

CALL FOR PAPERS DURRELL SCHOOL OF CORFU

SEMINAR AND WRITING WEEK: 'TRAVEL WRITING, SPIRIT OF PLACE, AND DISCOVERY OF SELF' Corfu, Greece, 1-6 June 2008

The Durrell School of Corfu host an international seminar and writers' feedback forum on "Travel Writing, Spirit of Place and Discovery of Self" at its Library and Study Centre, 1-6 June, 2008, in the company of distinguished guest-author **Jan Morris**. The seminar will be directed by **Dr. Mark Morris**, Visiting Scholar-in-Residence at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Alberta, Canada

RATIONALE

The Durrell School of Corfu is proud to offer a unique opportunity to participants to combine an exciting seminar on the art of Travel Writing with the chance to present critical papers (or samples of their own writing) and share ideas on all aspects of travel writing; to seek new inspiration and engaged feedback in an intimate and supportive environment; and to produce and discuss work (poetry or prose), some likely to be inspired by Greece or Corfu. Participants are not obliged to work both creatively and as critics, but the seminar will foster opportunities for dialogue between both.

Participants are invited (optionally) to submit a short piece of travel-inspired writing produced about Corfu during the week. After the close of the seminar, members of the International Board of the Durrell School will consider all the entries and award a Durrell School of Corfu Certificate of Merit to the best piece of travel writing about Corfu.

Different types of fine travel writing will be discussed: fiction, non-fiction, essays and articles, poetry, and travel journalism. The seminar sessions will generally take place each morning from 9.00-12.00 am, and the creative writers' presentations and feedback sessions from 6.00-8.00 pm. The rest of the day will be free for participating writers and speakers to explore the town and to find inspiration in the aspects that most interest them.

There will also be a caïque trip to Kalami and to the Shrine of Saint Arsenius, which Lawrence Durrell described as his second birthplace or place of predilection.

PROVOCATIONS

Greece, Corfu, and the other Ionian Islands have always been favourite destinations and subjects for travel writers and "writers of foreign residence," as well as for novelists and poets interested in the "Deus Loci" and "spirit of place." Lawrence and Gerald Durrell are the most famous travel writers associated with Corfu, but the island has a long history and continues to inspire writers of all types. Corfu's Old Town has recently been added to UNESCO's World Heritage List, and Corfu's praises have been sung by Homer (Scheria is traditionally identified with Corfu), by Walter Waller Wright, Edward Lear, James Chatto, Mary Stewart, Emma Tennant, and many others. The Ionian Islands more generally have provided the "landscape of the imagination" and settings for books by writers like Louis de Bernières...

As a location, Corfu also illustrates the debates associated with travel writing: colonial histories, cultural diversity, exoticism, increasing tourism, and the myth of 'authenticity.' The literary, the historical, and the personal are brought into creative interaction. Moreover, both visitors and authors alike confront a literary history and a cultural history capable of mutual influence, conflict, and plurality. As described by Lawrence Durrell, 'Everywhere the trembling atmosphere deceives.'

In her 'Foreword to Places,' Jan Morris provocatively suggests

'Now that nearly everyone who reads has been to nearly everywhere there is to read about, the travel writer finds his occupation's gone, and turns to other literary forms—transmuting his experiences into fiction, perhaps, or perhaps like me projecting his view of today into an evocation of yesterday... My approach was one of guileless irresponsibility.'

From this provocation, the June seminar of the Durrell School of Corfu takes its inspiration to discuss the responsibility, irresponsibility, and changing status of the travel writer. Critical and artistic engagements with this topic are encouraged to overlap in a supportive and productive environment.

Lawrence Durrell offers a similarly introspective and personal approach to the travel writer's task in his *Prospero's Cell*, questioning the relationship between the writer and his or her subject, and this will also prompt our inquiry:

Other countries may offer you discoveries in manners or lore or landscape; Greece offers you something harder—the discovery of yourself.

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

- Travel Writing and 'Foreign Residence' Writing: the achievement of Lawrence Durrell.
- The work of Jan Morris: a discussion of the nature of her writing and of travel writing
- Expatriate Travel Writing and the Postcolonial Perspective
- Travel and 'the discovery of self': the unspoiled and the myth of the 'authentic'
- The travel writing of such authors as Bruce Chatwin, Paul Theroux, Bill Bryson, Freya Stark, Patrick Leigh Fermor, Henry Miller, Nikos Kazantzakis, Jack Kerouac, Nicholas Shakespeare, V.S. Naipaul, D.H. Lawrence, Eric Newby, Evelyn Waugh, Karen Blixen, Lord Byron, Norman Douglas, and so forth.
- Transformations of the travel writing genre: aesthetics and politics
Or, in creative pursuits,
- Writing landscape
- Guide Books and Travellers' Companions: writing responsibly for the serious reader
- Travel Journalism, good and bad; ethical issues in travel journalism
- The writer as painter
- Travel writing as meditation or introspection
- Travel writing: Fiction or Non-Fiction?
- 'Fine writing' and purple prose
- Key concepts: 'Deus Loci,' 'Islomania,' 'Nomadism.'
- Bouncing Czechs, Whingeing Poms, Turkish Delights and Greeks Bearing Gifts: avoiding the cliché
- 'A Year in...' 'How we built our home in.....' genres

MODERATORS:

Jan Morris, CBE, world-renowned writer, journalist, historian, essayist, travel-writer and novelist, is the author of over forty books, many of them classics, including *Venice, Oxford, The Pax Britannica Trilogy, The Venetian Empire, Journeys, Hong Kong, Sydney, Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere*, and *Conundrum*. Jan will join us for 4 days and will talk informally about her work and the nature of travel writing.

Dr. Mark Morris is the Visiting Scholar-in-Residence at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta, Canada, and is a writer, photographer, award-winning librettist, and broadcaster. He teaches creative non-fiction, including travel writing, concentrating on helping young writers emerge. He has written widely for magazines and newspapers in many genres, and his operas have been performed in eight countries and in four languages. His first book, *Domesday Revisited*, was an historical travel book, and his second, the *Pimlico Dictionary of 20th-Century Composers*, a huge survey of 20th-Century classical music. His current projects include spending 2008 photographing the world of the university during the 100th anniversary year of the University of Alberta.

Mark (coincidentally the son of Jan Morris) has a particular interest in facilitating the Durrell School writers' forums. He is experienced in aiding, in a group context, writers who want to read and discuss their work, but who don't necessarily want their work 'discussed.' Mark has done this at university level, ran similar forums at the Banff Centre for the Arts, and in the Writing Group he has run for over a decade. A supportive environment is top of his priorities.

Proposals

Creative or Critical Proposals (2 pages maximum), together with the author's CV, should reach the Durrell School by 15 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. Creative works will be developed during the full seminar.

Papers

Full texts of accepted presentations or creative works must be received by the DSC by 15 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 interacting with an audience already familiar with the written copy. A selection of papers will be published as part of the DSC's Proceedings.

For workshop participants, creative materials will be discussed and developed during the seminar.

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> for details of accommodation available in Corfu. A limited number of scholarships are available: 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 and writing week, 'Travel Writing, Spirit of Place, and Discovery of Self' 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.'