 249)

This scene appears in Mountolive in its reworked form:

The moonlight shone directly on to the mirror, and by its reflected light he could see his father sitting upright in his chair. . . . he saw the invalid confronting himself in a moonlit image, slowly raising the pistol to point it, not at his temple, but at the mirror, as he repeated in a hoarse croaking voice, "And now if she should fall in love, you know what you must do." (Mountolive, pp. 37-38)

This and the other "Workpoints" seem to present strong evidence that Darley is indeed the narrator of Mountolive.

One last internal indication that Darley is the narrator of Mountolive involves earlier scenes which are repeated in the third novel. There is first the scene where Pursewarden dances with Melissa. In Justine Darley writes:

Pursewarden, who was gravely drunk, took her to the floor and, after a moment's silence, addressed her in his sad yet masterful way: "Comment vous défendez-vous contre la solitude?" he asked her. Melissa turned upon him an eye replete with all the candour of experience and replied softly: "Mon-sieur je suis devenue la solitude même". (Justine, p. 201)

In Mountolive we find the same scene:

Dancing again he said to her, but with drunken irony, "Melissa, comment vous défendez-vous contre la solitude?" Her response, for some queer reason, cut him to the heart. She turned upon him an eye

replete with all the candor of experience and replied softly: "Monsieur, je suis devenue la solitude même." (Mountolive, pp. 166-167)

Here we see Darley using an earlier scene, but with a slight difference. Leaving aside the minor changes in punctuation, we see that when Darley wrote Justine he saw Pursewarden "gravely drunk," speaking "in his sad yet masterful way." By the time he writes Mountolive his view of Pursewarden has changed so that Darley can now see him speaking "with drunken irony."<sup>1</sup>

A second scene, appearing first in Balthazar and repeated in Mountolive, involves Nessim's telephone call to Capodistria to tell him that Justine has accepted Nessim's

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1. This is one of the few scenes Durrell changed in the 1962 one-volume revision of The Alexandria Quartet. He leaves the scene in Justine untouched, except for the addition of a comma, but in the Mountolive scene he changes Pursewarden's question and Melissa's answer: "'Melissa, comment vous défendez-vous contre la foule?' Her response, for some queer reason, cut him to the heart. She turned upon him an eye replete with all the candor of experience and replied softly: 'Monsieur, je ne me défends plus.'" (Quartet, p. 526) It is not altogether clear why Durrell made this change from "la solitude" to "la foule." In terms of my discussion, however, I can see the Justine question, which centers on solitude, reflecting Darley's own concern with solitude and his tendency to impose his own viewpoint on his characters and the Mountolive question, which centers on the rabble, reflecting Darley's ability to be more objective about his characters and to let them speak for themselves. Certainly, based on the portrait we get of Pursewarden in Mountolive, a question about defending against the rabble is far more appropriate than defending against solitude. At any rate, the appearance of this scene from Justine in Mountolive, even in amended form, still seems to indicate that Darley is the invisible narrator of the third novel.

marriage proposal. These repeated scenes are, however, different from the above example, for here the second scene adds additional information. In one of the third-person chapters in Balthazar which Darley has reconstructed, he writes of Nessim:

After a long moment of thought he picked up the polished telephone and dialled Capodistria's number. "Da Capo" he said quietly. "You remember my plans for marrying Justine? All is well." He replaced the receiver slowly, as if it weighed a ton, and sat staring at his own reflection in the polished desk. (Balthazar, p. 64)

This conversation appears again in Mountolive in expanded form:

It was some hours later, when he was sitting at his desk, that Nessim, after a long moment of thought, picked up the polished telephone and dialed Capodistria's number. "Da Capo," he said quietly, "you remember my plans for marrying Justine? All is well. We have a new ally. I want you to be the first to announce it to the committee. I think now they will show no more reservation about my not being a Jew--since I am to be married to one. . . ."

Now he replaced the receiver slowly, as if it weighed a ton, and sat staring at his own reflection in the polished desk. (Mountolive, p. 202)

The similarities between the two scenes is obvious. The difference, of course, is that the Mountolive scene has become politically oriented; at least one of Nessim's motives for marrying Justine is to make him acceptable to the Jews involved in the plot. This later scene, incidentally, is also noted in one of Darley's four third-person "Workpoints" at the end of Balthazar, where Darley writes:

Nessim said sadly: "All motive is mixed. You see, from the moment I married her, a Jewess, all their reservations disappeared and they ceased to suspect me. I do not say it was the only reason."  
(Balthazar, p. 249)

Thus, since this telephone scene contains part of the earlier scene written by Darley in Balthazar and since the new information in the Mountolive scene is implicit in the above "Workpoint," I feel that here again we are justified in seeing Darley as the narrator of Mountolive.

If Darley is the narrator, then what kind of novel does he write? I mentioned earlier that both Justine and Balthazar are divided into four parts and that the four-chapter divisions in the second novel give Balthazar a more formal organization. This structural trend is continued in Mountolive. The third novel is divided into sixteen chapters without the division into larger parts or books. The narrative momentum is rapid and essentially chronological. Through the first nine chapters we follow the early career of Mountolive to his arrival in Egypt as Ambassador, learn of the British suspicions concerning Nessim, and follow Pursewarden's official activities up to his suicide. Chapter Nine ends with the narrator's introduction of the conventional flashback in the next few chapters. The narrator says, speaking of Mountolive:

But perhaps the clues that he sought lay further back in the past--further than either he or Pursewarden could see from a vantage point in the present time.

There were many facts about Justine and Nessim which had not come to his knowledge--some of them critical for an understanding of their case. But in order to include them it is necessary once more to retrace our steps briefly to the period immediately before their marriage. (Mountolive, pp. 191-192)

Chapters Ten, Eleven, and Twelve contain the flashback narrative, starting from Nessim's courting of Justine and their marriage, their involvement in the plot, up to Pursewarden's suicide, this time seen from their point of view. The remaining four chapters continue the action through Mountolive's request that the Egyptians act against Nessim, Nessim's visit to and bribe of Memlik, the subtle shifting of guilt to Narouz, and finally, as the novel ends, Narouz' assassination and funeral. This orderly progression of narrative flow reflects Darley's objectivity, as he writes his way out of the subjectivity of Justine and through the hard lessons of Balthazar's Interlinear.

The third-person method enables Darley to step back from personal involvement in the action and view the characters with the ostensible objectivity of the omniscient narrator. Still, Darley's presence is felt throughout the novel. We can see, for instance, in the above quoted introduction to the flashback that he says, "It is necessary once more to retrace our steps to the period immediately before their marriage." We know from reading the first nine chapters of Mountolive that this is the first



time we "retrace our steps," but we remember that in Balthazar Darley "reconstructed" the courtship and marriage of Justine and Nessim. The necessity of "once more" covering these events reflects Darley's shifting of the narrative focus in the third novel to the political side of life. Or, to cite another example, Darley, speaking of Mountolive at the end of Chapter Two, writes:

He was unaware that before the three years were up he would once more find his way back to Egypt-- the beloved country to which distance and exile lent a haunting brilliance as of tapestry. Could anything as rich as memory be a cheat? He never asked himself the question. (Mountolive, p. 68)

Since Mountolive does not ask himself this question, then who does ask it? We know enough of Mountolive by now to realize that this question is a little too poetic, a little too rhetorical for his diplomatic mind. On the other hand, we also know enough about Darley to realize that this is exactly his concern, the permanence of memory. We have already seen, in fact, that memory is indeed a cheat, that it has rendered to Darley "the limitations of a truth only partially perceived." (Balthazar, p. 184) Darley, then, allows himself occasionally to show through his narration.

Darley's presence as narrator, however, can more readily be seen in the control he exercises over the narrative focus and characterization. The characters in Mountolive are portrayed primarily in terms of specific political role. We see them, not necessarily as people,

but as titles: Mountolive as Ambassador, Pursewarden as First Political, Nessim as plotting Coptic Banker, Justine as intriguing Mata Hari, Maskelyne as orthodox British Spy. These political roles function as part of the overall political focus of the narrative. In each instance, Darley concerns himself primarily with a political explanation of the character's actions and motivations. We are given, for instance, the political motivation behind Nessim's marriage to Justine. Capodistria's disappearance, which Balthazar earlier hinted was for financial reasons, now becomes political expediency. Even Pursewarden's suicide, long a mystery in Justine and Balthazar, is given a political explanation. Pursewarden discovers from Melissa that Nessim is in fact smuggling arms into Palestine. After revealing this information to Mountolive in a letter, he writes:

But I simply am not equal to facing the simpler moral implications raised by this discovery. I know what has to be done about it. But the man happens to be my friend. Therefore . . . a quietus. (This will solve other deeper problems too.) Ach! what a boring world we have created around us. The slime of plot and counterplot. I have just recognized that it is not my world at all. (Mountolive, p. 183)

And despite the fact that Mountolive says, "Nobody kills himself for an official reason!" (Mountolive, p. 184) this is the official reason posited by the narrator. At the beginning of Chapter Twelve Darley writes:

But it was not only for Mountolive that all the dispositions on the chessboard had been abruptly altered now by Pursewarden's solitary act of cowardice--and the unexpected discovery which had supplied its motive, the mainspring of his death. (Mountolive, p. 213)

We are led to believe with Pursewarden's suicide, as with most of the action in the novel, that the characters' actions are politically motivated. The narrator, by emphasizing "plot and counterplot," focuses his narration on the public, the external side of personality. This external treatment of character and action reflects the end of Darley's journey from the subjectivity of Justine to the objectivity of Mountolive.

Darley's insistence on restricting the narrative focus to the political side of life forces him to avoid certain non-political explanations of the action. I am thinking again of Pursewarden's suicide. In his letter to Mountolive, Pursewarden says that his death "will solve other deeper problems too." We are never told what these "deeper problems" are. Then, among Pursewarden's effects, we are told that there is a letter from his sister Liza. Of this letter, we are only told by the narrator that "Mountolive read it, shaking his bewildered head, and then thrust it into his pocket shamefacedly. He licked his lips and frowned heavily at the wall. Liza!" (Mountolive, p. 185) Only much later, in the fourth novel, do we find out what was in Liza's letter to Pursewarden, along with his

reply. This alternate explanation, the solution to the "deeper problems," is that Pursewarden committed suicide to free Liza from their incestuous love, free her to marry Mountolive and lead, as he had not been able to with his wife, a "normal" life. By avoiding mention of this more personal explanation of Pursewarden's suicide in Mountolive, Darley emphasizes the accepted political explanation. But he also distorts the truth. Darley's failure in the objective Mountolive to render the truth of an action is the last necessary step in his artistic apprenticeship. Having written his way full circle from the subjective Justine to the objective Mountolive, he is ready in Clea for the final realization that any one-sided approach to life yields, at best, a "selected fiction."

The form of Clea, no less than the form of the earlier novels, reflects Darley's view of himself and his world. The first three novels are Darley's books of the past; Clea is his book of the present. Justine, Balthazar, and Mountolive are Darley's progressive attempts to recapture the past. At the beginning of Clea he notes the failure of this Proustian approach:

I had set out once to store, to codify, to annotate the past before it was utterly lost--that at least was a task I had set myself. I had failed in it (perhaps it was hopeless?)--for no sooner had I embalmed one aspect of it in words than the intrusion of new knowledge disrupted the frame of reference,

everything flew asunder, only to reassemble again  
in unforeseen unpredictable patterns. . . .  
(Clea, pp. 11-12)

In the fourth novel, then, Darley turns his face away from the remembered past and toward action in the present. "The continuous present," he writes,

which is the real history of that collective anecdote, the human mind; when the past is dead and the future represented only by desire and fear, what of that adventive moment which can't be measured, can't be dismissed? For most of us the so-called Present is snatched away like some sumptuous repast, conjured up by fairies--before one can touch a mouthful. (Clea, p. 14)

Being thus able to live in the present, Darley realizes that he must see Alexandria again, not as he had invented it, but as it exists for him in the "now"; he says that he "must return to it once more in order to be able to leave it forever, to shed it," that he "must re-experience it once more and this time forever." (Clea, p. 14, 15) The old city of dreams and memory becomes, as Darley says, "as it must always have been--a shabby little seaport built upon a sand-reef, a moribund and spiritless backwater." (Clea, p. 103) Clea will give us a new look at the characters and action, not from another angle and not in terms of their past, but as Darley sees them in the present.

In Clea Darley returns to the first-person method. But now, unlike Justine and Balthazar, the actual writing of the novel is not one of his subjects. Thus, in Clea there is only one reference to the epic situation, to the

act of writing the novel. Near the end of Clea, Darley says, "It is not hard, writing at this remove in time, to realise that it had all already happened . . ." (Clea, p. 223) By leaving the epic situation almost entirely out of Clea, Darley stresses the day-by-day life with his return to Alexandria. We remember that in Justine Darley mingled his present life on the island freely with his memories of his past life in Alexandria, both written in the present tense. In Balthazar he still interwove his present life with his memories of Alexandria, although less frequently than in Justine, and also made a distinction by using the present tense for the island and the past tense for his past Alexandrian life. In Clea there is essentially no writing life, no epic situation; so, even though he uses the past tense for his return to Alexandria, the reader follows him through his daily life as if it were happening for the first time. This method gives to Clea an immediacy lacking in the other novels; we are with Darley in his present life as he lives it and not following the retrospective workings of his memory. What happens in Clea, then, is that the epic situation of Balthazar becomes the "now" of the fourth novel; Darley stops reliving the past and lives in the here and now of the present.

The novel begins with Darley on the island, musing now on the fact that Nessim's letter is pulling him away

from the ego-isolation of his island-self and back to life in Alexandria. As is typical of the other novels, concrete references to the passage of time are obscured. We know that Darley received Clea's letter which ends Balthazar in the summer and that he leaves the island at the beginning of Clea in the spring, but we do not know how much time has elapsed between the summer of the second novel and the spring of the last novel. However, once into the final book, we see that the novel progresses chronologically; Darley arrives in Alexandria in the spring, spends two full years there, leaves the city during the spring of the second year, returns to the island for three months, and then probably follows Clea to France. This use of straightforward chronology is an indication that Darley can now take life as it comes to him. Speaking of his new relationship with Clea, he can now say, as he could not with Justine, "I had stopped rummaging through my own mind, had learned to take her like a clear draught of spring water." (Clea, p. 107)

The form of Clea does not fit conveniently into one of Romberg's three classifications; Clea, in fact, contains elements from the memoir, diary, and epistolary novel. It is related to the fictitious memoirs in that it contains Darley's written account of his past life; but because there is little forward-looking commentary or speculative

pauses by the narrator, Clea deviates from the norm of the memoirs novel. The sense of dramatic immediacy relates Clea to the diary novel, but Darley's last novel is not written in diary extracts. The letters of Capodistria and Clea and Pursewarden's notebook are, of course, epistolary elements, but the technique of including extracts written by other characters is not the only method used by Darley in Clea. Romberg's classifications do not give us much information about the form of this novel or about the function of the separate elements.

Clea is divided into three books, each book having its own separately numbered chapters. Each book tends generally to focus on Darley's reconsideration of old relationships: with Alexandria, Pursewarden and Clea. Book I deals with Darley's return to the city, focusing primarily on his reintroduction and reorientation to all of the major characters. He returns to Alexandria and meets Nessim and Pombal in the first chapter. He finally confronts the real Justine at Karm in Chapters Two and Three, where he is able to see that "She had become a woman at last . . ." (Clea, p. 62) He has lost the need to romanticize and can see her with new eyes. In Chapter Four he meets Balthazar and hears about his ruin and impending rehabilitation. Finally, in Chapter Five, he recognizes Clea as his third love. Through her he learns of Scobie's transformation into



El Scob and Semira's marriage to Amaril. Darley sums up the newness of his vision and relationships at the beginning of Chapter Four: "I felt like the Adam of the mediaeval legends." (Clea, p. 63)

Book II focuses primarily on Darley's re-appraisal of Pursewarden and his ideas; he reads Pursewarden's literary notebook and his personal letters and meets his sister Liza. Darley and Clea speak of Pursewarden in the first chapter. The entire second chapter is comprised of extracts from Pursewarden's notebook, "My Conversations with Brother Ass." Chapter Three touches on Darley's routine at the office, where he meets Pursewarden's former adversaries Maskelyne and Telford. In Chapter Four, Darley meets Liza, reads Pursewarden's love letters to her, and talks to Keats about him. In the final chapter of Book II, Darley and Liza burn Pursewarden's letters. It is in this central book that Darley comes to realize, through his new approach to Pursewarden, "that poetic or transcendental knowledge somehow cancels out purely relative knowledge." (Clea, p. 176)

The focus in Book III is on Darley's relationship with Clea. Aside from Da Capo's letter, in the first chapter, we learn of Scobie's prophecy concerning Clea, witness Fosca's death, and hear Clea's account of Fosca's funeral. Chapter Two, the central chapter of Book III, relates

Darley's summer of joy with Clea, Clea's unknown fears, and finally Clea's accident and rebirth. In Chapter Three, Darley attends the Mulid of El Scob before leaving Alexandria for his island. The final chapter contains Darley's letter to Clea describing his island life and Clea's letter to Darley announcing her birth as a true artist; Darley's brief account of his own artistic birth ends the novel.

The general pattern of the novel parallels Darley's final development as an artist. In the first book he rejects the past and learns to live in the present. In the second book, through his experience of Pursewarden's private writings, he discovers that he "had been digging about in the graveyard of relative fact piling up data, more information, and completely missing the mythopoeic reference which underlies fact." (Clea, p. 176) In the final book, in the underwater scene, he confronts in himself "an alter ego shaped after a man of action I had never realised, recognised." (Clea, p. 249) Through his love for and identification with Clea as both woman and artist, Darley himself is now able to step over the threshold into his own artistic kingdom, able to write those four words "which presage simply the old story of an artist coming of age." (Clea, p. 282) These last necessary steps--life in the present, rejection of relative fact, and recognition of the man of action--follow one from the other and

determine, not only the three-part structure of Clea, but the smooth narrative flow and the straightforward chronology of the last novel. Even the epistolary elements like Da Capo's letter and Pursewarden's notebook function thematically, not structurally. In the other novels these epistolary elements were used to advance the plot, fill in informational gaps, round out the structure: Arnauti's novel, Balthazar's Interlinear, and Pursewarden's letters are really major structural devices. But in Clea these elements relate directly to the themes being developed and have no bearing on the form of the novel; except for Clea's letter at the end of the novel, all of the epistolary elements--including the stories dealing with the transformation of Scobie, Semira, and Balthazar--could be left out and the form would remain the same. Just as Darley's final development as an artist seems natural and uncomplicated, so, too, the form of the final novel he writes is direct and uncomplicated.

The narrative focus of the last novel moves, as Darley himself moves, away from the relative. Just as the focus in the first three novels paralleled Darley's current concerns in each novel, going from the emotional to the imaginative to the political, the focus in Clea is on the "mythopoeic." Though there are many mythic and archetypic allusions in the earlier novels, Clea abounds with them.

In terms of the story itself, Scobie becomes El Scob; Amaril and Semira are Knight and Rescued Lady; Mountolive is Liza's Dark Stranger; Da Capo becomes Black Magician, working with the Baron and his Turk, with the Abbé; the homunculi--as king, queen, monk, nun, architect, miner, seraph, blue and red spirit--probably correspond to archetypic states in the psyche; and the underwater scene is really a struggle between the dark and light forces for the anima. Even incidental details take on archetypic significance: Darley describes Nessim and Justine to the child as "the father, a dark prince, the stepmother a swarthy imperious queen" (Clea, p. 15) Budgie decorates his Bijou Earth Closet with astrological figures (Clea, p. 262); and the child at Karm becomes "an Arabian Nights queen." (Clea, p. 196) Thus, even though these archetypic descriptions and stories do not have any effect on the form of Clea, Darley in his secondary function as editor includes them because they collaborate with the general "mythopoeic" pattern and with Darley's own attempt "to inhabit those deserted spaces which time misses--beginning to live between the ticks of the clock, so to speak." (Clea, p. 14)

In terms of form, Clea is Darley's simplest novel; thematically, it is his most difficult. Though Romberg would call its form "mixed," the novel moves steadily from start to finish, following Darley's daily life in

Alexandria; there are no chronological convolutions. The technical devices he uses in Clea do not confuse the structure of that novel. There are no real narrative flashbacks, though some of the stories told to Darley bring the past history of some person up to the present, notably Clea's Syrian affair, Balthazar's passion and rehabilitation, and Scobie's apotheosis. The novel, as Darley tells us, is "simply the old story of an artist coming of age." (Clea, p. 282) The novel, however, cannot stand alone; despite its simplicity, Clea would be meaningless to the reader without the knowledge of the first three novels. This process, to be discussed in the next section, is what Durrell means by a "word continuum." Thematically and structurally Clea is the answer to Darley's quest, but only after he has written his way through the problems of the first three novels.

It should be apparent by now that it is extremely difficult to discuss the form of the individual novel without also discussing the dominant theme in each novel. As Darley's perspectives change, there is a corresponding change in the structure of the novel he writes. In a very real sense, the change in form from one novel to the next corresponds to Darley's "artistic quotient" as well as his "intelligence quotient." As Durrell says to Kenneth Young in the Encounter interview:

When you read Clea I hope you will feel that Darley was necessarily as he was in Justine because the whole business of the four books, apart from other things, shows the way the artist grows up. . . . I wanted to show, in the floundering Darley, how an artist may have first-class equipment and still not be one. (Young, p. 62)

The form of each novel provides, as a reflection of Darley's artistic growth, significant insight into the major themes of the whole Quartet and helps us to understand the structural functions of The Alexandria Quartet as a unified work of art.

## II

### Durrell and the Space-Time Continuum

Having seen, from the inside, so to speak, what Darley has to learn and how this lesson affects the novels he writes, we can now step back and consider the general pattern imposed on the Quartet by Durrell. The three separate keys to the form of the Quartet are Durrell's literary "translation" of Einstein's relativity, the relativity of truth, and Darley's artistic growth. Durrell's use of the theory of relativity determines the overall form of the Quartet; his development of relative truth determines the relationship between the separate novels; and the theme of Darley's growth determines the progression and form of the individual novels.

Probably the most often discussed and most often quoted passage from The Alexandria Quartet, a passage not

in the novel proper, is the Note to Balthazar, where Durrell attempts to explain what he is trying to accomplish with the form of the Quartet:

Modern literature offers us no Unities, so I have turned to science and am trying to complete a four-decker novel whose form is based on the relativity proposition.

Three sides of space and one of time constitute the soup-mix recipe of a continuum. The four novels follow this pattern.

The three first parts, however, are to be deployed spatially (hence the use of "sibling" not "sequel") and are not linked in a serial form. They interlap, interweave, in a purely spatial relation. Time is stayed. The fourth part alone will represent time and be a true sequel.

The subject-object relation is so important to relativity that I have tried to turn the novel through both subjective and objective modes. The third part, MOUNTOLIVE, is a straight naturalistic novel in which the narrator of JUSTINE and BALTHAZAR becomes an object, i. e. a character.

This is not Proustian or Joycean method--for they illustrate Bergsonian "Duration" in my opinion, not "Space-Time". (Balthazar, Note)

So much critical material has been written since this statement first appeared in 1958, the bulk of which is concerned with a literal reading of Durrell's claim that the form is "based on the relativity proposition," that in the 1962 one-volume edition of the Quartet Durrell changed this in the Preface to read, "In trying to work out my form I adopted, as a rough analogy, the relativity proposition." (Quartet, Preface) This shift in emphasis to "rough analogy" is the key to Durrell's use of Einstein's relativity.

I have already spoken of the view of Alfred M. Bork, Professor of Physics at Harvard University, that Durrell's use of relativity is a literary "translation." I do not feel that Durrell ever imagined that his readers and critics would take his statements about the form of the Quartet and his use of relativity quite as literally as they have. Durrell's method, both in A Key to Modern British Poetry and in The Alexandria Quartet, is to convert mathematics into metaphor and to blend the physical with the psychological sciences. Speaking of the form of the Quartet, Bork says, "It is really impossible to follow the strict relativistic dichotomy here. Time must play a role in the first three novels, and space in the fourth. Making the 'time' novel a sequel appears to be a free literary adaptation of the relativistic concept of time." (Bork, p. 196) Expecting this kind of rigid conformity to a scientific concept from a work of art is to do an injustice to both science and art, even when, as in Durrell's case, the artist's science may be fuzzy and his artistic plan may "sound perhaps somewhat immodest or even pompous." (Balthazar, Note) Durrell's knowledge of relativity, as Bork points out, "is not that of a scientist working in the area" (Bork, p. 191), nor need it be. My present concern is to examine how Durrell's "translation" of relativity affects the form of the Quartet.



The "relativity proposition," as Durrell calls it, is the joining of space and time in a space-time continuum. If we view The Alexandria Quartet as a single event, we can see that it, too, has "Three sides of space and one of time . . ." (Balthazar, Note) The first three novels are equivalent to the three sides of space; the fourth novel represents the time dimension. In the spatial novels time is stayed. Durrell does not, however, mean that time is stopped. In each of the first three novels there is a progressively increasing emphasis on chronological treatment of the Alexandrian story, and in the first two novels there is the chronological treatment of the epic situation. Time is stayed in the two following senses. The first three novels all deal with the same fixed period of time, from Darley's arrival in Alexandria to the winter during which Justine disappears, Toto de Brunel is murdered at the Cervoni Ball, and Narouz is assassinated; only the first four chapters of Mountolive antedate this period and sketch in the early years of Mountolive's diplomatic career up to his arrival in Alexandria as Ambassador; only the epic situation in Justine and Balthazar, when Darley is writing these novels on the island, post-dates this period. Everything else in the three novels focuses on the events of a two-year period in Alexandria, historically during the mid 1930's. Time, in this first sense, is stayed. Second,

despite the narrator's varying use of tenses, the emphasis in the first three novels is on the past; the narrator is looking back into the past and trying to recapture it. The story which emerges from the first three novels is a multi-dimensional vision of a fixed period of history, focusing progressively on the emotional, imaginative, and political history of the characters. In terms of this emphasis on the past, time is stayed in a second sense. In the last novel the emphasis is on the return both to life in the present and to Alexandria; Clea is a sequel to the first three spatialized stories, representing a true progression in time. Darley's concern in Clea is not with codifying the past but with living life as it happens.

Durrell emphasizes the spatialization of the first three novels by having Darley focus on the city; Alexandria becomes a timeless central character. By avoiding clear chronological or sequential references and by referring only obliquely to external historical events, Durrell emphasizes the timelessness of Alexandria. Nessim's historical dreams in Justine, with the mingling of past and present, are a symbolic representation of Alexandria as pure space. Narouz, when Nessim visits Karm Abu Girg, significantly stops all the clocks: "Your stay with us is so brief, let us not be reminded of the flight of the hours. God made eternity. Let us escape from the

despotism of time altogether." (Balthazar, p. 79) The eternal desert, the hunting scenes, the religious festivals, the identification of the present characters with the past avatars of the city: all conspire to portray the city as space with the timeless and ritualistic repetition of action. So, too, are Clea's paintings, Cavafy's poetry and Keats' photographs other attempts to stop time in the first three novels.

Jean-Paul Hamard sees, in addition to the spatialization of the first three novels, that each novel represents one of the space dimensions: depth, width, length. In "L'Espace et le Temps dans les Romans de Lawrence Durrell," he says:

Les romans doivent donc symboliser chacun une dimension du "continuum": les trois dimensions de l'espace et le temps. Dans la perspective de ce symbolisme, les trois premiers romans sont chargés de représenter: la profondeur, la largeur et la longueur. Dans Justine, l'accent est mis surtout, non exclusivement, sur les problèmes psychologiques: la nature de Justine, de ses relations avec Nessim, avec le narrateur. Le langage courant qui associe l'idée de profondeur à l'investigation psychologique nous montre que tel doit bien être le but du premier livre: créer la profondeur de cet espace romanesque. Balthazar élargit le problème en introduisant des considérations philosophiques, des spéculations mystiques. On y note aussi de vastes tableaux: la visite au cheik des Bédouins, la description de la fête de Sitna Mariam, le grand bal Cervoni. C'est, sur ce plan élémentaire, une bonne symbolisation de la largeur. Quant à Mountolive, à retracer la carrière de David Mountolive, l'auteur crée le symbole de la longueur. Du domaine des Hosnani, le jeune homme passe en Angleterre, puis dans divers postes, à Moscou, puis

de nouveau en Egypte où il se déplace sans cesse du Caire à Alexandrie. (Hamard, p. 400)

Hamard's view, interesting in itself, also fits into my own view of the changing narrative focus in the three novels. Justine is certainly the depth novel, with Arnauti's interest in depth psychology and Darley's interest in deep feelings. Balthazar, as the width novel, broadens the narrative focus by emphasizing the intellect and imagination with Balthazar's caballistic speculations, Pursewarden's anecdotes blending physics and psychology, and Darley's relativistic view of reality. As the novel of length, Mountolive is, chronologically speaking, the longest novel, covering more years than the first two novels. And by focusing on the character's political roles, the narrator lengthens their shadow, so to speak; we see the long-range effects of their actions. The effect of time being stayed is accomplished, then, by what Hamard sees as Durrell's use of the space dimensions of depth, width, and length in the first three novels.

In A Key to Modern British Poetry, Durrell speaks about Gide and the effect of relativity on the novel:

The naturalistic school, as André Gide points out in Les Faux Monnayeurs, spoke about a slice of life. 'The mistake,' he adds, through one of his characters, 'the mistake that school made was always to cut its slice in the same direction, always lengthwise, in the direction of time. Why not cut it up and down? Or across?' (Key, p. 26)

I think we can see in Gide's statement another critical approach to the three spatial novels of the Quartet. The slice of life in Durrell's work makes its cut sidewise, in the direction of space; the three stories coexist side by side, interpenetrating, while the narrator views the characters and actions from several different perspectives. The one constant in the space novels is time, while the changing of spatial position results in the varying points of view. As Pursewarden puts it, speaking of our view of reality, "Two paces east or west and the whole picture is changed." (Balthazar, p. 15) The various narrative views in the novels--the subjective Darley of Justine, the editing Darley of Balthazar, Balthazar in the Interlinear, the objective Darley of Mountolive--result from this sidestepping change of spatial position; the passage of time is not a factor in altering the points of view.

In addition to establishing a sibling relationship in the first three novels by staying time and focusing on a limited period of time, by telling several versions of a core story, Durrell strengthens the sibling relationship of the spatial novels with Darley's "Consequential Data" and "Workpoints." I realize that there is some potential confusion in my discussion of these "Workpoints," for we have to learn to see them in their "doubleness," first from the point of view of Darley as the fictitious author of the

individual novels and second from the point of view of Durrell as the actual author of the entire Quartet. To Darley the "Consequential Data" of Justine and the "Work-points" of Balthazar represent both material edited from original novel because it did not fit his predetermined narrative focus and material leading to and developed in the next novel. To Durrell, as the architect of the entire Quartet, these selections function as linking devices which emphasize the sibling relationship of the first three novels. Once this linking is accomplished, we can see that Pursewarden's explanation of his "n-dimensional novel" trilogy fits Durrell's own pattern in the spatial novels:

The narrative momentum forward is counter-sprung by references backwards in time, giving the impression of a book which is not travelling from a to b but standing above time and turning slowly on its own axis to comprehend the whole pattern. Things do not all lead forward to other things: some lead backwards to things which have passed. A marriage of past and present with the flying multiplicity of the future racing towards one. (Justine, p. 248)

We stand above time, that is, within a fixed period of time, and watch the triple development of a given set of events. It is significant in this scheme that there are no "Work-points" at the end of Mountolive, for that third novel is not intended to lead anywhere. Mountolive is the last of the sibling series and completes the spatial cycle. The three novels as a space trilogy represent a relativistic

rendering of the core Alexandrian story; they give us an ostensibly complete picture.

Clea breaks away from the bond of the past and continues the story in the day-to-day present. As the time novel it could continue indefinitely, but Durrell chooses to end it with Darley's breakthrough and his departure from Alexandria. Clea is the true sequel to the three space novels. Taking all four novels as a single work, we have what Durrell calls a "space-time continuum" or a "word continuum." The four novels form a unit from which, if the author chose, other novels could radiate. Durrell explains this process in the Author's Note to Clea:

Among the workpoints at the end of this volume I have sketched a number of possible ways of continuing to deploy these characters and situations in further instalments--but this is only to suggest that even if the series were extended indefinitely the result would never become a roman fleuve (an expansion of the matter in serial form) but would remain strictly part of the present word-continuum. If the axis has been well and truly laid down in the quartet it should be possible to radiate in any direction without losing the strictness and congruity of the continuum. (Clea, Author's Note)

The "Workpoint" stories would radiate from the core story established in the four novels. For instance, within the present space-time framework of the Quartet, "Hamid's story of Darley and Melissa" (Clea, p. 283) would be another space novel, covering the story of Darley's first love for Melissa from another angle; it would probably parallel, in structure and angle of vision, but not in intellectual

density, Balthazar's "objective" story of Darley's love for Justine. Hamid's story would probably be more simplistic than Darley's subjective version of his love for Justine in the first novel. The third "Workpoint," "Memlik and Justine in Geneva" (Clea, p. 283), if developed, would be a sequel or time novel; this story would probably expand the vague hint which Justine gives to Clea at the end of the fourth novel: "Clea, I am so happy, I could cry. It is something bigger this time, international. We will have to go to Switzerland next year, probably for good. Nessim's luck has suddenly changed. I can't tell you any details." (Clea, p. 281) These "Workpoints,"<sup>2</sup> then, suggest to us "possible ways of continuing to deploy these characters and

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2. Though I have not done so in my discussion, I think that it is entirely possible to extend the Durrell-Darley "doubleness" of the Balthazar "Workpoints" to the Clea "Workpoints" without contradiction. We know that Durrell has called attention to himself as the author of the Clea "Workpoints" in the Author's Note to the last novel and that speaking as the author he has suggested possibilities at the end of Clea for future deployment of characters and situations radiating from the present word-continuum. But what about Darley? He has, after all, within the convention of the fictitious narrator, written his way through the four novels. It does not seem a great stretch of this convention to imagine that by the end of the last novel Darley has caught up with Durrell artistically and that he can discover from the inside what Durrell knew all along, namely that the four novels are really one unified work of art, a space-time continuum. Assuming this kind of discovery as part of Darley's artistic growth in the Quartet, we can then imagine that Darley, at least in the realm of probability if not actuality, could have written "Workpoints" similar in content and intention to those at the end of Clea.



situations" by movement backward into the spatialized past in Alexandria or forward in time as the characters continue their separate lives. This process of a core story set in the spatialized past and a time story leading through the present into the future is what Durrell means by a space-time or word continuum. Durrell stops the process at four novels but suggests the possibility of further development. This continuum, while implicit in the form of the Quartet, really exists in the reader's mind. Durrell attempts a partial definition of this continuum process in the Hamburg interview: "If you remember scenes or characters and can't quite remember which book they come in, it proves that the four are one work tightly woven, doesn't it? The joiner is the reader, the continuum is his private property. One dimension in the light of the other." ("Kneller Tape," p. 163) We can read Clea, for example, as a separate and independent novel; yet the major significance of this fourth novel is dependent upon our previous knowledge of the first three books. In the same manner, we can read Mountolive as an interesting politically oriented Alexandrian adventure story, but without having first read Justine and Balthazar we would miss the reversals and new discoveries of the third novel. This same process holds for the "Workpoints" at the end of Clea: any suggestion of further development becomes meaningful only if we have read

the entire Quartet; once the core continuum is established in the reader's mind, the lines of development can radiate in any direction, spatially or temporally. Such is the nature of Durrell's "space-time continuum."

In addition to the notes to Balthazar and Clea, Durrell sprinkles throughout the Quartet a variety of clues to the form of the novels. These are the continual mentions of "sliding panels," stories told in layers, the palimpsest effect, the intercalating of reality, and Pursewarden's four-layer novel. One of these key comments is made by Pursewarden in Clea and describes, like his explanation of the "n-dimensional novel," the form of the Quartet. Pursewarden writes, with Darley as his object, advice on how the writer can be contemporary:

you might try a four-card trick in the form of a novel; passing a common axis through four stories, say, and dedicating each to one of the four winds of heaven. A continuum, forsooth, embodying not a temps retrouvé but a temps délivré. The curvature of space itself would give you stereoscopic narrative, while human personality seen across a continuum would perhaps become prismatic? Who can say? I throw the idea out. I can imagine a form which, if satisfied, might raise in human terms the problems of causality or indeterminacy. . . . And nothing very recherché either. Just an ordinary Girl Meets Boy story. But tackled in this way you would not, like most of your contemporaries, be drowsily cutting along a dotted line! (Clea, pp. 135-136).

Pursewarden, like Durrell, believes that relativity produces cyclic forms in literature. Because, as Pursewarden says, "The narrative momentum forward is counter-sprung by

references backwards in time" (Justine, p. 248), the narration does not proceed, as in the roman fleuve or saga novel, with the novelist "drowsily cutting along a dotted line" in the direction of time.

There are, within the novels, constant references by the characters to Durrell's use of Einstein's relativity in the form of the Quartet. The characters also speak, perhaps more frequently, about the relativity of truth, the second determinant of the form of the novels. John Unterecker, in his Columbia pamphlet Lawrence Durrell, correctly notes that many of these structural comments, primarily those dealing with relative truth, may seem heavy-handed but are absolutely necessary. He says that "many of the early intrusive remarks of Justine--glaringly functional in a second reading of the Quartet--serve, for the first time round, as absolutely necessary guideposts for the reader who otherwise might well be bewildered by the structure of the world he is about to enter." (Unterecker, p. 37) Unterecker refers specifically to Justine's comment to Darley as she looks into the dressmaker's multiple mirrors: "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?" (Justine, p. 27) We get, interestingly enough, five

distinct portraits of Justine in the Quartet: Darley's romantic view in Justine, Arnauti's psychological view in Moeurs, Balthazar's interpretation in the Interlinear, the "objective" version in Mountolive, and Darley's amended view in Clea. The form of the Quartet consequently reflects Durrell's incorporation of this relativistic rationale in the novels.

Charles I. Glicksberg, perhaps overstating the case in The Self in Modern Literature, says that "In Durrell's fiction, relativity remains the dominant metaphor, comprising every possible point of view that the mind can take." (Glicksberg, p. 94) Durrell, however, seems to be indicating that a person has neither the time nor the space to perceive or portray "every possible point of view that the mind can take" and that even novelistic omniscience produces merely another relative view of the action. While Durrell does give us a variety of viewpoints in the novels, he nonetheless imposes the four-part limitation of Einstein's space-time continuum onto the structure of the Quartet. The themes of relative truth and Darley's artistic development, the secondary structural determinants in the Quartet, must consequently function within the restrictions of this general pattern. Thus, if the space-time limitation determines the general pattern of the Quartet,

the theme of relative truth determines the relationship between the individual novels.

Just as time is stayed in the first three space novels to conform to Einstein's scheme, so the central story must also remain constant if Durrell is to play his variations on the way the characters interpret the action. By working with a given set of events and with characters at different states of awareness and involvement, Durrell puts the reader through a series of reversals. In Justine we accept Darley's interpretation because we have no other, even though there are enough implicit warnings in that novel that "everything is susceptible of more than one explanation . . ." (Justine, p. 78) Darley can say this, but he is not himself aware of the full import of what he is saying. The new information in Balthazar changes the original interpretations of Justine and also shifts the central emphasis. While it is true that we are told another version of the Justine story, we are also told an entirely different story, with a different focus. We should realize, as Pursewarden does, that "There are only as many realities as you care to imagine." (Balthazar, p. 152) But again, we are convinced, this time by Balthazar's seemingly objective knowledge of events and by Darley's reappraisal, that we have found out the truth. When we meet the new reversals in Mountolive, this time we

are sure we have found the answer. Here, in the third novel, continuing the objective trend established in Balthazar, the omniscient narrator lets us eavesdrop on the secret plans of the characters. We feel that finally we know "what really happened," even though the central emphasis focuses entirely on political motivations, even though toward the end of this factual novel, Balthazar still warns, "Truth naked and unashamed. That's a splendid phrase. But we always see her as she seems, never as she is. Each man has his own interpretation." (Mountolive, p. 233) Yet, even with the official "facts" of Mountolive, we find in Clea that, at least with Pursewarden's suicide, there is yet another interpretation. The establishment of an interpretation in the reader's mind and a later modification or reversal of that interpretation determines the shifting narrative focus in each of the novels. Durrell, by working through subjective and objective versions of the omniscient narrator, shows with these variations in form and "factual" reversals that "There is no final truth to be found--there is only provisional truth within a given context." (Key, p. 3)

Durrell changes the "given context" in each of the four novels to fit his theme of the relativity of truth. These contexts, each of which reflects a narrative focus and a point of view, determine the form of the novels. The

form, focus, and point of view, however varied, are still limited by the general pattern of the space-time continuum. Within this pattern Durrell employs emotional subjectivity in Justine, intellectual subjectivity in Balthazar, political and factual objectivity in Mountolive, and archetypic subjectivity in Clea. Each novel explores the theme of relative truth in a progressively larger context until, in Clea, the value of this discovery of relative truth is itself questioned by Darley's archetypic discoveries. This thematic and structural progression of relative truth from one novel to the next, functioning within the larger space-time pattern, is paralleled by a similar progression involving Darley's artistic growth. The kind of novel Darley writes reflects his growing awareness, first of relativity and second of the need to transcend the relative. This theme of artistic growth determines the form of the individual novels.

Durrell takes Darley through the various stages of artistic development. The form of Justine develops from Darley's sentimentality. Despite what Darley says about the relativity of truth, about Arnauti's one-sided portrait of Claudia (Justine), about not believing in the discrete human personality, Darley writes his novel expecting to capture the truth. Ironically, Darley's criticism of Arnauti's Moeurs isolates the weak points in his own novel:

"What is missing in his work . . . is a sense of play. He bears down so hard upon his subject-matter; so hard that it infects his style . . . Then, too, everything which is a fund of emotion becomes of equal importance to him."

(Justine, p. 75) Darley, too, brings in anything which might shed some light on his love for Justine: her alleged diaries, Arnauti's psychological portrait, meetings, glances, feelings, memories, isolated snatches of conversation. Ultimately, by having Darley collect a series of emotional documentations of his love for Justine, Durrell produces a novel fraught with romantic excesses; both Darley and his novel assert a privileged claim to truth. Within the general pattern of the Quartet, both the form and content of Justine establish the needed point of departure.

Once Durrell has established--with Darley and Justine--the potential excesses of the sentimental artist writing in the first-person form, he is ready to portray the breakdown of that form in Balthazar. Darley is forced, because of the new information in the second novel, to assume a more objective stance toward his own writing. Thus, just as the "given context" is changed to fit the theme of relativity, Darley's prose is changed to match his new awareness of the limitation of the first-person method. He includes large sections from Balthazar's Interlinear,



but does not yet realize that Balthazar's intellectually objective first-person account is nonetheless a provisional view in a given context; even though the Interlinear is more objective, in terms of method it is the same as the first-person methods of Darley and Arnauti in Justine. Darley does, however, realize the need to experiment, for the Interlinear has raised "the harder-grained question of form." (Balthazar, p. 183) Darley therefore includes in the structurally transitional Balthazar those "reconstructed" chapters in third-person narrative. Durrell, then, is demonstrating in the very form the second novel takes Darley's artistic awareness.

Balthazar realizes that even with the Interlinear, even beyond the second novel, Darley must continue to experiment. In a passage in the Interlinear which looks forward to Mountolive, he gives to Darley some Durrellian advice:

To imagine is not necessarily to invent . . . nor dares one make a claim for omniscience in interpreting people's actions. One assumes that they have grown out of their feelings as leaves grow out of a branch. But can one work backwards, deducing the one from the other? Perhaps a writer could if he were sufficiently brave to cement these apparent gaps in our actions with the interpretations of his own to bind them together? What was going on in Nessim's mind? This is really a question for you to put to yourself. (Balthazar, p. 98)

In Justine and Balthazar, but especially in Justine, Darley has been making "a claim for omniscience in interpreting

people's actions." He has not, however, been able to match his claim to his form. In Mountolive, writing in the third person, he attempts "to cement these apparent gaps." Darley must write the third-person Mountolive as the omniscient narrator; he must see, as an artist, that this form also has its limitations.

Writing to Henry Miller, Durrell says that Mountolive "is the fulcrum of the quartet and the rationale of the thing." (Private Correspondence, p. 327) We have already seen how this third novel rounds out the spatial cycle in terms of Einstein's relativity and relative truth. It also completes Darley's artistic apprenticeship and his codification of the past. Time, life in the present, and a deeper kind of significance can all move forward in Clea. Writing in Mountolive, Darley has made his "claim for omniscience" with both form and content. The third novel completes the pattern of objectification with the structure of Darley's novels and with Darley's artistic awareness. Durrell's rationale in Mountolive seems to be that Darley must learn the limitations of this omniscient method: even the objective third-person method, with its larger but limited political focus, still yields but another one-sided view of reality, "provisional truth within a given context." (Key, p. 3)

I have said earlier that Darley's pattern of objectification and consequent increasingly objective form of the novel are central to Durrell's several themes of relativity and artistic growth. In order for this structural and thematic pattern to be complete, we must view Darley as the narrator of Mountolive. I would like now to discuss two final points on this issue: Darley's function as a character in Mountolive and the possibility of Darley's learning of the events which become the content of that novel. To take the latter point first, we have seen throughout my discussion of the first two novels that Darley continually knows more than he tells us in those novels, but edits his information to fit the emotional or imaginative context of the novels. In Balthazar, Durrell introduces the idea of a fictionalized reconstruction of events. We see this process in operation, for instance, with Darley's account of Narouz at Sitna Mariam; we can also see this process hinted at by Balthazar, who speaks of the artist brave enough "to cement these apparent gaps in our actions with interpretations of his own to bind them together." (Balthazar, p. 98) I therefore suggest that whether or not Darley could actually know the content of Mountolive is not important; as a growing artist, he could invent, could fill in the gaps "with interpretations of his own." Darley's knowledge of events, always an unknown

quantity, is not a factor if we imagine that Darley is "reconstructing" in Mountolive just as he "reconstructed" the third-person sections in Balthazar.

In addition to the possibility of a fictionalized reconstruction in Mountolive, I believe that Darley could, in fact, have learned the content of the third novel before he wrote it. The sequence of Darley's life, as we piece it together, follows this pattern: he lives through his initial Alexandrian experience, goes to the island and writes Justine and Balthazar, returns to Alexandria, but does not write anything, returns to the island and then probably goes to France, and finally--"writing at this remove in time" (Clea, p. 223)--writes Clea. The important step in this sequence is that between the time Darley finished Balthazar and his final departure from Alexandria he does not write anything. If Darley is the narrator of Mountolive, then he would have to have written that novel after he lived through his second Alexandrian experience described in Clea. What I am suggesting is that if Mountolive was written after the Clea experience then Darley could well have learned the content of the Mountolive story. We see, in Nessim's letter to Darley at the beginning of Clea, that Nessim says, "I gather that Balthazar has recounted all our misadventures." (Clea, p. 20) We know that in the Interlinear Balthazar tells Darley,

speaking of Nessim, "I have in the interval learned a good deal about his affairs and his political concerns. . . . I will tell you only what seems politic. Perhaps later on I shall tell you the rest." (Balthazar, p. 147) We never find out what additional information Balthazar gives to Darley "later on," but by the time Darley returns to Alexandria he knows all about the Palestine plot; recounting at the beginning of Clea his first meeting with Nessim on the dock, Darley writes, "Then ducking his head he said under his breath 'You know about it eh?' I nodded and he looked relieved. 'So much the less to explain'." (Clea, p. 30)

There are, of course, the other situations in Clea which would have given Darley the information needed to piece together the Mountolive story. He works for Mountolive and discusses with Telford the Pursewarden-Maskelyne conflict; he meets Liza and reads Pursewarden's love letters to her; he spends a night with Justine and Nessim at Karm Abu Girg; and he once again rooms with Pombal, now a high French diplomat. When Darley finally leaves Alexandria, he knows the content of the Mountolive story and realizes, as he tells Balthazar, that "If I start again it will be from another angle." (Clea, p. 73) I believe that this "other angle" is Mountolive, the third facet of the spatial prism; he must write the seemingly objective

version before he can record, as his last movement, the Clea story.

The next point involves Darley becoming a character in Mountolive. In the Note to Balthazar, Durrell writes: "The subject-object relation is so important to relativity that I have tried to turn the novel through both subjective and objective modes. The third part, MOUNTOLIVE, is a straight naturalistic novel in which the narrator of JUSTINE and BALTHAZAR becomes an object, i. e. a character." (Balthazar, Note) The main problem with this statement is that, while Darley does become a character, he becomes such a minor character. He is mentioned only eight times in the novel, and on six of these eight occasions he is merely spoken about by the other characters. He appears, for instance, in Pursewarden's letter, where Pursewarden describes Darley to Mountolive and Telford. For his two remaining appearances, one is a telephone call to Justine, but the reader is on Justine's end of the line and finds out about the call only what Justine tells Nessim; Darley does not actually speak. Darley's only personal appearance in the novel, with the only lines he speaks, are set by the narrator rather casually in the chapter in which the narrative is focused on Pursewarden and the series of episodes which will end with his suicide. The narrator

reports the incident without editorial comment and then returns to Pursewarden's point of view:

Pursewarden suddenly collided with a figure in a mackintosh and belatedly recognized Darley. They exchanged confused pleasantries, weighed down by a mutual awkwardness. Their politenesses got them, so to speak, suddenly stuck to each other, suddenly stuck to the street as if it had turned to fly-paper. Then at last Darley managed to break himself free and turn back down the dark street, saying, "Well, I mustn't keep you. I'm dead tired myself. Going home for a wash." Pursewarden stood still for a moment looking after him, deeply puzzled by his own confusion and smitten by the memory of the damp bedraggled towels which he had left lying about Pombal's bathroom, and the rim of shaving soap gray with hairs around the wash-basin. . . . Poor Darley! (Mountolive, pp. 162-163)

Never does the narrator enter Darley's mind or show us how Darley views any of the action; never do we see Darley but in reference to some other character on whom the narrator is focusing. We begin to wonder why Durrell goes to such trouble to tell us that Darley becomes a character and then has the narrator virtually ignore him. It is true that Darley becomes a character, but if he were left out of Mountolive he would not be missed.

I believe that the answer to this problem lies not with Darley as character but with the shift from subject to object, from subjective to objective narration. Speaking of the shift in focus in Mountolive, Durrell says in the Paris Review interview: "It was simply a shift from subjective to objective. Mountolive is an account of the thing by an invisible narrator, as opposed to somebody engaged in

the action." (Paris Review, p. 54) Darley is certainly not engaged in the action of Mountolive as he was engaged in the action in the first two novels. In terms of Durrell's Paris Review statement, then, Darley could be the narrator. However, this shift which Durrell speaks of seems more conclusive, though it is not as simple as it sounds. First, Darley, the narrator of Justine and Balthazar, becomes an object or character in Mountolive. But Darley was also a character in the first two novels in addition to being the narrator. This first level of shift, Darley as a character, seems to mean that Darley becomes an insignificant character in Mountolive. This odd treatment of Darley, especially in terms of Durrell's statement in the Note to Balthazar, actually fits into the several patterns Durrell imposes on the Quartet: as a character, Darley is central in Justine, begins to fade in Balthazar, and becomes peripheral in Mountolive. Thus, as Darley matures as an artist, he begins to see his own role in the Alexandrian events as less and less important. The treatment of Darley as a character goes hand in hand with the progression of Darley as narrator. The narration and narrative focus shift from the subjectivity of Justine and the mixed form of Balthazar to the objectivity of Mountolive. On this second level of shift, Darley as narrator, both Darley and his novels follow the progressive shifting from subjective



to objective. And, as Darley and the novel he writes become more and more objective, Darley's treatment of himself as a character follows the same pattern: subjectively, emotionally, he was central in Justine as both narrator and character; in Mountolive, he is objectively, politically insignificant as a character, but objectified as the narrator. The true significance, then, of this subject-to-object shift, especially in terms of Durrell's pattern of objectification, is that it takes place, not only in the narrative, but also in Darley; Darley goes from the subjective narrator of Justine to the objective narrator of Mountolive.

I believe that we must view Darley as the narrator of Mountolive in order for Durrell's double theme of relative truth and artistic growth to function within his space-time continuum. Only with Darley as the narrator of all four novels, each with its separate narrative focus and form, only then can The Alexandria Quartet become the space-time continuum Durrell intended it to be. With Darley as the narrator of Mountolive, the thematic and structural problems all seem to resolve themselves and Clea's advice to Darley in the last novel takes on its full import: "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. This must, I imagine, do away with striving, and with illusions too." (Clea, p. 120)

Durrell's task in the Quartet is to take Darley through the experiences of the shifting "angle of vision" in the novels with their inherent partiality. Each of the novelistic forms has its separate limitations, but taken together they give, in their "prism-sightedness," a composite and relatively complete portrait of Durrell's Alexandrians.

## CHAPTER 4

### THEME: FOUR STORIES, ONE MAN

The Alexandria Quartet contains four separate though interrelated stories, each functioning at a different level of awareness. These are 1) the obvious story of political intrigue, 2) Durrell's acknowledged topic of "an investigation of modern love" (Balthazar, Note), 3) the implicit theme of the growth of the artist, and 4) the archetypic theme of the heraldic universe and the escape from time. These separate stories, like the structure of the individual novels, are developed within the confines of "the relativity proposition" and the several themes of relative truth, artistic growth and heraldic transcendence. The four stories are also developed within the framework of Durrell's translation, at several different levels, of Groddeck's psychological theories. I propose, in this final chapter, to discuss the development of these stories, especially as this development relates to Durrell's concern with the physical and psychological sciences. A brief introduction is necessary, however, before discussing this fairly complex subject.

The primary difficulty in discussing the development of the stories involves Durrell's characterizations.

Durrell's ideas about personality are based jointly on his adaptation of Einstein and Groddeck. Speaking in Key about the effect which he believes the space-time continuum has on characters in Proust, Joyce, Eliot, and Rilke, Durrell says:

Characters have a significance almost independent of the actions they engage in: they hang above the time-track which leads from birth to action, and from action to death: and spreading out time in this manner, contribute a significance to everything about them. An article of clothing worn by a character becomes as significant as anything he does, or any drama he enacts. (Key, p. 31)

This, of course, is Durrell at his most obscure; exactly what he means by this statement is not at all clear. I believe, however, that he is trying, as I have shown in the first chapter, to use the scientific theories of the space-time continuum and the principle of indeterminacy to support his own psychological theory that personality as we know it is an illusion. In the nineteenth-century novels of Dickens and Dostoievski, Durrell finds that "you are aware of a natural progress of the plot from one point to another along a defined and charted scale." (Key, p. 31)

When the plot of a novel develops chronologically, the development of the characters depends, in large part, on the action they are engaged in; the development of the novel depends on the causal connection between the characters' actions and their motivation. In the twentieth-century novels where Durrell sees the influence of what he

calls the "new time," he says that

In Proust and Joyce you see something like a slow-motion camera at work. Their books do not proceed along a straight line, but in a circular manner, coiling and uncoiling upon themselves, embedded in the stagnant flux and reflux of a medium which is always changing yet always the same. . . . If there is any movement at all it is circular, cyclic, and significant only because it is repeated. (Key, p. 31)

With this "new time" in operation in the novel, there is no clear chronological development of the plot. As the narrative circles back on itself, the reader is given a series of static portraits of the characters. It is the reader, ultimately, who must connect these static snapshots and attribute to the characters consistent personalities. We can see this process in operation with the personality of Justine. We are given a multitude of scenes in which we see Justine in many different attitudes; we see her, in fact, scenically, dramatically through the eyes of several observers: Arnauti, Darley, Pursewarden, Balthazar, Clea, the omniscient narrator of Mountolive. From these differing scenes and opinions we infer a personality, but what the "real" Justine is like remains a mystery. We may not leave Justine as Durrell says we leave Gerontion: where we found him. Yet Justine, like Eliot's hero and poem, is, as Durrell puts it in Key, "simply there in a state of pure manifestation . . ." (Key, p. 49) Durrell presents Justine to us in a series of manifestations, and we put these together to invent, each of us, our own Justine. As Clea

tells Darley, "After all Justine cannot be justified or excused. She simply and magnificently is; we have to put up with her, like original sin." (Justine, p. 77)

Speaking of his use of Einstein's relativity, Durrell calls his method in the Quartet "stereoscopic narrative" and "stereophonic personality." ("Kneller Tape," p. 163) The changing narrative focus in the separate novels provides Durrell with the general pattern he needs; and from these varying narrative vantage points, he can portray his characters in their "prism-sightedness."

Durrell goes on to say, to Kenneth Young:

But if I do the interior linking of the books right they should raise one terrific problem, namely, personality. In this stereophonic context, I think it does raise a question in your mind as to whether the human personality is not a selective fiction or a polite figment. Raising questions like the Principle of Indeterminacy affects the whole basis of human personality--and you come out in Hindu metaphysics! (Young, p. 64)

Durrell, then, plans to apply the principle of indeterminacy to his treatment of character. This scientific principle, as Durrell adapts it to his own work, undermines strict causality; every act is new and unpredictable. Personality, treated in terms of Durrell's interpretation of this principle, would not be portrayed as a fixed entity; personality becomes for Durrell, so his main spokesman Pursewarden tells us,

as unsubstantial as a rainbow--it only coheres into identifiable states and attributes when attention

is focused on it. The truest form of right attention is of course love. Thus "people" are as much of an illusion to the mystic as "matter" to the physicist when he is regarding it as a form of energy. (Balthazar, p. 141)

The jump Durrell is making from physics to psychology and mysticism is implicit in Pursewarden's explanation of the unsubstantial psyche. Durrell himself sees this jump as a marriage of science and mysticism; these two separate approaches arrive at the same conclusions. Speaking of the scientific concept of "Principle of Least Action" and Lao Tzu's concept of "non-action," Durrell finds that "Indeed they are both the same thing, only what the mystic has posited for the personality of the individual the scientist has posited for the universe." (Key, p. 161) Durrell believes that indeterminacy destroyed the concept of matter as an immutable object. In a similar way, this time translating physics into personality and leaving the mysticism out, he also believes that indeterminacy destroyed the concept of the stable ego. Just as energy coheres into temporary states of matter, so psychic energy coheres into temporary states of personality when the individual becomes conscious of himself. Durrell's idea that love is the best form of this self-consciousness will be discussed later. I believe that, for now, the progression of Durrell's ideas goes, on a physical level, from indeterminacy to the disruption of cause and effect to the view of matter as a

provisionally and temporarily solid form of energy; Durrell applies, in a parallel way, this physical sequence to personality: the mind, like matter, is essentially an unformed conglomerate of energy with periods of temporarily identifiable states. This is what I think Durrell has in mind when he says that personality, seen in terms of indeterminacy, comes out in Hindu metaphysics.

Coexisting and merging with Durrell's theory of personality based on his reading of physics is his concomitant personality theory based on his readings from psychology. From Freud's theories of the autonomous unconscious and its control over the conscious mind, Durrell believes that the nineteenth-century concept of the stable ego is undermined; the ego is not an independent, autonomous function of consciousness, but is in part subservient to the operations of the unconscious, and hence beyond the conscious control of the will. Durrell, however, uses Freud only as a steppingstone to Georg Walther Groddeck, the true psychological father of Durrell's ideas of human personality.

Groddeck believes that the ego has no independent functions at all, but is the invention and slave of the It, a concept roughly equivalent to the total self. The It, by its nature, is both unknown and unknowable; the ego, while thinking itself autonomous, is in reality the pliant tool of the It. This It concept, corresponding to Jung's self



or to the individual's life force, is ultimately responsible for the acts of the individual and, more importantly, for the temporary manifestations of the created ego into identifiable states and attributes. Personality, then, is a fiction perpetrated on the ego by the It. The ego can think that it has independent existence and control over its actions, but the true roots of being and action spring from the unknown recesses of the It, the greater self. This ego-It polarity approximates, in Bergsonian terms, the ego as conscious being, the function of intellection, and the It as self becoming, the function of intuition. This ego-It polarity is paralleled, in a later development, in Gestalt psychology: every interaction, the organism/environment configuration, forms a whole, an interchange between the total self and itself or its environment; the part can assert its independence of the whole, the ego making its claim for autonomy, but this claim is self-deceptive. We see this deception, for instance, in Darley's absolutist--and ego-centered--interpretation of Justine in the first novel of the Quartet. To succeed as an artist and a man, Darley must come to see, as Pursewarden advises Clea, that for the artist:

The real obstacle is oneself. I believe that artists are composed of vanity, indolence and self-regard. Work-blocks are caused by the swelling-up of the ego on one or all of these fronts. You get a bit scared about the imaginary importance of what you are doing! Mirror-worship. My solution would

be to slap a poultice on the inflamed parts--tell your ego to go to hell and not make a misery of what should be essentially fun, joy. (Clea, p. 110)

Darley must, as he does in Clea, transfer his reliance from the ego to the greater self; and on a physical level, he must give up the ego's counterpart, the relative, for the intuitive knowledge of the self, the mythopoeic reference.

The implications in The Alexandria Quartet of Durrell's use of Groddeck's theories are many. First, if personality is an illusion, how does Durrell portray his characters, their actions, and their motivations? As I mentioned earlier, we see the characters scenically, as they perform a certain act. But the constant in this method is the action, not the actor. We see, for instance, Justine acting out her several love involvements with Darley, Pursewarden, and Nessim. When we learn the "full" story, her actions become the given of the story. We learn what she does, often from several points of view and with differing interpretations, but we must ultimately guess why she acted in a certain way. We are given several explanations of her actions, each relevant to a given context, each containing a relative and provisional truth; yet, by adding up all these partial truths, we still do not get the final key to her motivations. Durrell seems to be employing, from Groddeck, a method which states that a person's actions are knowable, but his motivations must always

remain uncertain. Actions, then, become the key to characterization; people are what they do, their illusory personalities cohering into identifiable states as the Durrellian method attempts to "recapture the act prime." ("Kneller Tape," p. 167) Motivation, equally unknowable in Durrell's fiction as in real life, becomes a technique for exploring Durrell's theme of relative truth. Groddeck's unknowable It drives Durrell's Alexandrians to actions for its own reasons, far beyond the rational ken of the human situation. We are, in The Alexandria Quartet, in much the same situation as Count Banubula describes to Felix Charlock in Tunc, Durrell's first novel since the Quartet:

Haven't you noticed Charlock that most things in life happen just outside one's range of vision? One has to see them out of the corner of one's eye. And any one thing could be the effect of any number of others? I mean there seem to be always a dozen perfectly appropriate explanations to every phenomenon. That is what makes our reasoning minds so unsatisfactory; and yet, they are all we've got, this shabby piece of equipment. (Tunc, p. 100)

The real fiction, as Darley comes to realize in Clea, is life itself. (Clea, p. 177)

The second effect of Groddeck's influence in the Quartet, that of apparent lack of will power in the characters, has been noted by Lionel Trilling. Identifying what has bothered him about the Quartet, Trilling writes: "It is that all the novels, and the Quartet as a whole, stand in a peculiar negative relation to the will." (Trilling, p.

57) What Trilling says, of course, is true, but only within the limits of a truth partially perceived. If we acknowledge, as Trilling obviously does, that the conscious mind determines the actions of the individual, then Durrell's Alexandrians appear not to have any will of their own; if, on the other hand, we accept Durrell's translation of Groddeck into literature, we can see that the very claim to an exercise of human will is a self-deception. If in reality our actions are controlled by the It, the claim of willful, conscious control of those actions can only be valid in a limited context. In a passage which Durrell read from The World of Man, a passage he elided from a Groddeck quotation in Key, Groddeck writes:

We even assume that we are masters not only of the It, the general It as well as the many It-units, but also of the doings of other men, that we can control the life, the health, the death of a fellow-creature. Though this is assuredly false, it is a necessity of our organisms, of our human existence, that we should act as though it were true. We are alive and because we live we are bound to believe that we can train our children, that there are such things as causes and effects, and that we can be useful or harmful at will, whereas we really know nothing about the connection between one event and another, we cannot determine our actions twenty-four hours ahead, and we cannot say what life will make of all the careful education we give. The It compels us to take its doings for our own, its purposes and feelings as determined by the conscious mind, as the will and purpose of the ego. Only by immersion in this error, by blindness and ignorance can we play an effective part in human life, whether as physicians or in any other capacity. . . . we have to believe in ourselves and our doings or else be impotent, even though we

admit theoretically that all our doings are the work of an Unknown Power. (Groddeck 1951, pp. 77-78)

Durrell has also noted, with his quotation from The Book of the It in Key, that Groddeck makes a clear distinction between the external and internal cause of any effect. Any human action can be seen as having for its cause "an inner one, causa interna, which man contributes to himself, and an outer one, causa externa, which springs from his environment." (Key, p. 82; Groddeck 1950a, p. 280) In Durrell's translation of these theories, this external cause is equivalent to the ego's claim that it controls its own destiny, the ego's self-deception that it has will power; the internal cause is equivalent to the actual control which the It exercises over the person, a control which remains unknown to him. We find out in Mountolive, for example, why Justine begins her affair with Darley. This reason, to find out if Darley has any information about the Hosnani plot, is the external cause. We never find out the internal cause, what in Justine enables her to carry on a series of extra-marital affairs in the interests of her husband's political intrigues. Durrell's characters, on one level, then, exercise a kind of surface will power. I think, for instance, of the battle of the wills between Mountolive and Nessim in the third novel, a battle in which neither of these powerful figures is able to act. On a

deeper level, the characters are in the grip of their individual Its and the It of Alexandria. Darley, expressing this idea in Justine, writes: "Justine would say that we had been trapped in the projection of a will too powerful and too deliberate to be human--the gravitational field which Alexandria threw down about those it had chosen as its exemplars. . . ." (Justine, pp. 18-19)

This uncertainty concerning individual motivation, together with seeing Alexandria itself as a motivational force, blends into a third aspect of Groddeck's influence in the Quartet: landscape, in this instance Alexandria itself, as the pervading will. Durrell has projected onto Alexandria Groddeck's It; the city becomes a blown-up archetype of the self, instinctually seeking equilibrium out of chaos. The characters consequently become self-deceptive egos caught in the "gravitational field" of this Alexandrian It. As egos, they go through their motions as if they were volitional beings, but the true roots of their actions trail off into the dark recesses of the city's It. Justine, perhaps speaking truthfully, perhaps not, exclaims to Darley: "You talk as if there was a choice. All this is part of an experiment arranged by something else, the city perhaps, or another part of ourselves." (Justine, p. 27)

This idea of the city possessing an It and the characters as egos acting out their puppet-lives is the psychological side of one of Durrell's basic ideas that "the important determinant of any culture is after all the spirit of place." ("Landscape with Literary Figures," p. 1) Writing to G. S. Fraser, Durrell says that "In the Quartet I tried to see people as a function of place . . ." (Fraser, p. 166) Alexandria, then, becomes the central figure, the central character of the Quartet; the characters become actors on the city's stage, controlled by the presiding "spirit of place." I believe that Darley, at one point in Justine, expresses Durrell's joint idea of an Alexandrian It and the "spirit of place":

As poet of the historic consciousness I suppose I am bound to see 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. (Justine, p. 112)

I believe we can also see in this Durrellian statement the merging of "spirit of place" with relativity of space. In terms of this basically Laurentian mystique of "spirit of place," characters become a function of place; in terms of the space-time continuum, character response is a function

of location in space, the special vantage point of the individual observer. Durrell would say of this merger, as he has already said in Key of the bisexuality of the psyche, that "Scientific fact and myth marry up at this point." (Key, p. 152)

The usually straightforward fictional treatment of characterization and character volition are compounded, in the Quartet, by Durrell's integrated use of the three unpredictable qualities of place, space, and It. These ideological qualities, as they work themselves out in novelistic technique, emphasize action over volition, what a person does rather than why he does it. I believe that Durrell's use of these several ideas from physics, psychology, and mysticism affect the telling of the stories. I propose, in the discussions to follow, to investigate the effect which Durrell's use of Einstein, Groddeck, and the interlocking themes of relative truth, artistic growth, and transcendence has on the method of story telling and on the significance of the separate stories.

## I

### The Political Story

The Quartet, like the dream in a Freudian analysis, has both a manifest and a latent content. The manifest content is, of course, the story of the Hosnani plot. As the most obvious action in the Quartet, the political story



represents the outer surface of Durrell's symbolic man and deals with what John E. Kelly calls "public knowledge understood without difficulty by everybody." (Kelly, p. 56) The story focuses on the hard facts of the characters' actions, while the action itself touches nearly every character in the four novels. Hints of the story's development are vaguely scattered through the first two novels; the political story is then fully developed in Mountolive; the last novel touches on the eventual disposition of those characters involved in the plot, with a second set of vague references hinting at another still-formative conspiracy. Just as the political story is the most obvious in the Quartet, so, too, the novel in which this story receives its full treatment, Mountolive, is the only volume of the Quartet which can be satisfactorily read as a separate novel.

The story of the Coptic-Palestinian arms conspiracy unfolds in the Quartet like a "Who dunnit?" detective story, where the reader becomes the detective in search of the facts. Durrell controls the development of the story, however, by varying the narrative focus from novel to novel. Justine, as we know, is the first of the three spatial sides of the space-time continuum; it is only one side of the picture. By restricting the content of Justine, Durrell gives us a complete story within the restricted

context of this first spatial side. Part of the reason for this restricted content is, of course, Darley's limited narrative focus; Darley is set on telling the story of his passion-love for Justine. I believe that critics like Matthew Proser completely miss the whole rationale behind Durrell's novelistic structure when they say, as Proser has, that "Like our friend the mystery reader, we are duped because the author sets out to dupe us, just as Justine sets out to dupe Darley." (Proser, pp. 22-23) If anything, the exact opposite is true; as John Unterecker has pointed out, Durrell is perhaps even a little too heavy-handed in Justine with clues to the reader that he is in the midst of a relativistic scheme. (Unterecker, p. 37) Then, too, the content of Justine is governed by Darley's obsession to codify his past emotional life. For Durrell's theme of Darley's growth as an artist to be established and function at all in the Quartet, we need Darley's Justine manuscript as a tangible example of exactly where Darley is, so to speak, as an artist, a man, a lover. Durrell tells us that Justine is the first of three spatial sides and then limits the focus of that novel, not only to Darley's knowledge, but to his interpretation of the facts. This last point is important, for it is Darley, not Durrell, who chooses to ignore the hints of political intrigue in the first novel.

Throughout the first novel we are given hints that something political is afoot. Darley himself tells us that "Of Nessim's outer life--those immense and boring receptions, at first devoted to business colleagues but later to become devoted to obscure political ends--I do not wish to write." (Justine, p. 35) Darley's subject is the inner life of his friends, not their political affiliations. Thus, even though he tells us that he is working for the Secret Service because they suspect his friends, that the diplomatic corps suspects hidden motives behind Nessim's parties, and that Cohen, the former lover of Melissa, was an agent working for the French--even in the face of these growing hints of intrigue Darley refuses to draw any conclusions.

In the second novel the build-up of political hints becomes more obvious, now that we have the additional information supplied by Balthazar's Interlinear and Darley's own recollections. We find that there is a political side to Nessim's Coptic congress, that Nessim is worried about information leaks concerning Cohen's activities, worried too about Pursewarden; we see the remnants of Pursewarden's message to Nessim on the mirror, the mysterious "OHEN . . . . . ASTINE . . . ." which Nessim is erasing and of which he says, "There must be nothing for the Egyptian Police to find." (Balthazar, p. 150) We learn that

Balthazar knows much of Nessim's political concerns but is afraid to write Darley about it because of the Egyptian Police; Balthazar also hints that Capodistria is not dead. Both Pombal and Toto de Brunel, who is murdered by Narouz, are French secret agents. Just as Jean-Paul Hamard has called Balthazar the space novel of "la largeur," (Hamard, p. 400) so we can also see that the political implications of the second are broadened along with the general context of "des considerations philosophiques, des spéculations mystiques . . . aussi de vastes tableaux." (Hamard, p. 400) Durrell's method of having Balthazar represent the second side of space with Balthazar's Interlinear and Darley's reinterpretation is responsible for broadening the context of the second novel. Balthazar's information and interpretations also bring about a change in Darley; Darley's growth is in turn reflected in the broadening of his narrative focus. Finally, the reader sees Durrell's development of his theme of relative truth. Since events have as many interpretations as observers, the reader is implicitly warned not to take any single interpretation as the final truth of an action.

As a result of Durrell's method in the first two novels, then, we have gotten Darley's personal version of a given set of events, the more eclectic version of these events by Balthazar, and, based on Balthazar's information,

Darley's objective "reconstruction" of additional events of which he had no personal knowledge. By the end of Balthazar, Durrell has established a core Alexandrian story and set the reader up for the full development of the political story. We have met, for instance, almost all the characters touched by the Hosnani plot. We know of Mountolive's relationship with Leila, of the mystery surrounding Da Capo's death, of the strangeness of Nessim's marriage to Justine. We also know that Darley is a secret agent for the British and that Pombal, de Brunel, and Cohen are French agents. Nessim, the elder Hosnani brother, is involved with Cohen, while Narouz, the younger brother, kills de Brunel. As reader-detectives, we have enough information to know that something of a political nature is brewing; what we lack are the details.

Mountolive provides the details. This third novel rounds out the spatial side of Durrell's continuum and fills in most of the missing links; all of the tensions are resolved as the political clues of the first two novels are developed. Durrell completes the political story in Mountolive the same way he prevented its development in Justine and Balthazar: by control of the narrative focus. Just as Durrell has Darley focus on the emotional side of character in Justine and the imaginative side in Balthazar, he has the narrator (Darley) focus on the political side of

character and action in the third novel. Events and motivations are explained in terms of political implications. Mountolive's affair with Leila Hosnani, for example, is set in a political context. As a young diplomat, Mountolive stays with the Hosnanis to improve his Arabic. During his stay in Egypt, aside from his affair with Leila, he learns of the Coptic grievances against the British and of the Hosnani family's interest in Coptic nationalism. These political concerns give the reader the necessary background for understanding Nessim's involvement in the gun-smuggling plot, while establishing the basis for the later Mountolive-Nessim and Mountolive-Leila relationships. If we compare, for instance, the treatment of Darley's affair with Justine in the first novel or Pursewarden's affair with Justine in the second novel with the treatment of all the love affairs in the third novel, the exclusively political orientation of Mountolive's narrative becomes obvious. In Mountolive these love affairs are explained in terms of political expediency, manipulation, or consequence. The "real" reason Justine begins her intimacies with Darley and Pursewarden is to find out if they know anything about Nessim's plot. Leila's motivations in her affair with Mountolive are, initially, to live her life through her manipulations of his political life and, secondly, to gain Mountolive's help with the Hosnani plans for Coptic nationalism; later

she will try to use her influence over Mountolive to save Nessim from the consequences of his political activities.

Despite the apparent autonomy of Mountolive taken separately and the three space novels taken as the several views of the events of a given time span, we still do not have the complete story. As the facts are built up in the first two novels and developed in the third, we have changed our position in space as we move from one novel to the next; Durrell's shift in narrative focus parallels this changing spatial position. By the end of Mountolive we know only that the plot has been reported to the British and the Egyptians, that Nessim temporarily forestalled retributive action by bribing Memlik Pasha, and that Narouz has been assassinated. Only in Clea do we move forward in time to learn of the eventual dispositions of the characters. But the fourth novel is no longer primarily concerned with political matters. We therefore learn of the outcome of the intrigue incidentally, in much the same manner as we learn the initial hints in Justine and Balthazar, only this time the hints and explanations are readily understandable. Since we take with us into Clea the knowledge of the first three novels, Justine's short explanation to Darley at Karm Abu Girg tells us all we need to know of the former Hosnani plot. But we have also been educated by our reading of the novels, so that when we learn that Da Capo "now lives in a

handsomely converted Martello tower, dividing his time between studying black magic and working on certain schemes of Nessim's . . . " (Clea, p. 73), we are immediately suspicious. When we add this fact to Justine's statement at the end of Clea that she and Nessim are involved in "something bigger this time, international" (Clea, p. 281) and to Durrell's "Workpoint" about Justine and Memlik in Geneva, we can recognize the beginnings of another political intrigue. Speculating about this new venture, G. S. Fraser asks, "Where did it end, one wonders--Suez, 1956, or the Israeli victory of 1967?" (Fraser, p. 140)

It is interesting, in the structural and thematic developments of the Quartet, that the manifest story of intrigue must and does carry the major burden. The story contains the most actions, and the characters generally appear to be acting volitionally; yet, Mountolive's illusion that as Ambassador he would be able to act is the sort of illusion that he shares with most of the other major characters. In the end it is Pursewarden who, by his chance discovery and disclosure of the plot, places Mountolive and Nessim in the strange position of characters with free will unable to act freely. As the narrator of Mountolive says, speaking of Mountolive and Nessim, "They had embarked on a free exercise of the will only to find themselves shackled, bricked up by the historical process."



(Mountolive, p. 215) The various tensions concerning the facts are seemingly resolved in Mountolive, yet we must realize that any single view of action can only yield provisional truth limited to a given context; the truth of Mountolive is limited to these facts and their official explanations, revealing only the surface or public side of the characters. The story, then, is most important as a means of getting us through the Quartet, yet is itself only introductory to Durrell's major themes. As Robert Scholes says of the Quartet:

. . . Durrell's story is remarkably independent of its allegorical dimension. It is to the author's credit, I think, that he manages to be so engaging while keeping his narrative so squarely in the tradition of pure romance. He seems to have preserved enough from the tradition of the novel--to have learned enough from Lawrence, Proust, and others--to manage a revival of romance with a minimal amount of allegorizing. (Scholes, pp. 30-31)

The political story can stand on its own, but it does not represent the entire content of the Quartet. I plan to speak briefly on the political story as the necessary introduction to the major themes before turning to these themes as they are represented in the three other stories of modern love, the artist, and the archetypic man.

The four concentric stories represent a psychic progression into Durrell's symbolic man. This series is like the descending order of Chinese boxes, where the first box contains a second box which contains a third which

contains a fourth. The political story, which is the manifest content of the Quartet, corresponds to the outermost box. Durrell's themes of love, the artist, and the archetype would correspond to the second, third, and fourth boxes. This thematic progression has an implicit irony in its pattern, for as we progress away from the surface action and deeper into psychic significance--descending from the outer to the inner boxes--the thematic significance increases, along with the applicability to the life of the average reader. Darley's search for self, for example, is the timeless search of every individual for the creative roots of his being. We may enjoy reading about the great affairs of the Hosnanis, the Pursewardens, the Mountolives, may enjoy vicariously their struggles just as we enjoy any other adventure story, but we are closer to our own daily lives and concerns in following Darley's struggle with love, relative truth, and self-discovery. These multiple levels do not lessen the effect of the manifest political story; it can stand on its own. I am saying, however, that Durrell uses the manifest story to set the pace for his other themes.

By slowly building up the political story in Justine and Balthazar, Durrell forces the reader to assume the role of the detective in search of facts. This manifest search--the outermost of the Chinese boxes--is the

reader's initiation on a surface level to the more relevant theme of self-discovery. Just as the reader must search for the facts of the story, so he comes also to question the very nature of these facts; just as he searches for truth and finds it to be provisional in the Quartet, relative to a given context, so he comes to question the very nature of truth itself; and just as he finds that the Mountolive story provides the most obvious and easily acceptable explanations of the characters' actions, so also he sees that in psychological terms these political explanations for actions are the least true to life: we are less likely, for instance, to accept the official explanation of Pursewarden's suicide posited in Mountolive than to accept the personal reason posited in Clea, though both reasons probably contributed to Pursewarden's fatal act. This use of the reader-as-detective for the political story enables Durrell to tell a tale of romantic intrigue and also to notify the reader that there is more to the Quartet than a simple Alexandrian adventure story. This multiple-level process is hinted at by Durrell who, speaking of the Quartet, says in an interview: "for the rest you must think about a detective story in which the reader at the end discovers that he is the criminal!" ("Kneller Tape," p. 167) The true object of discovery for the reader of The Alexandria Quartet is himself.

Corresponding to these outer and inner Chinese boxes and to the fact-discovery and self-discovery are Durrell's additional use of Groddeck's two dichotomies of ego-It and external-internal cause. The characters, actions, and motivations of the political story are fixed at the ego end of the spectrum, where actions are explained in terms of their external causes and where characters exercise their imagined will power. As we move toward the inner Chinese boxes, we enter the realm of the It, where action is a function of internal causes, the unknowable will of the unknown It. At the ego end of this spectrum, we see Mountolive deceived by the illusion that as Ambassador he will be free to act, to impose his will in the form of political policy on the Egyptian situation. What Mountolive actually does impose on this situation is simply the ego-oriented image of a charming, delightful Ambassador who speaks fluent Arabic; when it comes to acting decisively with the Hosnani plot, he finds that he is shackled by the Home Office, the incorrigible Egyptian government, pure chance, and what Darley calls "the historical process." (Mountolive, p. 215) The narrator of Mountolive, speaking of the effect of Pursewarden's suicide on Mountolive and Nessim, describes their situation in terms of Groddeck's self-deceptive egos caught in the gravitational force of the It:

But it was not only for Mountolive that all the dispositions on the chessboard had been altered now by Purswarden's solitary act of cowardice--and the unexpected discovery which had supplied its motive, the mainspring of his death. Nessim, too, so long self-deluded by the same dreams of a perfect finite action, free and heedless as the impulse of a directed will, now found himself, like his friend, a prey to the gravitational forces which lie inherent in the timespring of our acts, making them spread, ramify and distort themselves; making them spread as a stain will spread upon a white ceiling. Indeed, now the masters were beginning to find that they were, after all, the servants of the very forces which they had set in play, and that nature is inherently ingovernable. They were soon to be 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. Mountolive knew this, vaguely and uneasily, lying in bed watching the lazy spiral of smoke from his cigar rise to the blank ceiling; Nessim and Justine knew it with greater certainty, lying brow to cold brow, eyes wide open in the magnificent darkened bedroom, whispering to each other. Beyond the connivance of the will they knew it, and felt the portents gathering around them--the paradigms of powers unleashed which must fulfill themselves. But how? In what manner? That was not as yet completely clear. (Mountolive, p. 213)

Those of Durrell's characters who arrogate to their egoselves control of the action by an exercise of their will are doomed to disillusionment and failure.

When, however, a character gives up the attempts of his ego to control action, gives in to the healing forces of the It within him, then he becomes a true man of action, tuned to the inner harmony of his greater self. I am thinking, in this instance, of Darley's long struggle through

the novels to escape the demands of his ego to impose his will upon the world and shape it into his own image. His breakthrough comes in Clea in the underwater scene, where he abandons his ego-control for instinctual action in order to save Clea:

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. (Clea, p. 249)

And, getting Clea back to the island, Darley is once again overtaken by this mysterious force:

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 fatigue, the groan and sweat of this 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! (Clea, p. 251)

This scene, of course, is an acting out of Darley's archetypic search for self, for Clea as the female counterpart of the artist within himself. I will speak of this archetypic level later in this chapter, but for now I wish to show that this action takes place in the realm of the It, in the innermost of the Chinese boxes.

The structure of Durrell's thematic method takes the form of a continuum starting with the introductory, outer political story and ending with the inner archetypic story. The various theories which Durrell brings to the Quartet are stretched across this thematic continuum in layers. The following are several of these dichotomies which Durrell uses and which start at the outer layer of surface meaning and end at the inner layer of symbolic meaning: only one space or time coordinate--the space-time continuum; relative truth--mythopoeic knowledge; Groddeck's ego, reason, will, external cause--Groddeck's It, intuition, psychic reintegration, internal cause; being trapped by time in the relative--being able to transcend time and enter the heraldic universe. The various levels of these ideological dichotomies permit the reader of the Quartet, as Pursewarden says, to "sink or skim." (Balthazar, p. 247) One can skim with the political story or sink into the level of symbolic parable. Durrell himself has commented on this multiple level, calling the Quartet "a yarn on one plane, a sort of poetic parable on another." ("Kneller Tape," p. 165) What I have been calling the manifest political story is Durrell's "yarn." I think we can leave the "yarn" for now and move on to the second Chinese box, Durrell's story of "modern love."

## II

The Love Story

Speaking of The Alexandria Quartet, Durrell tells us in the Note to Balthazar that "The central topic of the book is an investigation of modern love." (Balthazar, Note) The problem with this statement, as with so many other Durrellian statements, is: What does Durrell mean by "modern love"? In general, Durrell equates love with sex and then goes on to equate sex with the Platonic concept of the bisexual Eros. As part of the synthetic pattern of his thinking, Durrell then joins up the Platonic Eros with the Freudian concept of the bisexual psyche, thus justifying the older philosophic theory by means of a more recent psychological theory. When asked to define Man during the Hamburg interview, Durrell said, "How can I, how can anyone? An Eros-breath if you like; amo ergo sum, sed cogito." ("Kneller Tape," p. 162) Eros becomes the prime mover in man, a Durrellian twist to Freud's theory of the sexual origin of neurosis. Durrell's variation of the Cartesian dictum seems to be saying that the ability to love, not the ability to think, is the requisite to being. This kind of Eros-motivation, situated, I would imagine, in Groddeck's It, strongly resembles Pursewarden's explanation of the insubstantial quality of the psyche which "only coheres into identifiable states and attributes when



attention is focused on it. The truest form of right attention is of course love." (Balthazar, p. 141) Eros, then, contains both love and sex, yet Durrell's Eros-sex does not lead to "lazy and self-indulgent orgies of sensual pleasure" ("Kneller Tape," p. 162) but to self-knowledge and the development of culture. In a fairly long interview statement, Durrell discusses puritan-sex and Eros-sex:

Sex? Yes it is hard to use the word in English because of its sexual connotation which has swamped all others in our puritan dictionaries. But if you think of Eros being the motive force in man: an animal Eros-powered and Eros-dowered, then the idea changes a bit. The sum total of his affective life is Eros which gets differentiated off into various channels, various modes of being. The act of sex itself I take to be a vibration intended, by its orgiastic amnesias, to wake some of the other engines of understanding in him. Of course there's nothing new about this. But where Eros gets its due recognition you get a cultural pattern like the Greek; Epicurus, for example, his Garden was not a place for lazy and self-indulgent orgies of sensual pleasure but an academy given over to the education of the psyche. They studied delicate spiritual distinctions there; carefully avoided making a dogmatic theology out of Hundoni; the difference between the Jews and the Greeks. Alexandria is the key. ("Kneller Tape," pp. 161-162)

Sex, then, as a function of Eros, is personally, socially, and culturally redeeming.

Durrell makes a further distinction between puritan-sex as "bad sex" and Eros-sex as "good sex." His "bad sex" becomes associated with the Marquis de Sade and with the ego and power, while his "good sex" becomes associated with Eros and the integrated self. Alexander Lowen, in his

remarkable book Love and Orgasm, could well be talking about Durrell's distinction when he says, "we are so ego conscious that we have lost consciousness of the self, represented by the body in motion." (Lowen, p. 205) And later, in a passage which sounds more descriptive of Justine than of the ego-motivated male, Lowen says, "To the degree that the ego intrudes itself into the sexual relationship, the sexual act becomes an expression of possession and power over the woman." (Lowen, p. 306) Lowen's own distinction between "bad sex" and "good sex" will perhaps illuminate our discussion of Durrell's distinction.

Throughout Love and Orgasm, Lowen associates "bad sex" with sexual sophistication, sensuality and surface feelings, localized climax or clitoral climax, ego-isolation, and frustration; he associates "good sex" with sexual maturity, sexuality and deep feelings, full bodily orgasm, integration of the self, and renewal. I think we can recognize in these dichotomies a striking similarity with my earlier discussion of the outer and inner Chinese boxes.

There is also, in Lowen's distinctions, a striking similarity with Durrell's interview discussion of Sade and Eros. Durrell says, speaking of the quotations in the Quartet from Sade:

In a sense he is the most typical figure of our century, with his ignorance and cruelty. I regard him as both a hero and a pygmy. Freud has rightly framed him in his gallery of infantile subjects--he

is infantile, the very apotheosis of our infantile unconscious. But he had the courage to try and conquer his despair by going the whole hog, giving way to it. If he is a pygmy it is because the experiment didn't succeed, didn't break through to those spiritual responsibilities which he unconsciously craved. It was rotten luck really. He couldn't find the key, and convert his energy into laughter or rapture. He is the champion whiner of all time; yes infantile as modern man is: cruel, hysterical, stupid, and self-destructive--just like us all. He is our spiritual malady personified. And then how wonderfully the barren world of Sade symbolizes the limbo of the passions in which we live so restlessly; we are afraid even to risk damnation by trying his vertiginous way through aboriginal sin. Our motto is: Accidie, Satiety, Modernity! ("Kneller Tape," pp. 165-166)

This is, at best, a rather vague definition of Durrell's idea of "bad sex," but if we think of Justine's numerous sexual reiterations, of her use of sex as an expression of power and political manipulations, I think we get closer to Durrell's idea. By perverting the Eros-force into a power-struggle, Justine creates her own barren sexual world with its resultant "limbo of the passions."

On the other hand, for a definition of Durrell's "good sex," of his Eros in operation, he says in the same interview discussion:

The scenes you mention, which some critics find silly--the love scenes and the underwater scenes--are really a mime about rebirth on the parable plane. Perhaps it was a silly idea, I don't know. The love-act is symbolized by the breathing-trouble, the breakthrough to poetic illumination, the stark choice which must be accepted. You know what "breath" means in its Alexandrian connotation? In the Trismegistic sense I mean? Sex and knowing become primal here where I try to symbolize the achievement of "artishood"--the mysterious secret

of which Pursewarden was trying to pass on to Darley. Yes, in the Hermetic sense it is a matter of life and breath! In the old days Pursewarden used to say: "You must become a Knowbody before you can become a Sunbody." As for my "idealized lovers" as you call them, they reflect back the bisexual nature of the psyche again which is okay by Freud and Plato alike. They discover the fulcrum in themselves to lie outside the possession of each other, but in the domain of self possession (art). Again I quote Pursewarden: "The central love paradox is that you have to find yourself before you can really give yourself. Find your consort and syzygy in yourself before you can discern it in another." He isn't trying to say that the true lover is the artist. His work is an ideogram for this truth. . . . And [I] tried to say that life is really an artistic problem, all men being sleeping artists. ("Kneller Tape," pp. 166-167)

"Good sex" leads to poetic illumination and self-discovery; it is the means of awakening in every man the sleeping artist. We will see later how this "good sex" works when I discuss the Darley-Clea relationship in detail.

To return to the original problem, however, I believe that Durrell means two things by "modern love": first, what I have been calling "bad sex," the Sadean excess, "the limbo of the passions in which we live so restlessly"; second, "good sex," the Eros-force which leads to self-discovery. Durrell's investigation of modern love will therefore explore sex as a destructive and as a constructive force. As we would expect, this particular topic touches every character in the Quartet, just as the political story touched most of the characters; in Durrell's world, then, most of his people have surface lives, with

social or political interests, but all of them have love lives. And there is an interesting parallel: those who cannot be honest in love, who allow their egos to control their sexual behaviour, have a corresponding ego-It clash at every other level of their existence.

Durrell's topic of modern love, though less obvious than the political story, has both a manifest and a latent side to it. If we look now to Pursewarden as Durrell's spokesman, the ironic Pursewarden once again gives us a workable summary of what Durrell is doing in the Quartet. Pursewarden writes to Darley:

Our topic, Brother Ass, is the same, always and irremediably the same--I spell the word for you: l-o-v-e. Four letters, each letter a volume! The point faible of the human psyche. . . . 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, if you like. Surely, Brother Ass, this is the improper study of man? The main drainage of the soul? We could make an atlas of our sighs! (Clea, pp. 131-132)

The manifest content of the love story in the Quartet is very similar to Pursewarden's "atlas of our sighs," for almost every conceivable love-relationship is depicted in the novels: we get a picture of "the whole bloody range." The latent content is, of course, Durrell's view of the "higher spiritual connivance" with the Darley-Clea affair. Let us examine first the manifest side of Durrell's modern

love, for it reflects Durrell's negative attitude toward these reiterations of "bad sex," especially as displayed by Justine.

The Alexandria Quartet gives us a gallery of lovers and love relations, yet strangely few are successful or happy. This gallery of lovers is the first aspect of Durrell's investigation of modern love; it is love seen as bad sex, as sex in its Sadean infantile stage. The entire gamut of sexual activity is represented. And while Durrell is certainly no moralist, only those affairs entered into with honesty between unmarried adults, only heterosexual affairs have a happy ending. For the rest--those relationships of adultery, incest, rape, homosexuality, transvestism, and prostitution--all end badly. There is the philandering Pombal, who goes through women like socks; when he finally does meet his ideal, she is already married and pregnant by her husband, who is now fighting in Europe. Pombal and Fosca remain celibate until they hear that Fosca's husband is "safe" in a German prison camp. Once they become sexually intimate, Pombal tells Darley, "Now our story cannot help but have a happy ending." (Clea, p. 165) Fosca is accidentally killed a few months later; and after his grief, Pombal returns to his former promiscuous life. Promiscuity and adultery do not bring Pombal happiness; or perhaps they bring him the frustrating

happiness of the sensualist. G. S. Fraser's last glimpse of Pombal sees him "safely back in Normandy, after the war is over. His life-pattern has resisted deflection; glad to be rid of all this Levantine nonsense, he is smacking his lips again at French women and French cooking." (Fraser, p. 47)

The adulterous affair between Leila Hosnani and David Mountolive does not produce happiness either. Here the problem is not necessarily the adultery, but the Hosnani plague of control and dishonesty in love. Leila, "the dark swallow," is first the victim of a forced marriage to an invalid, a marriage arranged by her parents as part of the remaining Coptic feudal system. She tries to resist this marriage to an older man, but eventually gives in to her parents' authority. Feeling that her intellectual, emotional, and cultural life have been thwarted during her secluded life, at Karm, she turns to Mountolive, possibly at her husband's suggestion, and certainly as an expression of her will. She is dishonest in this relationship because the Mountolive she turns to is not the man, but the ideal; she consciously chooses to love the dream rather than the reality. Leila says to Mountolive, "Only I must not fall in love and I won't." (Mountolive, p. 30) She will control her feelings. It is right after this statement that the narrator asks, "Was this why she had elected to

love Mountolive's England through him rather than Mountolive himself?" (Mountolive, p. 30) This dishonesty of rejecting the man and electing to love the Englishman leads to Leila's continued manipulation of Mountolive through the rest of their relationship. Because she chooses to remain emotionally uninvolved by loving the ideal as she sees him in potentia, she sets for herself the task of making the dream come true, of manipulating Mountolive so that, in actuality, he slowly begins to take on the characteristics of this dream image.

A second aspect of this dishonesty is that Leila sees him as a potentially helpful ally, not as a lover and a man. It is of course ironic that when they finally do meet again Leila is personally destroyed by the impersonal monster she has created. Confronting Mountolive now as a suppliant woman and mother, seeking his official help for Nessim, Leila finds only the Ambassador, not the man. It is the Ambassador who can say to her, "I cannot discuss an official matter with a private person." (Mountolive, p. 282)

The fault in the Leila-Mountolive relationship is related to Durrell's theme that we invent other people's personalities to fit our own needs, that we create the "selected fictions" of their lives. This is certainly true of Leila creating Mountolive as the ideal Englishman; and it is true of Mountolive, for whom Leila represents Egypt,



"a second, almost mythical image of the reality which he was experiencing, expropriating day by day." (Mountolive, p. 147) The difference is that Leila created her fictitious Mountolive by a conscious act of the will; by not being true to her own feelings, she attempted to create her own reality and ended up as reality's victim. At one point Leila has the insight to see what she has done when, writing to Mountolive, she says:

I have been living with you so long in my imagination--quite alone there--that now I must almost reinvent you to bring you back to life. Perhaps I have been traducing you all these years, painting your picture to myself? You may be now simply a figment instead of a flesh and blood dignitary, moving among people and lights and policies. I can't find the courage to compare the truth to reality as yet; I'm scared. (Mountolive, p. 144)

But it is too late for Leila, for Mountolive has become the controlled diplomat. And "Diplomats," so Grishkin once said to Mountolive, "have no real friends . . . They use everyone." (Mountolive, p. 186) Leila's dishonesty in love, her control over emotions, and her manipulation of herself and Mountolive in the end destroy her affective life. Honesty to the Eros-force might have saved her.

Mountolive, for his part, is perhaps more a victim of Leila and his own image of her as Egypt than a wilful destroyer of the Eros-force. It is his youth that saves him initially from Leila. After Leila tells him that she must not love him, we see that "He told himself with equal

resolution that he also must respect her reservations and not fall in love, but this kind of dissociation is impossible for the young. He could not distinguish between his own various emotional needs, between passion-love and the sort of romance fed on narcissism." (Mountolive, pp. 30-31) Even though Mountolive comes to see Leila as a representative of his Egypt, even though he creates her in his own image, he still feels a passion-love for her. Mountolive's fault is not the manipulation of emotions, but the less serious fault of holding back, of controlling his feelings in the interest of creating a proper public image; he cannot reconcile his diplomatic and his emotional lives. It is, however, through Liza Pursewarden that Mountolive's affective life is saved. It is also interesting that what saves the Mountolive-Liza relationship is total emotional honesty. We know, for instance, that Liza told Mountolive about her incestuous relationship with her brother, thus hopefully averting the disaster which afflicted Pursewarden's own marriage because he did not tell his wife about Liza. We know also that Mountolive reads Pursewarden's love letters to Liza, that he knows all the details of their affair. It is through Liza's blindness that Mountolive finally faces the problem of public image and private life. In the beautiful scene which parallels and anticipates the Darley-Clea underwater scenes, Liza says to

Mountolive, "No, you could not have a blind Ambassadress" (Clea, p. 117), and then goes running into the sea. Mountolive, for once not caring about his public image, runs into the sea after her. This is a relatively minor scene, but it is the breakthrough for Mountolive, the shattering of the external control he imposed on himself. He becomes for the reader a feeling man; and as a man, he marries Liza at the end of the last novel. Once Mountolive faces the destructiveness of his self-control and sees how his public image and his emotionally dishonest legacy from Leila have thwarted his emotional life, he is able to free himself and enter into his kingdom of the Eros-force.

I do not think it is merely coincidence that the adulterous affair between Leila and Mountolive and the incestuous affair between Liza and Pursewarden are doomed to failure. In Durrell's world these kinds of relationships are unproductive and destructive, symbolized perhaps by the blind birth and eventual death of Liza's and Pursewarden's child. For this particular group of lovers, it is only when an unmarried man and an unmarried woman enter into a heterosexual relationship that there is a chance of happiness and success. It is interesting that as soon as Mountolive marries Liza, Durrell rewards him with the diplomatic plum, the Ambassadorship to France.

If Mountolive and Liza are a pair of Durrell's successful lovers, Pursewarden is Durrell's great sexual failure. Pursewarden can help everyone but himself. He gets Darley pointed in the right direction, figuratively gets Clea through the block of her virginity, frees Liza through his suicide, and breaks the "Check" in Justine. He is the sexual theorist: who sees in sex "the key to a metaphysical search which is our raison d'être here below!" (Clea, p. 139); who sees that "culture means sex, the root-knowledge . . ." (Clea, p. 141); who sees that "The sexual and the creative energy go hand in hand. They convert into one another--the solar sexual and the lunar spiritual holding an eternal dialogue." (Clea, p. 141); who sees that "sex is a psychic and not a physical act. The clumsy coupling of human beings is simply a biological paraphrase of this truth--a primitive method of introducing minds to each other, engaging them." (Balthazar, p. 124) He is a man about whom Clea, Durrell's other sexual spokesman, can say:

His intuition was very feminine and much sharper than [Justine's]--and you know that women instinctively like a man with plenty of female in him; there, they suspect, is the only sort of lover who can sufficiently identify himself with them . . . deliver them of being just women, catalysts, strops, oil-stones. Most of us have to be content to play the role of machine à plaisir! (Clea, p. 108)

Yet, with this remarkable equipment, Pursewarden cannot save himself.

I think we can find the reason if we look back briefly at Durrell's ideal of the bisexual psyche, the Eros-force. We remember that Durrell, playfully quoting Pursewarden in the "Kneller Tape" interview--the quoted material does not occur in The Alexandria Quartet--says, "The central love paradox is that you have to find yourself before you can really give yourself. Find your consort and syzygy in yourself before you can discern it in another." ("Kneller Tape," p. 167) I take this to mean that once man has discovered and accepted the feminine in himself, he has integrated the disparate psychic elements in himself and is then ready to seek outside himself for an actual counterpart to this psychic "consort." This entire process is very similar to the Jungian search for and integration of the anima; once the anima is integrated, the individual can function as a total self with respect to the external world: he possessed a self which he can give to another. Pursewarden, it would seem, is ideally qualified for this psychic integration because of his relationship with his sister. Here we have the close identification between the female Eros in Pursewarden and its external manifestation in Liza. But in Durrell's world Pursewarden fails, while Darley, acting out an almost similar psychic search and integration with Clea, succeeds. I believe that Pursewarden fails because his relationship with Liza is bad sex and

Darley succeeds because his relationship with Clea is good sex.

The Pursewarden-Liza relation is one of many parodies in Durrell of the bisexual Eros-force; these parodies of the idealized love relationship of Darley and Clea are all failures. Scobie's comic failure as the bisexual Tiresias, for instance, is a failure tinged with success; Scobie is killed as a masquerading female, but lives on in the heraldic universe as a saint with great fertility powers. Scobie must fail because homosexuality and transvestism in the Eros scheme are bad sex; it is, of course, Durrell's comic genius which turns Scobie's death into a holiday. Pursewarden's failure is tempered, as I have already mentioned, with success for those he touched: Darley, Justine, Clea, Liza. Yet fail he must, for incest, while ritualistically productive in the Eros scheme, is destructive in actual life. Pursewarden had all the equipment for sexual success, but he got off to a bad start.

Pursewarden's impotence, if I may use that term, seems to take a dual form, sexually as related to a kind of Freudian guilt and archetypically as related to an archetypic incest guilt. J. H. McMahon interestingly joins these two ideas when he says that Pursewarden "condemns Christianity for having invented Original Sin, 'that filthy obscenity of the West,' yet shows in his guilty reactions

to the affair with his sister that Original Sin may evoke an anthropological fact which existed within man long before it became a theological myth." (McMahon, p. 105) I think, however, even though the two forms of guilt are related, they must for clarity be treated separately and looked at in terms of the effect the guilt has on Pursewarden. After Darley has read the Pursewarden-Liza letters, Liza tells Darley:

But 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. (Clea, p. 191)

It is difficult to tell whether it was the incest relationship itself or this manifest guilt which destroyed Pursewarden's sexual life. We can, however, see the results in Pursewarden's life. Because, as Liza tells Darley, Pursewarden "could not free himself from my inside hold on him, though he tried and struggled" (Clea, p. 170), his marriage is destroyed. Later, with Justine, even though he suspects her motivations, he is not really interested sexually; with Clea, perhaps his best possible mate as an artist, he is cool and distant; with Melissa, he is sexually impotent. It seems that the only successful sexual activity he can have is with prostitutes. His incestuous affair with Liza, his inability to free himself from her inner hold, and the guilt he feels because of the relationship all conspire to

destroy his ability to love. As Melissa tells him, reading his palm, "You are all closed in, your heart is closed in, completely so. . . . Your life is dead, closed up. Not like Darley's. His is wide . . . very wide . . . open. . . . He can still love." (Mountolive, p. 173) Pursewarden cannot love. In fact, saying to Balthazar that he was starting another book "all about Love" (Mountolive, p. 184) on the very day that he had already planned his suicide is really another way of saying that he is dead to love. Pursewarden, then, cannot escape from the destructive bad sex in his past.

I think that the second part of Pursewarden's guilt may perhaps involve an archetypic taboo, a violation of ritual. Liza tells Darley that when Pursewarden

started looking for justification for our love instead of just simply being proud of it, he read me a quotation from a book. 'In the African burial rites it is the sister who brings the dead king back to life. In Egypt as well as Peru the king, who was considered as a God, took his sister to wife. But the motive was ritual and not sexual, for they symbolised the moon and the sun in their conjunction. The king marries his sister because he, as God the star, wandering on earth, is immortal and may therefore not propagate himself in the children of a strange woman, any more than he is allowed to die a natural death.' That is why he was pleased to come there to Egypt, because he felt, he said, an interior poetic link with Osiris and Isis, with Ptolemy and Arsinoë--the race of the sun and the moon! (Clea, p. 191)

Pursewarden was trying to relate his love of Liza back to ancient ritual; but the motive of his love affair with Liza



was sexual and not, as with the ancient kings, ritualistic. Thus, even on an archetypic level, the Pursewarden-Liza affair is bad sex. What Pursewarden does, however, to repudiate the psychological and ritualistic bad sex of his affair with Liza is to commit what Durrell has called "the sacrificial suicide of a true cathar." ("Kneller Tape," p. 168) Only by sacrificing his own life can Pursewarden free Liza to live her life with Mountolive.

If Pursewarden is Durrell's great failure because of a bad start, Justine is Durrell's great passionai failure because of her conscious perversion of the Eros-force. This is not to say that Justine does not have her tormented side. In fact, we can even attempt to justify Justine's actions in terms of the psychological traumas of her past and can perhaps see her as the victim of her uncontrollable inner urges. Both Arnauti and Darley tried this approach and were used by her like a public toilet. We can say that her hysteria and the loss of her child, in conjunction with the consequent symptom of nymphomania, drove her to sexual excesses and emotional infidelities; she was, after all, raped as a child by Da Capo and generally sexually abused during her youth. Yet, to view Justine exclusively in this manner would be to violate Clea's warning to Darley that it is our disease "to want to contain everything within the frame of reference of a psychology or philosophy." (Justine,

p. 77) Even though Justine does have a very juicy Freudian past and does suffer greatly, she consciously uses her "illness," her suffering, her promiscuity as a means of controlling others. I think we can attempt to justify Justine's actions in terms of her past, but I do not think that this justification will present a very strong argument. In many ways this kind of justification would be similar to and as invalid as Pursewarden's attempt to justify his incest in terms of mythological ritual: one of the many possible ways of looking at and explaining human actions, but in the end terribly incomplete, "a truth partially perceived." Perhaps, in terms of depth psychiatry, we can see in Justine's traumatic past only the core neurosis which enables her to do what she does, a kind of character probability and verisimilitude, but I do not think we can use her early trauma as a means of justifying or explaining why she acts the way she does.

Darley gives us our first real clue to Justine when he says of her, "She was not really human--nobody wholly dedicated to the ego is." (Justine, p. 203) Justine is ego-motivated, obsessed with the two overt functions of the ego: her own will and power. It is because of this ego-control that she cannot love. Arnauti found that Justine had been raped by one of her relations; due to this rape "she could obtain no satisfaction in love unless she

mentally recreated these incidents and re-enacted them."

(Justine, p. 78) If someone could break the Check caused by this rape, break the inner block in Justine which prevented her from letting go in love, then that person could truly possess her. But Arnauti also found that "in some perverted way she did not wish to conquer the Check."

(Justine, p. 81) Even though the rape and the Check may provide the psychological explanations of why Justine cannot love, it is her conscious will which perpetuates this condition. I think we can see in Justine a classic example of the ego setting itself up as supreme power and dissociating itself from the body. What the body does, then, has no bearing on the security and discreteness of the ego. Justine cannot love because she does not have a total self to give; she is possessed of an indomitable ego and an indifferent body. I think we can see this lack of body-mind unity and its consequent indifferent attitude to the actions of the body in most of Justine's actions. Once, she tells Darley, she took a lover after she married Nessim and said to this Swede, whose wife had left him, "Tell me how she behaves and I will imitate her. In the dark we are all meat and treacherous however our hair kinks or skin smells. Tell me, and I will give you the wedding-smile and fall into your arms like a mountain of silk." (Justine, p. 138) Justine can play any sexual role because her true

self--her ego--is not involved. Perhaps Arnauti came close to the truth about Justine when, speaking of her and the other women of the foreign communities in Alexandria, he said, "In love they give out nothing of themselves, having no self to give, but enclose themselves around you in an agonizing reflection--an agony of unexpressed yearning that is at the opposite pole from tenderness, pleasure." (Justine, p. 66) We remember also that once, in the midst of their embroilment in the intrigue, Nessim explains his troubled state to Justine: "It is only the pretense, the eternal play-acting one has to indulge in even with one's friends. If only we did not have to keep on acting a part, Justine." Justine's reply, significantly, is "Ah . . . ah, Nessim! Then I should not know who I was." (Mountolive, pp. 232-233)

In Durrell's world, Justine's true crime is that she has replaced the Eros-force of love with the ego-force of power. We remember that Pursewarden says that human personality coheres into identifiable states when it focuses its attention on love. With Justine the true focus is power. We remember that when Nessim is courting Justine as a lover she rejects him. It is only when he is honest with her about his motives for marriage that she accepts him. This would appear, then, to be a question of honesty, but that is not the case. Nessim falsely offers Justine love and she rejects him; he offers her power and complicity

and she accepts. The basis of their relationship and the focusing of their personalities center upon the Palestine plot. The narrator says of Justine, "The strange things was that as he began to talk thus, about what was nearest to his thoughts, she began to care, to really notice him as a man for the first time." (Mountolive, p. 198) Justine begins to care, now that someone has appealed to the driving force in her; in fact, so the narrator tells us, "for the first time she felt desire stir within her, in the loins of that discarded, pre-empted body which she regarded only as a pleasure-seeker, a mirror-reference to reality." (Mountolive, p. 200) The fault in this approach to life, in supplanting the self with the ego, Eros with power, is that the relationship is not between two people as people but between two conspirators; it is a shadow-play of ego-games, not a confrontation between individuals. Thus, on the brink of their marriage, the narrator can say of Justine, "There came over her an unexpected lust to sleep with him--no, with his plans, his dreams, his obsessions, his money, his death!" (Mountolive, p. 200) Nessim, for his part, believes that his marriage to Justine is politically expedient; he needs her as a Jewess to convince the Jews of his sincerity and needs her as a woman to begin a liaison with Darley and Pursewarden to pump them for information concerning their knowledge of Nessim's plans. Their

relationship, then, has all the characteristics of bad sex.

Since power was the basis of their relationship, it is lack of power that causes the relationship to founder. Nessim's passion for Justine, made subservient to political expediency, ceases when her usefulness ceases. Justine, for her part, loses her power-induced passion when the power vanishes. We get a contrastive portrait of the conspirators in Clea after the collapse of the plot. Justine explains her past passion for Nessim to Darley:

While we were conspirators, joined by our work and its dangers, I could feel truly passionate about him. But to be under house-arrest, compelled to idle away my time alone with him, in his company. . . . I knew I should die of boredom. . . . To be able to love a man fully, but only in a single posture, so to speak. You see, when he does not act, Nessim is nothing; he is completely flavourless, not in touch with himself at any point. Then he has no real self to interest a woman, to grip her. In a word he is really a pure idealist. When a sense of destiny consumes him he becomes truly splendid. It was as an actor that he magnetised me, illuminated me for myself. But as a fellow prisoner, in defeat--he predisposes to ennui, migraine, thoughts of utter banality like suicide!" (Clea, p. 58)

It is a measure of Durrell's irony that the one person who is on the surface apparently the most passionate is, in fact, the most crippled in her sex life. Justine, whose name most obviously and most appropriately links her with Sade, cannot even enjoy the simple sexual pleasures of a Pombal or a Capodistria or a Melissa; like some Alexandrian variation of a sado-masochist, she needs power and the

threat of death to stimulate her sexually. It is thus that that narrator of Mountolive can say of her and Nessim:

"How thrilling, sexually thrilling, was the expectation of their death!" (Mountolive, p. 205) Justine's conscious thwarting of the Eros-force reveals her as an exponent of destructive, bad sex. It is interesting that Justine links sex with death and that Darley, one of the few sexual successes of the Quartet, links sex with life-giving.

Justine's transformation at the end of Clea is not surprising in view of her past. Like Pombal, who falls back into the sensualist's rut after Fosca's death, Justine has been resuscitated by the forces of power and death. Clea aptly says of her, "Her eyes were sparkling with delight, a sort of impish mockery. It was as if, like some powerful engine of destruction, she had suddenly switched on again." (Clea, p. 280) The reason for this revitalization, like the original stirring of her passions, is that she and Nessim are now involved in "something bigger this time, international." (Clea, p. 281) Louis Fraiberg has said of this change in Justine from the tic-ridden virago Darley saw earlier to the sensual vamp of the old days that "The passion which is presumably once more possible for her is passion in the service of the externally induced political excitement, not love." (Fraiberg, p. 24) We also feel, because Justine is with Memlik in

Switzerland, that Justine is up to her old sexual tricks of using her body for political purposes with Memlik, who is hungry for society and white women. We are confronted at the end of Clea and the Quartet with the same old Justine, resurrected, as G. S. Fraser has said, by "a bigger and better conspiracy . . . to farcical life." (Fraser, p. 157)

Once this pattern of good and bad sex is established, the rest of the characters in the Quartet can be classified. I do not intend to be extreme in my interpretation of the effects of good and bad sex in Durrell's work, but a pattern does emerge which indicates that death is the price for bad sex. J. H. McMahon has said that "Sexual activity leads to pain in Durrell only when it is misapplied, when it seeks revenge rather than communication." (McMahon, p. 105) Yet, often mere indulgence leads to pain--and death. I must grant that the maimings and the deaths all have perfectly reasonable explanations, possibly as a result of the political intrigues, the war, or accidents. Yet, on a symbolic level, there seems to be an Eros-inspired retribution. Let us look briefly at the effects of this sexually retributive force, remembering, as Durrell has warned us in Key, that "poetry, like life, is altogether too serious not to be taken lightly." (Key, p. 90)



I have spoken about Justine and Nessim, both of whom are already dead to life and need not be killed off by the novelist. But just so we do not forget that bad sex is bad, we see that Justine suffers a nervous breakdown and a slight paralysis and that Nessim loses a finger and an eye. Pursewarden's incest, we know, leads to his suicide. After Leila Hosnani's adulterous affair with Mountolive, she is maimed by smallpox and dies in the end. Narouz creates his own ego-image of Clea and gives to her an unmasked-for love which repels her; he is murdered. Melissa is a prostitute; she has tuberculosis and dies. Fosca has an adulterous affair and is accidentally killed. Maskelyne has no place for love in his neat military world; he is killed in the desert. Keats, transformed into a Greek god, busily thrusts himself into life in the war--a destructive instead of creative life--and is killed in the desert. Balthazar, who has long remained philosophically aloof from love and passion, is a homosexual; when he rejects his priest-like role and gives in to his homosexual passion, he maims his hands, loses his teeth and his patients, and becomes a drunkard. Da Capo, for his part, takes over Balthazar's function as priest; he gives up his sensualist's life and becomes an ascetic priest of Black magic, as Balthazar before him had been the ascetic priest of the Cabal. Scobie, a sometime homosexual-transvestite, is beaten to

death. Toto de Brunel, a homosexual who pretends to be Justine at the Cervoni ball, is killed by Narouz. Clea-- who tries to remain uninvolved, has a vaguely lesbian relationship with Justine, and finally gives in to sex with the emotionally unavailable Amaril, only to abort his child--is maimed through the dark forces of Narouz and his harpoon. Bad sex certainly doesn't seem to pay in The Alexandria Quartet. Good sex, sex motivated by the Eros-force, does pay. After explaining the "four-card trick" approach to novel writing to Darley in the "Brother Ass" section of Clea, Pursewarden says that the story which employs this method need be "Just an ordinary Girl Meets Boy story." (Clea, p. 136) The three successful love stories are, in fact, "Girl Meets Boy" stories, though they are by no means ordinary: Doctor Amaril and the noseless recluse Semira; Ambassador Mountolive and the blind Liza Pursewarden; and the apprentice novelist Darley and the artistic, one-handed Clea. The men are all professionals and the women are all maimed, yet when the novel ends, the rewards of Eros leave Liza married to her "dark stranger," Semira married, pregnant, and with a nose, and Clea with a new hand, confidently painting better than ever. There seems to be little doubt that Durrell intended these three successful couples to represent three stages of the completed Eros relationship. I have already spoken about the rebirth

of Mountolive's affective life through Liza--a kind of regeneration through good sex--and his receiving as a reward for marriage the Paris mission. The other two successful pairs of lovers represent slightly different approaches to the same goal of Eros-fulfillment; Amaril's romantic quest of the virtuous Semira and Darley's artistic quest for self-realization through Clea.

Amaril is devoted to women, but had not, before Semira, found the "right" woman. In Balthazar Darley gives us a workable description of this idealizer of women who, so Darley writes:

built up romances in his mind about them, dreamed always of a complete love, a perfect understanding with one of the tribe. Yet all this was in vain. Ruefully he would explain to Pombal or to myself: "I cannot understand it. Before my love has a chance to crystallize, it turns into a deep, a devouring friendship. These devotions are not for you womanisers, you wouldn't understand. But once this happens, passion flies out the window. Friendship consumes us, paralyses us. Another sort of love begins. What is it? I don't know. A tenderness, a tendresse, something melting. Fondante." Tears come into his eyes. "I am really a woman's man and women love me. But--" shaking his handsome head and blowing smoke from his cigarette upwards to the ceiling he adds smiling, but without self-pity, "I alone among men can say that while all women love me no one woman ever has. Not properly. I am as innocent of love (not sexual love, of course) as a virgin. Poor Amaril!"

It is all true. It was his very devotion to women which dictated his choice in medicine--gynaecology. And women gravitate to him as flowers do to sunlight. He teaches them what to wear and how to walk; chooses their scents for them, dictates the colour of their lipsticks. Moreover, there is not a woman in Alexandria who is not proud to be

seen out on his arm; there is not one who if asked (but he never asks) would not be glad to betray her husband or her lover for him. And yet . . . and yet. . . . A connecting thread has been broken somewhere, a link snapped. Such desires as he knows, the stifling summer desires of the body in the city of sensuality, are stifled among shop-girls, among his inferiors. Clea used to say "One feels a special sort of fate in store for Amaril. Dear Amaril!" (Balthazar, pp. 132-133)

Amaril is devoted to women, even in his profession, but he does not see himself as a "womaniser"; his devotion leads him to help women and not, as with Pombal, to use them. It is Amaril who physically helps Clea in Syria through the barrier of her virginity and who later assists in her physical reconstruction as an artist by fashioning her artificial hand. His efforts are paralleled by Pursewarden's psychological deflowering of Clea and by Darley's physio-archetypic assistance with her rebirth from drowning. And Amaril's suggestion to Darley when Melissa is dying, very similar to Sir Luke Strett's advice to Milly Theale in Henry James' The Wings of the Dove, is the simple and sympathetic statement, "It would help her very much if she could be loved a bit." (Balthazar, p. 133) He is indeed a woman's man, sensitively proclaiming the healing powers of the Eros-force.

Amaril is true to his romantic nature, and when he meets Semira--Clea's "special sort of fate"--he knows instinctively that she is the goal of his quest. Even when he finds that Semira has no nose, he does not falter. His

professional and his emotional life both go out to her: as a doctor he will give her a nose; as a lover he wants immediately to marry her. Being deeply in tune with the Eros-force in himself, Amaril "knows" that he can enjoy, as Darley put it, "a complete love, a perfect understanding" with Semira. It is interesting how Durrell puts his romantics, especially Amaril, through the typical Medieval trials of the good knight. First Amaril must suffer a year's separation from his beloved, waiting to meet her again next carnival time; second, Amaril must endure the trial of the "Loathly Lady," only here it is Amaril himself and not an outside force who transforms the hag into the lovely Princess. In these trials Amaril proves his devotion both to women and to the Eros-force.

This theme of Amaril's romantic quest for love has several parallels in the Quartet. The most closely related story is Pombal and Fosca. Pombal also goes through the trial of celibacy, but being a "womaniser" he fails. Fosca pays with her life, while Pombal pays by returning to the death-in-life limbo of sensuality. Da Capo is another great "womaniser"; he must go through the ritual of the sham drowning, the symbolic death of his metaphysical search for salvation through sex; he is reborn as the romantic priest-quester of arcane knowledge, the Black Magician. It appears from the last view we have of Capodistria in his

tower that he has given up his life as the sensualist "Old Porn" in favor of an ascetic life devoted to the dark mysteries.

The other parallels to the romantic quest of love lapse into a second minor theme of the lover-quester creating the beloved in his own image. This theme is, of course, part of Durrell's theory that the perceiver creates the personality of the perceived person, who in turn presents to the perceiver a "selected fiction." Amaril, we know, reconstructs Semira; in a sense he creates her. Yet, this creation and reconstruction is not in his own image, for she is free to choose her own nose. Amaril is simply giving her the opportunity to develop and flower; he does not try to educate her, but he and Clea work with her so that she can develop her own talents as a doll's surgeon. As Amaril says, "It is the only way . . . to hold a really stupid woman you adore. Give her something of her own to do." (Clea, p. 90) Amaril's successful quest and creation of Semira is balanced by the failures of Darley to create his own Justine, of Leila to create her Mountolive, or of Narouz to create a receptive Clea. These failures are rooted in the ego and the will; the principle motivation is what I have been calling bad sex. Amaril's love, on the other hand, is selfless and Eros-motivated; it is a giving love, not a love concerned with getting or with manipulation.

Essentially, this is the distinction Abraham Maslow makes in Toward a Psychology of Being between deficiency-love (or D-cognition) and Being-love (or B-cognition), where Leila, Narouz, and Darley with Justine display deficiency-love which looks to the other person "from the point of view of usefulness" and Amaril displays Being-love where he loves Semira "because [she] is love-worthy rather than because [she] gives out love." (Maslow, p. 36)

Durrell's successful lovers all have to go through extensive apprenticeships, suggesting that love is something one must be prepared for. We have already seen how Mountolive was prepared--albeit negatively--by Leila and Liza by Pursewarden. Amaril serves his apprenticeship first as a devoted medical specialist and second as the romantic quester of Semira. Semira, having lived alone in her fantasy world, must undergo the ordeal of surgical transformation at the hands of Amaril and of socio-psychic education at the hands of Clea. Darley and Clea are, however, Durrell's primary lovers; they consequently receive the most extensive preparation, for they become Durrell's idealized lovers and provide what John Hagopian has called "The Resolution of The Alexandria Quartet." (Hagopian, 1964)

Darley's emotional apprenticeship closely parallels his artistic apprenticeship. What he needs is sensory

awareness, which in turn leads him to emotional and artistic sensitivity. When he meets Melissa he is in a stupor and displays a general paralysis of the life force.

Describing his life before he met Melissa, 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. Occasionally I turn over a bundle of manuscript or an old proof-copy of a novel or book of poems with disgusted inattention; with sadness, like someone studying an old passport. (Justine, pp. 21-22)

Melissa manages to blow some breath into Darley, but what Melissa stirs in Darley is sympathy-love, a love bred of their mutual exhaustion. And while the relationship with Melissa is doomed because they are "fellow-bankrupts" (Justine, p. 23), these new stirrings of the inner life do, however, emotionally prime Darley for Justine.

With Justine, Darley is overcome by passion-love, a totally blind commitment to Justine and his rejuvenated feelings. Justine is therefore responsible for the continued rebirth of Darley's emotional life, a rebirth started by Melissa. This rebirth of passion, even though it blinds Darley to Justine's true motives, spreads its influence to other parts of Darley's life; he becomes sensitized to his environment, enough to start work on his Alexandrian novels. While the Justine affair may have been a disastrous failure for Darley, it is the initiating step in Darley's long



journey toward self-discovery. Not only does Justine provide Darley with a central focus for his novel, but she awakens in him the will to live and write again

One of the things Darley begins to learn and acts out partially with Justine is Durrell's idea of the bisexuality of the psyche. Each person has within him both male and female parts; ideally, the male recognizes the female in himself and integrates her into his personality. Only then can he seek this female counterpart in the external world. As an introduction to this theory, Durrell prefaces Justine with a quotation from Freud's Letters: "I am accustoming myself to the idea of regarding every sexual act as a process in which four persons are involved." (Justine, p. 10) Toward the end of Justine, Darley vaguely realizes that he and his friends are involved in the four-part process. While Darley and Justine are still lovers and when Nessim is beginning an intimacy with Melissa, Darley writes:

Yet Nessim, in beginning to explore and love Melissa as an extension of Justine, delineated perfectly the human situation. Melissa would hunt in him for the qualities which she imagined I must have found in his wife. The four of us were unrecognized complementaries of one another, inextricably bound together. (Justine, p. 203)

This scene is an externalization of Durrell's bisexual theory, a symbolic affair between Darley-Melissa as a unit on one side and Justine-Nessim as a unit on the other side.

This rudimentary acting out of the bisexual theory fails for two reasons: first, because none of the four persons involved followed Pursewarden's necessary advice to "Find your consort and syzygy in yourself before you can discern it in another" ("Kneller Tape," p. 167); and second, because the relationships are Sadean excesses, are "bad sex." When Darley finally does find his complementary syzygy in himself and then in Clea, the acting out of Durrell's bisexual theory will be a success.

Just as Darley's affair with Melissa primes him for Justine, so his affair with Justine prepares him for the next stage of his development, his incubation and search for self on the island. Having gotten back into life with the shattering experience of Justine, he is now ready to pick up the pieces in the re-creation of self. As he tells us at the beginning of Justine:

I have escaped to this island with a few books and the child--Melissa's child. I do not know why I use the word "escape". The villagers say jokingly that only a sick man would choose such a remote place to rebuild. Well, then, I have come here to heal myself, if you like to put it that way. . . . (Justine, p. 13)

During this healing process, Darley's emotional development and his artistic development are inseparable and interdependent parts of the total process. By working through the artistic problems of writing Justine and Balthazar, by experiencing the artistic process of first trying to codify

the past and second trying to accept the illusory reality of the adventive moment, Darley also emotionally re-experiences the past and manages, through a great deal of honest introspection, to find a creative balance within himself. He emerges, at the beginning of Clea, cured of his emotional myopia. Having vanquished the blindness of egocentricity in the interests of the greater self, he is now ready to find Clea.

Clea's own emotional development generally parallels Darley's. She is isolated from life, yet has deceived herself into thinking that the life she is leading is complete. Darley gives us an initial portrait of Clea sequestered in the security of her attic studio:

She lives in modest though not miserly style, inhabiting a comfortable attic-studio furnished with little beyond an iron bed and a few ragged beach chairs which in the summer are transferred bodily to her little bathing cabin at Sidi Bishr. Her only luxury is a glittering tiled bathroom in the corner of which she has installed a minute stove to cope with whatever cooking she feels inclined to do for herself; and a bookcase whose crowded shelves indicate that she denies it nothing. (Justine, pp. 128-129)

These outward signs would seem to indicate that Clea is clean, well-read, not very domestic, and rather ascetic in her iron bed. However, Darley warns us that these outward signs might be misleading, that "there is a real danger that she might seem either a nun for whom the whole range of human passions had given place to an absorbing search

for her subliminal self, or a disappointed and ingrown virgin who had deprived herself of the world because of some psychic instability, or some insurmountable early wound." (Justine, p. 128) Darley sees Clea's austere life-- "so disarmingly simple, graceful, self-contained" (Justine, p. 128)--as having led her to an inner strength "quarried out of self-knowledge and reflection." (Justine, p. 130) Clea, for her part, tells Darley that she denies herself nothing. As for love, she tells him that "love interested me only very briefly--and men more briefly still; the few, indeed the one, experience which marked me was an experience with a woman. I am still living in the happiness of that perfectly achieved relationship: any physical substitute would seem today horribly vulgar and hollow." (Justine, p. 129) All of these statements and descriptive sketches occur in Justine, and we have learned now by hindsight to be highly skeptical both of Darley's initial version of characters and their actions and of what the characters say of themselves. We see, for instance, despite Darley's warning about misreading the implications of Clea's outer life, that Clea does lead a nun-like existence; and we later find out in Balthazar that Clea has had an "early wound" with Justine; later still, in Clea, we find that Clea is troubled by her ingrown virginity and a growing psychic instability. The almost prophetic unfolding of an

inner correspondence with the sketch of Clea's outward life casts serious doubt on Darley's estimation of Clea's inner strength and the success of her search for her "subliminal self."

In terms of my distinction between good and bad sex, I think we can see that Clea's past, like Darley's, consists of bad sex. Initially, she thwarts the Eros-force by directing her love toward Justine. After that wounding experience, she denies the Eros-force within herself by the self-deceptive ploy that she has had a "perfectly achieved relationship" with Justine. Darley, however, in another look at Clea in the second novel, now with Balthazar's view of the Justine-Clea relationship to augment his own view, says that for Clea the Justine affair "performed one valuable service for her, 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--and this gave her misery a fugitive relief." (Balthazar, p. 55) Yet, it is not until her Syrian episode years later with Amaril that Clea has an intimate relationship with a man. Clea is not in touch with her inner nature and, in fact, runs from her own sexuality until a series of events--perhaps arranged by the Eros-force--leads her to face her inner self on Narouz' island with Darley.

Clea has had an unsatisfactory affair with Justine. She then convinces herself that she is happy and that she does not need men. By denying her own sexuality and leading an austere life of celibacy, she believes that she has overcome the Eros-force in the interests of higher goals; for, as she explains to Darley, "it is as if the physical body somehow stood in the way of love's true growth, its self-realization." (Justine, p. 129) The problem here is misplaced emphasis. To Durrell, self-realization is a proper goal, but sex is the necessary means to that goal. Clea, then, is aiming for the proper goal, but she seeks to get there first by rejecting heterosexual love and second by idealizing the memory of a relationship which was bad sex to start with. Unlike the sensualist, who uses sex as an end in itself, Clea is attempting to deny the role of sex as a necessary step in the process of self-realization. In this sense, Clea is as egocentric as Darley, for both are dedicated to the power of the ego over the total self. The Eros-force, however, will not be thwarted or denied. With Clea, celibacy produces artistic problems; her painting, so she tells Darley in Clea, "had dried up on me. I couldn't get any further somehow, canvas gave me a headache." (Clea, p. 109) Realizing that perhaps her virginity is blocking her artistic growth, she presents herself to Pursewarden to dépuceler her. She has tentatively made the

Durrellian connection between emotional growth and artistic growth, yet even here she resists the actuality of what she sees as a necessary step in her development; she presents herself unappealingly so as to guarantee failure: heavy tweed costume, flat shoes, dark glasses, letting Pursewarden know that she does not really want him. It is as though she made the decision to give up her virginity intellectually, as an act of her will and ego, without the necessary emotional commitment. Pursewarden, of course, rejects her empty gesture, but gives her some very sound advice: "tell your ego to go to hell." (Clea, p. 110)

For the half-artist, telling one's ego to go to hell is a difficult task. Clea has not integrated her emotional self with her artistic self and therefore sees life subserving her art; her artist-ego still claims priority. After the Pursewarden fiasco, from which Clea emerges figuratively dépucelé, she has an actual affair in Syria with Amaril. In this affair, unlike the Pursewarden failure, Clea is emotionally motivated: "We both caught fire," she tells Darley, "as if somewhere an invisible burning glass had been playing on us without our being aware." (Clea, p. 111) She realizes, however, that her lover is committed to another, that she can make no claim on him; still she has a strong desire to have a child by him. Clea does become pregnant, but because of her idea that the

unmasked-for child might create an unnatural link between her and Amaril, she has an abortion. Once again Clea lets her will to be an artist get in the way of her emotional life, for she sees her emotional self as essentially separate from her artist self. Thus she can say, "it is funny but I realised that precisely what wounded me most as a woman nourished me most as an artist." (Clea, p. 112) To the integrated person, there is no distinction or separation between the woman and the artist; the two overt expressions of womanness and artisthood are interdependent co-sharers in the totality of the individual's life. With Clea, however, she not only sees her woman's life as separate from her artist's life, but she forcefully, willfully controls her womanness in an attempt to nurture her life in art. Just as Justine is using her sex life for political ends, Clea is no less negatively using her sex life for artistic ends. John Hagopian has suggested that the horror Clea experiences and eventually overcomes toward the end of the fourth novel is the Past, "a past which provides no confident basis for a commitment to love", a past which contains "all the false and distorted love affairs--the living death--that she had thoughtlessly been involved in." (Hagopian, 103) Clea's horror is, in terms of my discussion, a past based on bad sex.



Darley, we remember, has had a similar problem with his own past; however, he squarely faces this problem on the island as he writes Justine and Balthazar. His re-entry into the action of the Quartet at the beginning of Clea is actually a re-entry into life in the present after creating and experiencing the death of his past on the island. Thus, when Justine tells him at Karm that, though she cheated him, he cheated himself, she is simply telling Darley something he already knows about himself: that his own Justine "had indeed been an illusionist's creation, raised upon the faulty armature of misinterpreted words, actions, gestures." (Clea, p. 55) Now, Darley's new self-possession tells him that he must find Clea.

Darley's search for Clea in the last novel is not altogether unexpected. We remember that Darley ends both Justine and Balthazar with a letter from Clea and that the letters suggest the possibility of a future relationship: in the Justine letter Clea asks, "Is there a friendship possible this side of love which could be sought and found? I speak no more of love--the word and its conventions have become odious to me. But is there a friendship possible to attain which is deeper even, limitlessly deep, and yet wordless, idealess?" (Justine, p. 244); and in the Balthazar letter Clea writes, "For us, the living, the problem is of a totally different order: how to harness time in the

cultivation of a style of heart--something like that? . . . Not to force time, as the weak do, but to harness its rhythms and put them to our own use." (Balthazar, p. 242) The kind of relationship Clea is suggesting goes beyond the numerous verbalizations about the nature of love; it is a relationship which combines deep friendship and depth of love beyond the intellectualizings of the other Alexandrians, a relationship comprised of Pursewarden's "loving-kindness" and "helpmeet." (Balthazar, p. 128) It is also a relationship which submits to the flow of time, which has transcended the past. "The richest love," says Darley, quoting Pursewarden, "is that which submits to the arbitration of time." (Clea, p. 257)

Ironically, when Darley and Clea do get together in the last novel, it is Darley who is ready for this new kind of love, not the theorizing Clea. Darley has become in actuality what for Clea has remained an intellectual theory. During their affair, Clea begins to experience her "horrors" and become moody and irritable. Darley realizes, as John Hagopian puts it, "that something is rotten in their space-time. He is aware that the relationship between himself and Clea cannot continue as it is, that some change is necessary to bring Clea out of her anxieties before they can truly love one another." (Hagopian, 103) Clea has not faced the bad sex in her past, nor has she sought the Eros

integration by trying to discover her "consort and syzygy" within herself. Unlike Darley, who has worked diligently at the death of his past in order to be reborn in the present, Clea is forced to act out this psychic death-and-rebirth pattern physically, possibly as a punishment for her denial of the physical in favor of the intellectual. I have already spoken of the retributive powers of the Eros-force. Perhaps Clea's accident is a punishment arranged by the Eros-force, perhaps arranged by the prevailing It of the city. At any rate, it is appropriate, as John Hagopian correctly points out, "that the harpoon which pins Clea to the sunken ship is fired by the homosexual Balthazar and that Clea's past involved a homosexual attachment to Justine. Homosexuality, according to the symbolism of the Quartet, is related to sterility; it is not a (pro)creative kind of activity." (Hagopian, 103) It is also appropriate that the harpoon belonged to Narouz, whose secret love for Clea was so repulsive to her.

Clea's emotional apprenticeship as a woman, then, is not completed until she is forced to act out the death of her past and her rebirth into the present. Later, in the hospital, Darley immediately notices a "new self-confidence" stirring in Clea. (Clea, p. 255) And Clea, also immediately aware that a necessary change has taken place within her, tells Darley, "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 midstream again and driven off the dragon. It's gone and will never come back." (Clea, pp. 256-257) We never learn explicitly what Clea's horror was, nor do we learn what Clea experienced during her death and rebirth. Yet, whatever Clea's problems of emotional and artistic maturity were, they are now part of the past. Clea has finally, physically and perhaps unconsciously, faced and accepted her true emotional nature as a woman; she knows now, as Darley knew in Balthazar, that "she was a woman at last and belonged to men." (Balthazar, p. 55) She has also submitted to time, here in actuality and not just in theory. It is what Hagopian calls "a conscious and willful submission to time and fate," a submission on the part of Darley and Clea which "contrasts powerfully with that of Justine, Nessim, Mountolive and the others who are engaged in overt political intrigues and for whom 'love-time' is subservient to or in conflict with 'power-time'." (Hagopian, 101) Thus, in the hospital, Clea can say to Darley, "Now at last we can take things a bit easily. Unhurriedly." (Clea, p. 257) And to Balthazar she can say, speaking of Darley and his departure, "I shall see if I can't will him back again. We aren't quite ripe for each other yet. It will come." (Clea, p. 265) Clea has accepted Darley's earlier realization

that "The seeds of future events are carried within ourselves. They are implicit in us and unfold according to the laws of their own nature." (Clea, p. 223) Clea's acceptance of and submission to both her inner feminine nature and to time lead directly to her eventual possession of her artistic kingdom. Ending her last letter to Darley, hinting strongly at their future relationship, she writes, "I wait, quite serene and happy, a real human being, an artist at last." (Clea, p. 281)

Darley's own crossing of the threshold into the kingdom of the imagination comes a little later, based primarily on his active role in Clea's death and rebirth. The sudden awareness of his ability to identify emotionally with Clea in the drowning scene and his non-volitional decision "either to bring her up alive or to stay down there at the bottom of the pool with her" (Clea, p. 251) are the major factors in his artistic breakthrough. He, like Clea, has come to full emotional maturity and has submitted to the Eros-force and to time. The love between Darley and Clea is potentially the richest because they are now able to submit it to the arbitration of time.

I have called Darley and Clea successful lovers, even though they are separated at the end of the Quartet. There are strong hints that Darley will follow Clea to France, that there will be a future relationship. Yet

whether Darley and Clea actually do meet again does not seem to be important. What is important is that at the end of the Quartet both are ready and able to make a mature commitment to love. The ability to make that emotional commitment is, in Durrell's Eros-world of modern love, the prerequisite for becoming an artist.

### III

#### The Artist Story

Recalling my analogy of a series of Chinese boxes, we can see that Durrell's frame story of the Hosnani intrigue has shown us the outer, political man. At the second level, with Durrell's acknowledged topic of "modern love," we get Durrell's portrait of passionate man. Following this analogy, we can see that Durrell's next theme--the unacknowledged investigation of the growth of the artist--moves us another step into Durrell's symbolic man at the level of the third Chinese box. Here we see Darley's struggle to become an artist. By making the character's ability to become an artist depend upon his ability to love, Durrell is suggesting an integrating continuity between these two separate themes of love and art. Louis Fraiberg, stressing this continuity in Durrell's treatment of Clea, says of her: "Freed from her bond to Justine, she still needed to come to terms with her womanliness and her artistry, and the fates of these two were inseparable." (Fraiberg,

p. 33) This interdependence of love and art is very similar to Durrell's definition of man as "amo ergo sum"; man exists to the extent that he loves. In addition, this love-centered existence can itself be seen as an artistic creation. The joining up of art and life leads us to recognize that Durrell's artist theme in the Quartet has both a manifest and a latent content: the manifest content deals with Darley-as-artist and "the old story of an artist coming of age" (Clea, p. 282); the latent content deals with Darley-as-Everyman and with Durrell's idea that "life is really an artistic problem, all men being sleeping artists." ("Kneller Tape," p. 167) I plan to look first at the manifest content, investigating the specialized aspects of Darley's development as a novelist, before turning to the latent content and the more general aspects of the artist theme.

There are, we have to admit, an amazing number of writers and painters in Lawrence Durrell's The Alexandria Quartet. Darley is writing the novels we are reading; Pursewarden is an accomplished novelist; Arnauti has written a novel about Justine; Balthazar writes a miniature novel as an interlinear to Darley's Justine; Keats is a journalist who discovers that he is a writer; several characters keep extensive diaries or journals; Clea is a professional painter; and Nessim is a competent amateur

painter. Even discounting the peripheral figures, we are still left with three novelists and one painter. Of these artists, Darley is certainly the central character. He has, so it appears, narrated all four books of the Quartet. And while Pursewarden may, at times, function as Durrell's spokesman, his importance in the Quartet, in terms of the artist theme, comes from his relationship with Darley. The other two artists, Arnauti and Clea, function in a similar manner, as foils or counterparts to Darley. We must also recognize that Arnauti and Pursewarden represent artistic or novelistic constants: their artistic theories have been formulated and their literary productions have been either conceived of or completed before the major action of the novels begins. They are what might be called the artistic donnée of the Quartet. Clea's approach to art does however change during the action of the novels; as the female counterpart to Darley, her personal and artistic growth parallels Darley's. But it is upon Darley, as he writes his way through the four books of the Quartet, that Durrell concentrates the focus of his kunstlerroman theme. The Quartet, on the artist level, is the history of what Darley has to learn to become an artist.

In putting the evolution of Darley's artistic growth into practice, Durrell employs the highly successful method of having Darley narrate each of the four novels;



but Durrell changes the narrative method and focus from novel to novel so that both form and focus reflect the various stages of Darley's development. As I have mentioned earlier, the form and content of Justine reflects Darley's associative methodology and his egocentricity; Balthazar reflects Darley's awareness of relative truth and of the need to be more perspicacious; Mountolive completes the pattern of Darley's objectification, while broadening the focus to include the political side of life; and finally Clea reflects Darley's recognition of the need to transcend the limits of time and relative truth. Thus, Darley incorporates into each successive novel after Justine the results of his larger artistic vision, displaying in the second, third, and fourth novels what he has learned about life and art from Balthazar's Interlinear, from Pursewarden, and from his own experiences and introspections.

Darley's Justine stands as a good example of a first novel by an inexperienced writer. I do not mean that Justine is badly written, but that Darley's philosophical, psychological, and artistic foundations are often inaccurate and contradictory. Durrell seems purposely to allow Darley to display certain novelistic excesses peculiar to the literary novice. In Justine, Durrell must establish Darley as the talented bungler if we are to have a starting point for Darley's growth. Thus, Darley's Justine misses

the mark because his goals of codifying the past, reworking reality, and portraying absolute truth about Justine and Alexandria--goals which may well be impossible--are artistically and philosophically inappropriate for a novel based on autobiography, since the form and content of that novel depend upon his subjective experiences and interpretations: Darley is attempting to define universals by using particulars. His Justine is therefore a "Bergsonian rampage," with literary roots going back to Marcel Proust and Henry Miller; and like Miller's work, which Durrell came to question, Justine is written "from one determined standpoint" ("Studies in Genius: Henry Miller," p. 87), a novel which sets out to describe a space-time continuum (the total truth of an event) from only one side of space. Hence, while Durrell's Justine functions brilliantly as the first novel of The Alexandria Quartet, Durrell guarantees that Darley's Justine will be a theoretical failure because Darley's subjective methodology cannot produce the absolute truth he sets out to capture and codify.

The major literary influence on Darley in Justine is Jacob Arnauti's novel Moeurs. Darley's one-sided, emotionally oriented treatment of Justine "from one determined standpoint" parallels Arnauti's equally one-sided, though psychologically oriented, treatment of Claudia-Justine. Moeurs appears to be an example of the Freudian or

psychoanalytical novel; and though Darley says that he rejects Arnauti's form and method, he nonetheless repeats some of the "faults" he finds in Moeurs in his own Justine. Since the relationship between Arnauti's and Darley's novel is therefore significant, I intend to look first at Moeurs and second at the impact that novel has had on Darley's Justine.

After discovering Moeurs, Darley tells us that

It was very well written indeed, in the first person singular, and was a diary of Alexandrian life as seen by a foreigner in the middle thirties. The author of the diary is engaged on research for a novel he proposes to do--and the day to day account of his life in Alexandria is accurate and penetrating; but what arrested me was the portrait of a young Jewess he meets and marries: takes to Europe: divorces. (Justine, p. 64)

We also find out that Moeurs has at least three sections: a specific account of the meeting and marriage of Jacob and Claudia; the Check, in which Arnauti "thinks he has found the clue to Justine's instability of heart" (Justine, p. 78), for Arnauti writes that "In the very heart of passion . . . there was a check--some great impediment of feeling which I became aware of only after many months" (Justine, p. 78); and finally a section called Posthumous Life, an attempt "to sum up and evaluate these episodes." (Justine, p. 75) Arnauti believes that "Life, the raw material, is only lived in potentia until the artist deploys it in his work." (Justine, p. 75) Thus, he tells us that his characters are

"All bound by time in a dimension which is not reality as we would wish it to be--but is created by the needs of the work. For all drama creates bondage, and the actor is only significant to the degree that he is bound." (Justine, pp. 75-76) In addition to the diary format of his novel, Arnauti says that Moeurs "is not the sort of book to which we are accustomed these days. For example, on the first page a synopsis of the plot in a few lines. Thus we might dispense with the narrative articulation. What follows would be drama freed from the burden of form." (Justine, p. 75) We can see from these passages that Arnauti's concerns in Moeurs are with an explanation of his love for the female protagonist Claudia-Justine and with his experimentation with characterization and novelistic form. His theory of personality, if I may call it that, is similar to Pursewarden's view of the psyche as something as "unsubstantial as a rainbow" (Balthazar, p. 141), "an ant-hill of opposing predispositions" (Balthazar, p. 15), except that for Pursewarden the individual's personality is continually being created by his actions and interactions and for Arnauti the artist is the organizer and creator of the individual's personality. The difference in the two approaches is significant: Pursewarden's approach parallels Groddeck's theory of the It and the Gestalt idea of creative interaction of subject and object and Arnauti's

approach parallels Freudian causality and the psychoanalytical absorption with cause and effect interpretations and explanations. In short, the form and content of Arnauti's Moeurs are based on Freudian psychology, where the artist assumes the role of psychoanalytical interpreter of character.

Arnauti does manage in Moeurs to give us an interesting portrait of Claudia-Justine, and we--along with Darley--can recognize certain characteristic similarities between Claudia and the Justine we are getting to know in Darley's novel. Yet, Arnauti's portrait of this woman is severely limited by his exclusively psychological orientation; by treating Claudia more as a case history and less as a character, he engages our clinical interests but not our sympathy. His psychological methodology also predetermines the quality and extent of our knowledge of and involvement with Claudia, and in this way he contradicts his own stated intentions that his book would be "powerful enough to contain the elements of her," that it "would be drama freed from the burden of form." (Justine, p. 75)

Arnauti's subjective involvement with Claudia's problems and his Freudian predilections exclude all but the psychoanalytically relevant elements of her personality, such that he imposes a fairly rigid framework onto his drama rather than setting his own book "free to dream." (Justine,

p. 75) The ostensible freedom of Moeurs is also affected by Arnauti's conception of the role of the artist, for as Arnauti gives form to the potential raw material of his characters' lives, they become subjective expressions of his own preconceptions and biases; they live their fictional lives through his specialized perception. Even Darley, never very astute in Justine, notices that Moeurs lacks "a sense of play," that Arnauti "bears down so hard upon his subject-matter." (Justine, p. 75) Later, Clea will find that Moeurs seems "shallow and infected by the desire to explain everything," that Arnauti's attempts to explain Justine merely "freudianise her" and hence take away "all her mythical substance--the only thing she really is" by placing her "within a frame of reverence of a psychology or a philosophy." (Justine, p. 77) Balthazar, for his part, feels that Arnauti "avoided dealing with a number of things which he knew to be true of Justine, but which he ignored for purely artistic purposes--like the incident of her child." (Justine, p. 96) Justine's criticism of Moeurs is understandably more personal:

As for Arnauti, he nearly drove me mad with his inquisitions. What I lost as a wife I gained as a patient--his interest in what he called 'my case' outweighed any love he might have had for me. And then losing the child made me hate him where before I had only seen a rather sensitive and kindly man. You have probably read his book Moeurs. Much of it is invented--mostly to satisfy his own vanity and get his own back on me for the way I wounded his pride in refusing to be 'cured'--so-called. (Balthazar, p. 53)

Arnauti, then, has written an autobiographical first-person novel centering around his relationship with Justine, but has limited the narrative focus to the psychological and psycho-pathological side of her personality. The controlled focus produces a partial picture of character and action (much like the view of reality we get with only one side of space). And while this partial picture may be valid within the limits of his self-imposed context, it certainly cannot give us either "the elements" of Justine or "drama freed from the burden of form."

Arnauti's Moeurs is the first of Darley's literary models. Coincidentally, Darley's description of the earlier novel describes as well his own effort in Justine. Like Arnauti, Darley is doing research for a novel and uses the diary format to write an accurate and penetrating first-person account of Alexandrian life. His two major concerns in the novel are to explain his love for Justine and to learn how to translate his memories into the written word. As he remembers his past, he writes about Justine and his Alexandrian life; as he lives his day-to-day life in the epic situation on the island, he writes about the literary problems he faces while he is writing his novel. We can easily recognize in this brief sketch all the major elements of Moeurs. Then, if we substitute Darley's focus on romantic emotionalism for Arnauti's focus on

psychoanalysis, we can see that both writers will produce limited versions of their subject: in Moeurs Arnauti uses a psychoanalytical frame of reference; in Justine Darley edits and interprets his material from the single frame of reference of his own emotional involvement. Even the apparently confusing structure of Darley's Justine coincides with Arnauti's theory of the new novel. Just as Arnauti suggests, Justine has "on the first page a synopsis of the plot in a few lines" (Justine, p. 75), for Darley tells us that he will "return link by link along the iron chains of memory" to his Alexandrian past "in order to understand it all." (Justine, p. 13) This personal record of his experiences, arranged according to emotional significance, does in fact "dispense with the narrative articulation." (Justine, p. 75) The resulting novel does produce Arnauti's "drama freed from the burden of form" in a book "free to dream." (Justine, p. 75) What Darley fails to realize--and what Arnauti before him failed to realize--is that the limitations of his emotional focus, his incomplete knowledge of events, and the first-person method will produce a book which can only render a very specialized view of reality, a dream vision of Justine and Alexandria. Justine may be set "free to dream," but the novel can only dream Darley's dreams.



Ironically, even the criticisms of Moeurs, those leveled by Darley and the other Alexandrians, apply to Justine. Darley, too, "bears down so hard upon his subject-matter" (Justine, p. 75) and attempts to contain Justine within a frame of reference; his book lacks a "sense of play"; he avoids dealing with the problem of Justine's lost child, while Justine becomes as much a "case" for him as she had been for Arnauti. The influence of Moeurs can be seen in all this. At times Darley feels like "some paper characters out of Moeurs" (Justine, p. 83), and, in his analysis of Justine, he finds himself "attempting to do the same sort of thing with her in words" (Justine, p. 83) as Arnauti did in Moeurs. Later, even though he realizes that his adulterous affair with Justine does not deserve "romantic or literary trappings," he continues to romanticize this "banal story of an adultery which was among the cheapest commonplaces of the city." (Justine, p. 87) Thus, despite intentions to the contrary, Darley allows Arnauti's obsession with Justine to infect his own novel and intensify his romantic distortions. Throughout Justine, Darley says one thing but does another; in his portrayal of Justine, for instance, he ignores his own idea that "each person can only claim one aspect of our character as part of his knowledge. To every one we turn a different face of the prism." (Justine, pp. 118-119) He can

philosophize about reality, truth, perception and still think that he has captured the "real" Justine in his novel. It is not until the second novel, when his naive vision of events and the influence of Moeurs are shaken by Balthazar, that Darley tells us more convincingly, "I suppose that in all this Justine had surrendered to me only one of the many selves she possessed and inhabited--to this timid and scholarly lover with chalk on his sleeve!" (Balthazar, p. 100) But in Justine, following Arnauti's example, Darley unquestioningly assumes that his knowledge of events is complete and that his interpretation of Justine is exclusively correct.

Perhaps this kind of ego blindness in dealing with characters is the best way to interpret Durrell's use of mirrors as the predominant symbol in Justine. In this first novel the mirror becomes a potential barrier, especially for the artist; instead of seeing other people or their actions clearly, the artist--if he is egocentric--may only see himself reflected in the surface image of his characters. Thus, his view of reality is limited by his own need to see himself reflected in his work and by his inability to break through the egotistic barrier. Second, like Arnauti and Darley, he may choose a particular angle of vision or frame of reference in his work, portraying character and action which reflect only one facet of a

potentially multifaceted reality. This, too, produces a limited view, what Pursewarden calls "selected fictions." (Balthazar, p. 14) Blinded by this mirror-worship, the ego-artist states that his particular facet of the mirror alone can accurately reflect reality. Thus the reality of character and action in Moeurs is not presented directly, but is mirrored through the limited perspective of Arnauti's psychoanalytical bias; the reality Darley renders in Justine is similarly mirrored through his subjectively romantic dream. It is significant, therefore, that both Arnauti and Darley meet Justine for the first time in a mirror; their subsequent portraits of her, while valid in a limited context, are as much a reflection of their desires to see her in relation to themselves as to see her as a separate person. Durrell reinforces this idea with the use of multiple mirrors: there are five Justines reflected in the dressmaker's mirror and three Justines in the grocer's store where Darley first speaks with Justine. (Justine, pp. 27, 31) And to make sure that we do not miss the idea that a character can be seen from several different perspectives, Durrell has Justine say:

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? (Justine, p. 27)

Durrell is saying that character is many-sided, but Darley--

perhaps influenced by Arnauti--chooses a single reflection of Justine and declares that it is the "real" one.

At the beginning of Balthazar, Darley realizes that the egocentric mirror he held up to nature was a barrier in Justine. Speaking of his characters, he writes:

I mean that I must try and strip the opaque membrane which stands between me and the reality of their actions--and which I suppose is composed of my own limitations of vision and temperament. My envy of Pursewarden, my passion for Justine, my pity for Melissa. Distorting mirrors, all of them. . . .(Balthazar, p. 28)

Darley sees that his own feelings toward the Alexandrians had distorted his view of them and that in Justine he had created his own personal Alexandria which had become "almost a monomania." (Balthazar, p. 19) In the second novel Darley takes a noticeably different approach to the problem of writing. The way now, he says, "is through fact. I must record what more I know and attempt to render it comprehensible or plausible to myself, if necessary, by an act of the imagination." (Balthazar, p. 28) Memory was Darley's working rationale in Justine; fact and imagination will supply the working method for Balthazar. It is interesting to see that in this passage concerning fact and imagination Darley also hints at the working method for Mountolive when he goes on to ask, "Or can facts be left to themselves? Can you say 'he fell in love' or 'she fell in love' without trying to divine its meaning, to set it in a

context of plausibilities?" (Balthazar, p. 28) In Balthazar Darley fills in many informational gaps as he "reconstructs" the story from Balthazar's Interlinear; in Mountolive he gives us the "facts," set "in a context of plausibilities." Thus, even though Balthazar is Darley's relativity novel, it contains the theoretical seeds of the ostensibly factual and objectively told Mountolive story. In terms of Darley's growth as an artist, then, the writing of Balthazar represents a major breakthrough for him.

In Balthazar, Balthazar and Pursewarden become Darley's literary models. Through Balthazar's Interlinear Darley realizes the need to be more eclectic about his information; through Pursewarden's scientific maxims he realizes that truth itself changes with the observer's position in space and time. Rejecting the strictly subjective methodology of Justine, Darley assumes a new stance in relation to his material by becoming more the objective observer and interpreter, less the central figure actively engaged in the story. Darley steps back from his story in an attempt to see it in a new perspective; he incorporates Balthazar's seemingly objective view of the action and adds more of his own information which does not necessarily deal with his own emotional involvement. The resulting story gives us both a contrasting view of the Justine story and a new story with a more objective narrative focus.

Balthazar's Interlinear, then, forces Darley to re-evaluate the relationship between the artist and his story. As the sole interpreter of memory in Justine, he recaptured a subjective truth; in the second novel he will seek to render a new truth, this time relative to his facts, yet welded together by imagination. To accomplish this end Darley "reconstructs" a portion of the Alexandria story based on Balthazar's information. Thus, by imitating Balthazar's emotional detachment, Darley's prose becomes more objective; he moves the narrative focus away from his personal involvement and toward a treatment of events dealing exclusively with other people. We see this shift in subject and form in the chapters dealing with Nessim's marriage and Narouz' visit to the Magzub, where the writing is essentially third-person narration. Even in the chapters dealing with the carnival, Darley focuses on external events and not on his subjective impressions. By putting Balthazar's lesson into action in the second novel, Darley increases the emotional distance between himself and his subjects. This detachment and eclecticism is reflected in the more formal structure of the novel: in addition to the sections of third-person narration, the novel is divided into chapters; the chapters themselves treat fully developed incidents; and the story progresses chronologically from the barber shop scenes with Scobie and his involvement

with the British Secret Service to the carnival and the death of Toto de Brunel. Darley's increased perspective and objectivity become the structural foundations of his second novel.

The jarring experience of reading Balthazar's Interlinear also makes Darley more aware of Pursewarden's relative view of truth and reality. In one sense, Balthazar is Darley's practical application of Pursewarden's idea that "every interpretation of reality is based upon a unique position. Two paces east or west and the whole picture is changed." (Balthazar, pp. 14-15) By including Balthazar's Interlinear in his second novel, by cultivating a more emotionally objective relationship to his material, and by seeking now to discover a relative truth about his subjects, Darley has taken Pursewarden's "two paces east or west" and will eventually find that "the whole picture is changed." Instead of trying, as he did in Justine, to codify the truth of the past recaptured, in Balthazar he believes with Pursewarden that "in the end . . . everything will be found to be true of everybody." (Balthazar, p. 15) And near the end of Balthazar, Darley sums up the progress he has made as an artist who has just written a relativity novel:

Seen across the transforming screens of memory, how remote that forgotten evening [of the carnival] seems. There was so much as yet left for us all to live through until the occasion of the great duck-shoot which so abruptly, concisely, precipitated the final change--and the disappearance of Justine

herself. But all this belongs to another Alexandria--one which I created in my mind and which the great Interlinear of Balthazar has, if not destroyed, changed out of all recognition.

. . . . .

From the vantage-point of this island I can see it all in its doubleness, in the intercalation of fact and fancy, with new eyes; and re-reading, re-working reality in the light of all I now know, I am surprised to find that my feelings themselves have changed, have grown, have deepened even. Perhaps then the destruction of my private Alexandria was necessary ("the artifact of a true work of art never shows a plane surface"); perhaps buried in all this there lies the germ and substance of a truth--time's usufruct--which, if I can accommodate it, will carry me a little further in what is really a search for my proper self. We shall see. (Balthazar, p. 226)

Darley has come to realize, through the actual writing of Justine and Balthazar, that his struggle to become an artist is just beginning.

The writing of Mountolive represents for Darley, on the one hand, an extension of the relative view of reality and, on the other hand, the negation of the subjective self in the affirmation of the objective artist. I have explained elsewhere that Darley probably left the island shortly after the writing of Balthazar and returned to Alexandria to live through the experiences he recounts in Clea. It is during this final stay in Alexandria that Darley discovers all the facts of the original Alexandrian story. The one internal reference to the actual writing of Mountolive is "Today in the fifties" (Mountolive, p. 253), a



reference which was changed by Durrell in the 1962 one-volume edition of the Quartet to read "Today in the sixties." (Quartet, p. 598) Besides my earlier arguments in Chapter Three for Darley's authorship of Mountolive, this single reference to the epic situation many years after the action of the third novel and the up-dating of that reference in the 1962 revision seem to indicate that Durrell wants us to think that Mountolive was written many years after Darley left Alexandria near the end of World War II. In Balthazar, Darley explored the newness of relativity and paid his debt to Balthazar and the Interlinear; in Mountolive, many years later, Darley strikes out on his own, no longer "reconstructing" in third-person narration Balthazar's account of the action, but objectively creating his own final version of his Alexandrian past. During his last Alexandrian stay he learns all the "facts" of the Hosnani intrigue directly from Nessim, Justine, and his own searchings in the Foreign Office files. Now, in his third novel, he can extend the working method of Balthazar and "record what more I know and attempt to render it comprehensible or plausible to myself," this time setting these facts in a new "context of plausibilities." (Balthazar, p. 28) Mountolive is Darley's "objectively" factual account of the past.

Darley's discoveries of the variable nature of truth parallel the content of his novels and the narrative

stance he takes. After his return to Alexandria in Clea, Darley tells Balthazar that he has stopped writing:

I don't seem to be able to carry it any further for the moment. I somehow can't match the truth to the illusions which are necessary to art without the gap showing--you know, like an unbasted seam. I was thinking of it at Karm, confronted again by Justine. Thinking how despite the factual falsities of the manuscript which I sent you the portrait was somehow poetically true--psychographically if you like. But an artist who can't solder the elements together falls short somewhere. I'm on the wrong track. (Clea, p. 72)

This passage is similar to Darley's earlier realization in Balthazar that "the compulsive passion which Justine lit in me was quite as valuable as it would have been had it been 'real'." (Balthazar, p. 140) Darley sees that the Justine story contains subjective truth but not factual truth.

This situation delights Balthazar, who explains that

this very discovery should encourage rather than hamper you. I mean about the mutability of all truth. Each fact can have a thousand motivations, all equally valid, and each fact a thousand faces. So many truths which have little to do with fact! Your duty is to hunt them down. At each moment of time all multiplicity waits at your elbow." (Clea, pp. 72-73)

Darley is not as delighted by this multiplicity as Balthazar, but he does say significantly about his writing that "If I start again it will be from another angle. But there is still so much I don't know, and presumably never will, about all of you." (Clea, p. 73) I believe, as I have said earlier, that Darley does learn enough about his subjects to go on writing and that his start "from another angle" is

the seemingly factual Mountolive story. His third novel is Darley's attempt to balance the emotional truth and factual falsity of Justine with a new kind of truth, the factual accuracy of the political story; with Mountolive, Darley becomes the artist who can "solder the elements" of relative truth together.

The shift in content from emotional to factual truth in the third novel brings a corresponding shift in Darley as narrator. The subjective narration of Justine matched the emotional truth Darley portrayed; the subjective-objective narration of Balthazar matched the introduction of the Interlinear and the theme of relative truth; now, the objective narration of Mountolive matches the politically-oriented factual truth. Darley steps back as the central subjective character of Justine, gives himself an objective identification near the end of Balthazar when we hear his name for the first time (Balthazar, p. 206), and reduces himself to the role of a minor character in Mountolive. The other side of this negation of self-as-character comes as the affirmation of self-as-artist in the objective narration of Mountolive; Darley makes himself the omniscient creator of his Alexandrian past.

Darley's first three books explore the truth of the subjective experience, of memory, and of fact. In the fourth book, Darley begins to explore the truth of

Pursewarden's heraldic universe, the mythopoetic truth that transcends the world of the relative. The major influence on Darley in Clea is again Pursewarden, this time through his notebook--"My Conversations with Brother Ass"--and his private letters to his sister Liza. Darley is now ready to fit together the pieces of what he earlier called "the first great fragmentation of my maturity." (Justine, p. 17)

After Darley's final return to Alexandria, he finds that he has a bulk of information and several novels, but that he somehow "can't solder the elements together." (Clea, p. 72) I believe that Darley finds the solution to this artistic problem in Pursewarden's notebook. Pursewarden seems to anticipate Darley's problems of organizing the elements of a multiple novel. We remember, of course, that Pursewarden himself has written a trilogy and was working on the fourth novel at the time of his death. Part of his legacy to Darley is a series of suggestions for solving these organizational difficulties. He suggests, for instance, that Darley

might try a four-card trick in the form of a novel; passing a common axis through four stories, say, and dedicating each to one of the four winds of heaven. A continuum, forsooth, embodying not a temps retrouvé but a temps délivré. The curvature of space itself would give you stereoscopic narrative, while human personality seen across a continuum would perhaps become prismatic? Who can say? I throw the idea out. I can imagine a form which, if satisfied, might raise in human terms the problems of causality or indeterminacy. . . .

And nothing very recherché either. Just an ordinary Girl Meets Boy story. But tackled in this way you would not, like most of your contemporaries, be drowsily cutting along a dotted line!  
(Clea, pp. 135-136)

I think we can see from this suggestion that Darley uses the factually objective Mountolive story as his final attempt to recapture and codify the past, an attempt that does embody "a temps retrouvé." The difference, however, is that Darley now sees this attempt at recapturing the past as ultimately expressing a relative truth: the composite story of the first three novels still expresses the limited truth of his own private vision and organization. The significance and the very nature of Darley's truth would be altered if any one of his characters were to retell the same story. Darley has come to full realization that the truth he had been seeking remained relative to its context. The politically focused, official explanation of Pursewarden's suicide in the third novel, to cite only one example, is qualified in Clea by the more personal explanation involving Liza Pursewarden's relationship with Mountolive. Yet even the political motivation and the psychological guilt may not present the complete explanation of Pursewarden's action; perhaps there were ritualistic motivations also, connected up with "Osiris and Isis, with Ptolemy and Arsinoë--the race of the sun and the moon!"  
(Clea, p. 191) Darley sees that the artist chooses the

reality he represents in his work, and in choosing he creates a version of reality relative to his narrative focus. After reading Pursewarden's private letters, Darley asks, "If two or more explanations of a single human action are as good as each other then what does action mean but an illusion--a gesture made against the misty backcloth of a reality made palpable by the delusive nature of human division merely?" (Clea, p. 176) Valid explanations can be contradictory; action may be an illusion; truth may be relative: but it is the artist's duty to show us this contradictory, illusory, relative process in action. This is Pursewarden's lesson to Darley in the last novel.

There is another side to this lesson. Darley comes to realize

that poetic or transcendental knowledge somehow cancels out purely relative knowledge, and that [Pursewarden's] black humours were simply ironies due to this enigmatic knowledge whose field of operation was above, beyond that of the relative fact-finding sort. There was no answer to the questions I had raised in very truth. He had been quite right. Blind as a mole, I had been digging about in the graveyard of relative fact piling up data, more information, and completely missing the mythopoeic reference which underlies fact. I had called this searching for truth! (Clea, p. 176)

Darley's fact-finding investigations could only lead him to relative truth, like the content of the first three novels and much of the last novel. He was using the concrete aspects of memory and fact, seen across the screen of his subjective distortions, to try and capture an illusive

reality. Now he comes to see that beyond this concrete, relative aspect of reality lies a more basic truth: the heraldic or archetypic aspect of human actions. Darley now has the insight to convert the "temps retrouvé" of the first three novels into an expression of Pursewarden's "temps délivré" in the fourth novel; he can portray an escape from the confines of time and relativity through the mythic and archetypic aspects of human actions. He sees that the relative truths of his life also contain the elements of a larger design:

It was now only 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." (Clea, p. 177)

He realizes that the mythic patterns of life can be made to resolve the dead-end of subjective relativism. Darley's last book, therefore, deals with a series of transformations wherein the particular individuals become archetypic symbols: Scobie becomes both a Tiresias figure and a Coptic saint; Semira becomes the Rescued Lady; Da Capo becomes the Black Magician. I will deal more fully with these archetypic figures as a separate theme in the Quartet in the next section; for now, however, I want to point out that as a part of this general pattern of transformations Darley, formerly so strongly rooted in his individuality, can now see himself as a representational figure of the

archetypic artist. This final stage of his growth represents a rejection of the ego and the negation of his cult of personality. Thus, at the end of Clea, Darley tells us that the story of his artistic struggle and growth, aside from having personal significance, is really the universal "old story of an artist coming of age." (Clea, p. 282) And as he writes his "Once upon a time"--the typical beginning of the archetypic tale--he finds himself trembling at the four words "with which every story-teller since the world began has staked his slender claim to the attention of his fellow-men." (Clea, p. 282)

Darley's final discovery leads us, in fact, to Durrell's final theme in the Quartet, the archetypic in the relative. Durrell has shown us the various levels of Darley's development as an artist: technically, Darley has learned the mechanical skills of narration; psychologically, he has discovered that the individual chooses only one of his many facets of personality to present to another person; philosophically, he has come to see that both fact and fiction, whether subjective or objective, are relative; emotionally, he has realized that his own art-urge is psychically involved in his sexual relationship with Clea; and intuitively, he has caught a glimpse of the archetypic truth that may lie beyond the relative fact. With this last intuitive insight Durrell is suggesting a thematic



linking of art and archetype, just as he has earlier suggested a link between love and art. Darley's struggle to become an artist involves more than the development of mechanical skills, the experience of writing, or the exploitation of his innate talent; the success of his search also depends upon his learning how to see, how to love, and how to be. In fact, the development of his art comes out of the larger concern of what Darley calls "a search for my proper self." (Balthazar, p. 226) In this more generalized sense, then, Durrell is suggesting that Darley's struggle, no matter how particularized the content, is really the struggle of Everyman for self-discovery and self-actualization. And since Durrell believes that "life is really an artistic problem, all men being sleeping artists" ("Kneller Tape," p. 167), I suggest that one of his purposes in the Quartet, in addition to showing us how the artist matures, is to wake the sleeping artist in us. Just as Pursewarden's blank page is meant to throw the reader "back upon his own resources--which is where every reader ultimately belongs" (Balthazar, p. 142), Durrell is attempting to make us see our own struggle for self-actualization in the story of Darley's development. The very process of reading the novels brings us into a Gestalt relationship with Darley's problems and leads us to question our own assumptions about truth, reality, and the creative

interaction of subject and object, the figure/ground configuration of Gestalt perception. Like Darley, we believe the content of Justine, only to find that reality changes as we move "two paces east or west" into Balthazar, and then into Mountolive, and finally into Clea. If, as Durrell says, we are all artists, then Darley's search is also our search for our proper selves and the artist theme in The Alexandria Quartet becomes the particularized story of Darley's growth and the universalized story of the reader's own growth.

#### IV

##### The Archetypic Story

Speaking of the missing fourth volume to his trilogy God Is a Humorist, Pursewarden tells Clea that

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 lover's 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. A relationship so delicate that it is all too easily broken by the inquiring mind and conscience in the French sense which of course has its own rights and its own field of deployment. I'd like to think of my work simply as a cradle in which philosophy could rock itself to sleep, thumb in mouth. (Balthazar, p. 238)

This statement could have just as well been made by

Lawrence Durrell describing the last volume of his Quartet. Clea is Durrell's attempt "to combine, resolve and harmonise the tensions" created by his depiction of a world bound by time and relative truth. By suggesting that there is a "mythopoeic reference which underlies fact" (Clea, p. 176), Durrell is attempting "to sound a note of affirmation"; by appeasing the reader's "inquiring mind and conscience in the French sense" with the relative truths of the first three novels, Durrell can then portray an archetypic substratum in Clea in which the relativistic "philosophy could rock itself to sleep," still content with a "thumb in mouth." Just as Durrell has to portray Darley as the intelligent bungler in Justine so that he can then record his progress as an artist in the remaining novels, so Durrell must also establish the world of relative truth so that in Clea he can suggest a mythic or archetypic reference as a resolution to the limits of relativity. Here, then, is Durrell's final theme in the Quartet; at the level of the innermost of the Chinese boxes is the mythic connection which underlies human existence and which transcends time, the ego, and relative truth.

Durrell calls this reality which lies beyond the relative the "heraldic universe." He mentions this idea as early as 1936 in its initial application to The Black Book. In a letter to Henry Miller he writes: "I chose the word

'heraldic' for a double reason. First, because in the relation of the work to the artist it seemed to me that it expressed the exact quality I wanted. Also because in heraldry I seem to find the quality of magic and spatial existence which I want to tack on to art." (Private Correspondence, p. 23) Durrell sought, in The Black Book, to show that there was no duration, only space, telling Miller that "I AM SLOWLY BUT VERY CAREFULLY AND WITHOUT CONSCIOUS THOUGHT DESTROYING TIME." (Private Correspondence, p. 19) By February 1937, Durrell has to admit that his heraldic theory "is in a very muddled state just at the moment." (Private Correspondence, p. 65) After an incubation period of eight years, Durrell again begins to formulate his heraldic universe in 1945, this time in connection with his proposed Book of the Dead, the unwritten work which will eventually become The Alexandria Quartet. Durrell is studying with a cabalistic group in Alexandria and tells Miller how "You have to grow the extrasensory awareness of the symbol and accommodate it in your experience--not express it. . . . It is a calculus of pure aesthetic forms, a game like a heavenly chess; it brings out the meaning of the Tarot and all kindred morphologies." (Private Correspondence, p. 202) By imposing cabalistic mysticism onto the symbols of heraldry, Durrell feels that he can express pure forms and pure symbols:

You enter a field or laboratory of the consciousness which is not dangerous because it is based in repose. It does not strain you because having passed through the impurities of the ONENESS OF EVERYTHING, you are included in Time. NOW FORMS EMERGE. Because "contemptible" numbers are the only way to label them, you can say 1st State, 2nd State, 3rd State, like an etching. This is what I have called THE HERALDIC UNIVERSE. You cannot define these forms except by ideogram: this is "non-assertive" form. (Private Correspondence, pp. 202-203)

At this stage of development, the heraldic universe is a mystical system of symbols or ideograms which enables Durrell to express a oneness with time, as opposed to The Black Book heraldic universe which attempted to destroy time; in both instances, however, time is the element to be reckoned with.

In Personal Landscape: An Anthology of Exile, which Durrell and the other contributors compiled in 1945, Durrell applies his heraldry to art. One of the selections in this anthology is a group manifesto entitled "Ideas about Poems." Durrell wrote three of the seven sections, calling the first part "The Heraldic Universe." In this longest statement about his new reality, he explains that

Logic tries to describe the world; but it is never found adequate for the task. Logic is not really an instrument: merely a method.

Describing, logic limits. Its law is causality.

Poetry by an associative approach transcends its own syntax in order not to describe but to be the cause of apprehension in others:

Transcending logic it invades a realm where unreason reigns, and where the relations between ideas are sympathetic and mysterious--affective--rather than causal, objective, substitutional.

I call this The Heraldic Universe, because in Heraldry the object is used in an emotive and affective sense--statically to body forth or utter: not as a victim of description.

The Heraldic Universe is that territory of experience in which the symbol exists--as opposed to the emblem or badge, which are the children of algebra and substitution.

It is not a 'state of mind' but a continuous self-subsisting plane of reality towards which the spiritual self of man is trying to reach out through media: artists like antennae boring into the unknown through music or paint or words, suddenly strike this Universe where for every object in the known there exists an ideogram.

Since words are inadequate they can only render all this negatively--by an oblique method.

'Art' then is only the smoked glass through which we can look at the dangerous sun. ("Ideas about Poems," pp. 72-73)

Though Durrell never tells us specifically how one enters the heraldic universe, we can see that by using the mysticism of the Cabala he is setting up a dichotomy between logic, reason, causality, stasis--even what he will eventually call the space-time continuum of relativity--and an intuitive reality beyond the bounds of intellection.

Poetry is one of the ways to reach this reality. In Part II of "Ideas about Poems," Durrell says, "Logic, syntax, is a causal instrument, inadequate for the task of describing the whole of reality. Poems don't describe, but they are

sounding-boards which enable the alert consciousness to pick up the reverberations of the extra-causal reality itself." ("Ideas about Poems," p. 73) Thus, Durrell says that as you read a poem "your memory goes down like the loud pedal of a piano, and all tribal, personal, associations begin to reverberate. Poems are blueprints. They are not buildings but they enable you to build for yourself." ("Ideas about Poems," p. 73) Durrell's heraldic universe, at this stage, is the realm of pure symbol, a "continuous self-subsisting plane of reality" beyond the concrete world of scientific logic; art can lead the reader to discover and create this heraldic reality within by growing "the extra-sensory awareness of the symbol."

(Private Correspondence, p. 202) In this sense, the heraldic universe is very much like Pursewarden's idea of truth which, he says, "is a matter of direct apprehension--you can't climb a ladder of mental concepts to it." (Balthazar, p. 142)

During 1948 Durrell gave a series of lectures while attached to the British Council in Argentina. He published these lectures as A Key to Modern British Poetry in 1952. During this period Durrell does not mention his heraldic theories again in his letters to Miller. But by 1953, once again in the Mediterranean, Durrell is at work on Justine. In 1945, speaking of the Cabala and his heraldic theories,

Durrell had told Miller that "I'm using all this stuff for my Book of the Dead" (Private Correspondence, p. 202); now, his theories and his planned novel become an actuality. The last stage of the heraldic universe, reaching its final development in Key, is ready for deployment in the Quartet.

In A Key to Modern British Poetry Durrell expands the context of the heraldic universe away from its predominant mysticism to accommodate his readings in physics and psychology; yet the basic ground plan does not change. Durrell finds in Einstein's theory of relativity and in Sir James Jeans' popularized science the suggestion of a cosmic oneness beyond the world of sensory experience. Durrell uses Jeans, whom he quotes, to bridge the gap between modern physics and Eastern religion; Jeans writes in Physics and Philosophy that, like particles of electricity, human beings may be "carrying on separate existences in space and time, while in the deeper reality beyond space and time we may all be members of one body." (Key, p. 30) Durrell tells us a few pages later that

It is worth pointing out that these Eastern religions, whether Indian or Chinese, offer us one or two ideas which are not completely incompatible with some of the propositions of relativity. They claim to side-track causality. The escape from the cycle of birth and rebirth into 'Nirvana' promises a new timeless condition which is not subject to intellectual or linguistic qualification. Reality, they tell us, is illusion or appearance. (Key, p. 33)



It seems obvious that Durrell sees Jeans' oneness of a deeper reality beyond space and time and the Eastern Nirvana as two different expressions of the same thing: the heraldic universe.

Having established a thematic connection between physics and mysticism, Durrell turns next to the inner world of the psyche. With Freud's theories, despite their mechanistic approach, Durrell finds a link between psychoanalysis and anthropology, pointing out that Freud's investigations into the "fantasies of his individual patients were often direct copies of race-myths and folktales of savage peoples." (Key, p. 53) The unconscious, with its timelessness, could somehow tap the sources of common human experiences. What remained for Durrell was to connect the timelessness of the unconscious with the timelessness of his cosmology. For this final synthesizing step, he turns to Groddeck's theory of the It. Groddeck attributes consciousness, reason, a limited reality, and a limited perception of truth to the ego and unconsciousness, intuition, a total reality, and absolute truth to the It. The It, which creates the ego to serve the needs of the It, is, as Groddeck puts it, "The sum total of an individual human being, physical, mental and spiritual, the organism with all its forces, the microcosmos, the universe which is a man," the "self unknown and forever unknowable." (Key,

p. 74) As the pliant tool of the It, man-as-ego is pulled toward the limited goals of the known self, the logic of consciousness; on the other side, man-as-It is pulled toward the total goals of the unknown self. It is with this conflict of Groddeck's ego-it polarity that Durrell finds "a brilliant rationalization of the Eastern mystic's position--who seeks to free himself from the opposites of being, and to emerge into Reality." (Key, p. 83) This Reality is Durrell's heraldic universe. On an individual level, it is the integrated self; on a human level, it is race consciousness; on a universal level, it is cosmic oneness. At each level we can see an escape from the limits of the ego, relative truth, and time into the timelessness of the microcosmic and macrocosmic total Self. In the Quartet the heraldic universe becomes the "mythopoeic reference" which provides the resolution to the problems of relative truth and the need to transcend time.

The evolution of Durrell's heraldic universe parallels, in a general way, Darley's search for self-discovery. While Balthazar tells him that the mission of the Cabala is to enlist "everything in order to make man's wholeness match the wholeness of the universe" (Justine, p. 100), Darley can only see the self as "a huge, disorganized and shapeless society of lusts and impulses." (Justine, p. 98) Darley is man-as-ego and does not possess the wholeness

Balthazar speaks of. Also, he is attempting to destroy time by codifying the past in purely spatial terms. By the beginning of Clea, however, he feels the stirrings of self-possession and is learning "at last to inhabit those deserted spaces which time misses--beginning to live between the ticks of the clock." (Clea, p. 14) By the end of the last novel he has come into full possession of his self and has found in Pursewarden's heraldic universe the means to escape the time-trap. G. S. Fraser has called this process a progression "from psychology to myth." (Fraser, p. 129) Paraphrasing Christopher Middleton's radio talk on Justine, Fraser says that Durrell's originality "lay in using the conventions of the psychological novel as a framework for a vision of reality based in myth." (Fraser, p. 129) This is the clue that was missing from Durrell's earlier explanations of his heraldic universe; in the Quartet he depicts this extra-sensory reality through the use of mythic and archetypic patterns.

These mythic patterns are generally dispersed throughout the Quartet but reach their full development in Clea. They tend to fall into three separate though inter-related groups. The first is the mythic or archetypic substratum in human relationships. Like Yeats' self and anti-self, the characters or their actions pair up and reflect opposition or sameness in a manner which transcends

their individual personalities. Narouz, for example, becomes the primitive submerged part of the cultured Nessim or the dark force which tries to pull Clea down to the underworld, while Nessim, horrified that he may have to kill this submerged part of himself, is locked in a mirror-image struggle with Mountolive in which neither is free to act. In a similar manner, scenes such as Darley's meeting Clea at the same table where he once met Melissa are repeated to stress the essential pattern of human actions, a pattern which goes beyond personal volition and which is perhaps arranged by the heraldic It. The second group of references deals with attempts to transcend time by foretelling the future. Palm reading, tea leaf reading, Tarot reading, and Da Capo's homunculi all fit into this pattern. The final group deals with the rebirth or transformation motif. These patterns range from Keats' transformation by the war to Clea's death and rebirth as a woman and artist. The one thing that runs through all these patterns is that each is an attempt to transcend time, relative truth, and the ego; or, to put it another way, each is an attempt to enter the heraldic universe.

Carl Bode has interestingly noted that many of Durrell's characters appear to be modelled on certain Key cards of the Major Arcana in the Tarot deck. He finds that Pursewarden can be identified with the Fool, Capodistria

with the Devil, Balthazar with the Magician, Narouz with the Hierophant, Clea with the Star, Melissa with the High Priestess, and Justine with the Empress. (Bode, pp. 533-535) While I do not agree with Bode's identifications, both in terms of the Quartet and the Tarot (the Magician, for instance, is the Tarot mate of the High Priestess, which would incorrectly link Balthazar with Melissa), his associations do point out the mythic substance Durrell has infused into his characters. Even without the esoteric reference of the Tarot deck, we find among the more obvious instances: Justine's face described as "a mask of Siva," "the austere mindless primeval face of Aphrodite" (Mountolive, p. 205); Liza Pursewarden as having "the marble whiteness of the sea-goddess' face" (Mountolive, p. 161); Darley returning to Alexandria as "the Adam of mediaeval legends" (Clea, p. 63); Scobie associated with Tiresias, complete with an "old Tiresias" song (Balthazar, p. 44); and the incestuous affair between Pursewarden and his sister linked with Egyptian and Peruvian vegetation ritual. (Clea, p. 191) Almost every character in the Quartet is caught in this mythic perspective. Their personalities and their actions have interrelations that are somehow larger than life.

Speaking about the bisexuality of the psyche in relation to Tiresias in Eliot's The Waste Land, Durrell

makes an observation which sheds some light on our present discussion. "Among some of the older gnostic fragments, the Logoi which the compilers of our sacred books rejected," he writes in Key,

we find reflections of this same idea, which must be as old as Lao Tzu, which must have been known to Plato and Pythagoras. We read, for example, the following: 'When the Lord was asked by a certain man, When should His kingdom come, He saith unto him: When two shall be one, and the without and the within, and the male with the female, neither male or female.' I would like to think that in Tiresias we had a symbol of this kind, pointing towards the future integration which lies beyond the hills of science and metaphysics, anthropology, and even perhaps art itself. From this point of view, then, the poem is something more than an expression of 'utter negation and disgust'. It does suggest a possible integration of the spirit of man--but meanwhile it invites you to look at our city-culture for what it is without idealism or sentimentality. (Key, pp. 152-153)

Durrell sees Eliot's Tiresias as the mythic symbol of man's potential integration and oneness. "Meanwhile," he goes on to tell us, "these strange modern characters flit backwards and forwards across the scene, each accompanied by his mythic archetype; the astrologer, the palmist, the city typist, the Smyrna merchant. How can the artist get them back into their mythological frame so that they become parts of a significant picture?" (Key, p. 153) When we recall Eliot's note about Tiresias, which Durrell quotes in Key, of how all the male figures merge into one and how "all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias" (Key, p. 146), then we can see--in addition to any relevance

to The Waste Land--how Durrell manages his own mythic and archetypic substratum in the Quartet, with a "city-culture" of Alexandrians who "flit backwards and forwards across the scene, each accompanied by his mythic archetype," suggesting to us "a possible integration of the spirit of man."

On this mythic level Durrell's characters and their actions float in a timeless solution. Nessim acts out Alexandrian history through his historic dreams in the first novel. Clea and Darley on the little swimming island become Cleopatra and Antony on Timonium, waiting for Octavian's revenge. Justine is associated with Lais and Charis, "the great Hetairae of the past." (Justine, p. 77) Melissa, Justine, and Clea become three aspects of Woman, linked through Darley and coincidence: Darley finds Clea at the same table in the last novel where he had found Melissa in the first novel, and Clea uses the same words after making love to Darley as Justine once used. (Clea, pp. 76, 97) All of the writers--Arnauti, Pursewarden, Darley--merge into one and join, through Darley, with the female counterpart in Clea. The sexes are also coupled in Scobie, Durrell's Tiresias figure, and in the incest motif; the ritual joining of Liza and Pursewarden is repeated with Justine and Da Capo and with Leila and Mountolive, who is Nessim's psychic double. All the men are one Man and all the women are one Woman; the resolution to this "Boy Meets

Girl" story comes with the merging of Darley and Clea as the male and female counterparts of the archetypic artist. This first group of extra-human elements, then, sets the backdrop for Durrell's heraldic universe.

By merging Groddeck's It with the heraldic universe, Durrell can portray the relative facts and truths of his characters' ego-lives and then suggest that their actions have universal, symbolic significance, that their lives are, as Darley tells us, perhaps planned by "the mind of that invisible author--which perhaps would prove to be only the city itself." (Clea, p. 223) Thus, when Darley goes on to say in Clea that "the seeds of future events are carried within ourselves," that "they are implicit in us and unfold according to the laws of their own nature" (Clea, p. 223), he is not only referring to human potential, but also to the mythic and archetypic substrata which are symbolized by and externalized in the homunculi. Da Capo's study of the homunculi, so he writes in his letter to Balthazar, is "concerned with increasing man's interior hold on himself, on the domains which lie unexplored within him." (Clea, p. 199) We see here, as with the Cabala (Justine, p. 100), the attempt to relate the micro- and the macrocosm at the heraldic level; the homunculi, however, are a refinement of Balthazar's fons signatus and an externalization of the archetypal elements of the psyche. The



homunculi--king, queen, knight, monk, nun, architect, miner, seraph, blue spirit, and red spirit--represent psychic states present in each person. Seen in this way, they parallel the archetypic function of the characters in the Quartet: Balthazar, Da Capo, Narouz, and Scobie are all versions of the holy man, the monk; Arnauti, Pursewarden, and Darley are expressions of the artist, the architect; Clea, in the discovery of her womanliness and then her artistic self-possession, goes from nun to queen to architect, led on by the blue spirit of imagination; Nessim and Justine insist on their manifestation as King and Queen, possessed by the red spirit of passion and power. Archetypically, then, the characters in the Quartet, like the homunculi, represent the various psychic components of the total Self; each person then carries within himself, in the form of these psychic potentials, "the seeds of the future" which "unfold according to the laws of their own nature." Durrell uses these mythic and archetypic associations as a metaphor for transcending time and relativity; the mythic substratum, as part of the It and the heraldic universe, undermines the mechanistic causality in personality and motivation in much the same way as the Principle of Indeterminacy undermines causality in the physical universe.

The homunculi, together with the other references to foretelling the future, form a second pattern of

attempts at transcending time and are a further refinement of the generalized mythic background discussed above.

Justine is an unerring mindreader(Justine, p. 26; Balthazar, p. 127); Melissa, telling Pursewarden's fortune in his palm, sees the blind Liza and predicts his imminent death (Mountolive, p. 173); Pursewarden correctly predicts that Liza will fall in love with the dark stranger--Mountolive (Clea, pp. 170-173); Scobie describes Clea's Syrian episode, tells her about the weeping she will hear, and foresees her accident with Narouz' harpoon(Clea, pp. 124, 206-207); Clea, for her part, reads coffee grounds, has a clairvoyant sense about Darley, and recognizes the omens of her future maiming.(Clea, pp. 77-79, 161, 223-224) The only reference of this kind which does not turn out to be correct is the vision Narouz has of the death of Justine's child; in the last novel we learn that the child did not drown, but died of meningitis.(Balthazar, pp. 163-164; Clea, p. 144) For the rest, each of these extra-sensory predictions is accurate. Durrell does not give an explanation for these fortune-telling gifts, except for Melissa's prophesying Pursewarden's death, where he has the narrator of Mountolive say that Melissa "had never in playing this game made an accurate prediction before."(Mountolive, p. 173) If, however, the seeds of the future are within us, then it

is possible for the gifted ones to cross over and read what is written.

Fortune telling, then, is a way of controlling and transcending time. Da Capo's homunculi serve as a link between the occult and the actual. The homunculi are asked questions concerning the future, each answering according to his station. Now, if we see the homunculi as a metaphor for psychic states, then their ability to predict the future becomes a function of self-knowledge. The individual, to the extent that he is in touch with the variety of his inner selves, can transcend the realm of the relative ego and enter his own heraldic universe. The homunculi and the fortune telling, seen in this light, become part of the mythic and occult background of the novels on one level and a metaphoric part of the artist's search for Self on another level. Once the artist enters his kingdom, he no longer has need of fortune telling. Thus it is that Clea, once she has broken through to the discovery of self, can predict her own future with a certainty which comes from inner knowledge as she writes her final letter to Darley: "I speak of certainty not prophecy--I have done with fortune-tellers once and for all!" (Clea, p. 279) The mythic substratum of the novels suggests the possibility of a life beyond the relative and foretelling the future provides a means of transcending time, but to man-as-artist

the only permanent way to success is through the discovery of transcendence within oneself by stepping "across the threshold into the kingdom of your imagination" (Clea, p. 281) and entering the heraldic universe.

Durrell's final metaphor is the motif of rebirth or transformation. This last pattern of mythic and archetypic references is developed in Clea and provides the milieu for the major thematic elements of that novel. John Unterecker has called Clea the book of wounds, but goes on to say that some "of the wounded are not only restored to health but actually transformed--given a new and fuller life--thanks to apparent disaster." (Unterecker, pp. 39-40) He mentions Semira, Clea, Balthazar, Keats, and Scobie. These are certainly examples of the more obvious transformations, but it is my feeling that all of the characters in the last novel are transformed. First, they are all given a mythic dimension or an archetypic significance. Even a relatively insignificant character like Mnemjian the barber, not only transformed by marriage and the war into the richest barber in Egypt, becomes a hunchback messenger "in a silver suit, a flower in his lapel, a perfumed handkerchief in his sleeve!" (Clea, p. 15) Mnemjian, the memory man of Justine, becomes a messenger from the past, appearing and disappearing as suddenly as Hermes, calling Darley back to Alexandria with Nessim's letter. Second,

the transformations and rebirths in Clea, like the fortune telling, are used by Durrell as metaphors for transcending time and the ego; they supply the resolution to the problems of the Quartet on all levels, providing in these occasionally bizarre external transformations the poetic key to internal problems. On this external-internal level, then, Semira's rebuilt nose is no more extraordinary than Darley's self-cure for his myopia: by receiving love and tenderness in the form of a nose from Amaril, Semira can re-enter society without self-consciousness; by being cured of his philosophical and artistic short-sightedness by experience, Darley can re-enter Alexandria and shatter the mask of relative truth. Like Groddeck's distinction between external and internal causes, Durrell's transformations have external relevance in his mythic world of mystery and heraldry and internal relevance in the psychic world of self-discovery.

On this external mythic level, the pattern of transformations links all the characters together, suggesting their extra-sensory potential and their possibility of transcending time: Scobie as El Scob in Moslem heaven, counting foreskins; Mnemjian as the hunchback messenger from the past; Capodistria as the Black Magician, resurrected from his apparent murder in Justine, now in the notable company of the Baron with his Turk, the Abbé, and

the homunculi; Balthazar as the impassioned mystic, then the mystic with human passions, and now the socially resurrected doctor who has succeeded in "rubbing out his age" (Clea, p. 197); Keats, the writer as Greek god; Semira as the Rescued Lady of the fairy tale, now with a nose, pregnant, fixing broken dolls; Amaril as the Rebuilder, whose physical reconstruction of Semira, Clea, and Balthazar parallels his help with their psychic reconstruction; Justine and Nessim, resurrected from illness, wounds, and house arrest, both looking years younger, ready to start the next of an apparently endless cycle of international intrigues; and Darley and Clea, suspended in the timelessness of Narouz' island and reborn from the sea as the archetypic artist. Durrell uses these transformations to portray the mythic element in human life, the shifting levels of the extra-sensory reality. And even though he suggests further deployment of the characters in the "Work-points" at the end of Clea, these mythic representations beyond the relative enable him to complete his composite character portrayals and show a co-existent quality that cuts across the various story levels; each character is shown to possess political, emotional, and artistic qualities on the level of the relative world and mythic qualities on the level of the heraldic world.

I think we must see, however, that the mythic elements in the characters are attempts to transcend time and that they are not all successful. Balthazar may have gained an insight into the nature of passion from his disastrous love affair, but the recovery of his medical practice and his social status return to him what he already possessed; he may have "rubbed out his age" artificially, but he has still not conquered time. Despite Balthazar's work with the Cabala, Durrell does not reward him; Balthazar remains, much as he was through the Quartet, "The Wandering Jew." (Clea, p. 271) The same is true for Capodistria: though he has exchanged lechery for black magic in an attempt to transcend time, he still remains tied to ego goals and will again assist Nessim in another power plot. Justine and Nessim, in the end, are right back where they started, looking younger, but still needing the dangers of another intrigue to feel fully alive. Mnemjian, the silver messenger, is still the gossip-monger, tied to the past. Keats may have been transformed into god and writer, but he dies in the desert never having written a word. Even Pombal, transformed by his love for Fosca, returns after her death to the endless cycle of promiscuity. Despite their implicit mythic qualities and their potential for rebirth, each of these characters is caught in the ego cycle; their psychic development--one could almost call it

their Eros development--does not match their mythic potential.

With those characters who do succeed in transcending time and the ego I think we can see both Durrell's resolution and his value system. The successful ones, those who are rewarded by Durrell with worldly happiness and mythic transcendence--Scobie, Amaril-Semira, Mountolive-Liza, Darley-Clea--all manage to match up their inner resources with their mythic potential. Scobie succeeds through innocence. Though he has Tendencies, dresses up as an old woman, and dies a violent death, he is really pure at heart. G. S. Fraser calls him "an aged queer" and "a silly old rip" who "yet represents holiness and innocence." (Fraser, p. 161) Of all of Durrell's holy men--Scobie, Balthazar, Capodistria, Narouz--only Scobie is rewarded with a full life and with sainthood. He alone lacks cruelty and meanness, trying during his lifetime to do good for his people and during his sainthood to bring them fertility. Thus, we must assume, along with Darley and Clea, that the old pirate has achieved a final happiness, first in having been the moral light of his community and next in being "the patron saint of his own quartier!" (Clea, p. 84) Scobie's worldly and heavenly goodness is also exemplified in his two friends, Toby Mannering and Budgie. Fraser tells us that Scobie



lives, in his conversations with Darley, through two friends, purely loved. One is Toby Mannering, who converted him to Roman Catholicism, teaching him the function of the Virgin Mary. (This function Durrell does not define, expecting us to know it: it is to intercede with her Son, Christ the Pantocrator, for those who sin mortally, knowing the nature of their sin.) Scobie's other great friend has an earthy rather than a spiritual significance; he is the inventor of a patent earth-closet, whose lid, when it has been used, automatically snaps down releasing a mechanism that trip-kicks earth over human excrement. Thus the wicked, for Scobie, can be saved; and human nastiness can be wholesomely buried, becoming part of living soil. (Fraser, p. 161)

For Durrell, Scobie can be rewarded because of his child-like innocence and intrinsic goodness, despite the presence of what Fraser calls "the two extremes of sexual kinkiness." (Fraser, p. 160) The comic simplicity of Scobie's life matches perfectly the comic nature of his reincarnation and ritual, complete with Scobie's galvanized iron bathtub as the central object of his shrine.

If innocence provides the means of success and transcendence with Scobie, love provides the means for two of the three successful couples. We have with Amaril-Semira and with Mountolive-Liza the mythic pattern of the successful love story. I have already spoken about the positive influence of the Eros-force on these people; now we see them acting out a variation of the Cinderella-Prince Charming story. These two women are subjugated by evil forces, both physical and familial: Semira by lupus and a tyrannical father, Liza by blindness and an incestuous

brother. Both venture out of their seclusion on a special occasion, Semira to attend the carnival, Liza to attend the celebration of Blake's birthday with Pursewarden and Mountolive. Each meets her Prince Charming during this special adventure. (Amaril and Mountolive are, after all, the most attractive bachelors in the Quartet.) After a pursuit, the evil forces are conquered, the lovers are united in wedlock, and they live happily ever after. In contrast to the apparent failure of characters like Justine and Nessim, the success of these lovers on a mythic level is paralleled and made possible by their acceptance of the Eros-force on a psychological level. In Durrell's system love makes the world go round, both the psychological world of human love and the mythic world of transcendence.

The central success story of Darley and Clea I have left for last, not simply because it goes farther than the other relationships, but also because it links up all the themes of the Quartet in one final statement. Darley's and Clea's essential innocence, despite their sexual experiments, associates them with Scobie, with whom they both have a deep friendship. Clea's innocence is maintained, so Fraser points out, by the fact that "Durrell never lets Clea, who seems to know everything, know how Scobie died." (Fraser, p. 162) Each struggles, as an artist, for success, but it is not until they succeed as lovers in the

Durrellian Eros sense that they attain possession of their artistic kingdom. As with Amaril-Semira and Mountolive-Liza, where the right inner quality is necessary before they can become successful lovers, both emotionally and mythically, so with Darley and Clea their emotional development is necessary for their success as lovers which in turn is necessary for their success as artists. "As for my 'idealized lovers' as you call them," so Durrell explains about Darley and Clea to the Hamburg interviewer, "they reflect back the bisexual nature of the psyche again which is okay by Freud and Plato alike. They discover the fulcrum in themselves to lie outside the possession of each other, but in the domain of self possession (art)."

("Kneller Tape," p. 167) For Durrell, they exemplify man's archetypic struggle for the creative life.

Up until the last novel, Darley and Clea, like most of the other characters, function as individualized characters; their mythic potential is vaguely present but not developed. Both of these young artists are caught in the limited world of the ego. Darley is confused by relative truth and romantic passion. Clea, to match Darley's attempts at a limited realism, paints photographic reproductions of the genitalia of syphilitic patients and portraits of her friends. (Mountolive, we remember, does not think her painting of him is great art.) The record of

their artistic growth in the first three novels, while incidentally suggesting a pattern of artistic initiation, focuses more on their lives as particularized characters. It is only in the last novel, when their psychic development matches their mythic potential, that they take on archetypic significance. Clea turns to abstract paintings, her method of expressing a symbolic reality, and Darley discovers the need to express the mythopoeic reference which will enable him to transcend the relative. At this point they become players in Durrell's heraldic universe, fighting for the light of true love and self-possession. Once they recognize their artistic counterpart in the other, they can unite against the dark forces which would pull them down. For Clea, these forces take the form of Narouz, whose primitive vitality and love so repelled her. Scobie's prophecy of the dark one pulling her down must be faced; she must, albeit unwillingly, confront this "heart of darkness" within herself. Her emotionally sterile past with her apparently innocent homosexual experience become the major actors in the archetypic drama of her rebirth. It is therefore not a coincidence that her accident takes place on Narouz' fishing island with Narouz' harpoon gun, released by the homosexual Balthazar, an accident which would pin her forever, along with the drowned Greek sailor, in the dark recesses of this underwater past. Only Darley,

the necessary male principle she had refused to acknowledge, can save her. After she is restored, she finds that she has come into full possession of herself, both as a woman and an artist, creating powerful paintings with an artificial--heraldic--hand, paintings which now come from the creative unknown of the total self and not from the limited world of the ego. Darley, in actively participating in Clea's rebirth, accepts Clea as his necessary female complement and sees in her struggle the death of his own obsession with the past. By confronting the horrors of the timeless underwater unconscious and by giving up their former reliance on the ego and their egocentric interpretation of reality, Darley and Clea are freed to inhabit the timeless world of their new art, the transcendence into Durrell's heraldic universe.

The success story of Darley and Clea link together all the separate themes of the Quartet, completing Durrell's composite portrait of man co-existing on political, passionate, artistic, and mythic planes. Darley and Clea succeed because they manage to integrate the various levels of existence into a functioning vision of the total self; they will continue to succeed because they can awaken the universal and heraldic aspect of experience which lies dormant in the relative life. Thus, Durrell's formula for personal success is through innocence, love, art, and myth:

innocence as non-involvement in the ego goals of the outer life, notably the political life; love as submission to the Eros-force and the needs of the total self; art as self-possession, the continual struggle toward self-knowledge; myth as the escape hatch from the relative life and the unifying element in human experience. Darley and Clea, in their final archetypic aspect, can be seen as the resolution to the problems of the Quartet and as Durrell's models for the reader's own growth; their struggle is the struggle of Everyman for self-discovery. Pursewarden, expressing Durrell's parable of the artist as Everyman, says:

There is not enough faith, charity or tenderness to furnish this world with a single ray of hope--yet so long as that strange sad cry rings out over the world, the birth-pangs of an artist--all cannot be lost! This sad little squeak of rebirth tells us that all still hangs in the balance. Heed me, reader, for 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. (Clea, p. 119)

Just as the Quartet is "a detective story in which the reader at the end discovers that he is the criminal" ("Kneller Tape," p. 167), it is also a mythic story of self-discovery in which the reader discovers that he is reading his own myth. In this sense, then, Durrell would agree with Pursewarden that, like the object of writing, the object of reading the Quartet, "is to grow a personality which in the end enables man to transcend art." (Balthazar, p. 141) However much Durrell entertains, his basic

purpose is didactic and therapeutic: with relativity he would have us see the nature of truth and reality more clearly; with love he would have us be essentially happy; with art he would have us live more fully and creatively; with myth he would free us from the limits of the relative life; but always he would throw us back on our own resources.

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