ALFRED PERLÈS (28 August 1897-27 January 1990)

At age ninety-two, Alfred Perlès died in hospital at Taunton, Somerset after a month's illness. He was cremated in Bath, where a memorial service for him was held on 6 February. He is survived by his wife, Anne, and by numerous friends from many countries. In 1986, Perlès became an honorary member of the Lawrence Durrell Society. For decades he was an invaluable source for scholars and journalists interested in literary Paris between the wars or in his two special friends, Henry Miller and Lawrence Durrell, and he most generously shared his time and knowledge with those who knocked on his door.

Alfred Perlès-Henry Miller-Lawrence Durrell: the names have been linked since the later 1930s when the three edited the seven numbers of The Booster/Delta and made No. 18 Villa Seurat a famous address. The friendship between Perlès and Miller began with their second, fortuitous meeting which occurred in April 1930 at the Dôme, where Perlès rescued Miller from the wrath of waiter and proprietor by paying for the numerous drinks Miller had ordered and imbibed although he was totally without money. Their association continued; Perlès taught Miller about living on the cheap in Paris and helped him achieve his first publication in Europe early in 1931. In the summer of 1937 Durrell arrived and was immediately acclaimed. As Perlès wrote in My Friend Henry Miller: "One day he [Durrell] disembarked in the Villa Seurat... and was instantly admitted to the inner circle, where he has remained ever since." Hugo Manning in "The Wider Purpose of Henry Miller" described these three, who remained close life-long friends in spite of usually living countries or continents apart, as "The Miller-Perlès-Durrell trio--it would be difficult to find a literary group so permeated with buoyancy, eloquence, and life-loving zest."

Perlès first came to France in 1921. The son of a Viennese Jewish father and a French Catholic mother, he was born and raised in comfortable circumstances in Vienna. While a lieutenant in the Austrian Army during World War I, he found himself unable to give the order to fire during an enemy attack. For this he was court-martialed and condemned to be shot, but through his parents' influence he was sent to an insane asylum instead. Freed after the war, Perlès left home against his family's wishes and went to Paris to become a writer. Proofreading for the Paris edition of the Chicago Tribune enabled Perlès to subsist, to write, and to travel around Europe and North Africa. He wrote
two "reminiscent books," Sentiments limitrophes (1936) and Le Quatuor en ré majeur (1938), which received some recognition (Otto Rank praised the former), and acquired the house organ of the American Country Club of Paris, The Booster (later renamed Delta), which Miller and Durrell helped edit from 1937 to 1939. His time with Miller in Paris was probably his most creative literary period.

In December 1938, the Durrells whisked Perlès off to London, as he reported in My Friend Lawrence Durrell:

One morning Larry walked into my room in the Impasse du Rouet and said without preamble: "Start packing. We're off to London, Nancy and I, and you're coming along." Not another word. Never asking me if I cared for going to England, just ordering me about in his turbulent Jupiter Junior fashion. What could I do? I packed.

Unlike Durrell, Perlès loved England, and, excepting the few years he resided in Chania, Crete, in the 1960s, England remained Perlès's home for the rest of his life. Just as he had switched from German to French for his writing when he moved to Paris, in London he began writing mainly in English. The Renegade, both his first novel and first major work in English, was published in 1943 and awarded a Book Society Recommendation. Perlès joined the British Army in 1940 and later became a British subject. In 1951, he married Anne Barrett, an intelligent, attractive Scot whose sense of humor complemented Perlès's, and they lived together until 27 January 1990; that day Anne held his hands while Fred slipped over the boundary.

As a writer, Perlès has been undervalued. Although he published newspaper articles, a Surrealist manifesto, novels, poetry, short stories, essays, letters, biographies, critical works, translations (mainly from German), and sections of his autobiography, many tend to think of him as a friend of Durrell and especially of Miller and as a witness of the Paris literary scene of the 1920s and 1930s rather than as a significant writer per se. An extremely well-read and cultured man, a thinker fascinated by a constant succession of ideas, Perlès was also a womanizer and an occasional buffoon in his Paris days; Miller called him "a rogue, perhaps even a scoundrel, but a lovable one." In the article mentioned above, Hugo Manning wrote that "Perlès . . . is an extraordinary admixture of clown, philosopher, reporter, and mystic and has the Millerian kind of wholeness which, I think, is the touchstone of genuine human success."

I met the Perlèses in 1981 and last saw Fred in July 1989. Along with his gentleness, sensitivity, roguish twinkle in the eyes, and marvellous sense of humor, I was repeatedly struck by his talent as a raconteur, his amazing mental and physical agility, and above all by his extraordinary joie de vivre. This last he credited to curiosity in A Snail's Pace Suits Me Fine:

If I were asked to say in one word to what I attribute my joie de vivre in an ageing body, I would say, to curiosity. Curiosity, I believe, is the dominant ingredient of my makeup, which has clung to me from my earliest remembered childhood to this day and shows no sign of weakening. And if one happens to be curious one is curious about everything, not just about this or that. Curiosity, like love, is a principle that extends to no definite objective, but radiates indiscriminately in every direction.

I picture Fred still curious, wherever he now may be.

S.S. MacNiven

FRANK KERNSOWSKI

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Since last I wrote to you, I completed editing a collection of essays: Into the Labyrinth: Essays on the Art of Lawrence Durrell. The book was published in late October by UMI, 300 North Zeib Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1346. To avoid the accusation that I am making a blatant plug for the book, I include below some material the editors at UMI found it necessary to remove.

During the time I worked with the collection, I frequently corresponded with Alfred Perlès, who wrote the preface. My respect and affection for the man and his writing grew constantly. As often happens with really good artists, his contributions were greater than the need of the genre. In responding to my request for information about himself for the "Notes on Contributors," he wrote:
On my first arrival in Paris (in 1921) I was alone, felt lonely, had no one to talk to; my search for a twin-soul was unsuccessful. Moreover, I was practically penniless. Then, on a sudden impulse, I began writing letters to myself and posted them, franked with a 5-centime stamp, addressed to the cheap hotel in the rue de Seine where I lived in an attic. No toilet seat, just a hole in the floor. When the letters arrived, I read them at great length and with enormous interest. I doubt that any other writer ever indulged in this form of platonic masturbation. Can you? I could always afford the five centimes for the stamp, though five centimes was also the price of a crisp croissant. Incidentally, from the rue de Seine I had the view of the neighboring rue des Beaux Arts and the hotel where Oscar Wilde died in 1900 when I was already three years old. Today, aged ninety-two, I've more friends than I can cope with.

Other comments about Perls's own writing did not survive the blue pencils of my editors, but they have so much interest and value for his readers that I quote them here as well:

Maybe I should explain to you that I was brought up bi-lingually; my mother was French, my father Austrian, of Czech origin. And I myself was born in Vienna. Surely, there's no such thing as a bi-lingual mother tongue. I have none, only step-mother tongues, nearly half a dozen, and I dearly love all of them. Makes me feel like a spaceman. But then, aren't we all spacemen, spacewomen and spacechildren, cruising around the universe? ......

The Renegade was the first full-sized book I wrote in English. And this is how it came about: I was already in the army (the British one, for a change) when I received a letter from an old-established publishing firm (George Allen & Unwin), asking me for the MS. of a book of mine they would like to get out.

My astonishment was great. How on earth did they even know I was a writer? It turned out that they were much impressed by some of my short stories that had appeared in various magazines and that Cyril Connolly, editor of Horizon, had given them in my interests.

In a rather vacuous manner, I wrote back that I'd gladly let them have a manuscript, but couldn't afford to buy a portable typewriter; I thought that was the end of it. But enclosed in their next letter was a cheque for £50, more than enough to purchase a machine.

I wrote The Renegade in my leisure hours in the NAFFI (the English equivalent of your PX) amidst the shouts and laughter of my half-drunk comrades-in-arms. And finished the book in less than a month. Not a bad performance for one writing in a step-mother tongue.

We all know, more and less, the writings of Henry Miller and Alfred Perlès, who with Lawrence Durrell were the literary Three Musketeers of Paris in the 1930s. At one of our conferences, might there be an interest in sessions which include discussions or essays on the writings of Perlès and Miller unto themselves? We might, as well, think of considering Anaïs Nin in the same way. You will remember that Anaïs Nin was one of the editors of Two Cities and a close friend of Jean Fanchette, who will speak to us in April when we are once again the guests of Jim Nichols.

I asked Jean to send me a few copies of Lawrence Durrell: Letters to Jean Fanchette 1958-1963 and have three left. If any of you wants a copy, send me $20.00 (Department of English, Trinity University, 715 Stadium Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78284), and I'll send you a book. I also have some information about presses that might be interested in books about Durrell, which I'll send on to anyone interested.

Now seems a good time to approach publishers about projects on Durrell: The Avignon Quintet is completed; and James Brigham's edition of Durrell's collected poems, Ian MacNiven's edition of the Durrell-Miller correspondence, and good collections of essays about Durrell are in print. Durrell's stock is high.

(Editor's Note: Frank wrote this column in the autumn of 1989. It was not intended to be a posthumous tribute to Perlès.)
JENNIFER L. LEONARD

FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT: DURRELL DOWN UNDER

Melbourne, Australia, is a civilized city with a magnificent arts center composed of the National Gallery, three theatres, and a ballet company, all of which are participated in with gusto by the educated middle class (and in the great cities of Australia, everyone is middle class; "tall poppies," as pretentious people are called, are cut down). Frank was asked to Melbourne by ICI, Australia, a huge chemical conglomerate which has awakened to the realization that the world is rapidly headed into the twenty-first century and that the Pacific Rim is the next great area of business competition. ICI chose Frank to help bring them into modern times; they had been sleeping contentedly in a 1940s ambiance while Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, and China readied themselves to contend with ICI for the market. And so to Melbourne we went, twice in 1989, for four months.

We got to know Melbourne quite well. It has a small and compact CBD--central business district--with a furious concentration of companies, department stores, bookstores, and restaurants representing the major nationalities of the world. It was in one of the large downtown bookstores, which we walked by one Sunday morning, that we saw to our surprise and pleasure a huge window display of Ian Macniven's edition of The Durrell-Miller Letters, 1935-80. This particular bookstove was not open, but a bit further along was a used bookstore which was the object of our morning's walk and was very much open. In it, in among the stacks and piles arranged in an original system of organization, we discovered books and books of Lawrence Durrell: the Quartet and the Quintet and copies of Sappho, Reflections on a Marine Venus, Bitter Lemons, Tunc and Nunquum, Sauve Qui Peut, Stiff Upper Lip, and Esprit de Corps. We looked through these books, which were well-thumbed, often bearing the names of several owners; bought some books to grace our quite charming garden apartment; and left the bookstore warmed by the realization that Down Under we had the company of Lawrence Durrell and his fabulous array of characters.

JAMES R. NICHOLS

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

A word from the seldom but ever hopefully wise. The 1990 On Miracle Ground VI conference at Statesboro, Georgia, will quite possibly be our most international meeting. We have paper submissions from scholars in Belgium, Canada, Ireland, and Italy; in addition, Jean Fanchette from France will be the Thursday night keynote speaker. There is a great deal of departmental interest here at Georgia Southern College and significant student interest. We even have one early graduating undergraduate student (would you believe it, in history?) who has vowed to come visit in April just to hear all the Durrellian brilliance. I taught him Tunc during the fall quarter, and he actually liked it.

Personal vanity aside, however, Statesboro should be stunning in April. Pray for a cold winter to keep the azaleas blooming late, but, if not azaleas, there will be multitudes of other flowers: wisteria, tulips, roses of all kinds, dogwood, daffodils, jonquils, violets, redbud, salvia and peach, magnolias, and who knows what else. Not crocuses, however; they'll be all finished by March. Sunday brunch will be lakeside on our back lawn. The ducks will likely visit. Betsy promises no rain. If we're lucky, possibly cranes, egrets, and the lake's resident blue heron will have arrived from the south. I raised our well-stocked treasury to buy the Saturday night banquet wine cheaply in Washington, D.C., at Christmas. The champagne and brunch will be Betsy's and my treat. Ya'll come!

Concerning business, the Society enjoys moderate health. Many and most of you have rejoined us. I've finally figured out the difference between 1990 and 1991 membership dates (math is so unsatisfactory a language--so little irony and poignancy to it), and the treasury is healthy: $911.29 in the publication account, and $913.34 in the checking. These figures include an OMG VI payment of $604.80 for printing the call for papers--money we should recoup from conference registration fees. I hope all this seems as good to you as it does to me.

We have four new members in the Society:

Shelley Cox
Elen Larson
Route /14, Box I2I
Ashl and, hisconsi.n 54906
Karl Orend
24 Magdala Road, FJ.at 3
Nottlngham NCI ... 8023, Georgia Southern CoJ.lege,
Statesboro, Georgia 30460; office phone: 912-
68I-547I; home phone: 9lz-iG4-8520).

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meet

OI/G

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Alexandria,

where

the

Washington,

l v l o de n

Larkin,

LDS

L,,E

A

hearty

See

to

about

the

arrange

in a

Board

accommodations

but

December

I.v

Carruthers,

Peter

Christensen,

Don

Kaczvinsky,

Mary

Ann

Larkin,

Paul

Lorenz,

Ian

and

Susan

MacNiven,

Jim

Nichols,

Carol

Peirce,

and

Lynn

Smith

attended

the

LDS

meeting

on

29

December

1989

during

the

Modern

Language

Association

Convention

in

Washington,

D.C.

There

was

some

discussion

about

OMG

VI,

but

the

main

consideration

was

where
to

hold

OMG

VII,

the

1992

conference.

Alexandria,

Avignon,

and

Corfu

were

the

places

the

Executive

Board

had

been

contemplating,

and

the

vote

in

December

indicated

a

preference

for

the

latter

two

locales;

there

was

some

hesitation

about

travelling

to

and

within

Egypt.

Lynn

and

Brewster

have

contacts

in

Avignon

who

could

help

arrange

accommodations

and

a

meeting

place

there,

so

Avignon

is

emerging

as

the

first

choice.

After

the

meeting,

the

LDS

members,

joined

by

Langdon

Elsbree,

Betsy

Nichols,

and

Mary

Ann's

friend

Gray,

but

minus

Don,

walked

to

the

Mama

Ayesha

(a.k.a.

Calvert)

Restaurant,

where

the

conversation

continued

during

an

excellent

Lebanese

dinner.

OMG VI

From

19

to

22

April

1990,

Durrellians

will

meet

at

Georgia

Southern

College

in

Statesboro

for

On

Miracle

Ground:

The

Sixth

International

Lawrence

Durrell

Conference.

Forty-one

people

are

scheduled

for

the

various

sessions.

Jean

Fanchette

will

begin

the

conference

with

a

keynote

address

on

Thursday

at

8

P.M.,

and

this

will

be

followed

by

a

reception

at

the

Foy

Fine

Arts

Center,

where

there

will

be

an

exhibit

of

paintings

by

Oscar

Epfs.

Papers,

panels,

and

open

discussions

are

planned

for

Friday

and

Saturday

from

about

9

A.M.

to

4:30

P.M.;

cocktails

will

be

served

at

the

end

of

each
day's

presentations.

Friday

night

there

will

be

a

performance

of

<acte>,

and

the

banquet

will

be

held

Saturday

evening.

Betsy

and

Jim

Nichols

will

host

a

champagne

brunch

at

their

home

on

Sunday

morning

(9

A.M.

to

noon).

A

catered

lunch

is

planned

for

Friday,

but

people

are

on

their

own

for

Saturday

lunch

and

for

Thursday

and

Friday

dinner.

Traditionally

for

Thursday

dinner,

we

gather

at

a

restaurant

where

participants

can

meet

as

they

arrive

and

can

have

drinks

and

dinner

when

the

spirit

moves

them.

Since

most

people

will

be

staying

at

the

Statesboro

Holiday

Inn,

the

cocktail

lounge

and

dining

room

will

be

the

rendezvous

points.

Wander

in

whenever

and

give

the

password

"Macabre"'

to

connect

with

other

participants.

Remember

that

the

first

formal

meeting

of

the

conference

begins

at

8

P.M.;
dinner

is

served

at

the

Holiday

Inn

from

5

P.M.

The

Society

business

meeting

will

be

held

during

the

Sunday

brunch

and

will

include

an

election

for

Society

officers.

The

Executive

Board

has

chosen

a

Nominations

Committee:

Peter

Christensen

(Dept.

of

English,

Marquette

University,

Milwaukee,

Wisconsin

53233;

home

phone:

),

Susan

MacNiven

( ),

and

Gordon

Thomas

(Dept.

of

English,

314

Jesse

Knight

Humanities

Bldg.,

Brigham

Young

University,

Provo,

Utah

84602;

). It is their responsibility to present at

least

one

candidate

for

each

office;

however,

the

Nominations

Committee

will

also

accept

nominations

by

members

at

large.

Anyone

wishing

to

serve

as

an

officer

of

the

Society

or

wishing

to

propose

someone

else

for

president,

vice-

president,

or

secretary/treasurer

should

contact

a

member

of

the

Committee

before

or

at

the

Society

meeting.

LDS

members

should

have

received

information

about

the

conference

and

a

registration

form.

If

you

have

questions,

get

in

touch

with

Jim

Nichols

(Dept.

of

English

&

Philosophy,

L.B.

8023;

Georgia

Southern

College,

Statesboro,

Georgia

30460; office

phone:

).
You told me how a picture by Turner
Upset your reason and digestion by its
Unexpected force of vision: adding that art
Should do just that, outrage and disturb,
Not just contrive and move but really punish!

Lawrence Durrell
From "Elise at Mânes"

It was such a force of vision which "Upset
my reason" on first reading the work of Henri
Michaux (1899-1984), who is the subject of an
essay by Lawrence Durrell which I am to publish
shortly under my imprint the Delos Press.
Although born in Belgium in 1899, Michaux became
French by naturalisation in 1955. Peripatetic
for much of his life, he based himself in Paris
from 1924 and was essentially French in his
artistic heritage. He enjoys a reputation both
as a poet and a painter. So far as his poetry
is concerned, the danger is to catalogue
him with the surrealists, whereas his work is so
individual as to defy categorisation. To my
mind, he deals in the material of untempered
emotions -- the terror of isolation, the anguish
of the individual trying to come to terms with
himself, and the individual's responses to what
goes on and to what he experiences. Michaux
was an artist who followed his own singular course
and, although he was well acquainted with the
surrealists, his poetry offers a key to deeper
sensibilities and is not like the self
conscious, often mannered work of the surrealists
themselves. His work always bears the
mark of spontaneity and the truthfulness of
his experience.

Michaux's artwork -- entirely abstract --
offers the same sense of immediacy. In all his
work one feels that the work of the editor or
critic would have been intrusive, so acute was
his own sense of creation and self-criticism.
Through his work, he exposed the deepest parts,
not only of himself but also of the so-called
"archetypal" man.

My own publication of this original essay
by Durrell came about as the result of an
initial refusal! I had been shown some
translations of the work of Michaux -- a group of
poems entitled "Les Ravages." How stunned I was
by these verbal portraits by Michaux of the
artwork of mental patients who were using
graphic work as a direct lead to communicating
their states of mind, their feelings, their
perceptions. Would Durrell be prepared to write
an introduction for the Delos Press which would
then publish these translations with that
introduction? In due course the reply came -- in
the negative. Perhaps the translations had not
appealed; perhaps Durrell had other things on
his mind. However, this refusal did not end the
project.

I had taken a day out of the office to
inspect the Durrell Archive at Sotheby's during
one of the viewing days. Those who have
inspected the Archive will know that it was
stored in a very disordered state in a lot of
brown cardboard boxes. Burrowing into one of
these boxes, I came upon an unrecorded
manuscript essay by Durrell on Michaux. It
carries no title, but the manuscript bears the
simple wording: "Preface [Henry Michaux]."
Internal evidence suggests that it was written
about 1972 as a preface to a translation of the
most celebrated piece of Michaux: Un Certain
plume. I have not been able to ascertain if
this translation was to have been by Durrell,
nor have I been able to locate a translation of
the piece which Durrell tells me he did some
years before. Partly typescript and partly
holograph, the essay appears to have been a
commission, yet I have not been able to trace it
in any bibliography. One interesting feature:
browsing through one of Durrell's 1985
notebooks, I noticed what seems to be a list of
occasional essays and prefaces by Durrell. Most
of the titles have been published, but not the
title listed simply as "Michaud." Durrell's
recall of his bibliography is not perfect, and
he has not been able to provide either date or
genesis for this essay. The reference in the
notebook suggests that it carries some
significance in Durrell's mind.

Enquiry through Gallimard, the principal
publisher of Michaux's work in France, provided
me with information from Dr. Micheline Phan-Kim
Coupernik, Michaux's literary executor. She
could trace no published essay on Michaux nor
any translation of Michaux by Durrell, so this
seems to discount any idea that the essay by
Durrell has ever been published.

I prepared a fresh typescript of the
manuscript at Sotheby's and submitted it to
Durrell, hoping he would give me permission to
publish the essay. He was delighted with the
idea of my publishing this tribute to Michaux,
whom he had met and clearly found empathetic.
A few days later, to my great delight, a
completely fresh and, indeed, tighter essay
arrived in the post from Durrell.

Durrell’s interest and support for the project has continued. He has supplied me with additional material as well as a translation back into English [1] of his poem “Ah! Michaux, quel sacré diable vous fates.” Not recorded in any bibliography, this was the only published piece Dr. Coupernik was able to unearth which Durrell had written on Michaux. I presume that Durrell’s original, now lost, was in English, and I discovered that this translation in French by Théresse de Saint Phalle was published in Le Figaro Littéraire, No. 119 (page 18), on 25 September 1967.

Durrell has kindly translated the poem back into English, and so its first English publication is offered as part of the next volume from the Delos Press: Henri Michaux: The Poet of Supreme Solipsism. A prospectus will be available soon from me at 11 School Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9ET, England. Three variant bindings will be available: a full leather-bound edition, to be signed by Durrell; a quarter-buckram-bound edition, again to be signed by Durrell; and an edition in wrappers. The edition will include a print of one of Michaux’s paintings as a frontispiece and will be limited to 226 copies. Printing and design are being done by Jonathan Stephenson of The Rocket Press, Oxfordshire, England, so a product of exceptional quality is expected.

This Michaux essay will be my third publication from the Delos Press, a venture which sprang from the idea to publish a small selection of Durrell’s verse. That selection went no further than a rough list of titles in my notebook, but the operation has turned into an adventure. The Press is firmly a part-time venture, the economics at this stage being based on a "break even" rule. Durrell’s An Irish Faustus was the first publication. My second title was Iris Murdoch’s well-argued essay, The Existentialist Political Myth. After the Durrell/Michaux essay, and to be published contemporaneously with it, will be our fourth title—a short critical essay by Robin Rook entitled Lawrence Durrell’s Double Concerto: The Alexandria Quartet and The Avignon Quintet Reappraised. Robin Rook provided the commentary for The Mediterranean Shore, and his work is greatly respected by Durrell, who wrote when Robin had sent his appraisal of Tunc and Nunquam: “I thank you most warmly for this splendidly lucid and cogent evaluation of the books we need for the Hogarth project. I don’t think I have ever been better understood and weighed up critically.” Although the Rock essay is less ambitious in scope than the Michaux essay, I have already started the fascinating job of selecting the printer, the typeface, and the design work and of dealing with the wealth of detailed tasks which befall the publisher.

Birmingham, England
November 1989

NECROLOGY

The poet and agronomist Audrey Beecham died on the 30th of January 1989 in Oxford, England. She contributed “Three Poems” to the Easter 1939 number of Delta and remained a friend of Durrell’s from that period on. Her poetry appeared in many periodicals and anthologies, and two books of her poems were published: The Coast of Barbary (1957) and Different Weather (1980).

Alan Cohn, the first director of the humanities division of Morris Library, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, died 15 July 1989. It is largely due to him that the humanities collection at SIU is so excellent. He amazed graduate students and faculty by apparently knowing the precise location of all the material in his department, and he aided them immeasurably by keeping a keen eye on new material as it was received and by regularly informing individuals about acquisitions that would be of interest to them. Mr. Cohn was also an internationally recognized Joyce scholar. He directly assisted the LDS by helping with the plans and preparations for OMG V.

PEOPLE, PLACES AND PUBLICATIONS

* The town of Antibes on the Côte d’Azur awarded LAWRENCE DURRELL its Grand Prix Littéraire International, worth 50,000 francs, about the first of November 1989.

* PETER BALDWIN and his family spent their holiday in August-September 1989 at Dions, which is between Sommieres and Uzès. On 10 March 1990, Peter had a party to launch the publication of his latest Delos Press book, Henri Michaux: The Poet of Supreme Solipsism by Lawrence Durrell.
At the December Modern Language Association Convention in Washington, D.C., PETER CHRISTENSEN chaired the special session Approaches to Mircea Eliade's Literary Works and gave a paper: "Eliade's The Forbidden Forest and Postwar Existentialism."

REED WAY DASENBROCK also read a paper, "Davidson, Deconstruction, and Difference," at the MLA Convention for the New Philosophers II session.

In July 1989, WILLIAM GODSHALK attended a conference in Denmark on Walker Percy.

Two books edited by FRANK KERSNOWSKI were published in October 1989: Into the Labyrinth: Essays on the Art of Lawrence Durrell (UMI Research Press) and Conversations with Robert Graves (University Press of Mississippi). Frank is also writing a monograph on Durrell for the Understanding Contemporary Literature Series at South Carolina.

JOHN LENZI is currently studying anthropology at Columbia University. He writes that in and out of classes he keeps bumping into Durrell:

"It has been interesting to observe where Durrell and his themes pop up. For instance, I noted in a biography of the spiritual teacher Krishnamurti that The Alexandria Quartet was on his bedside table when he died.

"I recently read a work written in the '70s by Lévi-Strauss. In a structural analysis of several myths, he notes structural connections between the Grail cycle and incest. Familiar themes? Also, I've been told that the Knights Templar play an important part in Umberto Eco's Foucault's Pendulum.

"Durrell even comes up in anthropology classes. The explosive topic in anthropology these days is the suggestion that ethnography is akin to fiction. . . . This view is mostly coming from Clifford Geertz at Princeton. In his Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author, he notes that some anthropologist's ethnographies are written in what he calls 'plethoric style.' Specifically, these authors are 'aiming at Proust, but arriving, usually, rather closer to Lawrence Durrell' (87)."

Jennifer and FRANK LEONARD are in Australia again; they will be in Melbourne during March and part of April but will return to the U.S. in time for OMG VI.

In January, NANCY LEWIS left for Australia. Her husband, Bob, is an exchange professor at the Bendigo College of Advanced Education for one term. Nancy has a University of Wisconsin system grant "to read British Commonwealth and post-colonial lit. and to revive some courses to make them more 'diverse,' which is suddenly the buzz word out in the heartland. 'Diversity' in Wisconsin used to mean blue-collar Polish or dairy-farmer Norwegian, but the Regents have suddenly discovered the 'rest' of the world."

Nancy has sent her address for any other Durrellians who might wander "down under" this winter or spring: 92 Violet Street, Bendigo, Victoria, 3550 Australia. The Lewises will be there until mid-July.

In December at the MLA Convention, IAN MacNIVEN co-chaired a special session, The Cambridge Edition [of the writings of D.H. Lawrence]. He is the continuing Program Chair of the D.H. Lawrence Society of North America.

RICHARD PINE has a new book coming out in June; Brian Friel and Ireland's Drama will be published by Routledge and issued in both cloth and paper.

SOAD SOBHY co-translated Naguib Mahfouz's Hakayat Haretta--Fountain and Tomb. This translation won the 1986 Arab League Translation Award and was published by the Three Continents Press (1636 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009) in 1988.

In 1989, GORDON THOMAS's Wordsworth and the Motions of the Mind was released by Peter Lang International Academic Publishers at $23.95. The book examines Wordsworth's " several methods and aims as a teacher in a variety of his poems" and his lifelong effort to 'teach as Nature teaches' by setting the human mind in motion."

From 23 February to 4 March, Gordon attended a Wordsworth conference in the Lake District.

SUSAN VANDER CLOSTER visited Amsterdam in July 1989 and again in December. This winter she has been teaching in Mexico, part of the time at San Miguel de Allende.
There have been changes in the following members' addresses or telephone numbers:

Mary J. Byrne
7 Rue de la ... the 1951 text, Matthew insists that it's the Pardoner's turn, and the last words are l'Artigue's acceptance: "So be it:

BOOK REVIEW

Virginia Kirby-Smith Carruthers


An Irish Faustus is once again in print, in a handsome edition issued in both hardcover and paperback formats by the Delos Press. Seventy-five numbered copies of the hardcover version have been signed by the author and feature a tipped-in illustration by "Oscar Epfs." The same illustration serves as a cover piece for the paperback.

Lawrence Durrell has contributed a new preface to this edition. Here, he mentions "a brilliant American adaptation of the text," which I take to be the version produced by J. Newton White for the Third International Lawrence Durrell Conference at Muskingum College in 1984. According to Durrell, this production "resulted in transforming the structure into a prolonged soliloquy passing through the head of a single protagonist--making Faustus a one-man play, and carrying out the rest of the action with the aid of beautiful big mobiles, different voices and special effects of lighting."

The preface aside, the new text seems to be primarily the responsibility of Durrell's daughter, Penelope Durrell Hope, who is credited on the copyright page with having "adapted" the play. In his preface Durrell endorses the new version as the "definitive text."

Most of the substantial alterations to the 1963 Faber and Faber text are cuts--a total of about seventy lines--in the last three scenes. The majority of these are concentrated in Scene 8 and serve to tighten somewhat the leisurely conversation between Faustus and Martin, the Pardoner, as Faustus prepares to set out on his journey to the mountain retreat of Matthew, the Hermit.

Minor alterations include a correction of a typographical error (retribution to Faustus of a line mistakenly assigned in the 1963 edition to Anselm, the Chaplain, in Scene 7--page 72 of the new edition) and two changes in scene location: the "great library" at the palace of the Queen, the setting of Scene 1, is now simply "a room at the castle," and Matthew's log hut becomes a more substantial stone cabin.

More notable are the changes in the names of the Queen and her vampire husband, which lose their Northern European flavor and become distinctly Irish. Perhaps to evoke, ironically, the heroic attributes of Yeats's Countess, the obsessed Queen Katherine of the 1963 edition is rechristened Queen Kathleen. And her vanished husband, Eric the Red, who "Ruled this kingdom with a rod of iron," is now Fergus the Red, his name also ironically recalling the world of heroic Celtic legend.

The revision which I find most intriguing is one which stands out particularly because it comes at the conclusion of the play. As Scene 9 draws to a close, Faustus, Matthew, Martin, and Mephisto are settling down to enjoy a game of cards--"the old game of Fortune," with Hearts as Trumps. There is some disagreement about whose turn it is to cut. In the 1963 text, Matthew insists that it's the Pardoner's turn, and the last words are Martin's acceptance: "So be it;
well, off we go again." In the new version, Mephisto claims the deck: "It's my turn I think. Off we go again." Interpretation, anyone?

The Delos Press edition of An Irish Faustus is available from Peter Baldwin, 11 School Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9ET, England.

Susan S. MacNiven

RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY
OR CONCERNING LAWRENCE DURRELL


* Henri Michaux: The Poet of Supreme Solipsism, a new essay with a poetic tribute by Durrell and an illustration by Henri Michaux, was published 10 March 1990 by the Delos Press [see Peter Baldwin's column]. The Deluxe edition is £25, the Special edition £45, and the Standard edition £18. Add £1 for postage & packing (£1.50 overseas) and £3 for conversion costs if payment is not in sterling.

* There is a signed, limited edition of thirty numbered copies of Barbara Robinson's Lumières (Toulouse: Editions Tierra, 1985), which includes a preface and a letter by Durrell [see Herald 10]. The limited edition, signed by both Robinson and Durrell, has the same binding and cover as the regular edition (price £24) and sells for £50. It is available from Bernard Stone (The Turret Book Shop, 42 Lamb's Conduit Street, London WC1N 3LJ).


* Durrell wrote the preface to the catalogue of Carlos Freire's photographic exhibition, "The Spirit of Places," that was held at Espace AGF in Paris in the fall of 1989. A short paragraph with this information was carried in the International Herald Tribune of 17 November 1989 ("Illustrating the Travels of Carlos Freire").

* "The Great Wines of the South..." a paragraph from the November 1959 Holiday article "Ripe Living in Provence," is Durrell's contribution to Spirit of Place: Provence by Russell Ash and Bernard Higton (London: Pavilion Books/Michael Joseph, 1989, p. 20; £6.99). This is a collection of passages about Provence by 29 authors, each accompanied by a painting or photograph of the region.


* Durrell's poem "Byron en Grèce," translated into French by Patrick Hutchinson, appears in Détours d'Écriture (Aix en Provence), Numéro 12 (1988, pp. 59-62; FF120). This issue is titled Byron ou la stratégie: Le temps des poètes. There is also an interview with Durrell by Hutchinson (translated into French by P.H.) that was conducted 17 April and 23 August 1988 and is entitled "That is the Game!" (pp. 138-139).

* At the end of the "Editorial" in Filigrane, Numéro 2, nouvelle série (Automne-Hiver 1988, p. 4; FF50), is a question by Durrell written in his hand: "Between the completely arbitrary and the completely determined there must be a path?" Several quotations from the French translation of Quinx by Paule Guivarch appear here ("Quelques aphorismes extraits de Quinte ou la version Landry" selected by Gilles Farcet, pp. 34-35). And there is a March 1988 interview with Durrell by Gilles Farcet, "Le Sourire du Tao: Conversation avec Lawrence Durrell," with six good photos of LD (pp. 5-22). Six other contributions to this issue focus on LD or include references to him: David Gascoyne's "The Other Larry" and Alain-René Gélineau's translation of this poem—"L'autre Larry" (p.23); Gamma Salem's "Larry ou le prince charmant" (pp. 14-29); an untitled paragraph from Anaïs Nin's Journal of 1937 that describes LD (p. 30); Bruno de Cassole's article about The Alexandria Quartet, "Le Quatuor ou le voyage d'Ithaque" (pp. 31-33); Jacques Lacarriére's "Durrell, un homme à l'image de son œuvre!" (pp. 36-37); and Gilles Farcet's "L'horizon de l'écriture: Entretien avec Jacques Lacarriére" (pp. 39-59).

* LDS member Richard Pine published an interview with Durrell, "Durrell's Restless Quest for the Meaning of Life," in The Irish Times of 28 November 1988 (p. 14). This is a fascinating discussion of LD's published work, his current and future writing plans, his philosophy, and his Irishness.


* Another excellent interview with Durrell is Paul Chutkov's "Lawrence Durrell: Places and Loves of His Own," which appears in the Great Travelers section of the Conde Nast Traveler of June 1989 (pp. 118-121, 152-153). A haunting photo of LD accompanies it.


* LDS member Frank Kersnowski edited Into the Labyrinth: Essays on the Art of Lawrence Durrell, which was published by UMI Research Press (Ann Arbor, Michigan) in the fall of 1989. Eleven of the eighteen essays in the book are by members of the LDS: Peter Baldwin, Michael H. Begnal, James A. Brigham, Peter G. Christensen, Gregory Dickson, Frank L. Kersnowski, Lee J. Lemon, Ian S. MacNiven, Carol Peirce, Alfred Perlès, and Gordon K. Thomas.


* The next seven entries are from the 1988 MLA International Bibliography. An eighth listing under "Durrell" refers to The Modernists: Studies in a Literary Phenomenon edited by Lawrence B. Gamache and Ian S. MacNiven; this book was mentioned in Herald 8.


Helen Mary Kay's "Lawrence Durrell's Avignon Quintet: A Book of Miracles" is listed in Dissertation Abstracts International 48.12 (June 1988): 3116A.

LDS member Donald P. Kaczvinsky's "Durrell's The Dark Labyrinth" appears in Explicator 46.3 (Spring 1988): 42-44.


Ralph Yarrow's "Perceptions and Rites of Passage in Lawrence Durrell's The Dark Labyrinth and Thomas Burnett Swann's The Day of the Minotaur" is included in Donald Palumbo's Spectrum of the Fantastic (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1988, pp. 165-173).

* The Bookseller of 3 November 1989 contains "Honour for Durrell," a short paragraph that states Durrell received the Grand Prix Littéraire International from the town of Antibes.

* "Novelist Durrell Frail, but He Writes On" is included in the "Celebrities" column of the Chicago Sun Times of 23 November 1989.

There is one quote from Durrell (p. 245) in Brian Dicks's The Greek Islands (London: Robert Hale, 1986; paperback 1988).


Durrell is listed with other writers who have come to the region in Provence (London: George Philip, 1987 and Topsfield, Massachusetts: Salem House, 1987. p.15) by John Flower with photos by Charlie Wa:.

There are two references to Lawrence Durrell in Robert Rattner's "The Man Who Would Be Noah: Gerald Durrell Has Spent a Lifetime Hatching the Perfect Zoo" in the International Wildlife of July-August 1988, pp. 18-23.


Gemma Salem comments upon Durrell a few times in Lettre à l'Hermite Autrichien (Thomas Bernhard), published in Paris by La Table Ronde in 1989.

In The Devil's Advocates: Decadence in Modern Literature (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989, p. 12), Thomas Reed Whissen names Durrell and The Alexandria Quartet twice while noting books that appeared in the late fifties and "seemed blithely indifferent to social realities in favor of shameless self-gratification."


*****Special thanks to the following, who sent material for this column: Peter Baldwin, Roger Bowen, Elizabeth Erickson, Jennifer Leonard, Frances von Maltitz, Mary Mollo, Irene Moore, Richard Pine, Carol Peirce, and Bernard Stone.

FOLLOW-UP

It was announced in Herald 10 that Alfred Perlès's autobiography, "Stranger in the Mirror," was being published by Fourth Estate Ltd., but the book never appeared due to the financial distress of the publisher.

EN PASSANT