The Dark Labyrinth

Lawrence DURRELL

The Dark Labyrinth

FABER paper covered EDITIONS

LAWRENCE DURRELL

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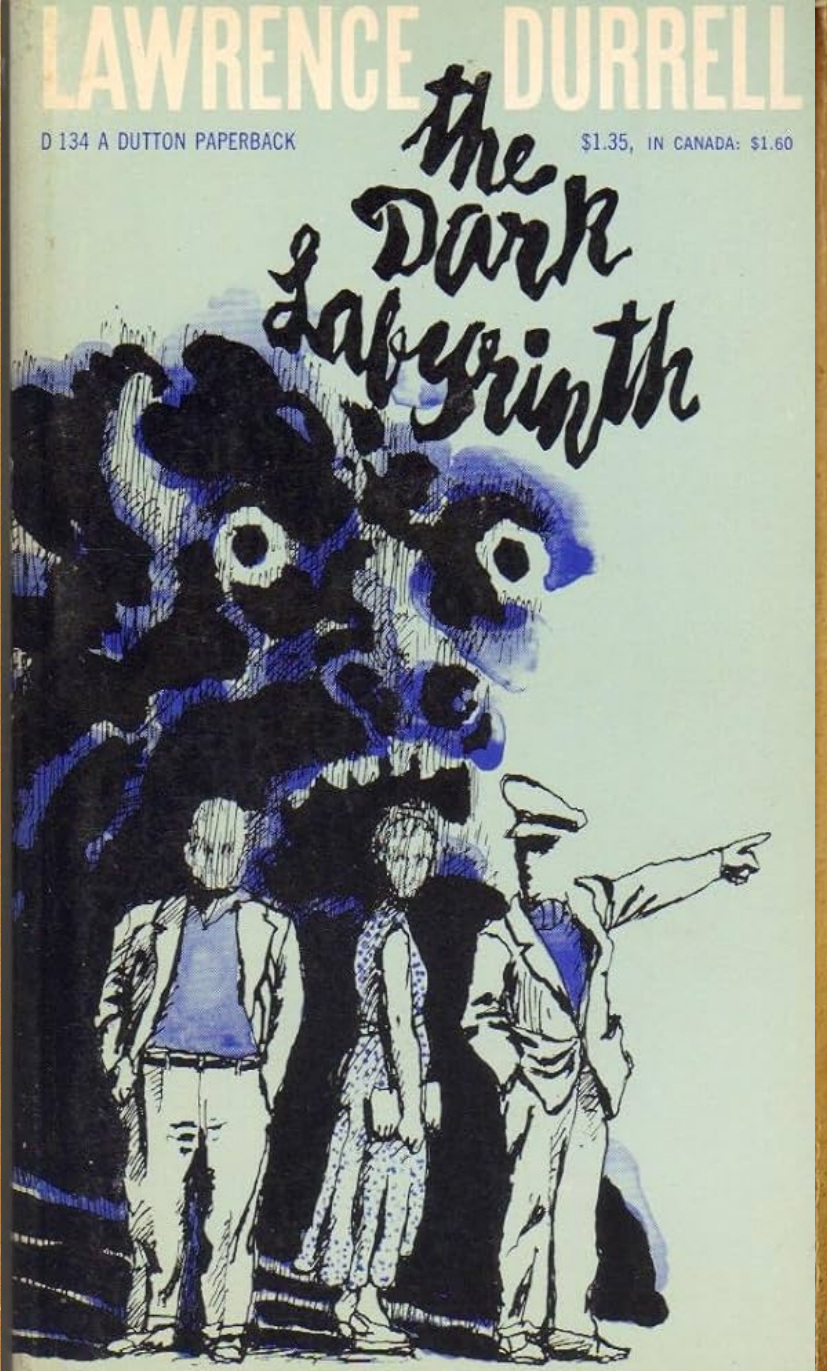
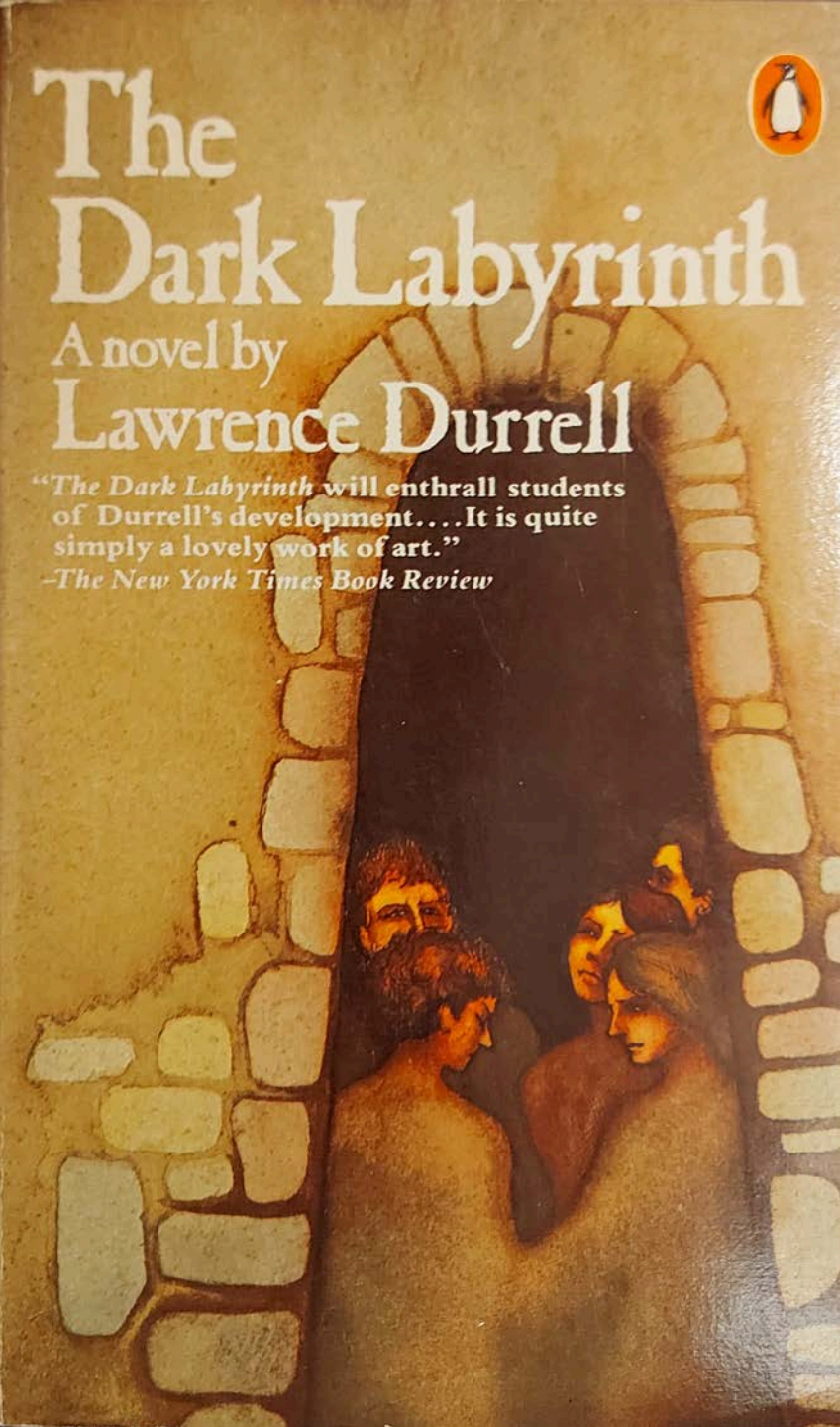


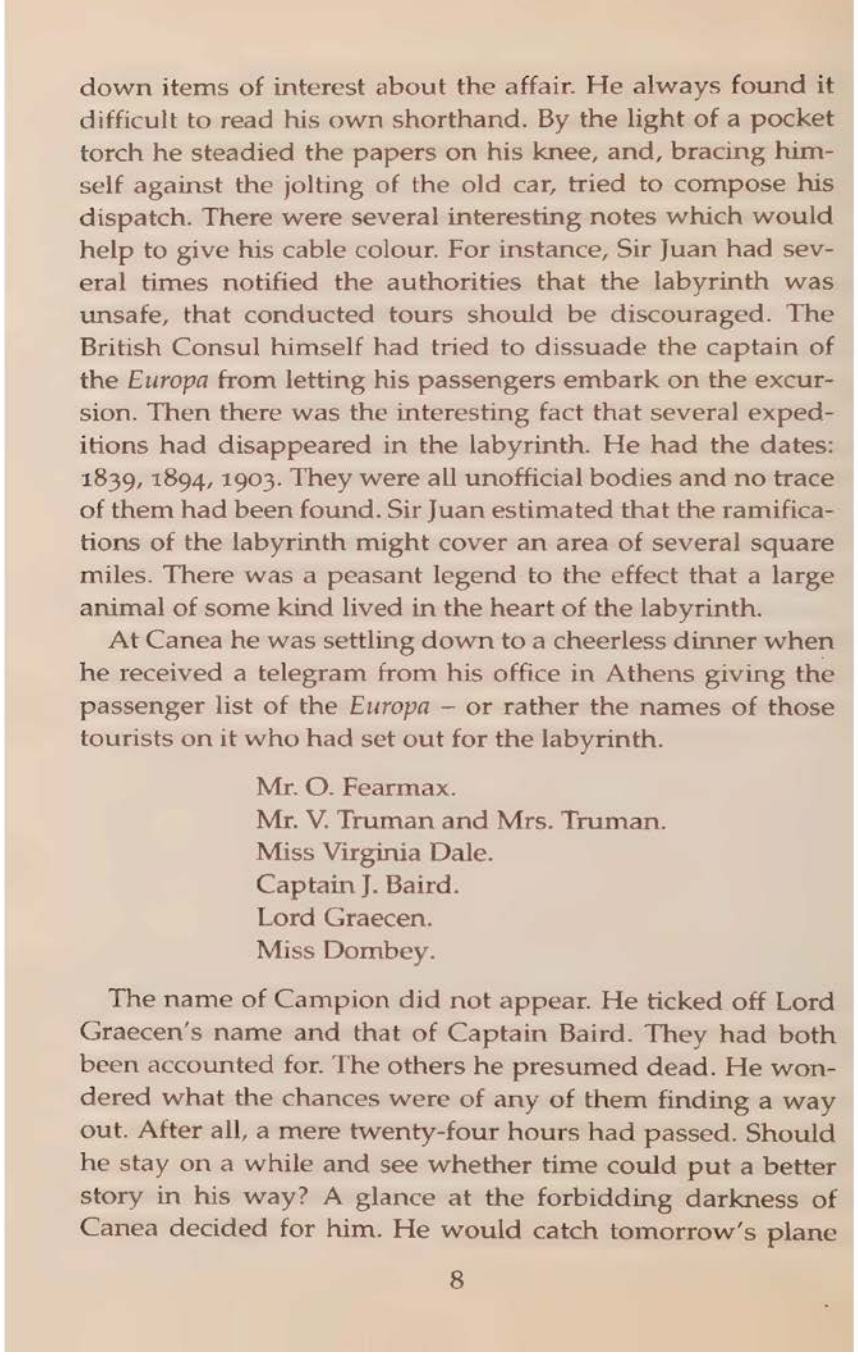
A FASCINATING EARLY NOVEL BY THE AUTHOR OF **JUSTINE**

The Dark Labyrinth

A novel by
Lawrence Durrell

"*The Dark Labyrinth* will enthrall students of Durrell's development....It is quite simply a lovely work of art."
–*The New York Times Book Review*





down items of interest about the affair. He always found it difficult to read his own shorthand. By the light of a pocket torch he steadied the papers on his knee, and, bracing himself against the jolting of the old car, tried to compose his dispatch. There were several interesting notes which would help to give his cable colour. For instance, Sir Juan had several times notified the authorities that the labyrinth was unsafe, that conducted tours should be discouraged. The British Consul himself had tried to dissuade the captain of the *Europa* from letting his passengers embark on the excursion. Then there was the interesting fact that several expeditions had disappeared in the labyrinth. He had the dates: 1839, 1894, 1903. They were all unofficial bodies and no trace of them had been found. Sir Juan estimated that the ramifications of the labyrinth might cover an area of several square miles. There was a peasant legend to the effect that a large animal of some kind lived in the heart of the labyrinth.

At Canea he was settling down to a cheerless dinner when he received a telegram from his office in Athens giving the passenger list of the *Europa* – or rather the names of those tourists on it who had set out for the labyrinth.

Mr. O. Fearmax.
Mr. V. Truman and Mrs. Truman.
Miss Virginia Dale.
Captain J. Baird.
Lord Graecen.
Miss Dombey.

The name of Campion did not appear. He ticked off Lord Graecen's name and that of Captain Baird. They had both been accounted for. The others he presumed dead. He wondered what the chances were of any of them finding a way out. After all, a mere twenty-four hours had passed. Should he stay on a while and see whether time could put a better story in his way? A glance at the forbidding darkness of Canea decided for him. He would catch tomorrow's plane

8

"Dramatis Personae" – A Key

Mr. O. Fearmax: The Spiritualist
Mr. V. Truman and Mrs. Elsie Truman: A Couple of Married Eccentrics
Miss Virginia Dale: The Pretty Convalescent
Captain J. Baird: The Soldier with Guilty Memories of the Cretan Resistance
Lord Graecen: The Antiquarian Peer and Minor Poet (Dicky)
Miss Dombey: The Protestant Spinster with a Fox Terrier

Campion: The Extrovert Painter
Böcklin: The Buried German
Sir Juan Axelos: The Archaeologist
Mr. Howe: The American Journalist
Hogarth: The Psychologist

But perhaps the seal was set upon their eccentricity when one day the stewardess found them sitting naked, side by side on the bunk, playing noughts and crosses. ‘Come in, dear, Mrs. Truman had said with pleasant unconcern, and then, seeing her consternation, ‘John, out of sight with you.’ She heard Truman laughing immoderately as he struggled into a shirt. She confided this adventure to the steward, asking him very seriously whether old people like that still made love: it seemed faintly indecent. They were old enough to have children. The steward stifled a smile and said he didn’t know — they were probably eccentric. She was thoroughly satisfied with this proposition. Eccentric, that’s what they were. But they were good-humoured and undemanding, and she had a little wave of pity in her heart as she packed the ill-fitting cheap dresses, the old wire-hair-brush, and the copies of *Tit-Bits* in the trunk which, according to the metal stamp, had been made by a Mr. Stevens in Peckham Rye.

The Dark Labyrinth, 16

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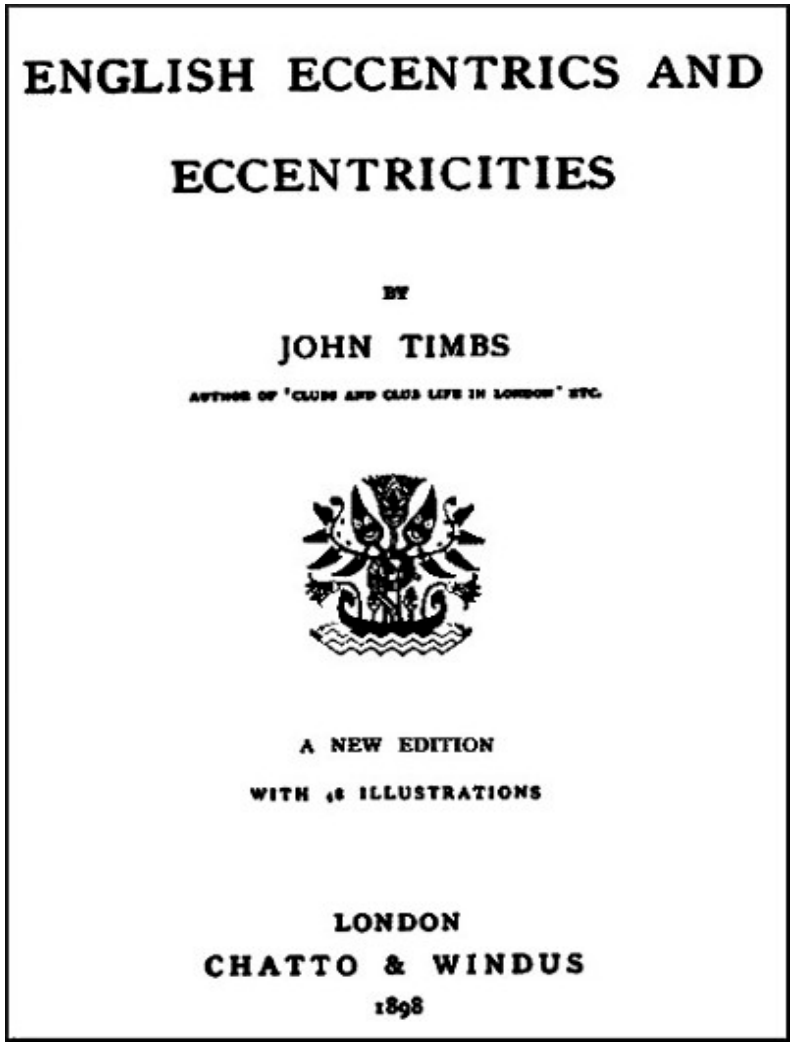
"…they were probably eccentric. She was thoroughly satisfied with this proposition. Eccentric, that's what they were." (16)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BY

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“It was not till some days later, when Graecen's escape was announced in the Press, that the purser discovered that he was a poet. *'England's Foremost Poet-Peer,'* said one paper and gave a brief outline of his history, his Scottish title, his M.C. and Mention, and his brilliant batting for the Gentlemen *versus* Players at Lord's in 1936. Everyone felt that they wished they had known at the time; he had been so quiet and unobtrusive - so like a middle-aged stockbroker. It is true that he had once been seen sketching in a book, and that he read to Miss Dale once or twice on A deck - but whether it was poetry or not they could not tell. It seemed, however, no less than poetic justice that he should be saved. Later still the purser was to see in *The Times* the poem of Graecen's, beginning: 'When death like the sundial casts his shadow.' The

Articles from the Thoroton Society Newsletter

Throwing light on a sundial at Newstead Abbey

by John Wilson

Newstead Abbey has a long history as a private house[1] and was owned by several prominent families. The most famous of these is the Byron family, who owned Newstead for 263 years until 1818 when the sixth Lord Byron, the poet, sold the property to his friend Colonel Thomas Wildman. The Wildman family owned the Abbey until 1860 when it was purchased by William Frederick Webb, who made many alterations and improvements to the house.

William Frederick (1829-1899) was the son of Frederick Webb and his wife Mary Shiel. Frederick, who had been in the Army, died in 1847 when William Frederick was just seventeen, leaving the latter a very wealthy young man. William Frederick entered the Army after education at Eton but did not stay long, although it is known that he served in the Crimea at some point[2]. He resigned his commission as a captain in the 17th Lancers to go to South Africa, where he became a close friend of the explorer David Livingstone[2]. William Frederick's younger brother Augustus, also a captain in the 17th Lancers, died in November 1854 of wounds received at the Charge of the Light Brigade. He is commemorated by a plaque in Newstead Abbey[3].

There is, in the Cloister of Newstead Abbey, an unusual sundial consisting of a marble pillar with a mid-19th century bronze dial plate. The sundial once stood in the Fernery[4], then was apparently transferred to a position in the American garden5, but at some point was brought into the Cloister. The dial bears an inscription:

This piece of marble, the capital of one of the smaller columns of the 'Temple of Venus' at Piraus, Athens. Presented to Mrs F. Webb by Cap'. F.W.Gore 3rd Reg' October 1856

The dial plate is of bronze, with a simple gnomon. The plate is inscribed with hour lines and compass directions in a fairly common pattern for the mid-nineteenth century, and a maker's mark *'Osmond Sarum'*.

The questions that come to mind are:

- who was Captain Gore?

- who made the sundial, and where?

- what was Captain Gore's connection to Mrs Webb?

The sundial in situ in the cloister at Newstead Abbey.

Inscription on the dial plate of the Newstead Abbey sundial.

Captain Gore

Captain Frederick William Gore (1825-1909) had been commissioned into the 3rd Foot (the 'Buffs') in 1846 and saw service in many war theatres, including the Crimean War. His unit was moved to Piraeus in November 1854 and stayed there until March 1855[6]. After a spell in Malta and further service in the Crimea, Captain Gore returned to England in 1856. Presumably it was during the stay at Piraeus that Captain Gore 'acquired' the capital from a column at the Temple of Venus. Captain Gore's military career took him to high rank and he retired in 1867. The following year he married Millicent, daughter of Major Robert Miller Mundy, RA, who was Lt Governor of Grenada.

Osmond Sarum

IN Byron's SHADOW

Modern Greece in the English and American Imagination

DAVID ROESSEL

INTRODUCTION

Almost Impossible to Think Sanely about Greece

On the terrace of the Hotel Cecil in the Greek city of Patras just after the outbreak of World War II in the summer of 1939, Henry Miller tried to dissuade Lawrence Durrell from enlisting in the Greek army. "He knew what I thought about war," Miller related, "and I think in his heart he agrees with me, but being young, being serviceable, being English despite himself, he was in a quandary. It was a bad place in which to discuss a subject of this sort. The atmosphere was charged with memories of Byron. Sitting there, with Missolonghi so near, it was almost impossible to think sanely about war" (*Colossus of Maroussi* 25).

Miller's problem was compounded by the fact that it was equally impossible to think sanely about Greece with Missolonghi so near. In Edward Whittemore's *Jerusalem Poker*, a character in Athens asserts that "the light here *is* different. It's a palpable thing and the effect is inescapable, which is why Greece has always been more of an idea than a place. When the modern nation was founded in the last century, Alexandria and Constantinople were the great Greek cities in the world, and Athens was a lonely plain where a few shepherds grazed their flocks at the foot of the Acropolis. But no matter. An idea doesn't die. It only slumbers and can always be resurrected" (113). The idea continuously resurrected from the late eighteenth century into the twentieth century was the regeneration of Greece and the Greeks, the physical reincarnation of the idea of the ancient past. And it was Byron, the martyr of Missolonghi, who had made the dream that "Greece might still be free" a part of a *literary* tradition. In addition to being young, serviceable, and English, Durrell was also a poet, and that, as Miller certainly knew, was a key element in Durrell's desire to join the Greek army.

It was not the last time that Henry Miller would have trouble thinking sanely about either Greece or war, but the shade of Byron did not trouble him long. Durrell, in the end, did not join the Greek army; he went with Miller to Athens, where they met poet George Seferis and George Katsimbalis, a

Lord Byron in Albanian Dress; an 1813 portrait painting by Thomas Phillips. Part of the Governent Art Collection, The British Embassy, Athens.

fellow "out of all proportion," as Durrell called him in his poem "My Theology." With these two Greeks as guides, Miller and Durrell would create a new concept of modern Greece in writing in English, one where young, serviceable, poetic young men no longer debated whether they should join the Greek army. They constructed a Greece where one went to escape from precisely such debates.

As Australian author George Johnston signaled in his novel *Closer to the Sun* (1960), Miller's *Colossus of Maroussi* was the work that replaced the verse of Byron as the canonical text of modern Greece for English and American readers. The protagonist, the fortyish David Meredith, asks a fellow expatriate on the island of Silenus (Hydra), an elderly British woman, how she came to be living in the Aegean. "'Asthma,' she replied. 'That . . . and my own passion for Byron.'" "I feel now," she continues, "it should have been Shelley. . . . But then it would have been Italy instead of here" (33). Some fifteen pages later, David's brother Mark asks him the same question. He responds, "Shall I say I am learning to know something about the light and shadow on rocks against the sky, the true taste of water, the rhythms of the season, the values of simplicity." Mark exclaims, "Oh, for God's sake. . . . All this pseudo-poetic Henry Miller guff" (34). Johnston included these two exchanges to indicate the generational gap between the pre- and postwar generations of expatriates on the island, signified by the two different "books" of Greece they carried with them on their voyage. According to Johnston, after Byron came Miller. There was, he suggests, nothing in between. For more than a hundred years after Byron's death, the Greek land was "haunted, holy ground," as Byron said of Athens. But, with Missolonghi so near, the spirit haunting it was Byron himself.

This book examines the significance of what Victor Hugo called the "Greece of Byron," or modern Greece, in English and American writing. Although ancient Greece, Hugo's "Greece of Homer," and modern Greece occupy the same geographical space on the map, they are two distinct entities in the Western imagination, as demonstrated by Virginia Woolf's comment: "I take pains to put old Greece on my right hand and new Greece on my left & nothing I say of one shall apply to the other" (*Passionate Apprentice* 340). Scholarship has tended to follow Woolf's advice, for while there is a large shelf of books devoted to the position and meaning of old Greece on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature in English, hardly any attention has been given to new Greece. The Greece of Byron is an interesting case study for several interrelated reasons, including its close connection to a single foreign poet, its persistent politicization, and its survival as a Romantic area long after the age of Romanticism ended.

Few countries have remained in the shadow of a single author for so long. In John Fowles's *The Magus* (1966), Nicholas Urfe says, "My knowledge of modern Greece began and ended with Byron's death at Missolonghi"

(39–40), and most of English and American writing about Greece into the twentieth century was also stuck in the milieu of the Greek War of Independence and Byron's Eastern Tales. For a century after the poet's death, writers tended to replicate rather than revise the Greece found in Byron's poetry. This desire was, to be sure, not simply a homage to a single writer but also an attempt to keep alive the social and political currents of the Romantic age, if only in one small spot on the globe. The literary tradition has, of course, more than one Byron. In addition to the hero of Missolonghi, there is the dandy in London and the introspective Manfred. This book is concerned only with the first. Byron was not always a politicized entity, but "Byron in Greece" was. With Missolonghi so near, one could say with some justice that it was also impossible to think sanely about Byron.

The resurrection of Greece, considered the original font of Western culture, was never an end in itself but rather was connected with a new spiritual, political, or cultural revival. Jerome McGann noted that in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Byron was deeply concerned with "the renewal of the value of the individual person, and the renewal of Greece as a political entity becomes Byron's 'objective correlative' for this idea" (*Beauty of Inflections* 260). Greece, therefore, was a highly politicized place on the map of Europe, since its renewal as a political entity was associated with the social and cultural changes desired by Western authors. In Maria Edgeworth's novel *Helen* (1834), therefore, a young Englishman, who spoke "with enthusiasm of modern Greece, and his hopes that she might recover her ancient character," is cautioned that "Greece is a dangerous field for the political speculator" (175). I argue that the lack of innovative writing about modern Greece from 1833 to 1920 is directly related to the fact that the country was such a dangerous field for writers, a place where one had to tread lightly because of the powerful presence of Byron and his legendary death in Greece. During his conversation with Durrell that day in Patras, Miller himself saw Greece as such a dangerous field.

In the first decade of the last century, Saki (Hector Herbert Munro) called modern Greece and the surrounding Balkans "the last shred of happy hunting-ground for the adventurous, a playground of passions that are fast becoming atrophied for want of exercise. . . . If the Balkan lands are to be finally parceled out between competing Christian kingdoms and the haphazard rule of the Turk banished beyond the Sea of Marmara, the old order, or disorder if you like, will have received its death blow. . . . the old atmosphere will have changed; the glamour will be gone" (528–31). Another way of phrasing Saki's words would be to say that modern Greece and Macedonia in particular was, in 1912, the last remaining Romantic area on earth. Through Byron, modern Greece became, as it were, embalmed in the time of Romanticism, and it suffered the fate of all perceived Romantic or nineteenth-century conceptions and values after the Great War. If before 1914, Byron in Greece was

The Observer
Greece

Two centuries on, Greece loves Byron more than ever

200 years after the revolutionary Romantic poet Lord Byron's death, Greeks are celebrating his place in their national pantheon

Helena Smith *in Athens*

Sun 21 Apr 2024 15.00 CEST

slowly turning the book of poems over and over, as if it were some puzzling potsherd whose function he could not decide.

'Cefalû,' said Graecen, enunciating clearly but softly the word which seemed to have come out of a W. J. Turner poem.

'Cefalû,' repeated Hogarth without any emphasis one way or the other. His interest had now moved on from the book to the ticket. The name of the ship was the *Europa*, 'Baird is going to Crete too,' he said. 'A patient of mine. You'll be travelling together, and will see . . .'

'Silenus,' said Graecen with the air of a conjurer bringing off a trick. 'I shall tell him everything.'

'You won't need to,' said Hogarth sardonically. 'He'll probably tell you, that old Phanariot intriguer. What is all this about the labyrinth? I saw it in the paper.'

Graecen fished a letter out of his pocket holding up an excited hand to prevent Hogarth saying any more until he should deliver himself of his news, 'A letter from Silenus,' he said. 'Look.'

Hogarth saw the familiar vermilion and the little drawing on the letterhead, of a village perched upon the side of a high stone cone. 'Read it,' he said. He knew that Graecen loved to read aloud, having a conceit of his voice. 'All right, I will.'

Graecen sat back and put on his story-book voice – the voice reserved for reading of his own work on the radio.

' "The sun" ', he read, ' "comes up every day like the naked flash of a cannon. I am sitting in the garden writing on a fallen block of marble. The roses are doing well and so, as you have heard, is the archaeology. Further to my last, the labyrinth has produced a stone inscription – pre-Minoan? At any rate another script I cannot tackle, part hieroglyph. The Museum say they will send for you if I wish. My dear fellow, of course I wish. A summer in Cefalû would do you good. I need company. Bring anyone you wish. But please follow these instructions implicitly: Do not in any way, in print or by statements to the Press, commit yourself to a belief in, or knowledge of, the New Era (we hope) I've stumbled on. Got

that?" ' Graecen broke off in confusion and found Hogarth's steady eye upon him. He wrinkled his brows. 'Now I wonder *why*,' he said plaintively.

Hogarth admitted a wrinkle to his left cheek and shook out the burnt top of his dottle. 'Why not guess?' he said. Graecen looked at him innocently.

'Dicky,' said Hogarth, 'you know what our dear Silenus is. It's just possible that the New Era is——'

'Faked?' said Graecen in alarm.

'Well, it's a proposition,' said Hogarth easily. 'It surely wouldn't be hard to do.'

'But the lovely statue,' said Graecen.

'I should have a good look at it,' his friend advised.

Graecen looked confused and put the letter back in his pocket. He thought hard.

'How do you tell the age of a statue anyway?' said Hogarth, 'apart from guesswork or typology?'

Graecen was too busy thinking to answer. He could easily get Firbank and his beastly chemicals to come along and test the stone; 'but I don't want to start any suspicion about Axelos,' he said.

'Chemicals?' said Hogarth. 'Take some along with you when you go.'

'I will,' said Graecen fervently. 'I will.'

He ate a rejected crust off his plate and seemed lost in thought. The statue was exquisite.

'Now then,' said Hogarth paying the bill and building a pyramid of books before taking them up. 'I want you to meet a young man who is travelling on the *Europa* with you. He's waiting in a pub in Shaftesbury Avenue.'

As usual Graecen had a thousand and one things to do. He took out his little leather notebook. Hogarth must really come to lunch or to dinner; but as usual he was booked right up. Tomorrow he was taking Mrs. Sanguinetti to the new Disney film. There was a dinner at the Savile in the evening. He read breathlessly through his engagements. Hogarth

Campion had been patronized by a gentleman and he was reacting to it now. His description of Lady Sholter barking like a shotgun and dropping her monocle to shake hands with him, was a masterpiece of ferocious miming. ‘The English, my God, the English,’ he said, pleased to have found an audience that did not contest his opinions. ‘The granite bound idiocy and moral superiority. The planetary atmosphere of self-satisfaction each of them carries around, to look at himself through. It is staggering.' He moved his toes in his sandals as he talked with exquisite pleasure. He was enjoying himself. ‘The sense of ritual they had evolved to cover their disastrous negation - their impotence.’ (44)

Miss Dombey had been sent east upon what she described as 'the Lord's business'. Leaving England had been a revelation. She had always heard of the 'backward' races, she said, but had never realized how backward and savage they were. 'The filth, ' she said challengingly, when he tried to defend Cairo and Jerusalem. […] On another occasion, travelling third the better to observe her quarry (the fellah), she had noticed that a strange smell of burning was emanating from the man seated next to her. He had a lighted cigarette in his hand which had burnt down to the flesh of the finger. He felt nothing. She realized that the smell was that of burnt flesh. The man was a leper! She recounted these ancedotes with triumphant gestures and Baird had to admit that his Middle East was dirty; but how varied, and how delightful. 'It's the same everywhere,' said Miss Dombey, 'same people saying the same things.’ (50)

seemed to be looking for a phrase. 'You ought to do well,' he said. 'They are looking for war-poets to help me to justify their messy little rodent-conception of life. The how-bravely-we-are-suffering-school. What a shameful disgusting business. One can only hope the whole lot of them meet in the obituary columns of *The Times Literary Supplement*.'

'Well,' said Baird, angered by this sally, 'that is neither here nor there. I dare say most people's behaviour is pretty questionable even in peace-time. The test is whether you are happy.' Campion folded his arms. 'Ah, yes,' he said in a small voice, 'Ah, yes. And I have never been happy, I don't think. Not once in my life. Or perhaps only when I was a child.'

It was odd the next morning to find oneself struggling on the wet grass of a Cretan hillside with a parachute harness. Baird thought of Campion often during the first few days of his mission in Crete. He had forgotten to ask him about Alice; but perhaps it was just as well.

Baird found himself sharing the command of a small group of guerillas with one other young officer and the Abbot John, that venerable old figure, whose resistance to the Germans during their occupation of Crete was widely written-up in the Press of two continents. The Abbot John was an imposing figure, with his massive patriarchal head and its tufted eyebrows, curly beard and ear-rings. Having renounced brigandage in 1923 and retired to the Monastery of St. Luke, he found a sudden invasion of the island not entirely uninteresting. It enabled him to revert to something of his old life. Things had been very quiet of late, and he welcomed a diversion from the relentless quest for holiness. Like all Greeks, he was without difficulty able to combine the mystic and the man of action. In his Byzantine belt, with its square iron studs, he carried not only several hand-grenades and a pistol, but also a tiny prayer-book attached to the buckle by a chain. He was at first so gruff as to be almost rude, and Baird was beginning to repent of his decision to

accept the Cretan assignment, when a small incident suddenly made them firm friends. The Abbot John had a tame raven, an amusing and impertinent old bird called 'Koax'. It was the life and soul of the headquarters in which the Abbot lived when the weather was too bad or the omens unpropitious for a sortie into German-held territory; 'Koax' hopped about all day in the large caves which marked the entrance of the labyrinth, making itself as much of a privileged nuisance as any court jester. It could swear mildly in Greek, and was now learning to do the same in English. It was always picking up scraps and hopping off into the shadows with them, and even managed to build itself a ramshackle nest high up in the roof above the natural vent which served them as a smoke-stack. 'Koax', however, suddenly became extremely ill, due no doubt to something it had eaten in a greedy moment, and was only nursed back to life by the united devotion of the company; but to Baird fell the happy thought, when the bird seemed about to die, to feed it on brandy in a teaspoon. After one dose 'Koax' rallied, and after a couple of days was back in his old form. This made the Abbot a firm friend. 'Say "thank you",' he would tell the bird as it flew up on to his shoulder, 'Say "thank you" to the officer,' And 'Koax' would give a little shriek and clap his wings.

The little group of saboteurs lived for almost two years in a comradeship and humour that was never tested. Baird learned the Cretan dances, and studied the particularities of the Cretan wines. His particular task was to build a small guerilla army, and to this end he devoted all his energies, backed by the hard-swearing Abbot. They operated from the mouth of the labyrinth, above the village of Cefalû, where later Axelos was to make his discoveries, and where the darkness was to close down on Fearmax, Campion and poor Miss Dombey. Despite its uglier moments, the life was at first merely tiring in the physical sense, in every other way there was the exhilaration to be enjoyed of freedom (the solitude of these immense white mountains in winter and

The mad Greeks, with their irrepressible friendliness and *naiveté*, would be the death of them all. They liked Böcklin and immediately accepted him as one of them. Well, come to think of it, why not? (58)

Baird put out his cigarette and listened attentively.

'Can you get away abroad now?'

'I should think so. On sick leave. Why?'

'To Crete?'

Baird looked surprised and a trifle pained. 'It is part of your system to propose long and expensive journeys to your poorer patients?' he said ironically. But Hogarth continued seriously.

'I'm suggesting something that would occur to any intelligent Hottentot. That you should return like a good murderer to the scene of your crime. Dig up Böcklin with your own hands once more. It's just an idea. I know it sounds shocking. But get him buried in a cemetery or something. Take a responsible line. It's worth it: you might come to terms with him – who knows? Besides I'm tired of indulging your maimed literary genius. Think it over.'

Baird sat for a moment in silence. They looked at each other. 'It's a curious thing,' he said, 'but I was offered a mission about a month ago to do precisely that. To go to Crete and try and find something out for the Intelligence people.'

Hogarth spread his hands out. 'Well, there you are. What more do you want? Accept, my dear fellow.'

It was more easily said than done; the idea was rather a startling one, and Baird felt that he needed time to think it over. 'And by the way,' said Hogarth, as he was putting on his mackintosh, 'let me know when you are off: and don't forget you are a tenner behind with your payments – the child is going to school soon, you know.'

In the vestibule, Baird met Fearmax. He had called to leave a cheque for Hogarth. From time to time during the last few months when their paths had crossed they had been in the habit of exchanging civilities. Now Fearmax walked down to the corner of the street with Baird. He looked pale and tired. He walked with an eccentric springiness beside the young man, remarking that spring would soon be here, though it was plain to see that his mind was not on the weather. He

The Labyrinth

The visit to Athens, so proudly announced on the agenda of the company, was a hollow boast. There really was not time to include Greece proper in the tour; and yet the advertising department thought that the existence of the name, both on the charts and in the text, was a well-justified inclusion. Thus it was that the *Europa* sailed round the Peloponnesus to the Piraeus, arriving there at dusk, and setting sail once more in the small hours for Crete. By straining both logic and every nerve the passengers might visit the Acropolis, but few bothered.

The halt at Piraeus, however, served one useful purpose. It enabled one of the Jannadis brothers to board the *Europa* with a notice for the green baize board in the dining saloon.

'The Labyrinth of Crete,' read Graecen with curiosity that night as he came down to dinner. 'Famous from ancient times, the discoveries of a famous archaeologist have once more been made available to the general public, thanks to the enterprise of Jannadis Brothers of Athens. From the quay passengers will please to proceed in cars arranged by Jannadis Cretan office to the labyrinth in charge of a qualified guide. Whole journey costing 780 drachmas. Please place your name underneath if you wish.'

The Jannadis Brothers had received a large part of their business education in America. Farther down in a heavy display type were the words 'TERRIFIC. LEGENDARY. HEART-THROBBING. ASTOUNDING. WHOOPEEE'.

'That rather sums it up,' said Baird, who was looking over his shoulder. 'Shall we go?'

Graecen thought for a moment. It would certainly carry

them as far as Cefalû, their destination. It would also give him a chance to see the city of the rock before he called on its discoverer. The idea was perhaps a good one. 'Perhaps', said Baird, 'Axelos would like to show us his discovery himself. It might be a *gaffe* to see it without him.'

Graecen pursed his lips and shook his head. He did not think so at all. Taking out his fountain-pen he wrote his name neatly at the head of the list. 'Shall I put yours?' he asked. Baird thanked him. 'And mine, please,' said Campion, who was craning over Baird's shoulder. 'Golly,' he added, catching sight of the display type.

Few of the other passengers showed much interest, except the Trumans, who spent an earnest five minutes calculating the cost at the rate of exchange and wondering whether the expenditure would be justified. Finally, they added their names to the list. Fearmax pondered the question gravely over dinner, and only added his name after the purser had made a short announcement to the effect that he would like the list closed by ten o'clock that night as the Captain would have to send a signal on to Crete stating the number of prospective excursionists and asking that cars be engaged.

Miss Dale and Miss Dombey brought up the rear; the one because she had a vague feeling that the visit might help her with her examination, the latter because she was an inveterate sightseer, and because humanitarian motives demanded that Spot, her dog, should have a run on dry land after so many days at sea. Several other names were also added to the list, but were afterwards erased as further inquiry showed that the trip was to take nearly the whole day. The name of Colonel Sinclair was actually on the list, but its owner was too prostrated by sea-sickness to avail himself of the opportunity offered by the Jannadis Brothers. He lay in his bunk groaning for Cheltenham. Later, of course, he claimed that a premonition had prevented him from going rather than sea-sickness. Indeed, his local paper on his return

than Axelos. A fisherman in a blue jersey, standing at his oars, conveyed the newcomer slowly across the intervening distance, until his boat rested in the shadow of the *Europa*. The man seemed to be English, from the cut of his clothes. It was probably the Consul, though why he should come aboard at this hour was more than Baird could fathom. 'Prosechete, kirie,' he heard the boatman say. It was the first Greek he had heard spoken for some time; it filled him with a kind of nostalgic pain. He scanned the face of the boatman eagerly to see if it was anyone he knew. (One always does this in Greece.) Octopus, pinnae and red mullet lay in a basket at the bottom of the boat. He had obviously been out all night fishing.

The British Consul (for it was he) came aboard in his time. He was tired and peevish, and walked like a person of some consequence to the bridge, where he asked smartly for the officer of the watch. 'I understand that you have passengers wishing to visit the labyrinth. I have come to inform you that the trip is simply not safe.'

He was conducted below to see the Captain, to whom he explained his business more clearly, slightly mollified by the excellent coffee and biscuit of the ship.

'There's a travel agency run by two young Greeks,' he said. 'They advertise tours of the labyrinth. Now, my advice is to dissuade passengers from running the risk. The labyrinth simply isn't safe. I don't want to have British subjects lost in the island, it upsets the Embassy; I've no doubt your company would also not like to risk the lives of its passengers.'

The Captain listened to him carefully and decided that his manner was too peremptory for a mere vice-Consul. The company, he pointed out, was exempt from any responsibility in the matter. The Jannadis Agency had merely canvassed visitors to the labyrinth. It was not up to him to stop people enjoying themselves. At any rate, he would post a notice on the board, explaining that the place was considered

February 18, 1962

A Way of Saying Urgent Things

By LAWRENCE CLARK POWELL

A queer cosmological tale about "seven modern European tourists who get lost in the labyrinth in Crete where the Minotaur has begun to make a comeback," is the way Lawrence Durrell described his fourth novel in a letter to his friend Henry Miller, written in the spring of 1945. "It is really an extended morality but written artlessly in the style of a detective story. Guilt, superstition, The Good Life, all appear as ordinary people; a soldier on leave, a medium, an elderly married couple (Trueman), a young unfledged pair, a missionary. I have deliberately chosen that most exasperating of forms -- the situation novel -- in which to write it. I knocked it off in a month in order to hold my depression at bay."

THE DARK LABYRINTH
By Lawrence Durrell.

It was originally published in London in 1947 under the title, "Celafu." Like Durrell's earlier books, dating from 1931, it passed unnoticed; and although an American edition was announced, it never appeared. For the next ten years, Durrell wrote no more novels. His poetry, a play, and travel books were ignored by American publishers, while the trifling royalties from their English editions were not enough to support him and his dependents. Durrell continued to earn his living as a British government information officer, stationed in Rhodes, Argentina, Yugoslavia, and finally Cyprus.

When his travel book on Cyprus, "Bitter Lemons," coincided with the political denouement on that troubled island and hit the jackpot of sales, Durrell's long period of civil servitude was over. He opened the floodgate of his wartime years in Egypt, and the four novels of "The Alexandria Quartet" poured out; the rest is literary history.

"The Dark Labyrinth" will enthrall students of Durrell's development; it will amuse those who enjoy satires on English manners and morals, engage readers who like a build-up of suspense and delight lovers of the sensuous world of the Greek islands.

"I have deliberately chosen a cheap novel formula and am trying to say urgent things in little squirts through the seven or so people involved," Durrell wrote again to Miller -- incidentally, their correspondence is being published later this year -- "a rotten book but with some small lucid moments and one or two good lines."

Lawrence Durrell is a virtuoso, capable of extraordinary feats of prose and poetry. His command as a writer is supreme, both over himself, his mind and emotions, and over his material. He is a superb craftsman and stylist, a classicist, as another English emigre to the lands of the sun, D.H. Lawrence, was not. As a creative artist, Durrell may be aptly likened to Mozart.

Some books now bear on their title-page the subtitle, "a major novel." "The Dark Labyrinth" is not one of these, either by claim of its author or publisher. It is quite simply a lovely work of art, written to relieve a teeming mind and to make money. Its pages offer plot, characterization, social commentary and an intensely moral view of life, in the prose of a man who can see, sense and say. Should more be asked of a mere novel?

Mr. Powell is Dean of the School of Library Service at the University of California (Los Angeles).