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On Miracle Ground XVIII

**James Gifford,
President, ILDS**

Durrellians, the centenary celebration in London during the summer of 2012 continues to provoke much attention and thought for Durrell's works, and that energy is carrying forward to our 2014 conference in May, which will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia. Vancouver is a highly cosmopolitan city with diverse cultural opportunities, and our conference will be in the heart of the Yaletown district of downtown, hosted by Fairleigh Dickinson University – “five races, five languages, a dozen creeds” may prove true indeed, if not much more, but there are no promises of “more than five sexes and only Demotic Greek . . . to distinguish among them.” We will be in the centre of a thriving, diverse community in which to consider Durrell's works.

As Pamela Francis points out in this issue of the *Herald*, the past year has been busy for Durrell scholarship, and we have

an embarrassment of riches pointing to the next international conference. I hope to see as many of you in attendance as possible, with keen ideas and sharp questions for discussion. The friendliness and genuine pleasure of the Durrell 2012 conference masked the high scholarly standards evidenced everywhere, and the work of the past year bodes well for more to come.

We are also organizing seminars for the first time in the conference. This format allows for a more discussion-oriented and nuanced interaction with a group of colleagues. For those who want to experiment with the format instead of or in addition to a traditional paper, it will be modeled after the seminars of the Modernist Studies Association. Each participant will share a draft paper prior to arriving in Vancouver so that the seminar time can be dedicated to discussion and opportunities for mutual engagement amongst the participants. If you have a hot topic around which you would like to organize a seminar, there's still time remaining to propose it. If

you have an emerging idea or draft of a publication, this may be the perfect venue for “flipping” the usual ratio of presentation-to-discussion for traditional panels – registration for the seminars will remain open until a month prior to the conference, provided they have space.

Our host for 2014, Fairleigh Dickinson University, is a strong match for the internationalism of the ILDS. The Vancouver campus is one of four in the USA, Canada, and the UK. Floating near to 1,000 students, it plays host to more than 35 nationalities and emphasizes a global perspective in our age of globalization. With 38 languages spoken on campus, please feel encouraged to think expansively for our understanding of Durrell in his second century.

Vancouver will offer a broad scope for visitors, with its new identity as the “city of glass” juxtaposed against impressive examples of modernist Art Deco architecture. With the downtown core originally being an island, we will be surrounded by the sea and mountains – a short stroll



from the historical Gastown district and a thriving Chinatown (second largest in North America), and amidst Hollywood North on all sides – all hosted on traditional Musqueam territory.

Lastly, I invite you all to peruse the ILDS website www.lawrencedurrell.org. It has a new design and content being added continuously. We have many surprises coming as well, with an updated online bibliography (tip of the hat to James Clawson) and a thriving twitter feed [@DurrellSociety](https://twitter.com/DurrellSociety) (courtesy of Charles Sligh). Also, since the earlier scheduling of the conference may limit travel for some, we are exploring ways to leverage the campus's rich IT environment to create an online experience or remote form of participation. Updates to come . . . Watch the ILDS site and twitter feed for details.

This is my last President's Letter, and in mid-May the ILDS will have a new president – I feel much satisfaction for what we have all accomplished over the past four years, and it has been a privilege to work with Charles Sligh and Paul Lorenz, as well as everyone else on the Society's executive board. We have much yet to do, but our next board will have more than three decades of productive work to draw from. I look forward to supporting those whom you choose.

I hope to see you all at the eighteenth On Miracle Ground conference in the 34th year of the ILDS!



Welcome to Vancouver

Helen Wussow

On Miracle Ground XVIII, “Durrell & Place: Translation, Migration, Location,” will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada from May 14 through 17, 2014, sponsored by ILDS and Fairleigh Dickinson University. Vancouver as a location for a conference on Lawrence Durrell may seem odd. But, like Alexandria, Vancouver is a port town positioned on the edge of an immense continent. Vancouver looks not to the cultures behind it, but to those that lie before it across the sea—much like Alexandria.

Conference attendees will notice this orientation as soon as they disembark at Vancouver International Airport. Information is provided in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Korean (in addition to Canada's two official languages). A large advertisement for hairy crab hangs on a wall directly outside customs (if you want to know what a hairy crab is, you must come to the conference—perhaps you will meet one). For those familiar with Hong Kong, Vancouver will seem like a miniature version of that older harbor. Vancouver's Chinatown, the local community of Richmond, and the numerous fine restaurants offering cuisines from the Pacific Rim are all a testament to the city's rich Asian heritage.

Your journey down the escalator at the airport to passport control will be observed by faces carved on the world's largest spindle whorl, symbol of the Coast

Salish people.



**Flight Spindle Whorl
Vancouver Airport Authority**

Two tall wooden figures will greet you, hands extended in welcome. These pieces are the work of Susan Point, a Coast Salish (Musqueam) artist whose work is featured in the many galleries lining Water Street and in the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology. For, like Alexandria, Vancouver is a place of many languages and many beliefs.

Once upon a time, people were swept to this place on some of the strongest tides in the world, waters which rush to fill the deep sea harbor. Now listen . . . from your hotel window you will hear the sounds of gulls, waves, and wind, all of which lie under Fog Woman, provider of the salmon you will eat, fish that journey thousands of miles only to return to their original waters. You will find her story portrayed in the work of Bill Reid, a Haida artist honored in the downtown gallery bearing his name.

Personally, I never thought of Vancouver as a destination, but the tides of life seem to have landed me here. I grew up on a small farm in northern Minnesota, not far from

the Canadian border, and crossed an ocean to study in England. From there I traveled to Memphis from which I ventured to Alexandria, and there discovered the greatest gift of all. Then on to New York City, a harbor which welcomes, like Vancouver, voyagers and seekers.

And now I have migrated to this place of sea and sky only to cross a border that is as imaginary to me as it is to the bald eagles that nest far up the Burrard Inlet, the arm of water that stretches well beyond the city's harbor.

Alexandria has a storied landscape. In Vancouver, landscape is the story. The mountain you look at today is an esteemed ancestor from yesterday; the osprey in the sky was once a killer whale, now translated through love. The self you bring to On Miracle Ground XVIII may well experience a seismic shift, a strange dislocation of place, the result of watching the sun setting as it rises in the west. Vancouver is a place where east becomes west, north becomes south, and the ocean goes on forever.



Rue sala-el-din, Niki Marangou

Teaching Durrell in the Arab Spring

Donald Kaczvinsky

My brother-in-law, who teaches English at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, once told me never to teach something you really love because the students will break your heart. I've remembered his words, though I try to ignore them. After all, shouldn't we teach what we love and are excited about, to engage the students in what has fascinated and engaged us? Such is my case with Lawrence Durrell.

Over my 23 years working here at Louisiana Tech University, I've taught works by Durrell probably 6 or 7 times, in classes ranging from a graduate-level course in Modernism-Postmodernism to more traditional courses in Modern and Contemporary British Literature. I must say, I've never been thoroughly satisfied with how I've presented Durrell. I've thought that maybe I know too much about him and tried to give the students everything, but ended up just confusing them, or worse, boring them. And teaching Durrell's works, even for the most seasoned instructor, is really, really hard in this day and age. First, there is the fact that he writes long, complicated, multi-volume works that do not fit well into an American syllabus. And then again I teach on the Quarter system, 10 weeks of classes, so we make a quick romp through whatever subject matter we may include, never mind a four-volume series that stretches over 800 pages. While Durrell's prose is

poetically evocative, richly elaborate, elegantly dense, the current generation communicates through tweets and bytes and has little patience for a baroque style. Then, Durrell is a dead-white-male writing from a distinctly conservative political perspective and having rather slighting things to say about women and minority cultures. Well, that's formidable. So, even to put Durrell on the syllabus takes dedication and devotion. From the back end of the 20th-century or the beginning of the 21st, Durrell simply doesn't look quite as exciting or experimental or "sexy" as he did in the 1960s and '70s. Indeed even his sexual frankness now seems not very frank, indeed, rather oblique and tame when compared to, say, Miley Cyrus.

And yet I teach and continue to teach Durrell's work, not because I'm Sisyphus, but because he has important things to say and says them in an important way. My most recent attempt to teach Durrell's *Quartet* was perhaps my greatest success. I included *Mountolive* in my syllabus in a course on Contemporary British Literature. I built my reading list up as a series of juxtapositions that I hoped would highlight the contrasting voices of late-twentieth century British literature. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* was paired with Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Philip Larkin's poetry was countered by The Beatles' lyrics, Durrell's colonial vision of the Orient was brought up against Rushdie's post-colonial *East, West: Stories*, to name just a few. Although I

couldn't have known, it just so happened that the course was scheduled right when the Arab Spring broke into full bloom, so nothing could have been better! Perfect!

I began my talk on Durrell by providing an historical background of the British presence in Egypt. I relied upon my article on "Ornamentalism," and also on Michael Haag's groundbreaking work about the society of Alexandria during the 1930s, hoping it would lead to greater discussion on what was currently being reported on the news and the internet. We looked at street protests recorded on YouTube, saw the crowds gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square. Egyptian nationalism, religious fundamentalism, political intrigue: Durrell's *Quartet* and his intimate knowledge of the Alexandrian/Egyptian society was remarkably relevant once again. In a way never before possible in my teaching career, the blimpish Mountolive trying to deal with a fractious society and an explosive political world made perfect sense. His frustration was ours. I even used Durrell as one of the essay options on the midterm, asking students to respond to the *Norton Anthology's* comment that Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* was evidence of a "nostalgia" in literature during the 1950s. Nostalgia. I don't think so. I felt good. I thought I finally had given Durrell his due.

About two months ago, one of the students from the class came to visit me in my office. She is now a graduate student. We got to talking and I asked her how she had liked the class: she was

going to write an annotated bibliography on James Bond in film and fiction--another spin-off from the course. She said she loved Fleming, and Alasdair Gray was wonderful, Graham Swift was interesting from an environmental perspective, and Rushdie was funny and witty. Of course, Angela Carter and her rewriting of fairy tales was superb in breaking male stereotypes. There was only one person she didn't really respond to. I knew it was coming. I looked around my office where posters from the Durrell conferences I've attended hang upon the wall. She said "that Durrell guy I didn't really like much." My heart sank. "Why?" I asked. "Well, the novel was only one of four, and I never felt I understood the whole story." I wanted to tell her that even if you read the "whole" *Quartet*, you would not get the "whole" story--that was the point. I didn't. I smiled, nodded my head, sighed. Students, they'll break your heart!

Niki Marangou (1948-2013) was a distinguished Cypriot writer and artist. She had strong ties to the Alexandria that Durrell knew as well as to contemporary Egypt, where she met her death in an automobile accident on 7 February 2013. The previous year she attended the 2012 conference marking the Durrell Centenary. In this issue of the *Herald*, we remember Niki with images of two of her paintings.

Durrell on the Web

**Charles Sligh,
Vice President, ILDS**

Over the past year, a number of innovations have emerged that will clearly make a positive difference for the ILDS and Lawrence Durrell studies in general. The recent release of a redesigned ILDS website (<http://lawrencedurrell.org/>) is, without doubt, of most immediate import. Thanks to the time and talents of James Gifford, the website is undergoing complete renovation. The redesigned website will feature a clearer, easier to use interface; an array of useful tools (online bibliographies, both for Durrell's works and for Durrell scholarship; descriptions, contact information, and links for special collections with Durrell holdings; and search access for the archived ILDS listserv); integration with the ILDS's social media platforms (including a Twitter timeline for @DurrellSociety); and online forms for ILDS membership and OMG conference paper proposals.

Both Faber & Faber and Open Road Media have greatly expanded the availability of Lawrence Durrell's back catalog through their eBook offerings. For some time now, Faber (<http://www.faber.co.uk/>) has offered digital versions of the following titles for purchase and download in the UK market via Amazon.co.uk and other vendors: *The Alexandria Quartet: Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive, Clea*; *The Black Book*; *The Dark Labyrinth*; *Judith*:

A Novel; The Revolt of Aphrodite; Tunc and Nunquam; Collected Poems 1931-74; Selected Poems of Lawrence Durrell; Prospero's Cell; Reflections on a Marine Venus; Bitter Lemons of Cyprus; Sicilian Carousel; The Greek Islands; Caesar's Vast Ghost; Aspects of Provence; Antrobus Complete; Esprit de Corps.

For the market on the other side of the Atlantic, Open Road Integrated Media's offerings are of potentially even greater significance. For several decades, American readers and scholars have justifiably lamented the lack of available Durrell titles.

Penguin Books, which has held publication rights for the US market, has seemed content to reprint the novels of *The Alexandria Quartet* as individual titles while at the same allowing the rest of Durrell's catalog to fall out-of-print. The fact that Penguin has continued to reprint *Justine*, *Balthazar*, *Mountolive*, and *Clea* from faulty plates that pre-date Durrell's early corrections and later 1962 revisions should also be noted.

Open Road Media

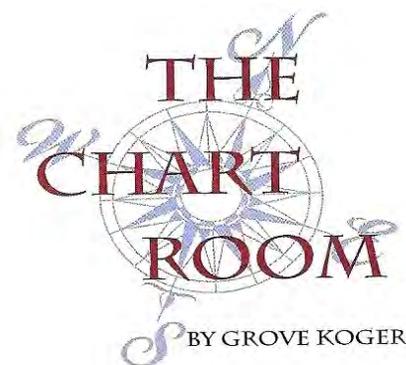
(<http://www.openroadmedia.com/>) has now made an impressive start toward remedying these all-too-familiar problems, offering the following titles in eBook format:

Justine; Balthazar; Mountolive; Clea; The Alexandria Quartet; Tunc; Nunquam; Monsieur or The Prince of Darkness; Livia or Buried Alive; Constance or Solitary Passions; Sebastian or Ruling Passions; Quinx or The Ripper's Tale; The Avignon Quintet; The Dark Labyrinth; Judith; White Eagles Over Serbia; The Best of Antrobus; Prospero's Cell; Reflections on a Marine Venus; Bitter Lemons of Cyprus; Blue Thirst: Tales of Life Abroad; Esprit de Corps; Stiff Upper Lip; Sauve Qui Peut; Sicilian Carousel; The Lawrence Durrell Travel Reader; Spirit of Place: Letters and Essays on Travel; A Smile in the Mind's Eye.

Open Road Media is to be commended for having exceeded our expectations in its offerings, and this catalog of eBook titles more than makes up for the previous shortfall of Lawrence Durrell titles available for the US market. Indeed, the appearance of Open Road's releases means that there are now more Lawrence Durrell titles available than at any previous moment. Also worth noting is that Open Road Media presents readers with a generous variety of choices when it comes to Lawrence Durrell's multi-volume and serialized titles. American customers interested in reading *The Alexandria Quartet* or *The Avignon Quintet* may now choose to purchase either eBooks for the omnibus editions or individual eBooks for each of the constituent novels. *The Black Book* and *The Alexandria Quartet* feature new introductions by D. B. C. Pierre and Jan Morris, written especially for the 2012 Lawrence Durrell Centenary. Significantly, the text of the Open Road Media eBook for *The Alexandria Quartet* reflects Durrell's 1962 revisions and additions, thus bringing American and British readings into alignment for the first time.



Window with Chair,
Niki Manangou



Some time ago I ran across an online announcement of the 2007 program in Alexandria celebrating the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Justine*. I remember it well because it reproduced a watercolor—striking in its quick line and quirky detail—of Alexandria's Grande Corniche taken from one of the most attractive items on the Durrell shelf—Paul Hogarth's *The Mediterranean Shore: Travels in Lawrence Durrell Country* (Pavilion/Michael Joseph, 1988). The covers of the volumes of the *Avignon Quintet* published by Noir sur Blanc in Polish draw on the same source.

Hogarth is only one of several fine illustrators to have been associated with Durrell's works. The original Faber editions of the *Avignon Quintet* bore lush, just-about-irresistible covers by David Gentleman, as did the 1992 one-volume edition. (I've often thought that if Viking had used these covers, the publisher would have sold more copies.) Gentleman went on to provide covers for later Faber editions of the *Alexandria Quartet* and its individual volumes, as well as for *Tunc* (and, I imagine, *Nunquam*, although I have yet to lay eyes on a copy). The cover of *Tunc*—a watercolor of the

Parthenon in autumnal tan and brown—reappeared on the combined edition, *The Revolt of Aphrodite*.

Recently Penguin commissioned American tattoo artist Robert Ryan to design front and back covers for an edition of *Justine*. When I heard about this project my hopes weren't high, but the result—bright and gaudy as it is—captures certain aspects of the novel splendidly, and I'm glad to add it to my collection.

Other members of the society have spoken of the delight they take in the first Faber editions of the *Quartet*, but perhaps because they represent my first experience of Durrell, the 1961 Dutton paperback editions, with covers and box design by Jim McMullan, are the ones I value above all others. McMullan works with less detail than either Hogarth or Gentleman, and his sketches of Durrell's four main characters suggest rather than show, pulling readers into the texts. McMullan went on to provide covers for several of Durrell's other books, but none matches these first evocative efforts.

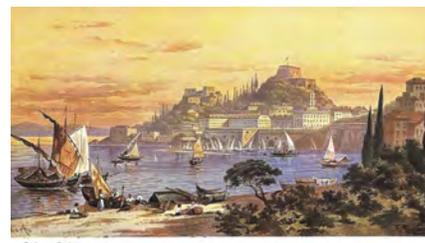
The great Patrick Leigh Fermor is no longer with us, but Artemis Cooper's biography, *Patrick Leigh Fermor: An Adventure*, captures his spirit perfectly. The biography was published to wide acclaim in Britain by John Murray in 2012, and New York Review Books will publish it in the United States in late 2013, along with the concluding volume of Leigh Fermor's trilogy describing his trek across Europe in the 1930s. This final volume is titled *The*

Broken Road: From the Iron Gates to Mount Athos, and has been assembled by Cooper and travel writer Colin Thubron from several texts, most of them unpublished until now. The British edition has just appeared as I write these words, and reviews suggest that Leigh Fermor's many readers will not be disappointed.

The original Murray editions of Leigh Fermor's books bore striking covers designed by his friend, painter John Craxton. Born in 1922, Craxton spent much of his adult life in Crete, where he bought an old Venetian house overlooking the harbor of Chania. "I have little sense of being 'British,'" he once declared. "In Greece I found human identities, people within their own environment. This new world fitted me artistically, and suited me socially and financially."

Influenced by fellow artists Graham Sutherland and (especially) Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika, as well as by Byzantine art, Craxton forged an individual style eminently suited to his adopted country. To my mind his most satisfying works are a series of landscapes of Hydra painted during the 1960s, and another, highly abstract series inspired by a gorge in Crete. You'll see examples of both in *John Craxton* by Ian Collins (Lund Humphries, 2011). After much initial reluctance, the notoriously exacting Craxton gave his blessing to the volume but died (in late 2009) without seeing it published. Quite simply, Edward Lear loved Corfu, calling it "paradise" and declaring that "no other spot on earth can be fuller of beauty and of variety of beauty." In honor of the bicentenary of his

birth, the Corfu Museum of Asian Art held an exhibition entitled *Edward Lear and the Ionian Islands* at the Palace of St. Michael and St. George over the course of the summer of 2012.



Postcard from Corfu

Although he spent as much time as possible in Corfu, Lear traveled widely as a professional artist, producing watercolor sketches of various scenes that he would later refer to in producing the full-scale oil paintings that he sold for a living. The watercolors themselves are of course more spontaneous than the oils, and to the modern eye they often seem better works of art. *Edward Lear: Egyptian Sketches* (National Maritime Museum, 2009) collects a number of such watercolors of a country that clearly fascinated Lear. Referring to the Nile island of Philae in a letter to his sister Ann, he wrote that "it is impossible to describe the place to you, any further than by saying it is more like a real *fairy island* than anything else I can compare it to."

The novels of Olivia Manning, whom Durrell knew slightly in wartime Egypt, have been overshadowed by the works of her contemporaries—a situation aggravated by Manning's scarcely concealed insecurity and sense of neglect. The popular 1987 television

production of *The Fortunes of War*, based on her “Balkan” and “Levant” trilogies and starring Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson, sparked renewed interest, but by then Manning had died. Now her works are receiving greater critical attention thanks to two new studies: *Imperial Refugee: Olivia Manning's Fictions of War* by Eve Patten (Cork University Press, 2011) and *Olivia Manning: A Woman at War* by Deirdre David (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Report on the “Villa Ambron”

Ahmed Khedr sends distressing news from Alexandria about the impending destruction of Lawrence Durrell’s former house, the “Villa Ambron”:

“I don’t know if you’re aware, but the villa is now in danger of being demolished due to the land owner’s decision to have a building there instead. He knows of Lawrence Durrell, as well as his fan base, but has made it clear that unless someone is willing to buy the property, he will indeed destroy it. He would in fact be destroying a part of Egypt’s history. There are many controversies regarding this major issue. The house is in foul shape, and it is rumored that the owner has been implementing much internal damage to the structure of the villa in order to get a clearance that it is no longer safe and beyond repair. This kind of action would bring him legal permission to bring it down. Anyone who is a Durrell fan who comes to visit the house is utterly

heartbroken by its fragile condition.”

Khedr is trying to fight the destruction of this house “because of the contribution it has made as the very space that inspired Durrell to write one of the most influential literary works of the twentieth century”: “I would need many credible personalities in the literary world in order to have any chance at stopping the villa from being demolished. What we are trying to do is bring the issue to an international scale.”

Anyone who can help, please contact Ahmed Khedr at aaykhedr@gmail.com.

This year in Durrell studies...

Pamela Francis

It’s so nice to write for the *Herald* again. Since Grove and others have covered the newest books on Durrell, I want to fill you in on recent periodical literature.

At the risk of generalizing, I identify three trends in recent essay-length studies of Lawrence Durrell. One is the continued recognition of Durrell as a productive example of modernist networks “at work”; the second is Durrell’s contribution to the burgeoning field of landscape studies. The third trend, the frequency of references to Durrell in articles not specifically relating to his work, suggests a widespread familiarity with his writing and thinking that encourages those of us who believe his work to be under-read and understudied.

While *Deus Loci* is always the go-to source for Durrell

scholarship, this year the critical mass, so to speak, appears in the inaugural issue of *Global Review* (theglobalreview.net/?page_id=11). Edited by the Society’s own James Gifford, James Clawson, and Fiona Tomkinson, this issue, subtitled “Archives and Networks of Modernism,” builds on the work first begun in earnest at On Miracle Ground XIV in Victoria in 2006. Some of us have seen Gifford’s charts and networks, and their demonstration of Durrell’s ubiquitous—even if peripheral—participation in so many coteries and movements elucidates the varied angles of study available to Modernists. Gifford’s essay directs attention to Durrell’s connections to English Surrealism and Anarchism through the New Apocalypse and Personal Landscape (Cairo) poets, but his larger point is a call for more attention to the “distinct critical narrative” that lay “buried in our archives and recorded in their networks of international influences” (101). In response to Gifford’s article, Jesse Cohn replies that Gifford’s “anarchist revisions to Surrealism” are both significant and incomplete; specifically, Cohn notes, this trajectory of study may benefit from an investigation into the use of “mythistorema,” the present repetition of a past event, as a particularly Nietzschean view of time that would likely have appealed to the “anarchist imaginary” (112).

Another network associated with Durrell is the world of the British foreign services. Caroline Z. Krzakowski’s “Modern Diplomacy and

Mountolive reads *Bitter Lemons* and *Mountolive* as efforts to “decode” the postwar world, and sees the failure to do so as indicative of the “demise of empire” (115). James Clawson, responding to her article, interprets Durrell’s efforts at decoding fragments as a much broader enterprise, one not limited to the postwar world of ineffectual diplomacy. Clawson quotes from Durrell’s *Key to Modern Poetry*, noting that “our understanding of reality requires us to imagine networked connections among ‘our provisional truths, our short-range raids’ of it” (138). Providing a visible string connecting the various networks of Late Modernism, Durrell is also mentioned as part of the little magazine network of Paris in “‘Published by Us, Written by Us, Read by Us’: Little Magazine Networks.” In short, the entire issue of *Global Review* is of interest to those invested in the study of that “loose, baggy, monster” called Modernism.

It is difficult to write or talk about Durrell without referring to his landscapes: each of his works is inextricably woven into the fabric of a particular place. Yet critical human geographers have overlooked Durrell, preferring visual art as their objects of study. Durrell scholars have always seen the importance of landscape in his work, and though recent book-length collections have broached the subject (Donald P. Kaczvinsky’s edited collection *Durrell and the City: Collected Essays on Place*, for example), there is plenty of room

for new critical studies of Durrell’s relationship to landscape. “City and Landscape of Remembering: The Visual Textual Palimpsest of Alexandria in Lawrence Durrell’s *Justine* and *Balthazar*” in *Scrutiny2*, a South African journal, investigates the palimpsestic nature of Alexandria “through the stylistic use of metaphoric and painterly imagery” (13). There is not much new here, but the article does remind us that Durrell’s writing is an excellent example of literary phenomenology.

Sadly, we lost ILDS member Ray Morrison this year, but he left us with some further observations concerning Durrell’s study of Taoism. In “The City and Its Ontology in Lawrence Durrell’s *Alexandria Quartet*,” Morrison identifies Alexandria, the city itself, as the “macrocosm of Durrell’s creative vision” (56) and asserts that, “Through his handling of the philosophy of the Laozi and the Zhuangzi, Durrell has vindicated his claim that ‘Only the city is real’” (68).

The influence of Taoist and other Eastern philosophies was not lost on Fausta Cialente’s translation of *The Alexandria Quartet* into Italian, according to Antonella De Nicola. Her essay, “Sharing Eastern Visions: Reflections upon Fausta Cialente’s Translation of *The Alexandria Quartet* by Lawrence Durrell,” sees in both Durrell and Cialente similar lives of border crossings and rootlessness, as well as a common concern over what George Steiner calls the “third voice” in the act of translation. De Nicola also opens a new avenue in the networks of modernism: she notes that Cialente and Durrell

lived in Egypt during the same time, though they never met. Cialente had published her own Alexandrian novel, *The Levantines*, in 1962, two years after Durrell wrote *Clea*, and twenty years before she translated *Clea* into Italian.

In a last search I found this piece, just out: “British Literary Responses to the Suez Crisis” in the October issue of *Literature and History*. Written by Andrew Hammond, Senior Lecturer at University of Brighton, and a familiar name in the fields of British travel writing and British-Balkan relations, this work offers a substantive overview of the “the discursive responses to the Suez Crisis,” with several pages given over to *The Alexandria Quartet*. Hammond, like Krzakowski above, sees in Durrell “fears about British national decline” (53). Whether one agrees with this political reading of LD or not, the critical attention given to Durrell in this and other major journals is heartening.

Indeed, Durrell seems to pop up often in somewhat unexpected places, indicating an encouraging familiarity with Durrell as writer, thinker, and, even, as we have seen, diplomat. For instance, an article in the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* covering approaches to the teaching of Greek, addresses *Mountolive* as a useful text for the study of Levantine cities. In an article on the treatment of incest in Iris Murdoch, Emma Miller refers to Durrell’s use of a “Romanticist type” of incest—incest between adult siblings—in the *Quartet* (though Miller’s familiarity with LD must end

there, as there is no mention of that same sibling incest in the *Quintet*). Most fascinating of the short mentions are notes for Peter Whitehead's two short films in 1963, which include a fairly thorough consideration of Durrell's ideas on relativity. In one set of notes that Whitehead has titled "The Muddle," he writes of "anti-relativity" and gives a substantial analysis of Durrell's claim for "the relationship between his *AQ* and science." He quotes the opening "Note" in *Balthazar* but ultimately rejects as futile any "claims of analogy to science by modern writers" (57-59).

Greek studies, foreign affairs, psychology, film . . . Lawrence Durrell is certainly getting around! I know we all look forward to the forthcoming *Deus Loci* and further Durrell studies in and from all quarters. If you have note of new articles or insight into critical articles on Durrell, please send them to me: pamelajofrancis@gmail.com.

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Frank, Joseph. "The Making of a Counter-Culture Icon: Henry Miller's Dostoyevsky (review)." *Common Knowledge* 18.2 (2012): 374-376.

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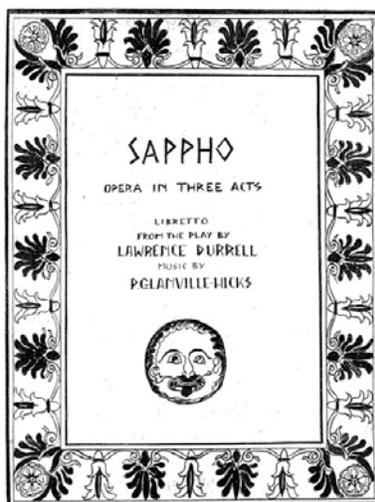
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Conversations with Another Ass, or Views from Pudding Island

Peter Baldwin

In the early days of the Herald, I contributed some notes and thoughts from the English perspective on Durrell's writing. Your editor has asked me to resume these contributions. I saw no reason to change the title of this column. I have been a keen collector of Durrell's writings since the mid-1970s; through my imprint Delos Press I published a number of books by Durrell in limited letterpress editions as well as commentaries on Durrell's work by Robin Rock.

"Sappho: opera in three acts [sic]. Libretto from the play by Lawrence Durrell. Music by P. Glanville-Hicks."

Ian MacNiven in his 1998 biography of Durrell tells us that "Peggy Glanville-Hicks had brought her ill-fated operatic version of Larry's *Sappho* to the point of orchestration. . . . [I]t would eventually get as far as rehearsals, but would never appear before the public" (534). In 2012 the record label Toccata Classics released a splendid recording of the whole opera. See <http://www.toccataclassics.com/cddetail.php?CN=TOCC0154-55>. This link provides full casting details as well as MP3 downloads and streaming samples.

I can do no better than quote the description of the Opera from Toccata's website: *Sappho, the last grand opera of Australian composer Peggy Glanville-Hicks (1912-90), was written in her stone cottage on Mykonos in 1963. Never heard before this recording, Sappho*

reflects Glanville-Hicks' fascination with the orient and folk music, encapturing the colours of ancient Greece, with a heroic brass fanfare and epic writing for chorus, haunting woodwind solos and shimmering percussion evoking the stillness of crystal island waters. Deborah Polaski, who creates the role of the disenchanted Sappho, describes it as 'the kind of music that singers want to sing'. The libretto, based on Lawrence Durrell's verse-play, incorporates fragments of Sappho's own verse.

This is a fine recording with professional singers and orchestra of high reputation. Enormous credit must go to the conductor Jennifer Condon. She has contributed to the CD booklet which also has contributions from Deborah Hayes, musicologist and biographer of the composer; Margaret Reynolds, an academic specialist of the "original" Sappho; and, Charles Sligh, vice-president of the ILDS.

From Condon's note it would seem that the composer completed a full score in 1965, despite the piano score being rejected by the commissioning opera company, but never got as far as rehearsals.

There is an excellent related and dedicated website www.sappho.com.au with a photo gallery including several pictures of the composer with Durrell. Glanville-Hicks gives Sappho herself a rather Tosca-like musical characterisation in the opera and this is not entirely to my taste, but that should not distract from the excitement I feel that this key

work of Durrell's should see an incarnation which can no longer be called "ill-fated."

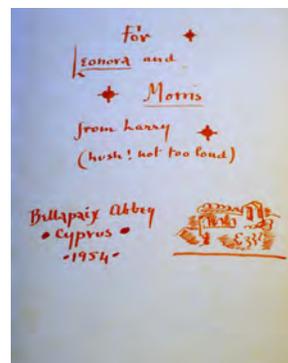
Glanville-Hicks' biographer, Deborah Hayes, tells us in the CD booklet that "Durrell's play is an intimate and personal exploration of the poetic imagination – the conflict between the creative mind, such as Sappho's, which seeks a still, quiet focus, and the world of action that can intrude. With Durrell's approval, Glanville-Hicks cut scenes, summarised others in a few lines, much reduced the dialogue throughout and changed the ending. The composer and playwright collaborated via letters, and in September 1963, Durrell and his third wife, Claude, visited Glanville-Hicks in Athens."

I have recently discovered Spotify and was pleased to find the opera available on that site. Durrell's views on the opera are not recorded. Doubtless he would have been flattered at the prospect of his play receiving the attention of a skilled and gifted composer with the prospect of the opera being staged.

An Inscribed "Pope Joan"

In my heyday of Durrell collecting, it was not infrequent to find some rarity lurking in the back of a bookshop or in a Modern Firsts dealer's catalogue. As specialist book dealers put their catalogues online, the thrill of that chase has disappeared. Presently, my first port of call online is www.abebooks.com, and earlier this year I found advertised a copy of Durrell's translation published by Derek Verschoyle in 1954 of Royidis' "romantic biography"—"Pope Joan." Although lacking a dust wrapper and slightly dusty (a

bookseller would describe it as in "very good" condition), this has a quite spectacular inscription: "for Leonora and Morris from Larry (hush! Not too loud). Bellapaix Abbey, Cyprus, 1954." I have not been able to establish who the dedicatees were nor the significance of the exhortation to quietness in the inscription.



Alongside the inscription which is in red ink, Durrell has provided a little thumbnail sketch of the Abbey

itself. During a visit to the dealer, Peter Harrington in Chelsea (the location of the shop in an expensive part of London will give a clue as to some of the high prices called for by this dealer), I inspected the book and finding that the shop assistant was not only a fan of Durrell but also willing to negotiate on price, I achieved that excellent compromise between what I thought the book was worth (very subjective) and what the dealer felt it was worth (an objective rate).

I am pleased to say that book is now in my collection, but the visit was slightly more costly than I expected when I found that one of Oscar Epfs' paintings was also available and, likewise, I bought this after some dignified negotiation on price.

Harrington's recent catalogue "Modern Literature, Part One A – K" offers for sale a number of interesting Durrell

items, some of which are illustrated in the catalogue which, for that reason alone, is worth investigating. (See <http://www.peterharrington.co.uk/catalogue/modern-literature-part-one-a-k/>) £6500 would have bought you a copy of Durrell's very early 1932 collection "Ten Poems" inscribed to Walter De la Mare. £4500 would have bought you a copy of the 1938 Obelisk Press edition of "The Black Book" extravagantly inscribed by Durrell in 1973 to his friend, the actor, Peter Bull. If you still had money to spare, another £6500 would have bought you a copy of the 1950 pamphlet "Deus Loci" inscribed to T.S. Eliot.

Patrick Leigh Fermor

Artemis Cooper's page-turning biography of PLF is now available in paperback with several references to Durrell. Leigh Fermor's easy style belies the great struggle he encountered when trying to commit his vast knowledge and imagination to the page. Struggling to continue with his book *Roumeli*, he wrote to Durrell seeking a "huge and sympathetic room, with plenty of striding space, a large worktable, a shaded lamp, a bed and a view plunging away into the distance, costing practically nothing." With echoes of Larry's own way of finding girlfriends, he picks up Annie, an off-duty Verlaine-reading maid, who shows him around Bordeaux and who gave him some of "the happiest hours of my existence."

Durrell was not at home when Leigh Fermor arrived in Sommières unannounced in 1961 but was at home for his visit in

1968 when he found Larry "better than ever, not nearly as circular as they say, ebullient and full of beans and ideas, waiting when we arrived with a giant magnum" (344). One can imagine the jollity and frivolity of such a meeting and how one would have loved to have been a fly on the wall for this reunion.

Leigh Fermor never himself completed the third volume of his autobiographical trilogy, but his extended work in progress, now completed by his biographer Artemis Cooper and highly respected travel writer Colin Thubron, has recently been published as *The Broken Road: From the Iron Gates to Mount Athos*.

Audio Books

The catalogue of works available for download has recently been enhanced significantly with unabridged readings of *The Black Book*, *Prospero's Cell*, *Bitter Lemons*, *The Dark Labyrinth* and *Pope Joan* having been added this year. Already available from Audible Modern Vanguard are the last three novels in the *Alexandria Quartet* but not, curiously, *Justine*. The recordings made by this provider are unabridged. All four volumes of the *Quartet* are available in download form from the 1995 readings by Nigel Anthony in Naxos AudioBooks, but as competent as these are, they are all abridged readings. Durrell does very well indeed for audio books when compared with, say, William Golding; only *Lord of the Flies* is available.

Durrell in the London *Guardian* newspaper and BBC Radio 4.

The London *Guardian* continues to serve Durrell well, having featured the *Quartet* as part of the centenary celebrations in 2012. See <http://www.theguardian.com/books/lawrence-durrell>.

Of particular interest are John Crace's "Digested Reads." Crace mimics the style of each author for whose book he is providing a short digested read. These are not simple synopses but satirical and critical commentaries on the work themselves. *Justine* gets the treatment at <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/nov/29/digested-classics-justine-lawrence-durrell>. Crace's tongue in cheek digest of *Justine* starts thus:

I have escaped to this island with the child, Melissa's child. As the night is snatched from darkness by Arcturus, I think of my friends and of my beloved Alexandria, with its iodine-coloured meidan of Mazarita, where the open petal of Melissa's mouth fell upon mine like unslaked summer. Ah Melissa!

Although technically missing Durrell's centenary year by three days, BBC Radio 4 did honour his birthday with a half-hour documentary broadcast on 3 January 2013, "Forgetting a Revolutionary: Lawrence Durrell at 100." See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01phktg>.

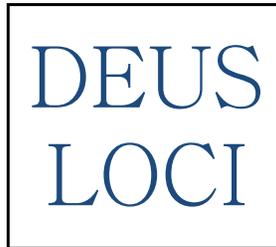
This year Lawrence Durrell is or would have been 100. Tim Marlow sleeps beneath a special shelf above his bed which holds his collection of first editions of Durrell. He is a devotee. What do Durrell and those bright-covered novels of *The Alexandria Quartet* once read

by every open-minded reader mean today? Can his reputation extend beyond his surviving fans and the occasional leftovers of scandal? Should new readers pick him up, what would they find? Do archive recordings and new interviews mark a reassessment of a revolutionary writer in danger of being forgotten?

And Finally

Readers may know of Michael Haag's writing about, amongst other things, Egypt and Alexandria. Yale University Press has commissioned him to write a biography of Durrell. It is well worth keeping an eye on Michael's blog: <http://michaelhaag.blogspot.co.uk/>.

This site obviously focuses on Michael's main interests – recent blogs have been about the Templars, Byron, and Dan Brown's most recent work. Of particular interest to me was Michael's posting in September on the plight of the Villa Ambron, now in serious danger of literally falling down through the neglect of its current owner. Durrell moved into the Villa Ambron in 1943 while he was living in Alexandria [see "Report" on p. 7]. Michael's post includes a short note, with photographs, on his own visit to Alexandria and the villa with Eve Durrell in 1999. There is a particularly tantalising photo of Durrell's writing tower at the villa taken by Paul Gotch in 1943. The picture is hazy because badly exposed but that just adds to the mystique of the place where Durrell worked at the first drafts of *Prospero's Cell* and the *Quartet*.



Anna Lillios

Deus Loci volume 13 is in the final stages of printing and should be out by the end of November. This largest ever issue of *Deus Loci* is guest-edited by Robert Haslam, an independent Durrell scholar living in London. He has gathered what he calls "emended readings" by Corinne Alexandre-Garner, Mary Byrne, Michael Haag, Isabelle Keller, Ray Morrison, Clive Scott, Fiona Tomkinson, Dianne Vipond, and Ralph Yarrow. Also included are reminiscences by Peter Baldwin, Mary Byrne, Paul Gotch, Richard Pine, Barbara Robinson, Anthea Morton-Saner, Ralph Steadman, Frederic-Jacques Temple, and Paula Wislenef. As Rob notes, these reminiscences may be among the last.

Poetry editor David Radavich has conducted another successful White Mice contest, and readers will enjoy prize-winning poems by Steve Lautermilch, Julia Older, Jerome Wyant, Brian Clark, and Paul Soher.

Plans for volume 14, the special centenary issue, are just getting underway. If you've submitted an article for this issue, please be patient. Each article is sent out to two readers, and this process involves time and careful consideration. I hope this issue will be published in time for the Vancouver conference next May. Please submit your articles and

creative work to *Deus Loci*. The journal is listed with EbscoHost, the MLA bibliography, and soon with ProQuest. Please send submissions to Anna@ucf.edu.

"A Wartime Correspondence"

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation has produced and disseminated this compelling dramatic rendering of responses to World War II by Lawrence Durrell and his long-time friend and correspondent, Henry Miller. Pressured by the fearful realities about to engulf their countries of expatriate residence, Durrell's Greece and Miller's France, the two men faced difficult personal decisions. "One ran away," in the unsparing words of the ABC's summation, "while the other stayed and found a new depth in his experience of life."

The program, based on selections from *The Durrell-Miller Letters, 1935-1980* as edited by Ian S. MacNiven, was written and recorded by David Green and Lyn Gallacher. The broadcast, incorporating also comments by MacNiven and by Michael Haag, aired at 1:05 pm on Sunday, 14 April 2013; it was very well received by listeners. Those who have the opportunity to hear it will probably agree with David Green's own assessment that "the actor who plays Durrell [David Tredinnick] . . . has reproduced Durrell's voice rather well."

(The editors express their gratitude to Ken Gammage who supplied them with a recording of the broadcast.)

ON MIRACLE GROUND XVIII

DURRELL PLACE: TRANSLATION, MIGRATION, LOCATION

Vancouver, BC
14-17 May 2014

Following on the Durrell 2012 centenary celebration in London hosted by the British Library and Goodenough College, the 18th biannual conference of the International Lawrence Durrell Society will take place in Vancouver, British Columbia, at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Papers and panels on all aspects of Durrell's works or those of his milieu are welcome. Paper and panel proposals related to "place" are particularly encouraged. Relevant themes may include Durrell's position as a writer during the collapse of the British Empire, the politics of place in his various foreign residences (Argentina, Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Egypt, etc.), the spatial turn or cultural field in criticism, shifting national boundaries in his works and across his life, or the various translations across languages and locations in Durrell's work.

The conference organizers welcome the submission of short abstracts (250 words) with a short biography (50 words) for proposed PAPERS or COMPLETE PANELS by **15 January 2014**. Proposals for complete panels should include an abstract for the panel as a whole with the names, titles, and biographies of each presenter.

For the first time, the ILDS will include seminars in the conference. Seminars will meet for 3 hours and include a maximum of 6 participants whose papers will be read by the group prior to the conference—seminar leaders will guide the discussion of each paper and the overall seminar theme. Proposals from seminar leaders should be submitted by **1 December 2013**, and accepted seminars will be listed by **15 December 2013** for registration. Seminars that consider Durrell's works in relation to his contemporaries or milieu are particularly welcome, as are professional seminars focused on pedagogy, curricula, or the discipline.

All submissions are via the ILDS website: http://lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/omgxviii/