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Illness in *Justine*: A Groddeckian Reading

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Abstract:

“Illness in Lawrence Durrell’s *Justine*: A Groddeckian Reading” is an attempt to read Lawrence Durrell’s novel *Justine* from the theoretical perspective of the Groddeckian psychoanalysis. According to Groddeck, ‘It’, the unconscious force of every human being controls one’s life. Groddeck sees in any illness the symbolic manifestation of the desires of the It. And he believes that every illness bears a meaning which has its roots in the person’s psyche. In *Justine*, the Mediterranean city and the people out there are beings tormented with illness. The novel is filled with instances of physical and sexual deformation. Durrell in his novel *Justine* uses illness as a meaningful symbol. In the novel, the real desires and mental agonies of the characters are expressed through the illness. The illness act as a manifestation of their it. Each illness is pregnant with meaning and allows us to know the characters in depth.

Keywords: Groddeck, It, Psychoanalysis, Illness, Durrell

Lawrence Durrell is a towering figure in the austere post-war literary climate of Europe, a champion of experimental prose and poetics, a modern master. He had written over a dozen major works, including novels, travel literature, poetry, and theatre. He had lived in and around some of the most awe inspiring cultural centers of the ancient Mediterranean world: Athens, Alexandria, Rhodes, Corfu, Serbia, Cyprus, and perhaps foremost, Avignon, but then watched as the military and financial conflicts of the last great century saw them all destroyed or fade into obscurity.

His novel *Justine*, the first volume of the tetralogy, *The Alexandria Quartet* was published by Faber in 1957. The successor volumes (*Balthazar*, *Mountolive* and *Clea*), which Durrell called ‘siblings’ rather than ‘sequels’, appeared by 1960. The complexity of the novel makes its narrators, events and characters puzzling without any reasons. The work has a lot of endless and various relations. The existence of Alexandria inevitably pervades the work.

Justine is narrated from the perspective of Darley, an Anglo-Irish schoolteacher and aspiring writer now living in Alexandria. He is living in poverty with his girlfriend Melissa,

who is a prostitute. Darley meets Justine, a married Egyptian society woman, and they begin a romantic relationship. The increasingly passionate affair is unhinging to their partners: Nessim, Justine's sad, intensely decent husband, a wealthy Coptic Christian banker driven to madness by her adultery, and Melissa, Darley's fragile girlfriend. Justine, the alluring, seductive, mournful, prone to dark and cryptic pronouncements, is the centrifugal force of the novel. She has a shadowy past, and there are hints of extreme poverty and sexual abuse in her youth. Men find her fascinating precisely because there is so much they do not know. Bonamy Dobrée commented on Durrell's novel thus, "What is it that drives all these people? It is not mere pleasure seeking. For something drives them, and here Mr. Durrell leads us to the psychology of Groddeck . . ." (62). "The roots of Durrell's notion can be found at the psychological theories of a little-known contemporary of Freud, Georg Groddeck, whom Durrell very much admired" (Petlachova 7).

Georg Groddeck (1866-1934) was one of the pioneers of psychoanalysis and, with his creative and original personality; he influenced its very foundation. His exchange of letters with Freud shows how much his thought informed and encouraged the earliest and boldest psychoanalytic theories. Groddeck was a doctor, novelist and literary critic and his entire work was inspired by his belief in the force of symbols. He saw the diseases of the body as symbolic creations which he tried to cure through psychoanalysis physiotherapy and massage. It was because of this use of psychotherapy in the cure of organic diseases that Groddeck became known as the father of psychosomatic medicine, a title he himself objected to as he considered it limiting compared to his wider vision.

The unifying and consistent theme in Groddeck's work was his theory of the It, the organic source of everything related to the human self from the moment of the individual's birth to his death. The It theory provided an alternative to the split between mind and matter derived from Descartes. It encompassed many complementary dualisms as units: health and illness, mental and physical, male and female, life and death. Groddeck saw the It as the dominant though unconscious, font of personality. For Groddeck, the psyche had no conscious agency at all. The unconscious It regulated everything. Man, then, is himself a function of this mysterious force which expresses itself through him, through his illness no less than his health. To Groddeck the psycho-analytic equipment was merely a lens by which one might see a little more deeply than heretofore into the mystery of the human being, as an It-self over the theory of psycho-analysis, as he used it, therefore, stood the metaphysical principle which expressed itself through man's behaviour, through his size, shape, beliefs and wants.

Groddeck sees in any illness the symbolic manifestation of the desires of the It,
. . . It is the unknown It, not the conscious intelligence, which is responsible for the various diseases. They do not invade us as enemies from the outside, but are purposeful creations of our microcosmos, our It, just as purposeful as

the structure of the nose and the eye, which indeed are also products of the It. .
. . (*The Book of the It* 57)

Groddeck extended the use of psychoanalytic concepts to include organic illness. Groddeck saw disease as only one of many expressions of the It, a “creation of the patient” (81). Groddeck believed that “every illness has a definite meaning for the sufferer, that it is intentional, consciously or unconsciously intentioned, and that it can be treated by discovering this intention, the meaning” (81). Disease is a form of self-expression. The task for the physician in all illnesses was to gain access by any means to the patient's It, to influence it in its ways.

This present study is a reading of the novel *Justine*, in the light of Groddeckian theory of It and his idea that disease is a symbol which has a hidden meaning in it. Durrell's writings are highly influenced by Groddeck and his treatment of illness in *Justine* proves it. The city of Alexandria, in which the story happens and all the major characters are tormented with several kinds of diseases. He uses illness as a window to the real character and life of his characters. The illness of each character is the manifestation of the It, either as an outcome of their past experience, or as a helping hand or check on their present life.

The dissertation is divided into two chapters with an introduction and a conclusion. The first chapter deals with Groddeck's psychoanalysis theory of It and his views of illnesses as a symbol bearing a meaning. This paper attempts to shed light on the originality of his ideas and restore him to an arena where uncertainty still prevails. The second chapter is an analysis of the novel *Justine*, its characters and their illnesses in the perspective of Groddeckian theory. And shows how important are the role of illness in understanding the novel and its characters.

Lawrence Durrell's novel *Justine* encompasses the Groddeckian theory of It. The city, the characters are seemed to be controlled by the It. Durrell's understanding and inheritance of Groddeckian It is reflected in the characters and characterization of the novel. Durrell uses Groddeck's theory of organic illness as the manifestation of It in the novel. Most of the characters in the novel are ill. And the following is an attempt to read the novel in the light of Groddeckian theory of It and illness.

Durrell in his *A Key to Modern Poetry*, while commenting about Groddeck states that, “Disease appeared to be one of the psyche's ways of expressing itself, that was all” (75). Lawrence Durrell's *Justine* is a novel in which we could see the Groddeckian psychoanalytical theory or It in it. Durrell being a great admirer of Groddeck and his psychoanalysis method uses illness in the novel as a metaphor which evokes the mental agonies and characteristic peculiarities of the characters. As Groddeck himself says, “It is rewarding to take one of the

innumerable forms of illness and look at it as impartially as possible in its context of life and find a meaning for it" (*The Meaning of Illness* 197).

Justine opens on an isolated and unnamed Mediterranean island, where Darley, an Irish schoolteacher and writer, has retreated in order to ponder and reflect upon his experiences in the city of Alexandria, Egypt in the late 1930s. Throughout, Darley continually emphasizes vivid descriptions of the people and locales of exotic Alexandria, which frame the events of the plot. Darley is chiefly preoccupied with recollections of his relationships with two very distinct women, the selfless Melissa, an impoverished and tragic cabaret dancer, and the enigmatic and sensual Justine, a wealthy and alluring socialite.

Darley narrates the story as a personal memoir and unravels his tale: in Alexandria, he works as a teacher while maintaining a relationship with Melissa and surviving in generally modest comfort. He soon encounters Justine, who introduces him to many of the upper echelons of Levantine society in Alexandria. Despite the deep respect and friendship with which he regards Nessim, Justine's husband, Darley commences a secret sexual relationship with Justine, with whom he becomes infatuated. Darley takes clues from a book, *Moeurs*, written by Arnauti, Justine's ex-husband, which supposedly offers insights into Justine's personality and behavior, including the fact that Justine was raped in her youth. As Darley endures many exotic exploits in the city, including the mysterious suicide of Pursewarden, he obsesses over Justine and worries that Nessim may discover their affair; he eventually fears that Nessim will arrange his death and conceal it as a hunting accident during the 'Annual Duck Shoot' on nearby Lake Mareotis. There is a mysterious murder during the hunt, but the victim is found to be Capodistria, a notorious womanizer, who is revealed to be Justine's rapist. Justine, fraught with guilt and conflicted over her transgressions, flees both Darley and Nessim, and disappears, while Melissa, who had been terminally ill with Tuberculosis, is cast off by Darley and eventually succumbs to her disease. As the novel closes, Darley, confused and heartbroken, escapes from Alexandria with Melissa's child, fathered by Nessim, with whom Melissa had bonded before her death.

Durrell's Alexandria is more than a background for the story in *Justine*. It is more than a stage, more than a collection of buildings and people. "Lawrence Durrell has used Alexandria as a convenient metaphor for the various themes underlying his work" (Soby 29). It is another character in the story, which has an incredible influence on the others, and a very important role in the whole novel. Henry Miller wrote to Durrell:

. . . Alexandria – thru and by her inhabitants, climate, odours, temperament, diversity, freaks, crimes, monstrous dreams and hallucinations (but why imitate you?) – gives the impression of living herself (her pantheon self) out, of washing herself clean through complete enactment. Alexandria enacts (for us) – that's it. (*Lawrence Durrell and Henry Miller: A Private Correspondence* 31)

The city itself is ill. Durrell's usage of illness in the novel begins there. Durrell himself and characters in the novel describe the city as fatal: sex, vulgarity, pain, disease and death are all seen in the city. Durrell's descriptions of the city images are not only unpleasant but repelling too.

Streets that run back from the docks with their tattered rotten supercargo of houses, breathing into each other's mouths, keeling over. Shuttered balconies swarming with rats, and old women whose hair is full of the blood of ticks. Peeling walls leaning drunkenly to east and west of their true centre of gravity. The black ribbon of flies attaching itself to the lips and eyes of the children; the moist beads of summer flies everywhere; the very weight of their bodies snapping off ancient flypapers hanging in the violet doors of booths and cafés. The smell of the sweat-lathered Berberinis, like that of some decomposing stair-carpet. (*Justine* 26)

And as Nessim says to Darley, "...that Alexandria was the great winepress of love; those who emerged from it were the sick men, the solitaires, the prophets — I mean all who have been deeply wounded in their sex"(18). Like the city, all the major characters in the city are ill too. The native Alexandrians are either ill or deformed. "Little Mnemjian is a dwarf" (36), Hamid is "one-eyed" (54). The migrants like Darley, the Irish narrator; Pombal, a French consular officer; Scobie, an English Lieutenant-Commander is caught in this ill world. Illness is at the core of the novel, central not for purely aesthetic or dramatic purposes, but for its philosophical value as well.

Unterecker has noted the symbolic significance of wounds and disease.

. . . it seems to me, as Durrell's book of wounds, the damaging but in a way life-giving wounds that strike through all of the false faces to the quick body beneath and that can be healed only by proper questions, proper concerns for others, such as those we find displayed in the tenderness of human affection. (68)

One of the common forms of illness in the novel is partial or complete blindness. Many characters are partially or wholly blind from the time we first meet them: Darley wears glasses; Scobie has a glass eye; Da Capo and Hamid wear black patches to conceal a missing eye. According to Groddeck, blindness is a manifestation of the It to protect us from unbearable sights. In his book, *The Meaning of Illness* he says,

Likewise, an initially minor complex may expand gradually and over-sensitize one or more of the sensory organs. It is certainly easy to see that a human being does not perceive or misconceives objects which are unbearable for its It, even when they are pushed in front of his nose. If the early acquired sensitivity of an eye is too great, the It protects itself most simply by shortsightedness, in certain circumstances even by blindness. (114)

Thus the blindness in the Groddeckian sense suggests the over sensitiveness of their eyes. They do not want to look at the world, or the fatal city. Their It creates blindness in them to fulfill their inner wish to get rid of the sights outside. Their blindness acts as a shield to escape them from the sights which they do not want to see.

Durrell uses these illnesses in his novel keeping the Groddeckian psychoanalysis and the theory of the meaning of illness in mind. Every illness of each character even the simple ones as coughing or sniffing takes us to the It or unconscious of the character and only through this we get the real entry into the character as well as the story itself. A detailed analysis of the illness of each character proves it true.

Justine and her illness nymphomania are at the center of the novel. “The doctor I loved told me I was a nymphomaniac” (*Justine* 61). Her sensual life and the effect of it in the other character’s life are the focal point of the novel. She has sexual relationships with innumerable people in the city, including the woman artist Clea. Her husband Nessim and Darley once find her in a child prostitute hub. She is portrayed as a woman after sensual pleasures, a sick demon (45), and a woman with a loose moral sense.

Of Justine who can pretend that she did not have her stupid side? The cult of pleasure, small vanities, concern for the good opinion of her inferiors, arrogance. She could be tiresomely exigent when she chose. Yes. Yes. But all these weeds are watered by money. (27)

Thus from the very beginning of the novel, we are made to feel that Justine is potentially a dangerous woman, a femme fatale, a “man-eater”. “The true whore is man’s real darling —like Justine; she alone has the capacity to wound men” (68).

The speed with which she moved from one milieu to another, from one man, place, date to another, was staggering. But her instability had a magnificence that was truly arresting. The more I knew her the less predictable she seemed; And every action ended in error, guilt, repentance. How often I remember — ‘Darling, this time it will be different, I promise you.’ (61)

When we consider her nymphomania in the Groddeckian sense, we could understand that for her it is not the need of varied sexual pleasures. The fact is that she is not at all enjoying the sexual intercourses because of her past experience. Through “The Check” (69), a part of her ex-husband’s novel, we understand that, “She had been raped by a man” (182), and for her all the sexual acts she indulged in are mere repetition of that horrible act on her. “Nymphomania may be considered another form of virginity if you wish; and as for Justine, she may never have been in love” (*Justine* 71). She is not yet able to leave the memory of a childhood abuse.

Nevertheless — and here I thought I had penetrated to the heart of the Check: from this time forward she could obtain no satisfaction in love unless she

mentally recreated these incidents and re-enacted them. For her we, her lovers, had become only mental substitutes for this first childish act. (69)

A Groddeckian view through the meaning of her illness makes a paradigmatic shift in the way which a reader sees the character. She is no more a sex addict, but her It is creating the illness in her in order to find a sexual gratification at least once, after the failure of each such act. Durrell uses her disease as an important narrative tool in portraying her character.

Neurasthenia is another disease with which Justine is affected. It is an ill-defined medical condition characterized by lassitude, fatigue, headache, and irritability. The following passage from the novel gives us proof that she is suffering from neurasthenia.

... so that love, as a sort of masturbation, took on all the colours of neurasthenia; she was suffering from an imagination dying of anemia, for she could possess no one thoroughly in the flesh. She could not appropriate to herself the love she felt she needed, for her satisfactions derived from the crepuscular corners of a life she was no longer living. (*Justine* 69)

Her neurasthenia is rooted in her shame on her sensual life and her acute guilt over betraying Nessim. Justine's remorse over her own behavior could be seen in her conversation with Darley. "For God's sake, no justifications! Then I shall know we are wrong! For nothing can justify it, nothing. And yet it has got to be like this" (75). And she gets afraid when she saw a change of character in Nessim. "For the first time I am afraid, and I don't know why" (120). Durrell uses her disease of neurasthenia to show her immense love for Nessim and her inherent goodness in character.

In the novel *Darley*, the narrator, gets affected by a venereal disease and because of this disease, he could not indulge in sex for a time. He himself says about it in the novel. "...I was still barely cured of a minor but irritating venereal infection — the fruit of Pombal's solicitude" (*Justine* 55). Darley's venereal disease acts as a symbol for the love he has for Melissa. He considered his sexual relationship with the girls, especially with Justine as an act of betrayal to Melissa; and to Nessim in Justine's case. He wanted to change his life in his unconscious mind. As he says, "I have lost any interest in sorting my emotions so that they exist for me like dimensionless figures flashed on a screen" (25). And about Melissa he says, "Her care for me was a goad, provoking me to give my life some sort of shape and style that might match the simplicity of hers" (48). Therefore, his It creates the disease so that he could get rid of the guilt he feel for Mellissa.

Durrell's portrayal of Melissa in life and in death is, I believe, an explicit example of Groddeck's influence. Melissa's death is thus a denial of her way of life. She appears "pale and somehow wizened" (208) for, in Groddeck's terminology, the It which lived her has destroyed a

life which offended it. Groddeck has written, "He alone will die who wishes to die, to whom life is intolerable" (*The Meaning of Illness* 199). Only the analysis of her disease could show the utter loneliness and grief she covered behind a smiling face.

Melissa is affected by severe tuberculosis and by many other lifestyle diseases. In the novel, a doctor while examining Melissa commented so, "He pronounced Melissa very ill indeed but his diagnosis was ample and vague — in the tradition of the city. 'It is everything' he said, 'malnutrition, hysteria, alcohol, hashish, tuberculosis, Spanish fly help yourself'" (*Justine* 53).

Groddeck, defined Tuberculosis as,

. . . the pining to die away. The desire must die away, then, the desire for the in and out, the up and down of erotic love, which is symbolized in breathing. And with the desire the lungs die away . . . the body dies away . . . because desire increases during the illness, because the guilt of the ever-repeated symbolic dissipation of semen in the sputum is continually growing greater . . . because the It allows pulmonary disease to bring beauty to the eyes and cheek, alluring poisons. (*The Meaning of Illness* 199)

Melissa is a prostitute. Unlike Justine, she is making sex with so many other people, not for the pleasure but out of her utter poverty. She hates the life he lives. She considers herself unworthy of living and thinks it is better to die. Once, she said to Darley,

. . . 'If you knew how I have lived you would leave me. I am not the woman for you, for any man. I am exhausted. Your kindness is wasted.' If I protested that it was not kindness but love she might say with a grimace: 'If it were love you would poison me rather than let me go on like this'. . . (*Justine* 49)

Early in *Justine* Darley describes Melissa as she is and must be ill. Darley reflects: "I found Melissa, washed up like a half drowned bird, on the dreary littorals of Alexandria, with her sex broken . . ." (26). Melissa's death adds to the tragic effect of the novel. Her disease and death is rooted in her grief over her meaningless life. Moreover, she gets shattered when she understood that she is losing Darley, who was her real love and the last hope.

Nessim is also affected by neurasthenia. If Justine has it all along the novel, Nessim's is temporary one. He is a very well natured and gentle man with a sound health in the beginning of the novel. But towards the end, Nessim seems to suffer from headaches and symptoms of neurasthenia. ". . . she heard him tell one of his mirrors, 'so you are falling into neurasthenia!'" (130). "An occasional headache only proved him to be a victim of *petit mal* or some other sub customary disease of the rich and idle" (131).

It is the mental agony over Justine's loosened sexual life which results in his illness. Nessim's love for Justine is evident in Darley's these words,

I think often, and never without a certain fear, of Nessim's love for Justine. What could be more comprehensive, more surely founded in itself ? It coloured his unhappiness with a kind of ecstasy, the joyful wounds which you'd think to meet in saints and not in mere lovers. (*Justine* 19)

Even though the city was all sure about the loosened life of Justine, he never believed or he may ignored it until Melissa herself told him about the relationship with Justine and Darley. And after this, he started experiencing the symptoms of neurasthenia.

He had begun to harbour feelings which would not yield to analysis. The periods of intoxication were followed by others in which he felt, as if for the first time, the full weight of his loneliness: an inner agony of spirit for which, as yet, he could find no outward expression, either in paint or in action. (130)

For his own part he was prepared to suffer thus as long as the suffering remained within the control of his consciousness. What terrified him only was the sensation of utter loneliness — a reality which he would never, he realized, be able to communicate either to his friends or to the doctors who might be called in to pronounce upon anomalies of behaviour which they would regard only as symptoms of disorder. (131)

It is the disease of Nessim and the meaning of it, which comes out of the Groddeckian analysis, make the rising action in the novel. While reading the novel, we have a tendency to equate Nessim's illness to his tormented unconscious mind or It. Actually this reading is what increases the tension on the Duck shoot event, where Darley is feared to be murdered by Nessim.

Instead of Darley, it is Capodistria, who was murdered in the Duck shoot. Darley, the narrator mentions his ophthalmia in the beginning of the novel. "...wearing a black palet over one eye as he did always after an attack of ophthalmia" (70). Ophthalmia is a kind of inflammation of both eyes following trauma to one eye. It can leave the patient completely blind.' His ophthalmia symbolizes his erotic gaze at every object he confronts. His eyes are inflamed, or over bulged, as his erotic vision and desire. The narrator refers to his overt appetite to sexual pleasures thus,

Capodistria has the purely involuntary knack of turning everything into a woman; under his eyes chairs become painfully conscious of their bare legs. He impregnates things. At table I have seen a water-melon become conscious under his gaze so that it felt the seeds inside it stirring with life! Women feel like birds confronted by a viper when they gaze into that narrow flat face with its tongue always moving across the thin lips. (*Justine* 37)

He rapes Justine in her childhood. Still is a womanizer. His ophthalmia acts as a symbol of his sexual monomania.

Cohen's, Melissa's ex-lover, illness is also a reflection of the unconscious. His love for Melissa and his guilt over mistreating her leads to the illness. The damp green corridors along which Darley walks to Cohen bear some resemblance to the dense jungle of his illusions into which Darley is metaphorically led. The corridors are the approaches to that terrain of the psyche through which the dying man probes to expunge his guilt. "I wanted to close my account honourably with her. I treated her badly, very badly. She did not notice, of course; she is too simple-minded, but good, such a good girl" (91). For the guilt engendered by his treatment of Melissa is, in the Groddeckian sense, the cause of Cohen's poisonous uremia.

Illness has a purpose; it has to resolve the conflict, to repress it, or to prevent what is already repressed from entering consciousness; it has to punish a sin against a commandment, and in doing that it goes so far that one can draw conclusions as to the time, the place, and the nature of the sin that is to be punished by considering the time, the place, and the nature of the illness. (*The Meaning of Illness* 74)

The stream of Cohen's consciousness reveals to Darley what time, place and nature revealed to Groddeck. Cohen's sin is his failure to treat Melissa honourably, to love her, to marry her. The illness, as much as his desire to give her the sable and the rings, is the symbolic expiation of his guilt, the latter undertaken by his consciousness, the former by his It. He confesses to Darley in his deathbed.

I cheated her over her coat. It was really sealskin. Also the moths had been at it. I had it relined. Why should I do such a thing? When she was ill I would not pay for her to see the doctor. Small things, but they weigh heavy.' Tears crowded up into his eyes and his throat tightened as if choked by the enormity of such thoughts. He swallowed harshly and said: 'They were not really in my character. Ask any business man who knows me. Ask anyone. (*Justine* 91)

Another who is ill in the novel is Lieutenant Commander Scobie. The aged Scobie "is affected by severe headaches at times . . . Taking stock of himself he discovers that he has the inevitable headache" (101). It is his fear of death that causes the illness. The narrator says that, "Scobie is gashing on for seventy and still afraid to die; his one fear is that he will awake one morning and find himself lying dead — Lieutenant-Commander Scobie" (101). In the Groddeckian sense, headaches are warnings that the thoughts are to be controlled. "Using headaches to stop thinking and instinct is one of the most common and well-known of the techniques employed by the unconscious" (*The Meaning of Illness* 118). And the headache enables him to get rid of his fear of death and gives him inner peace at least for a short time. It redirects his thoughts from his ultimate fear of death.

Even simple illnesses as coughing and sniffing bear meanings in Groddeckian theory. Groddeck considers this as the unconscious way to cast out the psychological intruders which one does not want to deal with.

It is well known that many people start the day by coughing. This way they cast out the impressions of their dreams and blow away the minor and major anxiety fantasies and embarrassments of the day which are associated with these. Whatever manages to penetrate in spite of this and appears poisonous to the It is dissolved and wrapped up in mucus, brought out and finally even spat on. The curious thing about this process is that the unconscious equates physical and psychological intruders and treats them the same. (*The Meaning of Illness* 125)

And Durrell uses this in *Justine*. Melissa while parting with Darley before she leaves Alexandria for treatment, she talks to him about his relationship with Justine and immediately after that blew her nose. This shows the It working in her.

Time to reconsider ourselves....If only I were Justine....I know you thought of her when you made love to me....Don't deny it....I know my darling....I'm even jealous of your imagination....Horrible to have self-reproach heaped on top of the other miseries.... Never mind.' She blew her nose shakily and managed a smile. (*Justine* 179)

There is another instance also where Durrell uses sniffing as a psychologically meaningful act. Sveva, a prostitute sniffs while she accuses Pombal, a friend of Darley. "Now Sveva is quietly sniffing into her handkerchief as she recounts the extravagant promises which Pombal has made her, and which will never be fulfilled" (119).

Thus, illness plays an important role in the narration of the novel. Durrell's use of illness as a meaning full symbol acts as an important tool in understanding the characters in depth and their psychology. The illnesses are inevitable part of the novel through which Durrell reveals the real colour of the city, as well as the true nature of the characters. A Groddeckian reading of the use of illness in *Justine* opens the book for the reader in a much wider way.

Lawrence Durrell in his novel *Justine* uses illness as a meaningful symbol, which sheds further light into the novel and its characters. Georg Groddeck and his psychoanalytical theory influenced him. Durrell makes use of Groddeck's psychoanalytical method which is a deconstructive take on the modern medicinal patterns which divides between body and mind and treats only the symptoms of the organic illnesses. Durrell uses disease as a meaningful expression of our It, the power which controls our life.

The Quartet is filled with instances of physical and sexual dysfunction.

In Alexandria love explodes the body of the lover, as a winepress explodes the individual grape. The integument of the individual, like the skin of the grape, is not strong enough to contain the vital juices within when placed under such pressure and force: sex “outstrips the body,” yielding a highly concentrated, yet toxic, form of love. (Kaczvinsky 40)

But for Durrell, this network of physical and psychological illnesses is itself the perpetuation of modern love, a necessary fusion of disease and health at the psychosexual level, of which the city of Alexandria is an exemplar. For it is in this impossible city of love and obscenity, that one finds the fusion of love and sexual passion with disease and death. What might seem like an obsession with the moribund is a metaphor for the multiplicity and instability of human passion, of the binary composition of all people.

In the novel, the real desires and mental agonies of the characters are expressed through the illness. The illness acts as a manifestation of their It, the force which controls our life. Including the city, all the major characters in the novel are ill. Durrell has the setting of his novel in an ill-ridden place. Each illness is pregnant with meaning and allows us to know the characters in depth. The interpretation of the illness not only helps us to understand the characters, but also acts as part of the narrative tool, as in the case Nessim's neurasthenia which Durrell uses as a tool to enhance the rising action of the novel. The Groddeckian theory of meaning of illness in Durrell's hands gains its complete meaning.

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