

## CALL FOR PAPERS DURRELL SCHOOL OF CORFU

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### SEMINAR: 'AN INVESTIGATION OF MODERN LOVE' Corfu, Greece, 18-23 May 2008

The Durrell School of Corfu will host 'An Investigation of Modern Love', an international seminar, at its Library and Study Centre, 18-23 May, 2008. Dr. Shere Hite and Professor Joseph Boone, University of Southern California, will act as moderators. We invite submissions on all aspects of literature, psychology, cultural history, sexology, gender studies and sociology relating to 'Modern Love'. We also hope to receive submissions addressing the work of Lawrence Durrell and those who influenced him or were influenced by him.

#### RATIONALE

Lawrence Durrell provocatively opened his prefatory note to *Balthazar* in *the Alexandria Quartet* by stating

*'Modern literature offers us no Unities, so I have turned to science and am trying to complete a four-decker novel whose form is based on the relativity proposition.... The central topic of the book is an investigation of modern love'*

From this provocation, the May seminar of the Durrell School of Corfu takes its inspiration to discuss 'Modern Love' as a notion debated across the Humanities and Social Sciences. What do we mean when we consider 'modern' and 'love'? What of Early Modern Love? To make the matter more complicated, this prefatory note originally read 'bisexual love', and bisexuality is censored from the other epigrams. What then does 'love' entail, how does it relate to gender, sexual identity, plurality, and what role does science play in discussing the matter?

We aim to draw on expertise in as many areas as possible in order to elucidate the multiple ways Love and Gender Relations are experienced, described and understood in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (and in the cultural and literary context of key writers and investigators of the past).

*'Durrell later came to realise....that 'modern love' was in itself an impossibility'. Richard Pine, Lawrence Durrell, The Mindscape*

#### PROVOCATIONS

Opening from the issues surrounding Durrell's views on sex, his attitudes to love and women, to the gaps between man and woman, and the problems of gender and identity, seminar participants are asked to discuss any aspect of Modern Love. How representative were Durrell's views of his period? This query may be posed equally with regard to any author or artist. What is the relationship between art or literature and sociocultural attitudes toward sexuality? In what ways have both changed over time? Do we truly have 'no unities'?

Moreover, what does science offer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, fifty years after the publication of *Justine*, the first volume of *The Alexandria Quartet*, in terms of the investigation of modern love? What has changed since Shakespeare (eg, *The Sonnets*), John Donne, Emily Brontë, Thomas Hardy and George Meredith (*Modern Love*); since Sade, Freud, Jung and D.H. Lawrence; since the Kinsey reports or Alex Comfort (a poet and correspondent of Durrell's), since Judith Butler, bell hooks, Judith Jack Halberstam, and so forth?

What have we learned about monogamy, polygamy, promiscuity, fidelity and the varieties of sexual experience in Humans and the Animal Kingdom? Since the Durrell School of Corfu reflects the concerns of both Durrell brothers, do Zoology or animal studies offer any new insights? What may be gleaned from Gerald Durrell's work, and that of other zoologists and conservationists, about the sexual life of primates, about breeding in captivity, and so forth?

#### POTENTIAL TOPICS MIGHT INCLUDE (but are not limited to):

- Recent research, psychological, biological, zoological and scientific, about the nature of human and animal love, sexual behaviour and preferences (male and female), the gap between man and woman;
- Fictional and poetic investigations and explorations of Love and 'Modern Love' in all its aspects;
- Modernism, Post-Modernism and 'Modern Love';
- Lawrence Durrell, especially *The Alexandria Quartet*, concepts of love, & sexual relations;
- Papers on ground-breaking writers such as D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Anaïs Nin, Constantine Cavafy, Sade, Olga Broumas, Doris Lessing;
- Theoretical and scientific investigations of sexuality;
- 'Preference' versus 'Identity';
- Eroticism and the Exotic, Intercultural relationships, the 'Female Other' as sex object/femme fatale; Postcolonial approaches; Masculinities Studies; Female/feminist perspectives on Love (and Lawrence Durrell);
- Pornography, Erotica, Censorship, and Literature;
- Film and Modern Love;
- Gay and Lesbian studies and/or Queer Theory.

#### MODERATORS:

**Dr. Shere Hite** is an American born cultural historian, sex educator and feminist, an expert on psychosexual behaviour and gender relations. Her sexological work has focused primarily on female sexuality. Her books include *The Hite Report on Female Sexuality*, *The Hite Report on Men and Male Sexuality*, *Women and Love: A Cultural Revolution in Progress*, *Sexual Honesty, by Women, for Women*, and *Oedipus Revisited*. Her forthcoming books include *Women Loving Women (relationships between women at work and at home)*, October 12, 2007 Arcadia U.K., and *Questions*, March 8, 2008 (International Women's Day), *Seven Stories U.S.*

Her keynote topic at the seminar is expected to be concerned with the topic 'What is love—are women talk about it—are there special emotions related to sex?'

**Professor Joseph Boone** is Professor of English at the University of Southern California, where he just finished a four-year term as Department Chair. A specialist in the novel as genre, gender and queer theory, and modernism, he is the author of *Tradition Counter Tradition: Love and the Form of Fiction* (Chicago 1987) and *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism* (Chicago 1997). The latter includes a chapter that expands his earlier work on Durrell in a chapter titled: 'Fragmented Selves, Mythic Descents, and Third World Geographies: Fifties Writing Gone Mad in Lessing and Durrell.' Recipient of ACLS, Guggenheim, Rockefeller, and Huntington Library Fellowships, among others, Boone has co-edited two collections, *Engendering Men: The Question of Male Feminist Criticism* (Routledge 1990) and *Queer Frontiers: Millennial Geographies, Genders, and Generations* (Wisconsin 2000). He has also written a dramatic musical, with his composer-brother Benjamin, based on Herman Melville's novel *The Confidence-Man*, and he is currently working on a project titled *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*.

His keynote talk at the seminar is expected to be concerned with sexuality, travel, colonialism, modernism, and gay/queer figures.

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### Proposals

Proposals (2 pages maximum), together with the author's CV, should reach the Durrell School by 1 February 2008 <durrells@otenet.gr>. Presentations will be limited to 30 minutes each, with another 30 minutes allocated for discussion by participants including resident faculty and the moderators.

### Papers

Full texts of accepted presentations must be received by the DSC by 1 May 2008 in electronic form. This is to facilitate circulation of the papers to all participants in advance. The papers should *not* be read at the seminar, but spoken to, since they will have been read by participants before the seminar opens. In other words, participants should discuss their papers in order to engage and begin discussion with an audience already familiar with the written copy. A selection of papers will be published as part of the DSC's Proceedings.

### Registration

The registration fee for the seminar will be 300 euros for participants (to include costs of field classes) and 350 euros for those who wish to take part in the discussions but who do not wish to present papers.

The authors of accepted proposals will be asked to give the DSC an assurance that they have secured adequate funding to enable them to take up the places offered to them. The DSC cannot be responsible for any costs associated with travel or accommodation. Intending participants should consult the DSC website <[www.durrell-school-corfu.org](http://www.durrell-school-corfu.org)> for details of accommodation available in Corfu. A limited number of scholarships are available: in the first instance, contact the Administrative Director at: <durrells@otenet.gr>.

### Disclaimer and Release of All Liability

When registering please copy, sign and return a copy of the text below. This will be included in registration materials and correspondence with participants. The DSC recommends participants have appropriate travel insurance for the EU:

'For and in consideration of being allowed to participate in the Durrell School of Corfu Seminar, "An Investigation of Modern Love" and associated optional excursions, I agree to release and hold harmless the Durrell School of Corfu, its staff, its Board of Directors and the seminar organizers from any and all liability which might be incurred by them during these activities. I have taken steps to ensure that my physical condition allows me to participate. I assume all responsibilities for myself, and I am participating at my own risk. I have taken out appropriate medical insurance which includes repatriation cover and (if a national of a member state of the EU) I have obtained my EU Health Card.'