

ISSN: 0976-8165

The Criterion

An International Journal in English

Since 2010

Vol. 5, Issue-I

February 2014

The Criterion



5th Year of Open Access

Editor-In-Chief: Dr. Vishwanath Bite

www.the-criterion.com

Bi-monthly Refereed & Indexed Open Access eJournal

Technique in the Novels of Lawrence Durrell

Dr.Sonia khandelwal

Whether one regards Durrell as primarily a poet or a novelist depends on whether one is an Englishman or an American. His novels have been less highly acclaimed in Britain than in America. This is because Durrell, like D.H. Lawrence, turned his back on Britain and wrote prose in the language of poetry. Like D. H. Lawrence, Durrell traveled to exotic places. He was born, brought up and worked in exotic places. His work is ripe with the atmosphere of Mediterranean cities and sites. He approached all his work self consciously as an artist. He experimented because he believed it to be an artist's job to experiment. He played Joyce' games with language and employed the technique of narrating events from different viewpoints- a method pioneered by Cary in the *Sara Monday* trilogy. Durrell used this method in *The Alexandria Quartet* and shared the fascination of many contemporary novelists with ways of expressing the passage of time. He advocated the theory of relativity in support of his own departure from simple chronology. Relative time, relative truth and relative moral values are the motifs of much of his work. He added to his experiment with language his experiments with form. He cast passages in the form of letters, extracts from diaries and pieces of journalism. It has been said that Durrell was a better prose writer when he was not trying to achieve 'poetry' than when he approached the novel with, as it were, a sense of holiness. There is a point at which art becomes artifice. Perhaps the Englishman is more wary of the confusion of forms than the American. The Englishman likes his poems to be poetic and his novels to be prose. In this sense, Durrell is a less 'English' poet-novelist than Hardy and Robert Graves who held the forms further apart.

Durrell manages to construct an intricate story containing a vast variety of incidents and characters. All characters and incidents contribute to the main story. Minor themes are presented in such a way as to help in furthering the central theme. The description of occasional meetings of lovers and friends, shooting, political discussions and exposition of social customs contribute to the main plot. Throughout, the first episode leads to the second one and the second one leads to the third one and thus a string of chronologically presented episodes is constructed.

Conflicts – external as well as internal – are extensively used in Durrell's plots. Both the external and internal conflicts overtake his characters relentlessly. Almost all his characters pass through various conflicting circumstances. Melissa and Cohen suffer from fatal diseases which bring them ultimate death. Darley passes through the conflict born of his dire economic problem. Nassim is involved in political conflicts. He is forced to grease the palm of Memlick. If he does not do this, his entire property will be at stake. Similarly, Justine is engulfed in untold mental conflicts. Her only child is lost. In order to search her lost child she needs money that she does not have. The presentation of these conflicts contributes to the development of plot.

Like the presentation of external conflicts, the presentation of internal conflicts contributes to the development of plot. Durrell's characters suffer from internal conflicts more severely than from external conflicts. It is because of the acuteness of internal conflicts that Pursewarden commits suicide. He is pulverized by the conflicting situations. He pitifully flaps between loyalty to his country and sincerity to his friend. When he finds that he is bound to lose

either Nassim's friendship or loyalty to the govt., he commits suicide. Similarly, Darley suffers from internal conflicts severely after he is estranged from Justine. His internal conflicts are so acute that like Hamlet he faces the question of "to be or not to be".

In the structure of his novels both the architectural and the emotional aspects are always at work. The architectural aspects consist of the bare skeleton of story by the emotion consist in feeling aroused by the presentation of various situations. Since the feelings are aroused by the skeleton of the story and the presentation of situation, both the architectural and the emotive aspects are interdependent upon each other.

The beginning lines of Durrell's novels are almost descriptive in their nature. In the beginning part of *Justine*, Durrell describe the scene of the sea and the winter season.

"The sea is high again today with a thrilling flush of wind. In the midst of winter you can feel the inventions of spring. A sky of hot nude pearl until midday crickets in sheltered places and now the wind unpacking the great plans ransacking the great plans."¹

Similarly *Balthazar* opens with the description of the scene of island where Darley lives with Melissa's child :

"Landscape -tones: brown to bronze steep skyline, low cloud, pearl ground with shadowed oyster and vislet reflection. The lion dust of desert Prophel's tombs turned to zinc and copper at sunset on the ancient lake. It's huge sand faults like watermarks from the air, green and citron giving to gunmetal to a single plum dark sail. moist pulpit ant : Sticky -winged nymph. Taposires are dead among the tumbling columns and sea marks vanished the harpoon man MAREOTIS under a sky of hot Lila:

Summer: buff sand hot marble sky

Autumn : Swollen bruise grays.

Winter: freezing now, cool sand, clear sky, panels.

Glittering with mice: Washed Delta greens magnificent star cope.

And spring? Ah: there is no spring in the delta, no sense of refreshment and renewal in things. One is plunged out of winter into wax effigy of a summer too hot to breathe. But here atleast in Alexandria the sea breathe save us form the tide less weight, of summer noiningners, creeping over the bar among the bar ships to flutter the striped awnings of the capes upon the Grande corniche."²

Durrell has shown the main action, It is here that he introduces all his characters .The middle of his novel is the climax where the story reaches with many ups and downs and from where it slips towards the end. This part is almost dramatic because the dialogues are presented in abundance and the characters are made to reveal their self. The following dialogue between Clea and Darley illustrates the dramatic middle of Clea:

Have been watching me asleep

'yes'

unfair: but what thinking ?

many things,

Unfair to watch a sleeping woman,
Off her guard,
your eyes have changed colour again smoke."³

The most striking feature of the architectural aspects of Durrell's novels under discussion is that they end with long letters. In the end of *Justine*, We come across the letter of Clea to Darley. In the letter she describes her experience which, she got in the company of Nassim and Justine. Similarly *Balthazar* ends with the long letter of Pursewarden to Clea. In the letter he also expresses his personal experience as a writer. Again *Clea*, ends with Darley's letter to Clea. But *Mountolive* is an exception here, it ends with tragic note. Narauz's death fills it ending part with the tragic elements. The following lines may be quoted to illustrate the tragic end of the *Mountolive*.

"And now Nassim gave a single sweet sob out there on the balcony - the noise that a bamboo stem makes when it is plucked from the stalk. And like the formal opening bars of some great symphony this small sob was echoed below in the darkness, passed from lip to lip, heart to heart, their sobs lighted one another as candles take a light from one another- an orchestral fulfillment of the precious theme of sorrow, and a long quivering ragged moon come up out of the empty well to climb upwards towards the darkening sky, a long hushing sigh which mingled with the hushing of the rain upon like mareotis."⁴

There are two ways of plot. It can be marshalled through chronological development and 'flash back' chronological development means that the events are put in order in which they occurred (this happened first and then, this etc.). And flash back means that the events are put in a framework. A character may recall something that once happened to him or to someone else.

Durrell has marshaled the plot of *The Alexandria Quartet* through the chronological development. The events are recounted in order. They seem to be the various links of a chain. Occasionally Durrell has also taken recourse to flash back. In his attempt to develop the plot, he has made his protagonist recall the past events that had occurred to her. For example, in *Justine*, Justine recalls the events that occurred to her a day before, she and Darley had left the summer place and narrates it to Darley.

Technically Considered the plot of *The Alexandria Quartet* is too much complicated. There are countless episodes in the novels under discussion. The reader can not remember them all at one time. Moreover the events that occur later have a little to do with the events that occurred previously; hence the reader gets puzzled at the sight of the chaotic world of the countless episodes.

As a matter of fact, Durrell manages to construct an intricate story containing a vast variety of incidences and characters. All the characters and incidences contribute to the main story which is depiction of the realistic picture of *The Alexandrian Society*. The minor themes are presented in such a way as to help in forwarding of the main story. The description of the occasional meeting of lovers, dining, shooting, political discussions and the detailed description, social customs contribute to the main plot. In *The Alexandrian Quartet* the first episode leads to second and second leads to third and thus a string of logically presented episode is constructed.

Durrell's characters – major as well as minor- also contribute to the development of plot. Generally, they are made to acquiesce in the requirements of plot. But, sometimes, the plot has to suffer for the sake of the freedom of characters. The novelist makes them move freely without

caring for the requirements of plot. Since he deals with the disordered psyche of his characters, there is a visible lack of coherence in the sequence of incidents.

Another striking feature of the plots of Durrell's novels is that there is an excessive use of coincidences. It is a sheer coincidence that Darley, Justine and Balthazar reach the Cecil hotel the night when Pursewarden commits suicide in the corner of the hotel. Again, it is by chance that Nassim and Balthazar reach the Hosnani Land at a time when Narauz is shot dead.

Durrell's art of characterization is praiseworthy in that his characters, though unreal and imaginary, have been presented in such a way as to convince us that they are real and have their existence upon earth. The striking feature of Durrell's art of characterization is that the characters are not innumerable, they can easily be counted; they are inventions together with the personality of the narrator and bear no resemblance to the living beings. Both male and female characters are inter-dependent. One sex has no importance in the absence of another. The male characters have no say if they are detached from the female ones.

Female characters have a vital role to play in *The Alexandria Quartet*. Durrell has depicted them very skillfully and successfully. The major female characters are Justine, Clea, Melissa and Leila.

The Female characters are highly romantic at heart Justine, who plays the role of heroine in *The Alexandria Quartet* is the very embodiment of romanticism. She is nymphomaniac having affairs with Darley Nassim and Pursewarden simultaneously. Middleton is right in saying.

"She who could never live save through one person. She who could never speak saves to one person. And all the rest of her a shifting change, a broker bundle of mirrors. "⁵

Like Justine Melissa is a romantic woman. Her meeting with Darley at pombal's flat fills her heart with love for him. From now on show behave Darley like a lover. She is ready to sacrifice everything for sake of Darely. Later on she shifts her attention from Darely and falls in love with Nassim and lives with him as his beloved.

Leila, Nassim's mother is not untouched by romanticism. The moment she encounters young Mountolive at her residence, she falls in love with him. But he is too young to respond to her. Ultimately Mountolive become her lover and satisfies her passion of love.

Clea who is regarded as a nun - is not free from the sway of romanticism. She has love relationship with Amaril who is only person whom she loves whole-heartedly. But her relationship with Darley is free from lust. She behaves him like a friend and not like a lover at all.

The number of the major male characters in *The Alexandria Quartet* is in proportion to that of the major female characters. Darely, Pursewarden, Nassim and Mountolive are major male characters. Darely acts as a narrator throughout. He is a lover of Melissa. In the beginning he loves her from his heart but as he falls in love with Justine, he shrinks himself from her and focuses his love on Justine. Besides being a lover, he is a perfect politician. He smuggles weapons into Palestine and thus becomes a conspirator.

Pursewarden is a writer and also political officer As a writer he writes enthusiastically and as a political Officer, he performs his official duty faithfully. He commits suicide only

because of the fact that does not want to be disloyal to the government and insincere to his friend Nassim.

Mountolive is an ambassador, a specimen of a loyal political officer. He serves the government as best as he can. It is in the favor of the government that he does not convey to Leila his personal political affairs despite the fact that Leila is his beloved and as such asks him to protect her son.

In the Alexandria Quartet the number of the minor characters is comparatively great. Balthazar, Scobie, Pombal, Toto, Toby, Cohen, Mnemjan, Memlic, Kenilworth, Johnny Keats, Amanil, Semiria, Maskelyne, Abdul Narauz and his father are all minor characters in the Alexandria Quartet. They have all pivot role to play in the book. We can not do without them. They, in their simplicity light up the complexity of major characters They represents the middle class of the society.

Durrell's characters are not discrete. They may seem to complement each other, Darley working up towards the state of the artist, Pursewarden moving beyond it. They may be stages on a single path from Melissa through Justine to Clea. Durrell experience love in a successively greater concreteness, first as a pity then as a passion finally as ardent companionship. Character again may be almost mirror images of each other. Nassim and Mountolive are on opposite sides, but they belong to the same class, each has the same kind of slightly stiff public integrity. Passion irrupts into their lives, Mountolive passion for Leila and them for Liza, Nassim's for Justine, as something out of key, something not quite belonging to their characters, something profoundly disturbing. The non-discreteness, however, works in several other ways. Nassim is complimentary to his brother, Narauz but not quite in the same way as Pursewarden is complimentary to Darley. Nassim has become wholly westernize, a cool intelligent, refined modern man; Narauz is the primitive country squire, cruel powerful and tender. When Nassim thinks he will have to kill Narauz his horror is partly that he will be killing the submerged part of himself. Narauz's hopeless longing for Clea is similarly a longing for the light, the luminous part, the Nassim part of his own heavy dark nature; a longing for what has never been able to emerge out to his darkness. Similarly Balthazar and Scobie, the one a sage, the other a holy fool, are both homosexual; and the kicking to death of Scobie disguised as a woman could be equated with Balthazar's social disgrace and attempt suicide.

There are some glaring minus points which are quite visible in Durrell's delineation of characters. Depiction of character's idiosyncratic has become a forte of Durrell. Some of his characters are considerably idiosyncratic. In Balthazar Amril's idiosyncratic activities have been beautifully described. He has been shown engaged in trivial activities and submerged in meanness of thoughts.

"Amril was an original man in his way and a bit of dandy with the silver duelling pistols, the engraved visiting cards in their support case, clothes cut in all the elegance of the latest fashion. His house was full candles and he wrote for performance on black paper with white ink. For him the most splendid thing in the world was to possess a fashionable woman, a prize gray haired, or a pair of invincible fighting cocks. But he was an agreeable man and not without sensibility as a doctor, despite these romantic fables.

His devotion to woman was the most obvious thing about him'; he dressed for them. Yet it was accompanied by a delicacy, almost a pudicity, in his dealings with them at least in a city,

where a woman was as provender, regarded, as something like a plateful of mutton; a city where women cry out to be abused."⁶

It is because of their idiosyncratic nature that Durrells characters have to pass through the situations. Their feelings of love are not constant they are change with the result that metamorphose into the so-called idiosyncrasies.

Another shortcoming from which Durrell's art of characterization suffers is that his characters are considerably neurotic. "Neurosis, according to Freud, is a disease caused by the sense of guilt. Durrell has made some of his characters helpless victims to this disease. Pursewarden is the glaring victims to neurosis. His lustful love for his blind sister Liza pushes him towards neurosis as a result of which he is compelled to commit suicide. Similarly Justine also suffers from Neurosis. In childhood, she was raped by capodaestria. Her experience of rape in her childhood is so much deeply rooted in her mind that she is at every moment being hunted by the punching sense of guilt. Consequently she becomes neurotic. Darley is also the victims of the same disease. He feels the sense of guilt at the thought of his love for Nassim's wife.

Durrell's major characters are dynamic, round and multidimensional. They pass through divergent circumstances before they reach the process of self discovery as G.S. Fraser points out:

Durrell is concerned in his fiction not with a growing change in characters in response to changing challenges but with a process of self discovery stripping of layer after layer of the self of outward social habit till a hard core is revealed which was always there and in a sense always half known.⁷

Durrell's minor characters are not round. They are purely flat and as such can be summed up in a sentence or a phrase. Liza, Pombal, Scobie, Johny Keats, Toby Toto, Cohen and Amuti are all minor characters. They are constructed round a single idea or quality. They remain unalterable till the end and can easily be recognized whenever they re-enter.

Realism is one of the most striking features of the Post Modern fiction. The term 'realism' implies the depiction of the seamy side of society in a piece of literary work. Durrell has exposed the seamy side of society through the portrayal of social evils such as murder, suicide, an excessive use of intoxicants like drugs and wine, an abundance of the miscreants, murderers, thugs and dacoits, serious problems confronting people, a ditch of disparity between the rich and the poor, antagonism between the different communities, suppression of the poor by the rich, menace of dowry, problem of unemployment, defections and malpractices, servitude, pornography, cruel and inhuman attitude towards innocent children, women and servants and finally corruption in every walk of life.

"Interior monologue can be reserved to denote specifically the technique that undertakes to reproduce the course and rhythm of consciousness. Just as it occurs in a characters mind with no (or at any rate with minimal) intervention by the author as guide or commentators and without tidying the vagaries of the mental process into grammatical sentences or into a logical and narrative order. The interior monologue in its radical form is sometime described as the exact reproduction of consciousness. But since, sense perceptions feelings and some aspects of thought itself are non-verbal, it is clear that the author must convert these elements into some kind of verbal equivalent and much of this conversation is a matter of narrative convention rather than of unedited for-point reproduction."⁸

In *The Alexandria Quartet* Durrell has employed the interior monologue with the aim of tracing the consciousness of characters. In *Justine* Durrell traces the consciousness of Darley by making him utter the following lines at a time when he is separated from Justine.

The night after Justine went away; there was a freak thunder storm of tremendous intensity. I had been wandering about in the rains for hours, a prey not only to feelings which I could not control but also remorse for what I imagined Nassim must be feeling Frankly. I hardly dared to go back to the empty flat lest I should be tempted along the path Purswarden had already taken so easily, with so little premeditation."⁹

Here again Durrell traces the consciousness of Leila which possesses her at the time of Mountolive's departure from her residence.

"Her pride of spirit and intelligence lent her a new and unsuspected strength. And though she was sorry with one part of her mind to see him suffer and prepared never to see him return yet she knows she already possessed him and in a paradoxical way to say good-bye to him was almost easy."¹⁰

Thus by employing the interior monologue which seeks to reveal to us the consciousness of characters Durrell has fulfilled the requirement of the stream of consciousness technique which as a matter of fact tends to lead us into the unknown world of human psyche. Thus the monologues can do what letters cannot they lead us to objectivity and unearth the secrets about the state of human subconscious mind.

In order to exert an indelible influence on readers Durrell has also introduced rhetoric in the narrative literature. Rhetoric according to Aristotle is the art of persuading the audience. With the same purpose Durrell has employed this literary form in *The Alexandria Quartet*. In *Mountolive* he presents a rhetorical question which is being given below.

What meant heaven by these diverse laws. Eros agape-self decisions'? Rhetoric is rich and amusing even then it is subjects to criticism.

"His rhetoric, rich and evocative as it is, has been roundly criticized by the English Prose as some sort of aberration not in English and hardly appropriate for a novel."¹¹

In order to convince us that events occurring in *The Alexandria Quartet* are real and not imaginary at all Durrell has taken recourse to verisimilitude. It is with the aim of convincing us of the real appearance of the events that Durrell has presented seasons, months, time of the day and the name of the day in a way which is convincing and seems to bear testimony to reality.

The presentation of seasons and the scene of any particular place serve as a means to convince us that the story of *The Alexandria Quartet* is real and not imaginary one. The beginning lines of *Justine* describe the winter season and the scene of the sea in a convincing way.

"The sea is high again today with a thrilling flush of wind. In the midst of winter you can feel the inventions of spring. A sky of hot rude pearl until midday, crickets in shattered places and now the wind unpacking the treat planes ransacking the great planes."¹²

The Alexandria Quartet is rich in the beautiful description of nature and the sporadic scenes of violence, shooting, death, love-making and political discussions. Durrell has pictured the nature in his own way. His descriptions of nature have no resemblance to those of Hardy's. Hardy regarded nature as something indifferent to man. But Durrell has depicted it as a friend of

man. But Durrell has depicted it as a friend of man. Indeed his descriptions of nature are rapturous and bear a testimony to his special penchant for them.

What a beautiful description of nature he gives in the following lines.

Notes for landscape tones long sequences of tempara. light filtered through the essence of lemons. An air full of brick dust sweet smelling brick dust and the odour of hot pavements slaked with water. Light damp clouds earth bound yet seldom bringing rain upon this squirt dust red green, chalk mauve and watered crimson lake in summer the sea damp lightly a varnished in air. Everything lay under a cot of gum."¹³

Durrell has traced sensuousness by giving the description of the objects which satisfy the physical senses viz. taste, smell, touch, sight and music.

The following lines describe the objects which satisfy the senses of music sight and touch.

Sound of chanting, rosy flickering of candle light, swish of sponges and scratching of a razor upon dead flesh."¹⁴

The perfume which Justine use all over her body satisfies the sense of smell and the whisky which Justine and Nassim use satisfy the sense of taste.

Durrell has described the scene of death with a tragic note. The place where Narauz's dead body is put is filled with the sound of lamentation. How much beautifully he describes the scene of death in the following poetic lines.

"Now the sorrow of the knowledge of parting moves like wind in the rigging of the ship, of man's death, figure head of the while body, the rails of the soul being filled, by the ghost of the breath replete and eternal.

By the description of the scenes of violence, love making and political discussions, Durrell has depicted the Alexandrian society. By the description of the prevalent customs also he has served the purpose of presenting the mirror of society. The scenes of love making are highly romantic and suggestive of the immortal relationship with which the Alexandrian society is infected. The scenes of the political discussions give us a clue to the current politics.

Narration Durrell's narrations are as a matter of fact tinged with comic elements. The comical narrations occur sporadically in The Alexandria Quartet. The following lines about scobie are purely comical in their nature.

Physically he has drawn heavily on the replacement department in nineteen ten a fall from the mizzon, threw his Jaw two points west by south west and smashed the frontal sinus. When he speaks his denture behaves like a moving staircase traveling upwards and round inside his skill in a Jerky spiral. His smile is capricious, it might appear from anywhere, like that of Cheshire cat. In ninety eight he made eyes at another man's wife (so he says) and lost one of them. No one except Clea is supposed to know about this, but the replacement in this case was rather a crude one. In response it is not very noticeable, but the minute he becomes animated a disparity between his two eyes became obvious."

Scobie's role in The Alexandria Quartet_is comical. Like him Pursewarden is also occasionally comical when he is in company of Justine and Nassim, he amuses them by narrating

the comical story. Sometimes in his composition also Purswarden is comical. The following poetic lines which occur in Justine arouse in us a comical sense.

Food is for eating

Art is far arting

Women for finish ¹⁵

Like H.G. Wells and Virginia Wolf, Lawrence Durrell has employed the stream of consciousness technique in his novels. The interior monologues which serve as a means to trace the consciousness of characters have been successfully used by Durrell. In harmony with the conventions of the Post – Modern novel Durrell has provided us a peep into the inner recesses of his characters by means of employing the interior monologues. Influenced by H.G. Wells' and Virginia Wolf's masterly skill in laying bare the emotions lying hidden in the subconscious part of human psyche, Durrell has skillfully adopted the stream of consciousness technique and thereby continued the trend of providing the readers an access to the conscience of the characters.

Autobiographical method of the various methods of narration Durrell has employed the autobiographical method in *The Alexandria Quartet*. He is quite indifferent to the traditional author omniscient method which Kingslay Amis has successfully employed in his novels. In the author omniscient method the author himself acts as a narrator. But on the contrary in the autobiographical method the author makes one of his characters act as a narrator and through him conveys to the readers his experience about all that he sees and his own attitudes towards different characters.

In *The Alexandria Quartet* Darley acts as a narrator and it is through him that Durrell conveys to us his experience about the Alexandrian life. On this ground it may be said that Darley is a mask behind which Durrell's own personality is hidden.

Epistolary method- The employment of epistolary method in the *Alexandria Quartet* is in harmony with the stream of consciousness techniques which modern novelist have enthusiastically employed in their novels. In *The Alexandria Quartet* one comes across not only one or two letters but a large number of them. The lovers separated from each other take recourse to correspondence in order to keep their relations fresh and new. Mountolive's letter to Liza and Liza's to Mountolive, Purswarden's letter to his blind sister Liza. Darley's letter to Clea are the glaring examples of love letters.

Here is Leila's letter to Mountolive.

It is folly. But to enjoy you for a few months before I return here how hard it is to abandon the hope, stretch it, please at once so that when I do come, I will be at peace simply regarding you (as I have all these years) as something more than my closest friend"¹⁶

Purswarden's letters to his blind sister Liza are lustful and meant to make her more amorous of him than she is. Since she is blind, she is unable to read the letters and therefore she gets them read by Darley who suggests her to keep them preserved. But after the death of her brother Liza burns all the letters to ashes.

Darley's letters to Clea are considerably long. It is these letters that make Darley. Clea friendship deep and true. After they are separated from each other, they continue to correspond to each other from their islands. Their letters are, of course, what Auden calls long marvelous

letters". It is Darley's long letters to Clea with which The Alexandria Quartet ends. This letter is the bringer of happiness as it describes the happy meeting of Nassim and Justine, Mountolive's intention to marry Liza and the living together of Amaril and Simeria.

Letters serve as the means of Communication not only for lovers but also for politicians. In order to convey to Mountolive his reactions towards the current political situations Pursewarden writes a letter to him which is being given below:

"My dear David,

I have torn up half a dozen other attempts to explain this in detail. I found I was only making literature. There is quite enough about. My decision has to do with life. Paradox : I am terribly sorry old man.

Quite by accident in an unexpected quarter. I stumbled upon something which told me that Maskelyne's theories about Nassim were right mine wrong. I do not give you my services and will not but I now realize Nassim is smuggling arms into Palestine and has been for sometimes. He is obviously the unknown source deeply implicated in the operations which were described in paper 'seven'. You will remember (secret mandate file 1341 intelligence) But I simply am not equal to facing the simpler moral implications raised by this discovery. I know what has to be done about it. But the man happens to be my friend. Therefore a quietus (this will solve other deeper problems too) Ach: what a boring world we have created around us. The slime of plot and counter plot. I have just recognized that it is not my world at all (I can hear you swearing as you read).

I feel in a way a cad to shelve my own responsibility like this and yet in truth I know that they are not really mine, never have been mine, But they are yours. And Jolly bitter you will find them. But you are of courses the career and you must act where I cannot bring myself to:

I know I am wanting in a sense of duty but I have let Nassim know obliquity that his game has been spotted and the information passed on. Of course in this vague form you could also be right in depressing it altogether, for getting it. I do not envy you your temptations. Mine, however, not to reason why. I am tired my dear chap, sick unto death as the living say

And so

Will you give my sister my love and say that my thoughts were with her? Thank you

Affectionately yours

L.P.

The letters render us a great help in characterization by enabling us to come to terms with the feelings of characters which they went in their letters. By reading them we can know of the reactions of characters to situations in which they are involved. Their attitudes towards other characters and also the way they live their lives. Pursewarden's letter to Mountolive gives us a clue to the fact that Pursewarden is an ideal friend and also a faithful and fruitful political officer. Again Pursewarden's letter to his sister Liza reveals the lustful love for her. Similarly Leila's letter to Mountolive makes it clear that her love for Mountolive is true and sincere. Darley's long marvelous letters to Clea are competent enough to keep us in touch with Darley's sincere friendship with Clea.

Dialogue is indispensable methods of narration without which the novelist cannot do Durrell have very skillfully employed this method in *The Alexandria Quartet*. The striking characteristic of his dialogues is that is that they are not long. They are rather considerably short but pithy enough to give us a clue to the secrets as to what the characters participating in the dialogue want to convey. The following dialogue between Pursewarden and Justine gives us an evidence as to the brevity and pith of Durrells dialogue.

I am going to work today.

then I shall come tomorrow

I shall have flue

the day after

I shall come too.¹⁷

Here is another dialogue the participant of which is Darelly and clea:

I am always so bad the first time why is it?

so am I

Are you afraid of me?

No, nor of myself

Did you ever imagine this,

we must both have done otherwise it would not have happened.

Hush listen "¹⁸

Like letters, dialogues also render us a handing help in characterization by giving us an access to what attitude the characters have towards their friend their lovers, their rivals and so on. It is through dialogues that the characters reveal their inner self, their feelings whatsoever, their deep rooted sadness caused by long separation, their happiness and gratitude towards their friends.

The dialogue between Clea and Nassim which gives us an access to Nassim's attitudes towards Justine in given below:

"I do not idealize I know exactly how sad or mad she is. Who does not? Her past and her present. They are known to every one. It is Just I feel she would match perfectly my own.

Your own what?

Aridity; yes, I sometimes think I shall never be able to fall in love properly until my mother does and she is still comparatively young. Speak Clea. I shall see her myself this evening and make a serious attempt to make her understand.

You do not say make her love

How could I

If she cannot love, It would be dishonorable to pretend."¹⁹

In *Mountolive* Durrell has shown his extra-ordinary skill in using the rhythmical stanza in a middle of dialogue between pombal and Pursewarden.

"A hundred times I have asked you not to use my razor" said Pombal plaintively and you do so again. You know I am afraid of syphilis. Who knows what sports, when you cut them, begin to leak?

"Moncher colleague said Pursewarden (he was shaving his lips) and with a grimace which was somewhat intended to express injured dignity what can you mean? I am British. He passed and marking time with Pombal's eat throat declaimed solemnly.

The British who perfected the horseless carriage are now working hard on the sexless marriage soon. The only permissible communion will be my agreement with one's trade union."²⁰

Thus like other novelists Durrell has presented the pithy dialogue sporadically. The way he has presented dialogues is in conformity with the convention of the stream of consciousness narration.

Durrell has employed the autobiographical method of narration in his novels. He is quite indifferent to the author – omniscient method deftly employed by some of his contemporaries. In conformity with the requirements of the autobiographical method of narration Durrell has made his protagonist act as a narrator and it is through the protagonist that he has conveyed to the reader his reactions to the prevailing conditions.

The remarkable flaw Durrell suffers from as a novelist is that he has not fully lived up to the standards represented by the great writers of the past. But where he has so often failed to do this is not in his subject matter (which is perfectly valid for fiction), but in his technique. His style is flat, it even seems, sometimes, clumsy. The characters, with a few exceptions, are the same, loosely integrated and colourless. The events are trivial or simply tedious. Another flaw is that there is a startling gap between the professedly brilliant ideas ascribed to the characters and their actual behavior.

Pursewarden is described as a great novelist, but there is nothing about him to convince the reader that he has the equipment, the responses to life, or the personality (as Joyce Cary does convince with Gulley Jimson) to make an artist of any kind at all.²¹

Notwithstanding these minor technical flaws, Durrell has carved out a permanent niche for himself in the history of English Literature by producing *The Alexandria Quartet* that has been widely acclaimed as a perfect work of art. His complicated plots, the stream of consciousness technique and realism have stamped him as a great novelist of Post-Modern Age.

Works Cited:

1. Durrell, Lawrence, *Justine*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1957, p. 11.
2. Durrell, Lawrence, *Balthazar*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1958, p. 11.
3. Durrell, Lawrence, *Clea*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1960, p. 90.
4. Durrell, Lawrence, *Mountolive*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1958, p. 228.
5. Fraser, G.S. Lawrence Durrell (ed.) Alan G. Thomas, London : Faber and Faber Ltd. 1968, p. 117
6. Durrell, Lawrence, *Balthazar*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1958, p. 110-111.

7. Fraser, G.S. Lawrence Durrell (ed.) Alan G. Thomas, London : Faber and Faber Ltd. 1968, p. 118
8. Abrahms, M.H. A Glossary Literacy Ternus.
9. Ibid
10. Durrell, Lawrence, *Justine*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1957, p. 198.
11. The English Novel Development in Criticism since Hannry James, p. 137
12. Durrell, Lawrence, *Justine*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1957, p. 11.
13. Durrell, Lawrence, *Balthazar*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1958, p. 11.
14. Durrell, Lawrence, *Mountolive*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1958, p. 231.
15. Ibid, p. 280
16. Ibid, p. 51
17. Durrell, Lawrence, *Justine*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1957, p. 105.
18. Durrell, Lawrence, *Clea*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1960, p. 85.
19. Durrell, Lawrence, *Mountolive*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1958, p. 175.
20. Ibid, p. 141
21. Ford. Boris (ed.) The New Pelican Guide to English Literature: The present, London; The Penguin Books Ltd. 1983, p. 427.