We are delighted to learn that Faber and Faber who have been Lawrence Durrell’s principal publishers since he was taken on in 1937 by T.S.Eliot have republished in the course of the last year or so in print form ALL of their back list of Durrell’s books. There are some exceptions such as the 1980 Collected Poems and Durrell’s plays. All the books have new covers. These covers reflect the original lettering style adopted by Faber’s in-house designer, Berthold Wolpe, but otherwise are new designs, albeit reaction to these designs has been mixed from comments I have seen on social media.

See https://www.faber.co.uk/catalogsearch/result/index/order/date_of_publication/dir/desc/q/Lawrence+Durrell/ for a full listing of Lawrence Durrell’s titles currently in print with Faber.

Each of the reissued books has a newly allocated ISBN; readers are advised to order copies of the reissues via the new ISBN (which can be found on the link above) to avoid getting an earlier version from the warehouse.

Faber’s have been generous in supplying us with review copies of many of these new reissues, but we have not been able to inspect copies of all the titles. Therefore, while we can confirm that all the reissues are very smartly presented (the poor standards of the cheap versions which appeared in the 1980’s is a thing of the past), we can confirm that only some of the titles have been reset; some rely on the same settings used for earlier editions of the book.

Much of the pleasure in writing this editorial is to report that each of the four novels comprising The Alexandria Quartet has been reissued as part of this project from Faber’s, each with a specially commissioned new Preface. We write in more detail about these Prefaces in this edition of The Herald.

Readers are reminded that all of Durrell’s major work is available in eBook form from Open Road publishers.

Equally exciting is to report the issue by Naxos AudioBooks of readings of all the four Quartet novels in unabridged form, read by Nicholas Bolton – please see details in the Chart Room column (p. 16) – we hope to carry a fuller review in a forthcoming Herald.

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Remembering Brewster Chamberlin

Brewster Chamberlin’s ‘The Durrell Log: a chronology of the life and times of Lawrence Durrell’, first published by The Durrell School of Corfu, 3rd edition published by Colenso Books in London in 2019, is, in the opinion of your editors, an indispensable guide to Durrell’s life and can be read both as a biographical narrative as well as an indispensable research tool for checking dates relevant to Durrell’s life.

Brewster Chamberlin (born Jersey City, NJ, 27 March 1939; died – 12 November 2020) was a writer and historian with a special expertise in Germany and the effects of the Holocaust. From 1983 to his retirement in 2001 Chamberlin was founding director of the Archives and Library at the US Holocaust Museum in Washington DC and director of the International Programs division.

Brewster Chamberlin’s most ambitious work was a four-volume novel with its origins in Berlin in the Second World War, but extending as far as Key West in the present day. He had also been published at The University Press of Kansas in 2015 (rev 2020) his ‘The Hemmingway Log: a chronology of his life and times’.

We have asked Anthony Hirst, with whom Brewster worked in conjunction with Colenso Books’ ‘The Durrell Log’, to add some personal thoughts for this edition of The Herald.

Ian MacNiven, Lawrence Durrell’s official biographer has generously contributed his own thoughts on Brewster.

Our thanks to Richard Pine for allowing us to use his longer obituary of Brewster for some of the factual information in this preface. Brewster, at the invitation of Richard, was a director of the Durrell School of Corfu.

The photos within these tributes are copyright Lynn-Marie Smith
Brewster of Corfu and The Durrell Log

I associate Brewster Chamberlin with warmth and sunshine and the occasional summer storm, for, though I met him many times over a twelve-year period, it was always in the warmer half of the year, and in Corfu. Our first meeting was in 2000 at the On Miracle Ground XI conference in early July of that year — the first Lawrence Durrell event I ever attended. That was the occasion on which Richard Pine announced the setting up of the Durrell School of Corfu, whose weeklong “seminars”, once and sometimes twice a year were to be the context of all our later meetings; Brewster, as a member of the Advisory Board, was one of the DSC’s staunchest supporters. Our last face-to-face meeting was in 2012, when I had announced a September seminar on the Music, Dance and Drama of the Ionian Islands. It had attracted very little interest, but we went ahead anyway, and Brewster and Lynn-Marie were among the handful of people — the others were mainly Corfu residents — who attended a small number of talks, walks, and cultural events, and a larger number of convivial and (to use a favourite phrase of Brewster’s) well-watered lunches and dinners.

After that seminar, Brewster ably and sensitively chaired what proved to be the last full meeting of the Durrell School directors. There were difficult decisions to be made: funding was much reduced and the landlord had given us notice to quit the premises in Philellinon Street. Brewster was a wise and understanding advisor in the disputes that arose thereafter between the directors, and which lead eventually to the closing of the DSC early in 2014.

We kept in touch from time to time, and I sent Brewster the two Lawrence Durrell titles that Colenso Books published in 2018, *The fruitful discontent of the word* and *The Placebo*. On the 2nd of September 2018 he emailed to say the books had arrived and four days later wrote again to ask if I would publish a revised edition of his Lawrence Durrell Chronology. I immediately agreed, and his next email suggested how it might be different — a different title, and would there be an index? Our collaboration began in earnest in early December 2018 when he sent me the revised files, and, dating from then until October 2019 when *The Durrell Log* was published, there are in my email folder for the book over 400 communications between us. In this rapid exchange, ideas about how to make the book more reader friendly and easier to navigate gradually emerged: the division into sections defined by Durrell’s successive places of residence, the use of running heads and the repetition of the year before the first full entry on each double spread where the next year was not prominently displayed; and yes, it has indeed an extensive “Index of persons”. In the course of 2019 the “revised files” were considerably further revised and extended, with Brewster frequently sending me new information he had come across that was to be inserted — “if possible”, he would always politely add. As I typeset and copy-edited the book I sent him no less that fifteen long lists of “Queries” to which he responded as quickly as he could. Not always immediately, because he was badly affected at times by the chemotherapy he was undergoing for a resurgent cancer, and was hospitalized more than once in that period. His emails usually ended “Be well” — a generous irony from someone who so evidently wasn’t.

It was in this long-distance co-operation that I came to appreciate more fully Brewster’s witty and amazingly well-informed mind — well-informed on such a wide range of subjects. He was, obviously, an enthusiast for Durrell, but very far from being an uncritical Durrell “fan”. *The Durrell Log* is peppered with censorious and sometimes amusing comments on Durrell’s behaviour. In the footnotes he frequently engages in argument with others who have written of Durrell’s life, and readily acknowledges what we cannot know for certain.

I had been expecting to meet Brewster again in Corfu in the summer of 2019 at the Islands of the Mind event organized by the Durrell Library of Corfu, but for health reasons, and much to my regret, he had
to cancel his travel plans. A few months later, *The Durrell Log* was published — the process had taken rather longer than either of us had anticipated — and it has been well received. The only complaint that has reached me mentioned the absence of a second index, an index of references to Durrell’s writings — something I could still supply. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work so closely with Brewster on the *Log* in 2019, but, knowing now of his dying regrets, I can’t help wondering if it might not have been better for him to have concentrated instead that year on the never-finished fourth novel in his Berlin series. Humour, a lively sense of irony, generosity and resilience are the qualities I most associate with Brewster, and it is perhaps fitting that he spent so much of his waning energy in setting straight his account of someone else’s life. “A chronology of the life and times” of Brewster Chamberlin remains to be written. His was indeed a varied, fascinating, and fascinated life.

Anthony Hirst.
August 2021

*Anthony Hirst is the director of Colenso Books, the publisher of The Durrell Log.*

*Copies of the book can be ordered from [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)*
The last twenty years of Brewster Chamberlin’s life were spent mainly at his home in Key West, where I cherished the thought of him living with Lynn-Marie Smith in a beautiful locus that is – or was – more like a West Indian island than an appendage of the United States. Our long friendship centered around Lawrence Durrell, so it strikes me as fitting that my own connection with Larry began, so to speak, when I visited Key West in 1958 on my honeymoon with Susan Steier, who first urged me to read Durrell.

A vital part of Brewster’s genius in life lay in his relationship to others. This is a more uncommon personal gift than, I believe, many people realize, Brewster’s ability to bond with those he felt closest to. From my first acquaintance with him I found that I did not think of Brewster without mentally adding, “and Lynn-Marie.” It struck me that this was quite extraordinary, since to be with Brewster was to realize that he *asserted* himself, not in any unpleasant way, but simply because he knew so much, because he seemed to be so articulately at home not only in all the great capitals of Europe, but in the villages and byways as well. Lynn-Marie, on the other hand, subtly complemented Brewster: self-effacing where he was dominant, quiet where he seemed always to belong center-stage. I recognized in their marriage that ideal state that Durrell had said characterized Justine and Nessim, “they seemed to me then to be the magnificent two-headed animal a marriage could become.”

I saw Brewster and Lynn-Marie act this out during the Avignon Durrell conference of 1992. We held our meetings in the Palais des Papes, and the entire event threatened to devolve into chaos when three times the number of people signed up to give papers or otherwise take part than we, the organizers, had envisioned. Brewster stepped in to coordinate the walking tours of the Old City; Lynn-Marie looked around at the milling crowd, and quietly proceeded to open bottle after bottle of donated wine. The whole mood of the conference changed, relaxed, flourished! I discovered also that Brewster could move into a city, this one or any other, with the ease of a man slipping on a familiar jacket, one tailored especially for him, elegantly casual. I joined one of his tour groups, just to revel in his mix of history, anecdote, and humor.

Part of Brewster’s habit was to meld his professional with his creative and cultural interests. He and Lynn-Marie lived for a time in Tavel near Avignon, and in this fine ambience for artists he began to paint in watercolor and gouache. During his nearly a score of years as a director of two divisions of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, he traveled throughout Europe collecting material for their collections, and on the side absorbed the ambience for his projected Berlin quartet. His time in Paris produced *A Paris Chapbook* and another volume on the city. When he retired to Key West in 2001, he catalogued Hemingway’s and Tennessee Williams’s residences and activities there, as well as compiling his detailed Durrell chronology and acting as a director of The Durrell School of Corfu. Brewster was enormously productive, yet he was also infallibly generous with his time, volunteering to read the outsize typescript draft of my Durrell biography and sending a detailed and perceptive critique.
I knew that for several years Brewster had been undergoing chemotherapy through various bouts of cancer, but he seldom mentioned this and kept up his writing projects and his correspondence. It was only when I was told of his death that I realized how close he had been to the end for many months. Lynn-Marie wrote to me: “He was put in the ICU where I couldn’t see him, but Thursday they let me in for his final 2 hours. He couldn’t talk very well, but we talked about our life, our friends, our 40 years of love, it was very special. He had told the nurse before I came that he couldn’t leave me, plus he hadn’t finished the fourth volume of the Berlin series and had another book in his head, that’s our Brewster! I finally asked if he was ready to go and he said yes, so I had to let him go. They stopped the medicine and he just slipped away.”

-- Ian MacNiven, 6 March 2021

Deus Loci: The Lawrence Durrell Journal invites submissions of original scholarly articles for the forthcoming volume 17 (2020-22). The editor is seeking articles on all aspects of the life and work of Lawrence Durrell: his circles (including Henry Miller, Anais Nin, Gerald Durrell, Richard Aldington, Keith Douglas, Bernard Spencer, Olivia Manning, etc.); his landscapes—Greece, France, or England; his philosophical and artistic concerns.

Please submit critical article manuscripts in MLA style of documentation (based on The MLA Handbook, 9th ed.). Electronic copies should be saved as a Word .doc or .docx.

DEADLINE: October 1, 2021.

Inquiries regarding the submission of your paper should be sent to Dr. Anna Lillios, Editor, at Anna@ucf.edu
Landmarking the City – four new editions; four new prefaces

As noted in the editorial to this edition of *The Herald*, Faber and Faber, who published the first UK editions of the four novels *Justine*, *Balthazar*, *Mountolive* and *Clea* have now republished these four novels, *Justine* in 2020 and the other three novels this year. All have specially commissioned new Prefaces: Andre Aciman introduces *Justine*, Alaa Al Aswany *Balthazar*, William Boyd *Mountolive* and Elif Shafak *Clea*. All find reason to praise Durrell’s novels, whereas Jan Morris in her 2012 Introduction to the combined volume of *The Alexandria Quartet* qualifies heavily her praise. In 2019, Faber reissued the single volume Quartet with Morris’ 2012 Introduction. Morris concludes:

‘But the whole thing itself, this immense imaginary construction, has stood the tests of time and taste, and has never been out of print – probably never will be. Half a century after its completion, those florid vulgairties, those modernist pretensions, seem no more than incidental to its unique flavour, which lingers in the mind long after its labyrinthine plots (for they are myriad, and muddling) have been forgotten.’

Here I am planning to give a flavour to each of these new Prefaces and, at the same time, draw both distinctions and parallels between them which all seem to have been written independently of each other. I have not sought to compare these reprints with any previous editions of the Quartet novels for any textual variations.

In case any of the names of the writers of these Prefaces are not known to readers, here are brief details:

Alexandrian-born writer Andre Aciman may be known to Herald readers via his 1996 engaging memoir of his family’s Mediterranean roots and expulsion from Egypt when Aciman was a child: *Out of Egypt*. Aciman now lives and teaches in the USA and has an impressive tally of books to his name.

Alaa Al Aswany – Born 1957, Egyptian novelist

William Boyd – Born 1952, Scottish novelist and screenwriter.

Elif Shafak – Born 1971, is a Turkish-British novelist and women’s rights activist.

All four writers have taken their tasks here seriously. As I hope to show in this essay, some common themes but different interpretations of those themes from the Quartet novels appear in these essays, each reflecting the cultural heritage of his/her own national and cultural background. Of the four, I found those by Aciman and Al Aswany the most thought provoking; Shafak offers some valuable insights into her sense of being an expatriate writer. As the only female contributor, I was disappointed that she did not apply her reputation as a feminist critic to these novels, written nearly 60 years ago when the male perspective seemed to dominate western literature. It is also the shortest Preface at just over 5 pages; Aciman contributes 13 pages, Boyd 6 pages and Al Aswany 9 pages.

References in this essay will be to the page numbers in each Preface.

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1 This quotation comes from The Guardian newspaper at [https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/feb/24/alexandria-quartet-lawrence-durrell-rereading](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/feb/24/alexandria-quartet-lawrence-durrell-rereading), accessed on 10 August 2021. I have assumed that this is the same text as Morris uses for the printed 2012 version of the Quartet, a copy of which I do not have when writing this essay.

2 A version of Aciman’s Preface can be found via the website of The Sunday Telegraph as ‘How Lawrence Durrell made me ache for Alexandria’.
Durrell lays his own mischief in his own note to *Justine*: ‘….Only the city is real’, perhaps prompting dozens of readers to visit Alexandria and seek out the ‘real’ places as well as the ‘real’ characters. Does it not go without saying that anyone on such a quest is bound to be disappointed? The Quartet, to state the obvious, is a work of fiction and not, as E. M. Forster had provided in 1922 and dozens of writers and publishers since, a guide book to the city, even though, as Aciman claims; ‘Lawrence Durrell would not get lost in today’s city, for its skeletal grid is still very much in place. But he wouldn’t recognise the Alexandria he knew.’ (x); and ‘Someone eventually told me that Durrell’s Alexandria could never exist, had never existed. But I couldn’t believe this, not now. There were simply too many things I recognised.’ Does this not catch the essence of Durrell’s ‘made up’ Alexandria, of all his writings about place, whether in his ‘non-fiction’ travel books or his invented novels? – that they fire the imagination so intensely that we can think ourselves not only there but as a close observer of the experiences and feelings of the protagonists.

Al Aswany seeks to answer the same conundrum about the reality of Durrell’s Alexandria and speaks, like Aciman, as someone of Levantine origins; indeed, Al Aswany is of Arab background. Al Aswany cites an interview with Durrell who states that Alexandria in his, Durrell’s, writing is ‘purely symbolic’ (v). Al Aswany goes further dismissing the idea that Durrell’s depiction of life before and during the Second World War as ‘realistic’, but, I think, goes too far in suggesting that Durrell’s inventiveness achieved his aim of ‘reproducing in his Alexandria the seductive qualities of the Arabian Nights.’

I think Aciman would agree with Al Aswany’s idea that Durrell’s city is symbolic. Aciman carefully dissects the metaphorical value of the novel *Justine*: ‘...written in powerful metaphors, with relentless psychological acumen.’ (xiv) I rather like Aciman’s idea that ‘we live in paradox (sic)….And Alexandria is the mother of all paradoxes.’ (xvi). And: ‘….a metaphor doesn’t so much bridge two totally unrelated or even conflicting terms, it collapses them, slips them together into the same tight pocket so that they can no longer be separated.’ (xvii)

Two themes provide the focus for Aciman’s Preface – the metaphorical construct of *Justine* and the paradox of contraries in the novel plot of *Justine*.

Al Aswany looks at the form of the Quartet as against the, then, contemporary construction of the novel, le nouveau roman, suggesting that Durrell challenges that form of modernism: ‘The tetralogy also reveals how it is the content of a literary work that defines the form and not vice versa.’ (vii). Al Aswany seems to work on the basis that Durrell’s chosen form, a ‘narrative form from the distinct points of view of the four main characters’ (vi), was a scheme worked out by Durrell in advance of his writing the first Quartet novel. However, a contrary point of view is offered by the late Michael Haag - see, eg his essay ‘The Alexandria Quartet: From one volume to four’ in *Deus Loci: The Lawrence Durrell Journal, NS13 2012 - 2013, pp 64 - 73.*, where he suggests that the form of the tetralogy only came during the course of writing *Justine*.

Al Aswany also seeks to subvert the colonial aspect of Durrell’s writing in the Quartet, listing a number of examples in the Quartet of ‘a deep-seated contempt for Arabs and Egyptians.’ There is much to support Al Aswany’s view, although, by doing so, one may be at risk of an ex post facto revisionism of a writer who was both revolutionary but also decidedly conservative in his political outlook as an expatriate Britisher. Nevertheless, Al Aswany does right to offer this criticism and is a subject for much future discussion.

Al Aswany, nevertheless, concludes, and not gratuitously, that ‘The Alexandria Quartet will always remain a work of great creativity, which we will delight in and from which we learn how to look inside
ourselves in order to understand, tolerate and even accept our own urges.’ (xiii)

William Boyd takes a much less international view of the Quartet, telling how he came to Durrell via the latter’s poetry: ‘……Durrell’s potent manipulation of language and image and evocative description explains a great deal about his particular allure.’ (vi); ‘To put it very simply, it’s the atmosphere – the spirit of place – and the sexual transgressions and dilemmas of the various characters that finally give the Quartet its particular magnetism’. Boyd concludes: ‘Good in parts – or more precisely; brilliantly unrivalled in parts – is the simple approbation that makes the Alexandria Quartet worth reading today, and that, most unusually and intriguingly, should ensure its survival as one of the great novel sequences of the twentieth century.’ (x)

As Al Aswany sees the Quartet as a route to understanding, so does Elif Shafak, through Durrell’s cast of lost lovers (‘Everybody is a little lost in The Alexandria Quartet’ (vi)) asking his readers ‘not to judge but simply to understand.’ (vi). But just as some critics see Durrell as ‘stateless’, born in India, claiming Irish descent, British citizen, domiciled in France, for example, so Shafak identifies with Durrell as an ‘outsider’, to use Shafak’s word (vi): ‘It was this burning but equally difficult to describe feeling of ‘in-between-dom’, that invisible rift between ‘belonging’ and ‘non-belonging’, that Durrell captured so poignantly for people like me through his themes and characters, both expatriates and natives.’ (vi). This, of all the perceptive evaluations we see in these four Prefaces is the most insightful and the key for me and many others, I suspect, to Durrell’s appeal to us as readers – here is a writer who, like us, feels that they do not quite belong and, through art (reading) seeks, like Durrell ‘to reconnect with what [he] has left behind’.

This loss can be felt in a number of ways – from lovers, from family or, as in the case of Shafak ‘from wounded democracies or countries with troubled pasts yet to be acknowledged.’ For Shafak, ‘literature has never been as much as ‘in search of lost time’ as ‘in search of lost place’.’ Shafak is referring to her ‘native’ Turkey. Durrell’s Egypt had yet, at the time in which the Quartet is set, to evidence the wounds which became apparent of Nasser’s nationalism as a reaction to British rule in Egypt, yet it is quite proper for Shafak to identify after the event with the same political otherness which she suffered and the Egyptians were later to suffer and which led, amongst other things, to Alexandria’s becoming more ‘culturally and religiously homogenous’ (Shafak’s words; vii) as the multi-ethnicity of a pre-modern state was imposed by the subsequent political regimes.

Peter Baldwin
ILDS Mini-Minutes

ZOOM: 9 June 2021

The Executive Board of the International Lawrence Durrell Society met via Zoom on 9 June 2021 at 2:55 p.m. Paris time, President Isabelle Keller-Privat presiding. The president announced that the “On Miracle Ground XXI” conference, postponed from the original May 2021 date, is now scheduled for 9 -11 June 2022 in Toulouse, France. During the course of the meeting, the following Board members were appointed to the 2022 Conference Committee: Peter Baldwin; James Decker; Isabelle Keller-Privat, chair; Paul Lorenz; David Radavich; Fiona Tomkinson; Anne Zahlan.

A proposed announcement of the 2022 William Godshalk Prize for New Durrell Scholarship (including instructions for application) was considered and, with some revision, approved for posting on the ILDS website. President Keller-Privat and Vice President James Decker will assess the submitted abstracts and, once papers are presented at the conference, make the final determination of the winner of the Prize. Those present also approved an updated OMG XXI Call for Papers, focusing their discussion on deadlines. A final text of the CFP was to be posted on the ILDS website.

Subsequent discussion centered on conference planning. Two of three originally scheduled plenary speakers will participate in 2022; additionally, a plenary reading by a distinguished British actor is being considered. A previously planned Cave Poésie event has been rescheduled and will now feature winning poems from both the 2019 and the 2021 White Mice contests. (David Radavich announced that the theme for this year’s competition is “History Revisited” and that the deadline is 1 October 2021.)

Questions about virtual attendance at the conference and possibilities for recording events were raised by Peter Baldwin; President Keller-Privat is checking on technical possibilities with the host-institution, Université Jean Jaurès, and will report to the committee. Additionally, Baldwin reported good progress on the new edition of Durrell’s *A Key to Modern British Poetry*, which ILDS has agreed to support financially. He also noted the successful Facebook event organized by Pamela Francis; he and Francis agreed to work on future virtual events.

Anne Zahlan
Conflicting Cosmologies: The Herculean Labour That Transformed A Marine Venus

The years following his sojourn in Rhodes were difficult ones for Lawrence Durrell. Posted first to Argentina and then Yugoslavia, both of which he disliked, 1952 brought new responsibilities of fatherhood as well as the first hints of problems within his second marriage. Is it any wonder then that, having completed Reflections on a Marine Venus, his account of Rhodes, in late 1951, he found wrestling it down to a publishable length so overwhelming?

Enter Faber editor Anne Ridler, to whom Durrell was delighted to hand the task over. Conventional wisdom has it that Ridler effectively rescued the Rhodes book, helping Venus emulate Prospero's Cell as both lyrical portrait and reliable source of income. Not only did Durrell trust her abilities, but needing to earn money from his writing, he was in neither the mood nor position to realistically oppose her editorial decisions.

Larry was certainly appreciative at the time, as a letter to her in August 1952, published in Spirit of Place, demonstrates. A “Herculean labour” (Durrell, Spirit, 111) is how he describes her cutting of the typescript down to size. “I hope the wretched book reads the better for it,” he goes on. Such grudging optimism suggests the deed is as good as done, that the book has been whittled down to its final 75,000 or so words, with the loss of around a third of the original typescript.

If so, it is odd that in the same letter Durrell still offers to lose “the ghost stories” in exchange for keeping his description of the 1480 siege, because in the final published version, both cuts are made; and both are substantial, with the ghost – or more accurately vampire – stories taking up sixteen pages of typescript, and the siege twenty-seven. They must both surely have been part of Ridler’s “Herculean labour”, as the achievement seems much less Olympian if the vampire stories are excluded. Durrell clearly knew about the siege, but not, apparently, about the vampires. Something doesn’t add up. Could he really have been told how much had been cut, yet be in the dark about precisely what had gone?

In order to delve deeper, it is necessary to understand something of Anne Ridler herself, and to acknowledge that, as a devout Christian and talented poet in her own right, she was always unlikely to be a dispassionate editor. Her poems have been described as devotional; among her influences were the metaphysical poets John Donne and George Herbert and she had ties to the Inklings group, a predominantly Christian set of writers that included Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. Of the group, Charles Williams was a particular influence, and in the 1950s she compiled a posthumous collection of his work, The Image of the City and Other Essays, contributing a critical introduction. Much of Williams’ writing is theological in nature, and Ridler, clearly in her element, critiques his work knowledgeably and eloquently.

Cosmologically speaking then, Ridler and Durrell were poles apart, and it seems inevitable that her involvement as editor would alter Venus in ways that Larry could never have anticipated. Moreover, his state of mind at the time made it impossible for him to assess the full impact of the excisions, hence his first reaction was predominantly one of relief and gratitude. However, a little more than a year on, in a letter to Theodore Stephanides, he is far more negative about the recently published book, and laments its neutered state (Durrell, Spirit, 119).

David Roessel takes the title of his excellent article on the editing of Venus, “Cut In Half As It Was”, from a comment in this letter. The article documents the cuts meticulously: an entire chapter entitled Dreams, Divinations, the account of the siege, the vampire episodes, several passages on the link between Islomania and the historical present and a fair chunk of the chapter on the feast of Saint Soula. The reason Roessel gives for the first two make perfect sense: Dreams, Divinations could be snipped out painlessly with no other alterations, and, given the book’s earlier account of one fight over the island, the second was deemed a siege too far for the average reader.
Regarding the vampires, Roessel suggests Ridler thought they detracted from the book’s sunny atmosphere, but there may be more to it than this. Might not the deciding factor in their removal have been the editor’s own religious sentiments? Ridler may have been at home immersed in Williams’ work, but Larry’s was quite another matter. Lurid tales of vampires must surely have filled her with something approaching repugnance. Christian reaction to the vampire has for centuries been, in the main, unequivocal abhorrence, its insatiable appetite for blood a perversion of the Eucharist. It also effectively cheats death, leading a relatively meaningful – if quite literally soulless – existence. All of this is incompatible with Ridler’s beliefs.

Larry had great affection for Anne Ridler. His letters to her are full of good-humoured teasing and the Durrellian joie de vivre. Yet he would also have understood the vast ontological chasm that lay between them, that his anarchic iconoclasm was anathema to her conservative Anglicanism, and vice versa. Perhaps we catch a glimpse of this in Durrell’s choice of the term “ghost stories” in the above-quoted letter. Did he diplomatically avoid referring directly to vampires for fear of causing offence? But equally, did Ridler delay telling him they had been excised because she feared confrontation over her motives?

Roessel points out that omitting the stories disrupts the book artistically. An overarching theme in the typescript is the historical present, but this is greatly diminished in the published version. The sensation that time is suspended is a major attraction of Greek island life for the islomane, who cheats death, vampire-like, by existing in a kind of languorous temporal stasis. The tales of the undead underpin this beautifully, so the wisdom of dropping them is questionable. Their importance to Durrell is seen in the fact that they were recycled, one in Balthazar and the other in the Rhodes section of The Greek Islands, and the vampire motif recurs often in other works, from Prospero’s Cell to An Irish Faustus.

It is not only the removal of the vampires that does artistic damage to Venus, though. In the chapter The Saint of Soroni, to quote Roessel, “one of the climactic passages in the book” (Roessel, 71) is dropped. All of Durrell’s musings on the saint are swept away, “quite remarkably” (ibid.). Roessel quotes a short extract but stops at the point where Durrell is really just getting going. Saints, he writes, are a gateway to the metaphysical world, elaborating specifically on the Rhodian example:

‘I see him as something more than a prop invented to quieten the insecurity of the man, who finds himself set down in a mysterious and frightening world; on the contrary he is the blithe and uncritical deus loci whose proper habitation is the adult spirit which has grown to comprehend him as a representative of husbandry and wine. And if I prefer him – the Mediterranean saint – to his more powerful and autocratic brothers of the north (whose existence depends on an attitude based in a more exacting theology), it is precisely for his weaknesses, and for the long tap-roots which keep him in touch with Dionysus and Athens…” (Durrell, Venus, Section 2, 61)

Here Durrell targets Christianity as mere crutch, singling out what he believed was its puritanical north European strain and preferring its more paganish Orthodox version. It is in the same spirit as when, by his own account, he dared ask T.S. Eliot how an intelligent person like him could be a Christian (Durrell, “The Other Eliot”, From the Elephant’s Back 264).

Such provocations were bound to cause Ridler raised eyebrows, and possibly to let the section fall by the wayside. But at what cost? According to Roessel, the passage is “not simply the observation of the repeated patterns of history … but also the endless repetitions of the mind in solitude pondering those patterns … [a]nd the result of this meditation leads not to rational understanding but … directly to the ghost, or more properly vampire, stories…” (Roessel, 71). The passages are thematically intertwined, and the theme they explore is at the very heart of Durrell’s Greek Islomania. It is,
after all, the historical present, untouched by oppressive time constraints, which frees the mind from the weight of human mortality, thus providing the conditions necessary for total, unsullied contemplation.

Textually these two expunged episodes are discrete entities appearing in different chapters, and it is only through a close reading of the original typescript, with its other references to the historical present, that the metaphysical thread connecting them can be traced. However, in 1971, Faber (Dutton in the USA) published *The Red Limbo Lingo*, a limited edition volume of fragments and poetry, in which Durrell explicitly attempts the synthesis of Christian ritual with the mythology of the undead. In a letter to Henry Miller, Durrell referred to this work as “the Vampire Notebook” (Durrell and Miller 438) and in subsequent correspondence tells him “[i]t’s all about Jesus and vampires and the blood of the lamb etc.” (Durrell and Miller 449). The tone of Durrellian dismissiveness belies the seriousness with which he combines the two themes. Christ on the cross is presented as both vampire and victim and the Eucharist equated with the blood-drinking of the vampire. As Durrell writes, “In the beginning was the Word, and the word was blood…” (Durrell, *Lingo* 11).

This thematic synthesis allows Durrell to circle back to the notion of Time. In *Lingo*, the fusion of motifs heightens the mood, as the writer declares that “[t]he day which we call today will tomorrow become yesterday; tomorrow will become today in twenty-four hours. Is Time then a superfluous concept?” (Durrell, *Lingo*, 15). The ideas are strikingly similar to a section cut near the start of *Venus*, in which Durrell writes, “On islands … there is no present, past or future … For the true islamane time on islands is abolished” (Durrell, *Venus* Section 1, 3). In *Lingo*, the proposition has been seeded from the outset by the use of the word “Limbo” in the title, and its multiple use in the text helps us decode the writer’s credo: we exist in a Limbo in which Christianity has put civilisation on hold, as we await the dawn of a new (pagan?) era.

As Durrell concludes his musings on Saint Soula in *Venus*: “for in our deepest past lies the only hope for man’s future. So much of our history will in the end prove to have been a detour” (Durrell, *Venus* Section 2, 61). This too was cut, as part of the damning assessment of Christianity which would have offended Ridler’s sensibilities. The problem was that, having decided to go down this path, it was necessary to cut almost all other references to the historical present in the book, which otherwise would seem out of place. By doing this, she denied the possibility for future readers to see the germination of ideas which Larry felt compelled to give shape to and deepen throughout much of his mature work.

In 1987, Anne Ridler wrote an article, *Recollections of Lawrence Durrell*, for the journal *Twentieth Century Literature*, in which she shows her own awareness of their differing cosmological outlooks: “On metaphysics or theories about the universe, I often felt that the rapidly spinning wheels engaged no gear” (Ridler, 296). She goes on: “Although Larry’s mind was not closed to Christian religious emotion … the designation ‘Christian’ was rarely mentioned by him without its pendant adjective ‘sweaty’” (*ibid.*). Tellingly, she concludes by regretting how they drifted apart in the late fifties and early sixties. There is the unmistakable sense that any curtailing of relations came more from Durrell’s side than Ridler’s. “I think of our friendship as suspended,” she writes, “rather than brought to an end” (Ridler, 297). In truth, Larry may have felt increasingly uncomfortable about differences of opinion on matters that were important to them both, and the timeframe certainly makes it feasible that his delayed reaction to the cuts in *Venus* influenced him in allowing the relationship to cool.

Anne Ridler’s achievement was to produce a highly readable version of *Venus* which has become a classic of travel literature. But looking at her editorial choices, it is difficult to believe that, as Roessel posits, they were solely “to suit better the public perception of a Greek holiday island”
If she did allow her personal beliefs to intrude on her judgement, it would not have been hard to persuade herself that the cuts improved the book and would help sales. But surely there can be no excuse for making editorial decisions which obscure a writer’s overall vision, based on conflicting sensibilities, religious or otherwise.

If nothing else, the rejected material is a joy to read, representative as it is of Durrell as travel raconteur at his sparkling best. This alone is a strong argument for an edition of *Venus* that contains all the removed segments as an appendix, so that Durrell aficionados can finally fully appreciate what kind of book it might have been, and better understand his artistic and spiritual evolution.

Christopher Bacon June 2021

**REFERENCES**


Durrell, Lawrence *Reflections on a Marine Venus*. Unpublished typescript in two sections. Held in the Morris Library at the University of Southern Illinois at Carbondale, USA.


*A native of Scotland's capital city, Christopher Bacon graduated from Edinburgh University, and then subsequently worked in Scottish theatre as a writer/producer. He then made the move to London to work in BBC Radio 4 production, while also contributing scripts to BBC Education. He transferred to north-east Italy with his wife in 2000, where their two children were born, and where he is now an English lecturer at The University of Verona.*
Les enténébrés.
A novel by Sarah Chiche

This novel, first published by Éditions du Seuil in Paris in 2019, came to my attention via a review in a French magazine. The author is a practising psychologist and psychoanalyst, born in 1976, and the author of several novels and non-fiction works in the field of psychology. It tells of the first-person narrator’s journey through a difficult early childhood as the child of a mother and grandmother, both of whom suffered from debilitating mental health problems, towards a greater understanding of her own emotional needs as she struggles with feelings for her partner and their child. Her lover, a cellist, also plays a big part in her emotional journey.

Chiche cites at the end of her book several sources for her book, including Thomas Bernhard, James Joyce, Fernando Pessoa and……… ‘The Alexandria Quartet’ of Lawrence Durrell. I read the French version of this novel (I don’t think there’s an English version); perhaps my French is not up to it or the allusions to the Quartet too subtle, but I spotted no direct references to the Quartet but I did spot a reference to ‘Les îles grecques’ on p 376 of the subsequent paperback edition of Les enténébrés from the French publisher Points. The narrator spots the book on a bookshelf in a house where she is staying. The reference to Durrell’s book only has passing reference to the novel’s storyline but Durrell certainly impresses her: ‘[Durrell] writes of the harbours, the light and the flora (of the Greek islands) with a sense of marvel and sensuality close to that which one finds in D.H.Lawrence.’ (my translation)

Peter Baldwin

Critical Bibliography – Lawrence Durrell

Professor James Gifford, former President of the ILDS and Professor of English at Fairleigh Dickinson University, British Columbia, Canada, reports:

Just a quick note to mark a milestone. The Online Critical Bibliography just passed 3,000 entries:

https://lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/resources/bibliographies/critical-bibliography/

There are surely some duplicates in there, and we still need to clean it up after the Zotero conversion from PDT (and update the metadata, &c.), but it can be a useful resource. If you’ve not used the Zotero bibliography software before, you can access it through a web interface for basic searches as well as through a free application that can automate citations in various word processors and generate bibliographies and so forth. Zotero is developed by George Mason University.

Some long-term goals include ensuring scholarly works listed here are included in the MLA Bibliography as well, better coverage of scholarship in languages other than English, and updating things in the Notes or Tags fields that were scrambled or lost in previous file conversions.

And a reminder: this is primarily scholarly work and first/variant publications of Durrell’s works, so there’s still *lots* not included in it (for which, please see Grove Koger’s fabulous bibliography).

Naxos AudioBooks has released unabridged readings by Nicholas Boulton of the volumes of *The Alexandria Quartet*, with the running time for *Justine*, for instance, at 8 hours, 15 minutes. Naxos had previously released abridged versions of the books read by Nigel Anthony, with the earlier version of *Justine* running to 3 hours, 58 minutes.

[The total running time for all four readings is approx. 40 hours; we hope to review the readings in the next edition of *The Herald*, but in the meantime, see https://naxosaudiobooks.com/ - this is the home page of Naxos AudioBooks and features the readings as new releases at the time of preparing this article - Eds]

“The Exoticized Gaze in Lawrence Durrell’s *The Alexandria Quartet*” by Sean Sheehan was posted in *PopMatters* on July 27. Among his conclusions, Sheehan writes that “to say that Durrell sees the life of ordinary Egyptians going on around him but writes about it only as scenery is true but also a disservice to the extraordinary vivacity of his descriptive prose.” The article is illustrated, by the way, with the cover of the new Faber edition of the *Quartet*.

The *Greek Reporter* posted an article by Patricia Claus, “The Amazing Works of Beloved Corfu Writer Lawrence Durrell,” on August 9. As Claus notes, “this brilliant writer’s time in Greece gave him insights into human nature that he would use in all of his subsequent works.”

*The Black Book* is one of the works discussed by Ged Pope in *All the Tiny Moments Blazing: A Literary Guide to Suburban London* (2020). The publisher, Reaktion Books, describes the book as a “sweeping literary tour” of the city’s 32 boroughs.

The University of Kent has accepted Banan Aljahdali’s thesis *Literary Representations of Alexandria: Cosmopolitanism and History in Lawrence Durrell, André Aciman, and Ibrahim Abdul Meguid*. The author explains that his study “examines how Alexandria was given a literary form and represented” during the first half of the twentieth century and argues that “Durrell’s representation is an example and continuation of Western orientalist discourse that started centuries ago.”

*Caesar’s Vast Ghost* is discussed in *La guerre aux terres saintes* by, published in Paris by Orizons in 2020.

Paul Herron has announced that only two volumes of Anaïs Nin’s unexpurgated diaries remain, with Sky Blue Press scheduled to publish the first, *The Diary of Others: 1955-1966*, in October. The volume will be edited by Herron and will include a preface by him and an introduction by Benjamin Franklin V. The final volume of Nin’s diaries will be titled *A Joyous Transformation*.

A six-part adaptation of Nin’s volume of erotica *Little Birds* is being carried by the STARZ network. Created by Sophia Al-Maria and directed by Stacie Passon, the series stars Juno Temple and was filmed in Spain, although its ostensible setting is the International Zone of Tangier. For an interview with Al-Maria, see “‘People Think the Audience is Stupid’: Sophia Al-Maria on *Little Birds*, Anaïs Nin and Screenplay Development” in *Filmmaker* for July 13.

Nin is one of the subjects of *Bookish Broads: Women Who Wrote Themselves into History*, by
Lauren Marino with illustrations by Alexandra Kilburn. The volume is published by Abrams Image. Nin is also considered in the Peter Lang book *Bearing Liminality, Laboring White Ink: Pregnancy and Childbirth in Women’s Literature* by Francisco José Cortés Vieco.


The house that Patrick Leigh and Joan Fermor built in Kardamyli, Greece, can be rented during the months of June, July and August. The Fermors bequeathed the dwelling to the Benaki Museum of Athens with the stipulation that it be used as a retreat for writers and artists, but the agreement allows for the house to be rented for three months a year to help pay for its upkeep. The Benaki has contracted with Aria Hotels to handle the hosting details. An article by Eleni N. Gage for the July 22, 2021, issue of *Travel + Leisure* adds that the Fermors’ last housekeeper, Elpida Belogianni, will cook for the guests!

Grove Kroger
August 2021

**Important Links via the ILDS Website**

[www.lawrencedurrell.org](http://www.lawrencedurrell.org)


On Miracle Ground XXI: [www.lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/on-miracle-ground-xxi](http://www.lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/on-miracle-ground-xxi)

2021 White Mice Contest: [www.lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/white-mice](http://www.lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/white-mice)

William Godschalk Prize for New Durrell Scholarship: [www.lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/durrell-prize](http://www.lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/durrell-prize)
The Durrell Prize for Scholarship

Sponsored by the International Lawrence Durrell Society

The Durrell Prize is a biannual prize open to emerging scholars from around the world conducting research on world-renowned writer Lawrence Durrell.

Purpose: To foster and recognize scholarship about Lawrence Durrell (1912-1990) and his influences as well as to encourage participation in the International Lawrence Durrell Society’s biannual conferences.

Eligibility: The literary essays that qualify for the prize must be the original work of the emerging scholars submitting.

Rules and Procedures: The emerging scholar must submit an abstract of at least 500 words, along with a bibliography, a biographical statement and a CV. The abstract is submitted in anticipation of an original paper presentation at the next International Lawrence Durrell Society Conference. This presentation will be around 20 minutes long, focusing on Durrell’s writing, life, literary influence, legacy and/or concern for issues of his time. In order to qualify for the Prize, the scholar must deliver the presentation at the ILDS conference; he or she is expected to attend the entire conference and be recognized at the banquet.

Judges are members of the International Lawrence Durrell Society, appointed by its president. Abstracts will be judged on the promise they show for the development of an original presentation that contributes to the knowledge and understanding of Lawrence Durrell. Preference will be given to those who demonstrate in the abstract a serious engagement of Durrell’s writing and of relevant scholarship. Following the conference presentation, the scholar may submit the winning essay for publication.

Sponsor: The International Lawrence Durrell Society.

Prize: Monetary prize and a one-year membership in the International Lawrence Durrell Society will be awarded at the Conference banquet following the successful delivery of the paper. Conference registration and banquet will be complimentary.

Deadline for Submission: January 1st 2022

Send submissions (with MS Word attachment) to: President Isabelle Keller-Privat
isabelle.keller-privat@univ-tlse2.fr
Book review
John Craxton - a life of gifts (Yale University Press, 2021)
A biography by Ian Collins

John Craxton was a UK London born artist (b1922) who decamped from England in 1946, like Lawrence Durrell, finding the UK climate intolerable. Whilst never cutting his ties with England to the same extent as Durrell – one of seven children, contact with his parents, his siblings and his galleries as well as UK based commissions ensured the strength of Craxton’s ties with the UK until his death in London in 2009 – Craxton went to live on the Greek Isle of Poros in 1946, moving to live in Chania, Crete in 1960. His house there remained his principle residence until his death and Crete, its landscapes and its people remained his major sources of inspiration.

Amongst his artistic influences, he counted Samuel Palmer, Graham Sutherland, Picasso and Miro. What strikes the viewer of his art – and this book is very generous in its provision of colour reproductions of his significant art works – is not only the prevalence of Greece in Craxton’s imagination but also the purity of the light, captured in nearly all his paintings. He is, if you like, the visual artist’s counterpart to Lawrence Durrell. Powerful light, bold colours and easily-read figurative paintings characterise his work just as a broad vocabulary and semantic palette coloured the writings of Durrell.

Craxton and British ‘travel’ writer Patrick Leigh Fermor were good friends. Many of the readers of The Herald will know the shared affinity of both Durrell and Leigh Fermor to the spirit of place of Greece and the Mediterranean. Craxton provided the cover designs for nearly all Leigh Fermor’s books, as can be seen from the attached photo of my (slightly faded) cover of my copy of Romeli.

From what I can glean, Durrell and Craxton were only in direct contact once when Craxton, touring the Dodecanese islands, dropped in to visit Durrell at the Villa Cleobolos in 1946. Collins cites Durrell’s description from the latter’s book The Greek Islands to set the scene for the landscape which so drew Craxton to Poros when he landed there in 1946.

‘Poros is a most enchanting arrangement, obviously designed by demented Japanese children with the aid of Paul Klee and Raoul Dufy. A child’s box of tricks that has been rapidly and fluently set up against a small shoulder of headland which holds the winds in thrall, it extends against the magical blue skyline its herbaceous border of brilliant colours, hardly quite dry yet….’

With its lavish illustrations interspersed with the text, this book is a joy to read. Collins, who became Craxton’s secretary in the 2000’s until the artist’s death, was able to overcome Craxton’s reluctance to be the subject of biography and received the artist’s full cooperation in writing a comprehensive survey of Craxton’s work for art publisher Lund Humphries, started before the artist’s death but not published until 2011. It is with this knowledge and insight that Collins gives us a vivid account of Craxton’s life and art.

My only reservation about this book is that the Index is an index only of proper names so I was frustrated when trying to cross-reference some thematic ideas set out by Collins in this book. There is a great poignancy for fans of Lawrence Durrell. Yale, the publishers of this book, were the commissioning publishers of what should have been the late Michael Haag’s biography of Lawrence Durrell. Reading this book with its wealth of illustrations served to remind me of what we have missed in Michael’s not having written his biography of Larry.

Peter Baldwin
The Herald - editorial guidelines and publication dates

The Herald is the newsletter of the International Lawrence Durrell Society [ILDS] – see: www.lawrencedurrell.org. It will be emailed as a matter of course to all members of the ILDS. It will also be uploaded to www.lawrencedurrell.org/ for free access to any interested reader.

Should a member wish to receive a printed version of The Herald, they may contact the editors at newsletter.ilds@gmail.com to make the change.

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Readers are invited to contribute articles, news items, events and details of new publications by or about Lawrence Durrell for future publication in The Herald. Articles and contributions should, in the first instance, be limited to no more than 300 words. Unpublished photos or illustrations which may be of interest to readers of The Herald will also be welcome provided the editors are satisfied that appropriate copyright consents have been obtained.

Would-be contributors are advised to email the editors (newsletter.ilds@gmail.com) to discuss the scope of their contribution and its suitability for The Herald.

All inquiries about The Herald should be sent to newsletter.ilds@gmail.com

Copy date for the next edition of The Herald [NS] is Nov. 15, 2021 for publication in winter, 2021.

The views and opinions expressed in The Herald are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the International Lawrence Durrell Society.