THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

There are only a few notes for the President's Column this fall, but one of them is especially sad. At the beginning of February, Lawrence Durrell's younger daughter, Sappho Jane, committed suicide in London. As your President, I have sent a letter of sympathy to Durrell on behalf of the Society. For such loss there can never be any adequate reparation.

* * * * * * *

I have spoken to Wayne Markert at the University of Baltimore, and he assures me that the On Miracle Ground II conference Proceedings should be finished and printed this fall. Typeset galleys and Kinser illustrations are in and final layout will be completed during early November. Extra copies will be available at Pennsylvania State University.

Jay Brigham, editor of the Proceedings for OMG. III is at work on that volume and plans to get copies of each presentation to its author. Eventually, we will need funds to print that manuscript, so any suggestions should be sent to Jay or to members of the Publications Board.

Jay has also informed me that numbers 3 and 4 of Volume VII of Deus Loci: The Lawrence Durrell Quarterly are in the works.

The program for On Miracle Ground IV at Pennsylvania State University next 11-12 April is developing well. Lawrence Durrell plans to attend, the call for papers has gone out, proposals and papers are coming in, and all signs point to an exciting conference under Michael Begnal's expert coordination. The latest word from Michael is that John Hawkes is going to attend the conference; he would like to discuss Durrell's use of language or perhaps the state of modern fiction with Durrell, who is delighted at the prospect.

If you have not already sent Michael your ideas and proposals, please do so. Although the official deadline is 1 December, proposals received by the beginning of the second week of January will still be considered.

FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

I hope that this finds all Durrellians enjoying the beginning of a good autumn. The appearance of Quinx and the anticipation of On Miracle Ground IV are certainly part of the pleasure of this season.

My husband and I spent much of the summer in Sicily, which occasionally put us in mind of Durrell's (Where can one go that the man has not been?). Our journey around Sicily was counterclockwise, unlike Durrell's clockwise one, but certainly we visited many of the same places. Durrell's visit to this island as recorded in a Sicilian Carousel has always struck me as a most un-Durrellian proceeding--two weeks on a tour bus? At any rate, I think we enjoyed ourselves more than he did. With a car (Sicilian roads are remarkable in every sense of the word), we were able to explore, following our own whims. Some of the Greek ruins in western Sicily--especially Segesta--are wonderful for now being out in the middle of nowhere: coming around a bend in a country road and encountering a wonderful temple or theater in splendid isolation is quite different from dealing with throngs of tourists, guides, hawkers, and traffic police that are inevitably now present at most of the major Greek sites. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay.

At the beginning of the summer, we spent a week in Venice at the Gianbattista Vico-James Joyce Congress. The sessions--at the Cimi Foundation headquarters on San Giorgio--were marvelous, but it was a disappointment to hear one of the professors (a Joycean, not a Vichian) who opened the Congress list writers', in addition to Joyce, who were influenced by Vico's theory that history goes in circles, corso e ricorso, and name almost every writer imaginable except... It was as if Durrell did not exist, really that much work needed to raise Durrell's visibility?

Now that we have The Avignon Quintet "complet," I hope that we can make more readers take notice of a genuinely creative writer. Bravo, Durrell!
Gregory Dickson
SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

To me October means turning leaves, Halloween, colder weather, the World Series, and Society membership renewal. Since members receive the Herald, we have decided to kill two mailings with one stamp—you will not be receiving a separate renewal reminder in the mail this year. We have made only one change in our usual procedure: we now offer a two-year membership. This is a response to requests from our outside-the-U.S. members who have had difficulty in the past with money exchange. It's also good for the Society bank account; since we lose a certain amount in dues each year to pay the foreign-money-changers in Denver, one larger check will net us more than two smaller ones.) And since we are a democratic Society, this offer will be good for all members, U.S. citizens included. The rates are:

One Year (1 September 1985-31 August 1986)
   Single membership $ 7.50
   Couple 10.00

Two Year (1 September 1985-31 August 1987)
   Single membership $15.00
   Couple 20.00

Please send your checks to me, but made out to The Lawrence Durrell Society:
   Greg Dickson
   Department of English
   New Mexico Highlands University
   Las Vegas, New Mexico 87701

For your convenience, we have attached a membership form to this number of the Herald.

My home address is still valid, but I live on a rural route and sometimes pieces of mail disappear before I can get to the mail box. Remember that your dues entitle you to a subscription to both: the Herald and Deus Locii: The Lawrence Durrell Quarterly. You might also keep in mind that our request for membership as an MLA affiliate was denied in part because of our (small) membership list. You could point out to your colleagues the benefits of membership—our two publications and our conferences, for example—all for one, small, tax-deductible payment. (We are an "official" non-profit organization in the U.S.) Get a friend to join the Lawrence Durrell Society!

Speaking of membership, we have some Durrellians to welcome to our fold:
   Jean B. and Robert L. Sot

Professor Raymond J. Wilson III
Department of English
Loras College
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

and we welcome back some long-time members who never really left us—just got caught in a dues payment mix-up:

Professors W. H. and V. P. Rubrecht
Dept. of Germanic and Slavic Studies
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan
Canada S4S 0A2

I wish everyone a pleasant and productive fall, and I hope everyone has begun making preparations for a trip to Pennsylvania in April. I have.

SOCIETY NOTICES

Durrell Special Session Quashed

Once again the Modern Language Association has turned us down. A year ago our request for allied organization status was denied, and we were told to use the special session process. For the December convention in Chicago, Carol Price proposed a special session to consider the newly completed Quincunx—"The Garden of Pines: Structure, Theme, and Symbol in Lawrence Durrell's Avignon Quintet"—and the MLA rejected this proposal. One would think that a detailed study of a major writer's recently concluded novel sequence would be a significant contribution to the MLA Convention's offerings. The MLA did not agree, and doubted that the studies proposed would provide "new insights." The MLA's recent refusals notwithstanding, the Society believes that scholars interested in Durrell studies should propose special sessions for the annual conventions.

Durrellians In Chicago

Peter Christensen, Bill Godshalk, and Jim Nichols will be attending the Modern Language Association Convention in Chicago in December and would welcome an informal meeting with other Durrellians. A dinner get-together? Communications at the convention are often difficult, but try leaving messages on the main bulletin board.

On Miracle Ground IV

There will be a meeting of the Conference Committee and the Executive Board during the second week of January to make final decisions for the OMG IV program. There is still room for a few more presentations. If you have been thinking about submitting a proposal but fear you are too late, act now! Your proposal will be considered, provided it arrives in time for the second-week-of-January meeting. Write to Michael H. Begnal, Dept. of English, Pennsylvania State University, 117 Burrowes Building, University Park, Penn. 16802.

Don't miss this year's Durrell conference! Lawrence Durrell will take part. John Hawkes will be there. We would love to see all the Society members, participants of past conferences, and many new faces. Reserve 11-12 April and 13 April for the Society meeting—for an heraldic adventure.
Membership Renewal

Remember to renew your membership in
the Lawrence Durrell Society! The official beginning of the new Society year was
the first of September; keep your membership current to ensure an uninterrupted
procession of Heralds and other Society mailings.

Herald Number 6

The next issue of the Herald is scheduled for 15 March. Please send Durrell
and Durrell-related information you come across and personal news you wish to share
with Society members to any of the editors:

Greg Dickson
Department of English
New Mexico Highlands University
Las Vegas, New Mexico 87701

Susan MacNiven

Wayne Markert

Peter Baldwin

VIEWS FROM PUDDING ISLAND

The first manuscript of Justine must be one of the most fascinating literary manu-
scripts. Although it is some eighteen months since I have had a chance to look
at the government service exercise books which Durrell used for this first draft
(written in longhand to avoid waking the sleeping child Sappho in the early hours
of the Cyprus mornings), I recall vividly how they are crosshatched by Durrell's
drawings and abstract designs in colored inks—attempts at a different form of ex-
pression, aids to creation. Significantly, we find a number of reworkings by Durrell,
in English, of Cavafy's poem 'The City.' I'm told that this poem haunted Durrell,
which is attested to by his decision to reproduce it at the end of Justine. The
poem also comes under scrutiny in Philip Sherrard's piece in the review Temenos,
No. 5, entitled "C. P. Cavafy: A Reappraisal." Sherrard reviews a number of
writers' critical approaches to Cavafy, including Durrell's in The Alexandria
Quartet. He casts a different view on the apparent despondency of "The City." On
what authority, Sherrard asks, do we consider this an autobiographical poem, and
assume the "Black ruins" are those of his (i.e., Cavafy's) life? Sherrard suggests
that, in fact, the poet is admonishing "self-indulgent daydreamers" who "will
merely continue on their futile course of self-corruption."

The City

Translated by Lawrence Durrell

You tell yourself: I'll be gone
To some other land, some other sea,
To a city lovelier far than this
Could ever have been or hoped to be--
Where every step now tightens the noose
A heart in a body buried and out of use:
How long, how long must I be here
Confined among these dreary purities
Of the common mind? Wherever now I look
Black ruins of my life rise into view.
So many years have I been here
Spending and squandering, and nothing

There's no new land, my friend, no New sea; for the city will follow you,
In the same streets you'll wander endlessly,
The same mental suburbs slip from youth
to age,
In the same house go white at last--
The city is a cage.
No other places, always this
Your earthly landfall, and no ship
exists
To take you from yourself. Ah! don't
see
Just as you've ruined your life in this
One plot of ground you've ruined its
worth
Everywhere now--over the whole earth?

[Justine, 1957, by permission of Curtis
Brown for Lawrence Durrell.]

London was a city no self-respecting
Durrell fan would have missed at the end
of May, when, for the first time since the
publication of the 1980 Collected Poems,
1931–1974, Durrell came to the U. K. to
publicize the publication of a new book,
Quinx or The Ripper's Tale. No less than
four signing sessions were arranged in the
space of as many days, an admirable feat
for a writer recovering from illness and
in his 73rd year. I would like to think
that the happiest of those sessions was at
Bernard Stone's remarkable bookshop in
Lamb's Conduit Street, London. Very soon
after the session started, Bernard's shop
was thronged with enthusiastic readers of
Durrell's work. Many had bought what must
have seemed to be very large stacks of
Durrelliana for Durrell to inscribe. I was
one of those perspiring in a shop packed
with his admirers, grateful for Durrell's
patience in signing so many books. In
front of me in the queue was a lady who
could not decide whether to buy Justine or
one of the island books as a starter in
reading Durrell. Behind me.... well, I
can vouch for the fact that Society member
Ray Morrison was in London this summer!
There was also an atmosphere of reunion
which I was able to capture in part with a
photo of Durrell, Bernard Stone and Alan
Thomas outside Bernard's shop. No doubt
the editors of the Herald will be listing
fully the critical and publicity coverage of
the U. K. press, although the laurels go
to Allan Massie in the Scotsman of 25
May. When he reviewed Constance, Massie
admitted having disliked The Alexandria
Quartet when it was published; but his
opinion of Durrell's writing has changed
to such an extent that in his review of
Quinx he states:
With the publication of this novel, Lawrence Durrell brings off what is perhaps the most remarkable double in modern English literature; certainly I can't immediately think of another post-war novelist who has contrived two novel-sequences such as The Alexandria Quartet and now the Avignon Quintet. Though others like Anthony Powell and C. P. Snow have written multivolume novels which are actually longer than the Quartet and Quintet together... nevertheless to bring off a double as Durrell has done demands an extraordinary effort of concentrated imagination, invention and virtuosity.

Readers looking for further accolades of Durrell from respectable sources are referred to George Steiner's collection of essays, Language and Silence, just republished by Faber. Steiner states that Durrell "stands in the old tradition of the fullness of prose. He is attempting to make language once again commensurate with the manifold truths of the experienced world." This volume also contains Steiner's commendable critical essay, "Lawrence Durrell and the Baroque Novel," on The Alexandria Quartet, Clea in particular.

Finally, if you would like to spend a vacation in Lawrence Durrell's house on Corfu—or rather Anastasius' house where Lawrence and Nancy rented rooms—then contact Corfu Villas Ltd. (43 Cheval Place, Knightsbridge, London) apartments are available in the house. The Durrells' rooms were on the first floor; the ground floor is now a taverna!

Birmingham, England 4th July 1985

PEOPLE, PLACES AND PUBLICATIONS

* For the first time in five years, LAWRENCE DURRELL went to London for the publication of one of his books. On 28 May 1985, the day that Quinx or The Ripper's Tale was issued, Durrell began a book-signing marathon by autographing over 400 copies of Quinx at Hatchards. On 30 May he had a book signing at Mowbrays; and on the 31st he held a signing session at W.H. Smith in the early afternoon and another one at Bernard Stone's Turret Bookshop in the early evening. Durrell was interviewed for newspapers, magazines, and radio shows. He was scheduled to be "cast away" on Desert Island Discs, a BBC radio show on which the guest explains which eight records he would take with him to an imaginary island; however, the show's presenter died before Durrell's planned appearance and the program was canceled.

The completion of the Quinx and Durrell's trip to London to welcome the fifth volume seem to have brought Durrell to the attention of a wide variety of the British public. Not only were there references to Durrell in the literary and news sections of newspapers, but his name was invoked in travel articles and advertisements, personal interest stories, and even in an article about real estate sales (See "Recent Publications By or Concerning Lawrence Durrell").

In Paris on 14 June, Durrell was a guest on Apostrophes. In an article about the "live, 90-minute, prime-time, Friday-night" TV program, "The World's Most Popular Book Show: Five Million Viewers in Prime Time" (The New York Times Book Review, 29 September 1985, p. 31), Frank J. Friel writes about the show, "Apostrophes" is a French phenomenon, a literary discussion that regularly attracts five million viewers to Antenne 2, one of France's three state-run television channels. It is quite simply one of the most popular programs in France. Friel calls Bernard Pivot, the creator and moderator of Apostrophes, "the most powerful figure in the French literary world... If a book is discussed on 'Apostrophes,' special tables will appear in bookstores all over France the next morning to feature that book. A sign on the table will simply say 'Apostrophes.' "Durrell's appearance on this show should have boosted the sales of Sebastian, which came out in French last spring.

* MICHAEL BEGnal gave two papers—"Narrative Structure in Finnegans Wake" and "Constance Rain in Finnegans Wake"—at the James Joyce Symposium in Philadelphia, 12-16 June. Mike reported: "A lot of friendly drinking went on and I tried to tell everybody there about Lawrence Durrell."

* The Keeper of the Eggplant of the Society for the Celebration of Barthomania, a.k.a. ROBERT BORT, turned up a curious note about Durrell. L.: "Lawrence Durrell is the anagrammatic pseudonym of Ellen Ward Curier, born 1901. She wrote these books to get money enough to live on while she translated Homer." The editors of the Herald have been trying to contact Ms. Curier for comment on this shocking allegation, but so far our efforts have proved futile.

* By invitation, JENNIFER BREMER attended a meeting of the editors of the new Swedenborgian magazine, Chrysalis, from 13 to 20 August, and sent the following report:

"The purpose of the magazine is to give people who are interested in Swedenborg and his church an idea of what this slant on religion actually is. So far, two issues of Chrysalis have been created. The third issue has as its theme the Wise Woman. I gave the group two major ideas. First, that Watts created a wise woman in the character of Crazy Jane; and second, that Durrell traces the process by which a woman matures into wisdom in the character of Clea.

"The Swedenborgian editors were quite taken by Crazy Jane and asked me to write an article on her, which I've done. They were not so keen on Clea. I learned that abstracting a Durrell character, at least this particular one, from the context of the novels and presenting her to minds that have not encountered the novels, can make the character sound too far-fetched. In the wisdom of my own academic expertise I don't find Clea a cartoon to whom highly unlikely coincidences occur. But there we are, the editors did not have sufficient imagination!

"All is not lost for Durrell, however, with this group. In my Jane article,
called (skillfully) 'Wise and Crazy Jane.' I said the rote thing—that Yeats was influenced by Blake who was influenced by Boehme and on back, through the schoolmen, as Durrell would have it. I informed my readers that what we're dealing with here is the hermetic tradition, and I brought them up to date by saying Durrell writes with one foot (at least) in that stream.

- MARY J. BYRNE asked Greg to deliver the following message to all of us: "Should any of the Society members be in this part of the world (Temara, Morocco), I'd love to see them. Temara is about 15 kilometres from Rabat."

- Last spring PETER CHRISTENSEN gave a paper on Powys and George Eliot at the first North American J. C. Powys Conference, spoke on Joyce and Barnes at the Dyman Barnes Conference in Philadelphia, and attended the Society of Cinema Studies in New York. He went to the University of Iowa on an NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities) summer study grant and worked on French film and literature from 1919-1939. In October, Peter delivered a paper on Octeau's "Return film at the first International Tristan and Isolde Conference.

- During the first part of the summer GEORGE CLEYET was busy writing a second-year French textbook (he completed a first-year text last year). In August, George went to France; one of his stops was the village of Eliot, which he described as "full of Roman remains and souvenirs of the Templars who governed it during the 11th and 14th centuries."

- In July, GREGORY DICKSON presented a paper on "The Role of the Writing Lab in Open-Enrollment University" to a conference of The Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association at Boise State University. In late October he is scheduled to present a paper on "Writing Skills and Special Services Students: Reversing a Trend" at the conference of the Southwestern Special Services Directors in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

- JOHN LENZI has learned there are Buddhist centers in Barnet, Vermont and Boulder, Colorado that were established by the same group of Tibetan Buddhists that founded Kagyu-Ling at the Château de Plaige in France. Kagyu-Ling is the place Durrell wrote about in his article "Lamas in a French Forest." November 1984 Telegraph Sunday Magazine.

- NANCY LEWIS will be teaching in Bristol, England for a semester beginning in January 1986. Fortunately, her spring break there will coincide with the Durrell conference here, so Nancy will be with us for OMG IV.

- IAN and SUSAN MACNIVEN met CAROL PEIRCE in southern France in May, and together they explored a few Cathar sites—among them Puivert, Montségur, and Pouillans—and the village of Château. At the Château de Montségur, they found the date "1244-1984" written with the lightning-bolt-like 4s that John Lenzi and his friend had discovered the year before (See Herald No. 4).

Ian and Susan attended D. H. LAWRENCE: Creativity and Conscience, the DHL centennial conference held at Tufts University 13-16 June; Ian gave a paper, "Lawrence and Durrell," on the "Studies in Influence" panel.

- CAROL PEIRCE spent ten weeks in London last spring doing research for her book on Durrell. At the end of May she returned to Maryland to help BROOKE PEIRCE celebrate his retirement from Goucher College. This fall Brooke is a visiting professor at the State University of New York/Oswego.

- From Jakarta, BRIAN D. SMITH, who works with the British Council, wrote: "H. R. STONE'S journey to Durrell in China (issue 4 of the Herald) reminded me that I lectured on Durrell at Fudan University, Shanghai, in '79 and presented copies of The Alexandria Quartet and other works to the University Library. Clearly Shanghai's reputation for resistance to 'foreign' culture was a thing of the past—well-deserved, and it is encouraging to read that a translation breakthrough seems to have been achieved. "You may be interested to know that I am now trying to encourage the study of Durrell in Indonesian university English departments in an effort to enrich and diversify the standard TEFL/Eng Lit offering."

- SOAD SOBHY is writing a simplified Arabic version of her thesis, "Lawrence Durrell the Fabulator, A Foreign Perspective of Egypt in The Alexandria Quartet," for an Egyptian publishing house. She is also working on a study of the image of women in the novels of Durrell. In describing her study, Soad included a capsule history of the Egyptian novel: "My study is written in Arabic and deals with the development of the image of the Egyptian woman from El Akkad's works (El Akkad is a leading Egyptian poet and novelist) to Nawal El Saadawi's. El Akkad portrays the traditional patriarchal antagonism towards women whereas Nawal El Saadawi is a staunch feminist. Though not a great novelist, she gives a very frank and not very palatable image of the sexual situation in Egypt (so far a taboo subject). She writes in English and has been published in the United States. [Books In Print 1984-1985 lists only one work in English by her, The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World, a 1982 translation published by Beacon Press.] Naqib Mahfouz, Egypt's most famous and prolific writer, gives in his naturalistic novels a moving image of middle-class women, the class that has suffered most from confinement and tradition. He has been translated into several languages. Heinemann has so far published three of his works: Mida'a Alley, Miramar, and Sons of Old Alley. The American University of Cairo is involved in translating his masterpiece, The Trilogy of Old Cairo. Alley's work has been translated by myself in collaboration with James Kenne, but so far it has not been published. [Books In Print lists three works in '84 by Mahfouz, all published by Three Continents: Miramar translated in 1978; Children of Gâebelawi and Midâq Alley translated in 1981.]"
Tewfik El Hakim and Youssef Idris are two other major Egyptian novelists whose works have been translated into English. (Books In Print has one title in English for the former, Fate of a Cockroach published by Heinemann in 1973, and one for the latter, The Cheapest Nights issued by Three Continents in 1978.) The novel form is relatively new, as the first Egyptian novel was written in 1913 by Muhammad Haikal.

Soad mentioned that influences of The Alexandria Quartet "can be traced in the structures of two novels by Ghannem and Mahfouz." Books In Print lists one work in English by Fathy Ghannem, The Man Who Lost His Shadow, published by Heinemann in 1980 and by Three Continents in 1981, but this may not be the novel influenced by Durrell. A Fall 1985 Columbia University Press catalogue offers three titles in English by Naguib Mahfouz: Wedding Song, Autumn Quail, and The Thief and the Dogs. Wedding Song must be the novel influenced by Durrell; the description of it reads in part: "Wedding Song is a story told four times by four different characters."

* There is a correction for Susan Vander Closter's home address: she lives at 40 Everett Avenue (not Everett, as reported in Herald No. 4), Providence, Rhode Island 02906.

* We have new addresses for the following Society members:
  - Mary J. Byrne
  - Suzanne Henig
  - John Lenzi
  - Anna Lillios
  - Donna and Mark Lund
  - Soad Hussein Sobhy
  - Rosemary Taylor

Susan S. MacNiven

RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY
OR CONCERNING LAWRENCE DURRELL

* Quixy or The Ripper's Tale, the final volume of Lawrence Durrell's The Avignon Quintet, appeared in London (Faber and Faber, £8.95) in May and in New York (Viking, $15.95) in late August.

* Éditions Gallimard (Paris) published Sebastian ou Les passions souveraines last spring; it was translated into French by Paule Guivarch and sells for 75 FF. During the summer the Faber paperback of Sebastian or The Passion of the Saints made its appearance; the price is £2.95.

* Faber also recently issued a new paperback edition of The Dark Labyrinth, with a cover design by David Gentleman; it sells for £3.95.


* Antrobus Complete—all the Antrobus stories with drawings by Mark Boxer—will be published by Faber and Faber in October. The price will be £8.95.

* A Durrell work is included in Great Spy Stories from Fiction edited by Allen Dulles. Bernard Stone (The Turret Book Shop, 42 Lamb's Conduit Street, London WC1N 3LJ) is selling the London 1985 edition for £9.95.


* Peter Baldwin also discovered Views from a French Farmhouse, a "coffee-table book" by Julian More with photographs by his daughter. Among the "liberal quotations from writers on Provence" are three extracts from Durrell's writing: one each from Livia, Monsieur, and The Plant-Magic Man.

There are three other editions of Ludo Chardenon's In Praise of Wild Herbs: Remedies & Recipes from Old Provence Besides the Capra Press one of 1984 listed in the first number of the Herald. Century Publishing Co. ( London) issued a lovely cloth edition early in 1985. It has a foreword by Lawrence Durrell ( which was first published as a letter to the editor in 1973 ) and a preface by Gerald Durrell, a blurb by each Durrell on the back flyleaf, drawings by Paul Cox, and plant illustrations by Brian Dear.

Originally this book appeared in French as Memoires et Recettes de Ludo Chardenon, Recteur de St Antoine Languedoc ( Avignon Alain Barthelemy & Actes Sud, 1982, paperback). This edition has a foreword by Lawrence Durrell, an introduction by Docteur Dominique Rueff, photographs by Bob ter Schiphorst, and a blurb by Durrell on the back cover; on the front cover is a photo of Chardenon and Durrell, and among the photos in the text is one of Durrell (with his back to the camera).

The German edition, Vom Lob der Kräuter, Die Erinnerungen und Rezepte eines Kräutermachers aus dem Languedoc (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1982, paperback), has a foreword by Lawrence Durrell, an introduction by Dr. Dominique Rueff, and photographs by Bob ter Schiphorst. Two photos of Durrell are included in the text.

The Century English, the French, and the German editions may be purchased from Ludo Chardenon, des Planats, Route d'Aubais, 30250 Sommieres, France; the price of each book is $10 (U.S.), which includes handling and postage.

A review of the Century edition in the Reading Evening Post of 16 April 1985 describes the contents of the book. "Famous for his wild herb preparations that cure and relieve nearly all diseases and ailments, in this book [Chardenon] reveals the recipes of his trade." There is also a section "devoted to listing which herbs are best for various dishes--and another section containing some quite delicious recipes--soups, stews, wines--and one for Grandmother's Jam."

Durrell wrote the Preface to Vintzentos Kornazos's Protokritos (c. 1587), which Theodore Stephanides finished translating shortly before his death in 1983 and which he dedicated to Lawrence and Gerald Durrell. It has been published by Papazisis Publishers (Athens, Greece, 1984), and is available from the Euromed Press Ltd., 3 Manchester Road, London E 14 (price in the U.K.: £16 & £2 packing & postage; in the U.S.: $20 & $4 packing & postage). This is a beautifully illustrated and produced book.

INTERVIEWS WITH LAWRENCE DURRELL:

After describing Durrell's physical traits ( "It is still splendidly intriguing as one of the greatest sensual British authors is only 5ft 2ins tall, with a large bullish head placed on a muscular frame." ) and providing short summaries of The Alexandria Quartet and The Avignon Quintet, Andrew Morgan, in Durrell the Great, Weaving his Sensual Spells and Basking in Praise (Liverpool Daily Post of 29 May 1985), discusses Durrell's present life and interests.

Desmond Christy and Lawrence Durrell discuss The Avignon Quintet, Freud, acupuncture, and England in "The Devil and Mr Durrell" (The Guardian of 28 May 1985). Reflecting on his two major works, Durrell states: "Looking back now on the whole thing I think what I was after was one Occidental novel and one Oriental. Undoubtedly I hoped to plot the interesting state of our philosophy--the headlong collision of Oriental and Occidental philosophy."

An interview of Durrell by Charles Nevin, "Lawrence Durrell on the Point of Avignon," appears in the Sunday Telegraph of 26 May 1985. The Avignon Quintet, Durrell's background, English criticism, and Durrell as writer are the main subjects discussed.

Jolan Chang, Henry Miller, the present position of women, death, Durrell's painting, Freud and Jung, T. S. Eliot, Sartre, and Conrad Moricand and his horoscope of Durrell are the topics in the second part [see Herald No. 4 for the listing of the first part] of the Jean-Pierre Graf and Bernard-Claude Gauthier Interview of Durrell, Lawrence d'arabescues: 1 Galaxie Durrell (Constance, Switzerland), No. 4 of 23 January 1985, pp. 17 & 19.

The Durrell-Jean Montalbetti interview, "Lawrence Durrell en dix mouvements," (see Herald No. 4), has been translated into Spanish and slightly shortened in El Pais (Madrid), 21 October 1984, "Libros" section, pp. 1 & 4, where it is titled "Lawrence Durrell: 'Escribo mi propio drama.'"

In July, Society member Susan Vander Clooster's Joyce Cary and Lawrence Durrell: A Reference Guide was published in Boston by G. K. Hall ($48 cloth). This 240-page annotated bibliography lists the works of the two authors and then provides a comprehensive analysis of book reviews, dissertations, and important criticism in both English and foreign languages about their writings from 1937 to 1983. Susan has written an introductory essay comparing Cary's and Durrell's work.

Peter Baldwin notes that Cary and Durrell are "sometimes mentioned in the same breath because of their both writing in trilogy/tetralogy forms." The wrapper of a copy of Cary's Herself Surprised refers to Cary's trilogy (Herself Surprised, Be a Pilgrim, and The Horse's Mouth) as anticipating "the somewhat interlinear technique that Laurence [sic] Durrell was to develop later in The Alexandrian [sic] Quartet."

LDS member Corinne Alexandre-Garnier's Le Quatuor d'Alexandrie, fragmentation et écriture. Etude sur l'amour, la femme et l'écriture dans le roman de Lawrence Durrell did make its appearance this year as announced in Herald No. 4. Published by Editions Peter Lang (Bern, Francfort-sur-Maine, New York), it is Volume 136 of Publications Universitaires Européennes: Sér. XIV, Langue et littérature anglo-saxonnes. Contact Corinne for purchasing
information (1, rue Trousseau, 75011 Paris).

* Pierre Debray-Ritzen, in "Lawrence Durrell et le mélilo-mélodéologique" (in a paper of 14 June 1985), is very negative about Sébastian ou Les passions souveraines. He considers the Alexandrian scenes out of place; he accuses Durrell of discourse -ing pedantically about autism, paranoia, and psychopathy and "Le résultat est misérable"; and he finds the book full of Freudian rubbish, sadism, and anti-Semitism.

* Bertrand Poirot-Delpech's "Sébastian ou Les passions souveraines de Lawrence Durrell, Manifeste du 'durréalisme'" (Le Monde, 26 April 1985, p. 28) is a thoughtful and well-documented review, which ends with a definition of "durréalisme": "morceaux de décors rescapés d'un désastre, fragments d'événements qu'on dirait survenus dans la pièce d'à côté, et avec lesquels l'artiste c'est sa fonction glorieuse, compose puzzles et scénarios."

* "In Brief," West Sussex Evening Argus, 16 August 1985. In this short outline of Sébastian, the reviewer warns that Durrell's "writing style could put many off."

* Jon Massey, in a brief paragraph about Sébastian ("Pick of the Paperbacks," Western Morning News, 6 July 1985), calls it "heavily people, rarefied but absorbing."

* "Sébastian, by Lawrence Durrell" in Northants Chronicle & Echo, 4 July 1985, a mere announcement of the paperback edition, states that the fourth novel shows all Durrell's "usual imagination, character-portrayal and freakish wit."

* Noting the new edition of Sébastian, Don Suton (in "Paperbacks," Liverpool Daily Post, 6 June 1985) calls it an "elegant and shrill novel."

* Terence Moix considers the first four books of the Quincunx in "Libros escuipidos en carne viva, El quinteto encontrado en Aviñón" (El País [Madrid], 21 October 1984, "Libros" section, p. 5). Moix wonders if the Quincunx is a gigantic Gothic novel, and finds similarities in it to Hawthorne's The Marble Faun. He has qualified praise for Durrell's language: "Como siempre en Durrell, el lenguaje es una continua fiesta, con momentos de auténtica féerie, verdadero resumen de todas las posibilidades de ornamentación del idioma." It is interesting to learn that by a peculiar sin of omission the Spanish publisher, published a different press from the one that did Monsieur and with a different translator, made no reference to the first volume. Spanish readers initially thought Livia was an isolated Durrell novel, not part of an anticipated quintet.

* "Durrell Visit" (The Bookseller, 11 May 1985, p. 1943) briefly describes what Durrell's activities in London will be in May when he is there for the launching of Quinx.

* "A Rare Durrell at Hatchards" (Nine to Five, 20 May 1985) alerts the London public to Durrell's signing session at Hatchards on 28 May. The article states it is the first time in five years that Durrell will be available for the publication of one of his books and considers this a literary event--"not simply because of the reputation of the author (there has been renewed speculation about Durrell and the Nobel Prize) but also because of the rarity of his visits here and because this will be the last volume of a Quincunx, begun as long ago as 1974 . . . ."

* Dennis Barker, in "Desert Island Discs Left Adrift after the Death of Roy Plomley" (The Guardian, 30 May 1985), explains that Lawrence Durrell was to have been the guest on the Desert Island Discs radio show after its summer break, but the show may not continue without Plomley.

* "Desert Island Charmer Dies Aged 71" (East Anglian Daily Times, 30 May 1985) also mentions that Durrell was scheduled to be the next guest on Roy Plomley's Desert Island Discs BBC radio show.

* In "Desert Island Gent" (The Sunday Times, 2 June 1985), Stephen Fife states that Durrell "has missed his chance" to be on Roy Plomley's show.

* In its Calendar of Events September 1985, the October Gallery (London) listed "Evening with Lawrence Durrell": "October gallery is most happy to announce that Lawrence Durrell has kindly agreed to an evening of open discussion. Date to be confirmed . . . ."

* "Man, Myth and Machine" (Computing The Magazine, 18 July 1985, pp. 7 & 8), the first of two articles by John Melmoth about fictional computers and what they can tell us about human fears and fantasies, begins with a mention of Durrell's creation: "Since the war, a number of fictional computers have become almost household names. There is Abel in Lawrence Durrell's Tunc and Nunquam, Colossus in D F Jones's Colossus, Epipact in Kurt Vonnegut's Player Piano, HAL in Arthur C Clarke's 2001 and 2010 . . . ."

* Philip Sherrard's "C. P. Cavafy: A Re-appraisal" in Temenos 5 (1984, pp. 167-187) discusses Durrell's and other writers' approaches to Cavafy. This number can be purchased in the U.K. from Element Books, Unit 25, Longmead Industrial Estate, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP9 8LP for £6 plus £1 postage; and in the U.S. from Lindsey Press, RD2, West Stockbridge, Mass. 01266 or Spring Publications, 2500 Routt Street, Dallas, Texas 75201 for $10 plus $1 postage.

* George Steiner's Language and Silence (London: Faber and Faber, May 1985, £5.95) has been reissued as a paperback with a new introduction by the author. It contains discussions of Durrell's writing.
* In the interview with Diane Deriaz by Gilles Costaz, “La Trapèze des poètes” (Le Matin, 12 August 1985, pp. 23-24), one paragraph is devoted to Deriaz’s friendship with Lawrence Durrell.

* In L’Arc, No. 97 (1985), an issue devoted to Henry Miller, there are many references to Durrell; Durrell also appears in two photographs. This can be purchased from L’Arc, Éditions Le Jas, 04230 Revest-Saint-Martin or from Le Nouveau Quartier Latin, 78, Bd. St-Michel, 75006 Paris.

* There are mentions of Durrell in an interview with Alfred Perlès, “La Surprise d’être nonagénaire,” by Nicole Zand (Le Monde, 19 October 1984, p. 25).

* Bryan Moynahan, in “Writers’ Reasons” (The Sunday Times, 7 April 1985), reports on the replies given by 400 of the world’s best-known writers to the question asked by the Paris newspaper Libération: “WHY DO writers write?” Some writers did not think much of the question. Gore Vidal felt that impossible questions attracted impossible answers, which is politer than Lawrence Durrell who thought stupid questions deserved stupid answers.” Libération published a book in April containing the writers’ responses: Pourquoi écrivez-vous?

* In “Best Selling Facts about Marketing Fiction” (by PT in The Times, 6 September 1985), we gleaned information about Durrell’s major publisher. Last year Faber was finally “recognized” as a paperback house by W. H. Smith, the largest bookshop chain in the U.K. Faber’s books have been re-classified as “mass market,” “thus giving Faber access to all the 250 [W. H. Smith] branches, instead of the restricted list of about 100. Faber sales are now 78 per cent paperback, and [the firm] has been paperbacking its books since 1936, holding on to the rights of two of its distinguished authors, Lawrence Durrell and William Golding.” The largest poetry list in paperback belongs to Faber. Two of the points made above are contradicted in “Faber—a Pragmatic Approach to Format” (The Bookseller, 15 June 1985, p. 2408). Here W. H. Smith is credited with having “350-odd” branches, and the date of the first Faber paperbacks is given as 1956: “Faber has been in the business of publishing in paperback since the introduction of Faber Paper Covered Editions in 1956. Moreover, it has a sturdy backlist and, for historical reasons, has not sold paperback rights in two of its major authors, Durrell and Golding, with infinitely more rewarding results both for the authors and Faber than if we had,” said Mr Evans (chairman of Faber).” This article is accompanied by a photo of Durrell signing copies of Quinx at Hatchards.

* D. J. Enright’s Academic Year has been republished by Oxford University Press as part of its 20th Century Classics series. Academic Year, set in Alexandria, was first published two years before Justine. In a new introduction to Enright’s book, Anthony Thwaite writes: “Nothing could be more different than these two poets’ [Durrell’s and Enright’s] treatment of the city and its inhabitants.” He states that whereas the city of Alexandria gets to see Durrell, the setting in Enright’s novel seems rather fortuitous.

* In its “Best New Fiction” column The Fiction Magazine of 2 April 1985 (Vol. No. 2, p. 2) lists Shadows and Light by Francesca Stanfill (mentioned in Herald No. 4) and describes it as “set in a high-flying American/European Lawrence Durrell like world.”

* In a review of The Travels of Lord Charlemont in Greece and Turkey, 1749 edited by W.B. Stanford and E.J. Finopoulos (“The Flute-Notes Echo” in The Spectator of 26 April 1985), Harold Acton compares Charlemont to Durrell: “Like Mr Lawrence Durrell he was an isolamne and he found the islands of the Aegean irresistible.”

* Reviewing Barry Unsworth’s Stone Virgin (“Restoration but Little Comedy” in The Spectator of 24 August 1985), Francis King writes that this novel reminded him of Lawrence Durrell: “The rococo elaborations of the plot, with sexual passion leading first to betrayal and then to grisly murder, are typical of Durrell; ghostly horror has also figured in Durrell’s latest novel sequence; and reminiscent of Durrell at his best is Unsworth’s superlative evocation of a Venice of murky calle, of boats gliding down stagnant canals, of dawn breaking over long stretches of opalescent water, of secret, heavily scented gardens, and of the extraordinary beauty of palaces even when they have moulder into slums.”

* Peter Baldwin found a reference to Durrell and his theory about spirit of place in Barging into Southern France by Gerard Morgan-Grenville (Newton Abbot, England: David & Charles, 1985(?)).

* Christopher Dobson ends his short article about Sicily (“On Top of the Volcano,” The Sunday Telegraph, 22 September 1985) by recommending four travel books, including Durrell’s Sicilian Carousel.

* “Reflections on the Changing Face of an Island Resort” (The Daily Telegraph, 7 September 1985), a travel article on Rhodes, begins with a mention of Durrell: “It is 40 years since Lawrence Durrell arrived as an information officer on the Rhodes he described in his ‘Reflections on a Marine Venus.’”

* In “A Letter from the Publisher” in the second issue of Going Places (London, Spring 1985), Michael Haggerty explains the purpose of this travel magazine and paraphrases Durrell in his final paragraph: “Perhaps Lawrence Durrell said it for all of us when he wrote that ‘what he wanted most to capture in his travel writings was a spirit of place.’”

Editions Berlitz, c. 1977) refers to Durrell on page 52: "His beloved 'white house,' now partly converted into a taverna, still stands at the peaceful pebble-bottomed bay of Kalami. Civilization—a tarred road down to the water and some unsightly wire fences among the olives—has encroached only slightly on the marvellous landscape familiar to readers of Prospero's Cell. . . ."

* In her short listing ("The Good Guide Guide," The Mail on Sunday, 14 April 1985) of the best guides to France, Italy, Greece, Spain, and Portugal, Katie Hickman includes Durrell's The Greek Islands along with the American Express's Pocket Guide to Greece, Rough Guide to Greece, Trevor Webster's Where to Go in Greece, and Richard Stoneman's A Literary Companion to Travel in Greece as the best books on that country.

* CV Travel in London begins its 22 May 1985 ad in the Times: "DURRELL'S CORFU does exist. Our Corfu is the Corfu of Durrell books: the fabulously beautiful and unspoilt North-East Coast."

* Albert Morris, in "Rock and Rollers" (The Scotsman of 29 May 1985), refers to "a rare but by no means unknown affliction of the spirit, known as islamania, mentioned by Lawrence Durrell in his book, Reflections on a Marine Venus" to explain why a certain Tom McClean plans to spend four weeks perched on Rockall, "a lump of rock in the Atlantic."

* In "Sir Angus Wilson Yields to Lure of South of France" (The Daily Telegraph, 20 August 1985), John Shaw quotes Wilson's explanation for his decision to leave Britain: "It is a search for warmth and a search for different scenery... When I began to write the gods were Hemingway, Lawrence, Durrell, Katherine Mansfield and of course, Graham Greene, all of whom live or lived there. I thought I should like to live there for a bit and try to absorb the feeling of the place."

* Writing about cottages for sale in the area of Shaftesbury, Dorset, Michael Durrell, in "Where Canute Died and Durrell Wrote" (The Sunday Telegraph, 22 September 1985), mentions Durrell as the former owner of a house at Donhead St Andrew: "Stepping Stones was once owned by the author Lawrence Durrell who is reputed to have written the 'Alexandria Quartet' in the house, inspired by the calm atmosphere and the tinkling of the stream which runs under the cottage and through the garden."

This may be the cottage where Durrell and Claude stayed for some months in 1956; however, Durrell referred to the Dorset dwelling as Stone Cottage—"not owned—is, and wrote Bitter Lemons there.

(Thanks to Corinne Alexandre-Garner, Peter Baldwin, Dorothea and Edward Kupka, Mary Mollo, Anthea Morton-Saner, Paul Schluter and Bernard Stone for sending information for this column and for the column listing reviews of Quinx.)

Susan S. MacNiven

REVIEWs OF QUINx OR THE RIPPER'S TALE

* In addition to announcing the fifth book of the Quinteux, the short paragraph "Briefly" (The Daily Mail, 30 May 1985, p. 24) assures us that Lawrence Durrell will continue writing novels: "With Quinx... Durrell ends his Avignon Quintet and announces that it will be his last novel. Don't believe it, anyone who, on this evidence, so obviously still enjoys juggling so entertainingly with words and images isn't going to give up just because he's 73."

* "Five in France" (The Times, 25 May 1985) notes the publication of Quinx and calls The Avignon Quintet "a sequence of novels which rivals [Durrell's] Alexandria Quartet."

* Hugh Barnes, in "The End of the Gnostic Odyssey" (The Times, 30 May 1985, p. 11: a review of three novels), mainly a summary of Quinx: points out the Blanford-Durrell connection: "In the figure of Aubrey Blanford [Durrell] has produced a wonderful autoshrink whose obsessions with the five-skanda novel are his own: 'Alas, it had not come off. The idea, like the reality, had been too gnostic and would, in the reality also, fail.'"

* In "Recent Fiction" (The Daily Telegraph, 7 June 1985: a review of four books), Nina Bawden both criticizes and praises Quinx: "Lawrence Durrell's characters speak in roundtund mock profundities as if they were all different aspects of Polonius. Durrell addicts will not be put off, but it is a bit hard on the ordinary reader... As the whole cast assembles under the great aqueduct of the Point Du Gard, the author's magical talent for setting a scene comes into its own. The climax explodes into beautiful bustling life."

* Keith Brown in "Up to the Pisgah-sight" (The Times Literary Supplement, 31 May 1985, p. 597) states that Quinx is "effectively an appendix to the [Quinx] series and cannot well be independently discussed." In this very thoughtful review, Brown notes Durrell's attempt to create "a fiction based on a radically different metaphysic," i.e., the [Tibetan] Buddhism: "In recent years [Durrell] has found his way into a growing involvement with [Tibetan] Buddhism, whose metaphysic genuinely rejects that hard-edged, materialist, ego-centered Western world view of which the novel is perhaps our clearest literary reflection. Is it, then, possible to write a 'Tibetan' novel—that is to say, a new, more fluid, kind of fiction, still recognizable to novel-readers though largely shedding the usual assumptions of the genre?" Brown is not certain that Durrell has succeeded, but he believes it would be a worthwhile experience for the reader to follow Durrell's attempt.
David Hammond ("Books Extra," Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 16 August 1985) finds Quinx "rather confusing" and thinks that "the method of writing is such that the reader does not feel much empathy with the people in the story." But he also acknowledges "there is ample entertainment for those prepared to follow the often-intriguing conversations, which show Durrell's keen psychological perception and rich sense of fun.

In his short article, "The Master Goes Out to Grass" (The Mail on Sunday, 26 May 1985), that is half about Durrell's "retirement" and half about Quinx, David Hughes writes about the fifth novel and the entire Quinxunx: "But never has a novelist written with so scintillating an effort to put the world to rights. And Durrell stage-manages it sinuously, sensuously, in a sidelong fashion, never quite coming clean but not playing dirty either. It's uniquely written, thought, felt.

"Counting Sheep," (by I.O.) Financial Times, 15 June 1985: a review of two novels. This very brief review almost focuses more on the dust jacket of Quinx than on the novel itself: "The jacket, with David Gentleman's watercolour, is one of the most alluring I have seen, its reflections in the water perfectly suggesting the circularity and what one might call the duplicity of Durrell's world.

"In Five Sides and Two Dimensions" (The Listener, 30 May 1985, p. 731), Peter Kemp states that the "sex and savagery," the language "sometimes tinged with préciosité," the relish "for recherché words and cabbalistic creeds," and the "turn-of-the-century enthusiasm for Gothic frisson, doppelgangers, artifice and the perverse" found in Quinx "give Drax's notation a sublime base." Ultimately, despite [Durrell's] brandishing of the number five, it seems that it is a different set of digits—the 90s—that come closest to summing up Durrell's work.

In his column in this issue, Peter Baldwin has already noted the high praise that Allan Massie lavishes upon Durrell's two novel sequels in his review of Quinx, "Stately Progress of the Imaginative Scoosman." (The Scotsman, 30 May 1985) Massie admits that "If in my more austere youth I found the Quartet overwritten and pretentious," criticisms of Durrell that the British literary establishment still holds. Massie thinks Durrell "resembles that other man apart from the current of English literature: Malcolm Lowry." He believes Francis Stuart also has something in common with Durrell. "All [Durrell, Lowry, Stuart] use fiction, not as a means of explaining life, but in order to try to understand it. All their work is therefore essentially tentative: the exhibition of the imagination in progress."

Although Robert Nye (in "The Unskippable," The Guardian, 30 May 1985: a review of four books) criticizes Durrell's "linguistic density" and considers Quinx "morbidly overwritten," he believes the book is "worth attention. Why? Because this man was once a good poet, and he still works from an obvious awareness of the need to make page-dance of his prose, and also because the substance of his fiction is so interesting: myth and legend, history and mystery, all drawn from a wonderful empathy with the genius of a particular place. . . . Provence, where the pagan and the Christian worlds come together as nowhere else on earth.

In his review of reviews, "critics Crowner" (The Bookseller, 3 June 1985, pp. 235-237) Gwynn Oates considers how various reviewers handle the introductions and conclusions of their reviews. Along with reviews of other novels, Oates compares Keith Brown's, Hugh Barnes's, and Thomas Hinde's treatment of Quinx.

Patrick Parrinder begins his review, "Naming of Parts" (London Review of Books, Vol. 7, No. 10 [6 June 1985], pp. 22-231: a review of three novels), and a general discussion of the Quinxunx. "This series of novels-with-two-titles, containing characters with variable names and fluctuating identities, is (as we should expect) suffused with radical ambiguity. The 'Aiglon Quintet' . . . is an enigmatic and secretive work, a cluster of dark passages and guady, treasure-filled caves beside the thrusting baroque edifice of his earlier 'Alexandria Quartet.'" Parrinder then discusses some of the trademarks of Durrell's writing found in Quinx: "Orgy and feasting, the revelry that turns sour, and the intimate connection of petit and grandiose motifs, are, here as elsewhere, Durrell's specialities."

In her review, "Durrell Takes Five" (Glasgow Herald, 29 June 1985), Dorothy Porter seems rather bored by Quinx because it contains the old Durrell formulae: "Durrell achieved his fame with the Alexandria Quartet at a time when sexual licence on the one hand and subversion of the conventions of the realistic novel on the other might still be deemed liberating . . . . [Durrell's] insistence on mystically redemptive sex and literary experimentalism is made with a Dionysiac zest that shows Durrell as a 'wicked, wretched old man' indulging, in his own words, in 'paraplegic frictions and geriatric novels.' For all its defiance Quinx is curiously dated." Porter does, however, have some good words for Durrell's writing: 'Yet it would be churlish not to recognise the real magic of Durrell's linguistic inventiveness and talent for elaborate set pieces which provides a solid base for his novel that all his出了 vaporings about fiction and reality.'
* Lorna Sage, in "Soft Focus" (The Observer, 26 May 1985), judges that Quinx "gives the mixture [the characters and episodes of the whole Quincunx] a final shake, without much improvement." Sage finds "the only truly passionate relationship in 'Quinx' is Durrell's own relationship with the character--i.e. with himself--which is rather like Anthony Burgess's relationship with his creature Enderby. Blanford and Enderby are both projections of arrogance combined with self-doubt. They are grotesomely immortal and survive many fictional deaths. They even share a predilection for Jokey bad writing... . And both reflect a guilty obsession with words, words; words, in the absence, often, of matter."

* According to Nicholas Shrimpton in "The Riddle of the Quinx" (The Sunday Times, 2 June 1985), Durrell's Quincunx is an attempt to present "a panoramic view of 20th-century civilization... not for its own sake, in order to raise questions about the fundamental nature of things." Quinx disappoints Shrimpton in two ways. First is "the fact that Durrell's conclusion [to The Avignon Quartet] is deliberately inconclusive. The other disappointment is that Quinx is a very lightweight completion for so grand and portentous a project. Loose ends are briskly tidied up--Blanford, for example, is finally united with Constance. But the philosophical issues shrink into a cluster of self-indulgent aphorisms, the historical ambition dwindles into a mood of comfortable post-war weariness, and the silliness and extravagance which have always dogged Durrell's talent here look embarrassingly large." Shrimpton reminds us that when he reviewed Sebastian, "I observed that Durrell seemed to be four-fifths of the way through one of the great novels of our time. The publication of Quinx leaves me with a feeling of high ambition not quite achieved."

* Paul Skenazy is also disappointed with Quinx and with The Avignon Quartet as a whole. In "Last of the Avignon Quartet" (San Francisco Chronicle Review, 25 August 1985, pp. 1 & 11), Skenazy states that "'Quinx' is summative, but not cohesive. It is more like an anthology than a novel, a collection of poems and ditties, notes, philosophic digressions, momentary epiphanies... . A book dependent as this is on individual snippets of thought requires both a constant flow of darts wisdom to surprise the reader in an assent and a prose that transforms speculation into poetry. Durrell manages both at times; he's too smart, and too fine a stylist, to dismiss outright. But he's not good enough to bother reading, unless you get more excited than I do by books that describe themselves as the mystical marriage of four dimensions with five skandas so to speak.' And climax in the ideal of the 'dual orgasm' as the realization of 'love as a future-manufacturing yoga.'" In summation Skenazy labels The Avignon Quartet "the least bloody war novel you're likely to find—a tale of upheaval and reconciliation that divorces mind from culture and art from its reproductive roots. It's unfortunate that this is so, since there is so much knowledge of a time and a lifestyle hinted at throughout. But, in the end, the artificiality overcomes experience, resulting in a story playful to the point of indulgence, the insular meditation of a spiritual junkie."

* After summarizing Quinx in "Beneath the Bon Hots, Fundamental Feelings" (Hampstead & Highgate Express, 21 June 1985: a review of three novels), Eva Tucker passes judgment on The Avignon Quartet: "If 'the idea like the reality had been too gnostic,' what Durrell has tried for in this cycle of novels is of far-reaching importance and a significant contribution to our understanding that 'the world of consciousness is a world of historic echoes which cry out to be satisfied.'"

* "Very Clever, But Demanding Too," Cambridge Evening News, 13 June 1985. This mini-review calls Quinx "an even finer piece of self indulgence than the other four volumes."

* In "Links and Winks" (The New York Times Book Review, 15 September 1985, p. 16), Barbara Fisher Williamson compares Durrell to Rabelais: "The final sentence of the last volume of the quartet makes the whole 1,300-page cycle a shaggy dog story. As the narrator says toward the end, 'There is no meaning and we falsify the truth about reality in adding one. The universe is playing, the universe is only improvising.' Another, more hilarious work of teleological nonsense, Rabelais's 'Gargantua and Pantagruel,' ends with a similar anticlimax, when the long-sought-after oracle of the holy bottle speaks the single nonsense syllable 'trinc.' Although the truth never appears, the search is nonetheless worth the effort." Williamson finds another similarity with Rabelais in "the sensual beauties of Mr. Durrell's text. . . . Avignon, ancient city of kings and popes, comes gloriously alive. The physical pleasures are the only ones that can be counted on in this world of teleological frustration. The reliance on the physical is apparent in each volume, but the shaggy dog structure of the whole is impossible to detect if one reads only part. What makes the single volumes most perplexing is that the systems the different characters propose to give life meaning—Gnostic religion, Freudian analysis and mystical union through simultaneous orgasm—are described with such conviction and passion that they seem sufficient rather than provisional and flawed. Reading the theories in any one volume alone, one is tempted to think Mr. Durrell is silly. Reading them all, one is convinced he is wise."
* The Cambridge Evening News in its "Ten best sellers" column, which ranks the five fiction and five non-fiction best sellers at Heffer's Bookshop, listed Quinx in first place on 27 June 1985, in third place (preceded by A. S. Byatt's Still Life and Barbara Pym's Crampton Hodnet) on 1 July, and in third place (preceded by Isabel Allende's House of the Spirits and Still Life) on 8 August. The Sunday Telegraph "Bestsellers" column of 7 July placed Quinx third after Crampton Hodnet and Antonia Fraser's Oxford Blood. I have seen just these four listings, so do not know if Quinx made only four appearances in the British "best sellers" columns. I have not noticed Quinx in any of the "best sellers" lists in U.S. publications.