



## A Stylistic Analysis of Lawrence Durrell’s Famous Novel, *Clea* Lawrence Durrell’in Ünlü Romanı *Clea*’nın Biçembilimsel Açından İncelenmesi

Harika KARAVİN YÜCE\*

### Abstract

In recent years, stylistics studies have gained utmost importance especially within the realm of literary criticism. When modern approaches to the definition of “style” are analyzed, it is apparent that there is a tendency to refuse the idea that “style” is just a decoration. In other words, it is claimed that style is not something that stays outside the content and embellishes it, but it is inside the writing and complements the content in a certain way. Therefore, stylistics studies aim not only to define formal features of texts, but also to show their functional effect for the interpretation of the text. For this purpose, this study provides a comprehensive stylistic analysis of Lawrence Durrell’s novel, *Clea*, and questions how the stylistic elements the author uses affect the representation of the content in the novel. In order to identify various elements that constitute Durrell’s distinctive style, a detailed linguistic analysis was carried out. To this end, a linguistic methodology was applied, and the novel was discussed on lexical, syntactic and semantic levels. One of the motives of this linguistic analysis was to familiarize researchers (e.g. translators) with the stylistic features that are important in the interpretation and recreation of the content of the novel. After foregrounding the various stylistic devices that the author resorted to, their functions in the representation of the content were evaluated. As a result of the detailed analysis, it was seen that the stylistic elements contributed to the interpretation and representation of the content in different aspects.

**Keywords:** Stylistics, linguistic analysis, communicative effect, stylistic elements, style, content.

### Öz

Biçembilimsel çalışmalar son yıllarda özellikle edebi eleştiri alanında son derece önem kazanmıştır. Modern yaklaşımların “biçem” tanımlamaları incelendiğinde, “biçemin” sadece bir süs olduğu fikrinin reddedildiği açıkça görülmektedir. Diğer bir ifadeyle, biçemin içeriğin dışında kalıp, onu süsleyen bir şey olmadığı, aksine metnin içinde olup içeriği bir şekilde tamamladığı iddia edilmektedir. Bu nedenle, biçembilimsel çalışmalar sadece metinlerin biçimsel özelliklerini tanımlamayı değil, aynı zamanda bu özelliklerin metnin yorumlanmasındaki işlevsel etkilerini de göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, çalışma Lawrence Durrell’in romanı *Clea*’nın kapsamlı bir biçemsal incelemesini sunmakta ve yazarın kullandığı biçemsal unsurların romanın içeriğini yansıtmadaki etkisini sorgulamaktadır. Durrell’in kendine özgü biçimini oluşturan çeşitli unsurları ortaya çıkarmak için detaylı bir dilbilimsel inceleme yapılmıştır. Bu amaçla, dilbilimsel metodoloji uygulanmış ve roman sözcüksel, sözdizimsel ve anlamsal düzlemlerde tartışılmıştır. Söz konusu dilsel incelemenin amaçlarından biri araştırmacıları romandaki içeriğin yorumlanması ve yeniden yaratılmasında önem arz eden biçembilimsel özellikler ile tanıştırmaktır. Yazarın başvurduğu çeşitli biçemsal araçlar öne çıkarıldıktan sonra, bu araçların içeriği yansıtmadaki işlevleri

\* Asst. Prof. Dr., Trakya University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Translation and Interpreting, E-mail: harikakaravin@trakya.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-5113-4808

yorumlanmıştır. Ayrıntılı inceleme sonucunda, biçimsel unsurların romanın içeriğinin yorumlanması ve yansıtılmasını farklı açılardan etkilediği görülmüştür.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Biçembilim, dilbilimsel inceleme, iletişimsel etki, biçimsel unsurlar, biçem, içerik.

## **Introduction**

The English writer Lawrence Durrell was a novelist, dramatist, poet and travel writer. He was born in Jallandhar, British India as the eldest son of Indian-born British Louisa and Lawrence Samuel Durrell. His father was a railroad engineer and his mother was the daughter of a factory accountant. He was a very unsuccessful student and he failed his university entrance exams. However, he began writing poetry at the age of fifteen, and he was very prolific throughout his life. Durrell did not like his ancestral country, and in the same year he persuaded his new wife to go to the Greek island of Corfu so that they could escape from the depressing English life. Even in his tetralogy, *the Alexandria Quartet*, Durrell mentions his dissatisfaction with the English culture via a character: "I am just a refugee from the long slow toothache of English life" (Derbyshire, 2011, p. 21). As a travel writer, Durrell visited many places throughout his life.

In 1931 Durrell's first novel, *Pied Piper of Lovers*, was published by Cassell. During that time, he became friends with Henri Miller who had a huge impact on Durrell's next novels, *Panic Spring* and *The Black Book: An Agon*. Actually, Miller was considered a literary hero for Durrell.

Durrell worked as the occasional employer of the British Foreign office for several years. He had posts in prewar Athens, in wartime Cairo and Alexandria, and in Cyprus during the terrorist attacks of the 1950's. For this reason, Durrell settled in Alexandria for three years between 1941 and 1945. Arriving in the city after desperate flight from Greece, he was first started to live there as a refugee and then made his way to Cairo, where he was recruited by the Foreign Press Department of Britain's Cairo Embassy. Then the following year he was called to Alexandria where he met Eve (Yvette) Cohen, a Jewish woman and native Alexandrian, who was to become his model for the character Justine in *the Alexandria Quartet* (Friedman, 1970). Here, Durrell spent more than two years, which provided him with enough material for *the Alexandria Quartet*. It is interesting that an author can take such imaginative nourishments as observed in the novel in such a short time. As Derbyshire points out, "it is as though a particular author, dipping a toe into the water of some particular place, were to find himself all at once soaking wet" (p. 27).

In 1952 Durrell moved to Cyprus and started to teach English literature at the Pancyprian Gymnasium to support his writing. In *Bitter Lemons*, which received the Duff Cooper Prize in 1957, he wrote about his experiences in Cyprus. In 1956 he left the island after he was faced with the danger of assassination attempts. In 1957 he published four linked novels, which soon came to be known as *the Alexandria Quartet*. *Justine* (1957), *Balthazar* (1958), *Mountolive* (1958) and *Clea* (1960) deal with events before and during the Second World War in the Egyptian city of Alexandria. In the first three novels, time and events are the same, but the perspectives to the events are absolutely different. Only in *Clea*, the fourth novel, time continues and the course of events changes. After publishing the *Alexandria Quartet*, he moved to France, where he wrote *The Revolt of Aphrodite*, comprising *Tunc* (1968) and *Nunquam* (1970), and *The Avignon Quintet*, the middle book of which, *Solitary Practice*, was nominated for the Booker Prize in 1982. What is more, the first novel, *the Prince of Darkness*, received the 1974 James Tait Black Memorial Prize.

## **Synopsis of Clea**

When the last book of *the Alexandria Quartet*, *Clea*, is analyzed, it is seen that time starts to continue, and the narrator is again Darley as in *Justine* and *Balthazar*. At the very beginning of the novel, a man called Mnemjian brings news from Nessim to Darley living on a Greek island with Melissa's daughter. In this letter, Mnemjian informs Darley about some mysteries that are apparently not solved in the previous three books. In order to discover them and re-experience Alexandria, he leaves the island and goes there, hoping to meet other characters. When he enters the city that is at war, he realizes that it has

changed a lot, though it is still beautiful and chaotic as it was before. It is the first time that we encounter war in the *Quartet* as the previous ones take place in pre-war Alexandria. Throughout the novel, some secrets related to the events or characters of the previous three novels are revealed. For instance, together with the narrator, Darley, we learn that Nessim's all plans about the Coptic conspiracy were spoilt. Nessim and his family lost their possessions. Now, he is living in a small cottage with Justine and his daughter from Melissa. We are additionally told that Capodistria is alive. Nessim wants everybody to know Capodistria is dead because Capodistria is also involved in the Coptic conspiracy, and he knows so many things about the Copts. Nessim makes such a plan because this Coptic conspiracy can be revealed if Capodistria is caught.

Apart from learning some secrets, we also come face to face with different sides of the characters. Darley has changed a lot, which is obvious in Justine's description of him as a very coarse man. What is more, Justine is presented as a very different woman when compared to that of previous ones. She is no longer the woman who affects all men around her with her beauty and attraction. On the contrary, she appears a very desperate, unhappy and neglected one. At the Hosnani family estate, where she is under arrest when Darley comes to see her, she looks nervous and unhappy. Her husband has become uninteresting to his once-devoted wife. While in the previous novels she does not often express her ideas and feelings, somewhere in the last novel, she makes confessions about her relationship with Nessim and says: "Everything I felt and did then was really for Nessim. At the bottom of my rubbish heap of a heart there was really Nessim, and the plan. My innermost life was rooted in this crazy adventure" (p. 58). Hence, we clearly understand that it is not love but the plan of Nessim which attracts Justine. What is more, Justine admits to having deceived Darley and expresses her regret over her action as follows:

[..] I enjoyed deceiving you, I must deny it. But also there was regret in only offering you the pitiful simulacrum of a love (Ha! That word again!) which was sapped by deceit[..] Yet it is strange that now, when you know the truth, and I am free to offer you affection, I feel only increased self-contempt. (p. 60)

Darley also recognizes that he does not love Justine any longer. Darley tells how much he was wrong when he perceived Justine merely by her outside appearance.

Liza, Pursewarden's sister, wants Darley to write a book about her brother by disguising all the truths. Liza's wish brings us to one of the dominant communicative effects of the *Quartet*, in which Durrell aims at showing that everything in the modern world is chaotic and complicated, and realities are hidden, so everything is, in a sense, fictive. The book to be written for Pursewarden will also be fictive because the writer will not explain everything about Pursewarden. According to Durrell, life is itself a fiction because people do not see all the hidden things in it. As a result, it is not possible to talk about one truth that is valid every time or define people in a single way. As everything in life is relative, there is multiplicity in meaning and truths (Creed, 1973, pp. 19-20). In all of the novels of *the Alexandria Quartet*, Lawrence Durrell actually emphasizes the importance of relativity in life. Not giving the details of everything such as whether Justine was raped in her childhood or her child disappeared or even she really had a child, Durrell tries to explain that nothing can be true or all may be true, and he leaves the final decision to one's own point of view.

The fourth volume of the tetralogy deals, among other things, with the love affairs of the characters. As we know, Durrell defines the central topic of the book as "an investigation of modern love" (Steiner, 1998, p. 285). Firstly, Mountolive rejects the love of Leila, Nessim's mother, when he sees her as an old Arab woman drenched in perfumes, begging him to protect her sons Nessim and Narouz. Then Mountolive falls in love with Pursewarden's blind sister Liza, who loves Pursewarden. Later, it is seen that Darley gives up his love for Justine and he has a sexual relationship with Clea. As we move from the first to the last book of *the Quartet*, we see that people's emotions change to a great extent, depending on different contexts.

As mentioned before, we have a complex love pattern in *Clea*. For instance, we observe incest in the love affair of Pursewarden and Liza. Though Durrell has been criticized for focusing too much on

erotic love, Steiner does not agree with it, saying that "love in Durrell has an ashen taste". As he points out, Durrell takes love as a dominant theme because he believes that it is only in the lambent or desperate contact of the flesh that we can gain access to the truth of life (p. 285). He also attempts to emphasize that love is also relative, not having a single meaning for every character.

Towards the end of the novel, the war ends. The relationship between Darley and Clea comes to a dead end and they decide to leave it to time. Then Darley gains a minor official post on Greek island and decides to go back there. Clea, on the other hand, goes to France after leaving a letter to Darley in which he becomes aware of the fact that he will never be a writer in true sense.

### **Lawrence Durrell and His Baroque Style**

It is highly unlikely that an author's style is not affected by any literary traditions. Lawrence Durrell can be considered one of the representatives of the baroque prose tradition that started during the seventeenth century in Italy. The common features of this literary style are great emphasis on originality and an overabundance of stylistic devices such as metaphors, hyperboles, allusions, complex and elaborated forms. The main reason behind adopting this style is to move readers and evoke strong emotions in them. Even though Durrell wrote *the Alexandria Quartet* in the second half of the twentieth century, it still presents a perfect example of baroque prose. Before Durrell, many authors including Sir Thomas Browne and Robert Burton used stylistic devices of baroque prose in their literary works written during the seventeenth century. For instance, in his novel called *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Burton creates an elaborate style by producing "richness through accumulation and marshalling nouns and epithets into great catalogues of which the eye pursues in antiquarian delight" (1998, p. 282). In baroque prose, we observe a condensed form like a poem, embellished with highly detailed descriptions of characters and settings. Like poets, Durrell presents a condensed imagery in his novel, which enables him to say more using very few words.

As Steiner claims, Durrell does not use baroque style just as a formal instrument, but it also carries the heart of his content (p. 283). The common theme in all of the four books is that ultimate truths and the world cannot be penetrated by reason. In order to capture the truth, the process of sensuous absorption is prerequisite. In one of his statements, Durrell argues that the soul enters truth as man enters women in a sexual and spiritual manner. Therefore, in Durrell's style, it is an inevitable outcome that characters "pursue each other in an elaborate cross-weaving of sexual encounter, for only thus can the ghostliness of the human spirit be given the substance of life (ibid.).

Another important point to be mentioned is that the perception of reality in *Clea* depends on sudden moments in which characters become illuminated. James Joyce defines these moments as epiphanies in which abrupt spiritual awakening is experienced when thoughts, feelings and attitudes cohere to produce a new and sudden awareness of an unknown fact (Short, 1983, p. 73). In the fourth book of the tetralogy that I examine here, characters learn truths in such epiphanies, some of which will be analyzed below.

When Justin and Darley meet again after a long while, they sit together and talk about the past. At this time, a sentence causes a sudden awakening in Darley about the real face of Justine. After giving a long explanation about her feelings towards Darley, she asks the following question: "But now, tell me – which of us was the greater liar? I cheated you, you cheated yourself" (p. 55). With this sentence, Darley is forced to come to terms with the truth in a sudden way, which is apparent in Darley's words: "I saw now that my own Justine has indeed been an illusionist's creation, raised upon the faulty armature of misinterpreted words, actions, gestures" (ibid.). How this illumination affects Darley is obvious in the following statements:

She was there forever, and she had never existed! Under all these masks there was only another woman, very woman, like a lay figure in a dress maker's shop, waiting for the poet to clothe her, breathe life into her. In understanding all this for the first time I began to realize with awe the enormous reflexive power of woman, [...] How could I help but be anything but grateful for such vital information? (p. 56)

Another similar moment is experienced by Darley when Liza, Pursewarden's sister, reads a letter to him that explains the reason of his committing suicide. In this letter, it is stated that Pursewarden decides to kill himself in order to remove himself from the scene so that Liza can marry another man. He offers his death as a wedding present for Liza, which stuns Darley as soon as he hears Pursewarden's utterances:

I felt stupefied by the sad weight of all this calamitous information. I felt, in the ache of pity for Pursewarden, a new recognition of him growing up, a new enlightenment. So many things became clearer. Yet there were no words of consolation or commiseration which could do justice to so tragic a situation (p. 172).

In order to question the effect of Durrell's style on the representation of the content, the following part will provide a detailed analysis of the stylistic elements that he uses throughout the novel. In this way, the relationship between form and style will be discussed, and the contribution of the form to the main argument of the novel will be questioned. For this purpose, a linguistic methodology will be applied, and the novel will be analyzed on lexical, syntactic and semantic levels. One of the motives of this linguistic analysis will be to familiarize researchers (e.g. translators) with the stylistic features that are important in the interpretation and recreation of the content of the novel. After foregrounding the various stylistic devices that the author resorted to, their functions in the representation of the content will be evaluated.

### ***Unique Noun Phrases***

The basic word choice of Durrell to create noun phrases can be considered one of the most effective components of his idiosyncratic style. When we look at some of the noun phrases that he uses, we can easily come face to face with his fondness for complex and glittering words. For instance, he prefers to use such a noun phrase as "rainbow of dust" (p. 98) to define the mood of one of the characters that imagines holding the flesh of a woman in his arms. When read for the first time, this phrase does not conjure up a certain image in my mind, forcing me to read it more than once. Combining the words "rainbow" and "dust" in a specific phrase, he brings together one word having a positive connotations with another that has a negative one and hence makes us raise a question of what kind of feeling or thought Durrell wants to define with this phrase. With the word "rainbow", he might have most probably wanted to stress different feelings that are evoked in the character's mind when he imagines the body of a woman. On the other hand, why he qualifies them as dust remains ambiguous for me.

In another part of the novel, he provides an interesting phrase in which he defines the eyes of one of the characters, Liza, as "the cave of interrogation" (p. 115). With this kind of a description, he wants us to realize that he is talking about the eyes of someone by mentioning implicitly their hollowed shape with the word "cave", which I found successful. Even though he does not say it explicitly, it does not create any ambiguity in understanding because in the previous sentence it is apparent that this phrase refers to some part of the face.

In most of the noun phrases, we see that Durrell shows a tendency to concretize the head word. While doing this, however, he does not use common words to complement the head ones. For instance, he concretizes "darkness" in the following noun phrase as "cobweb of darkness". In another example, the author prefers to describe Darley's feelings regarding the past as the "scar-tissue of old emotions" (p. 45), which makes us consider "emotion" something like a skin that is shedding its wounded parts. What is more, Durrell talks about an epiphany experienced by one of the characters as the "jewels of enlightenment" (p. 180).

As is seen, in the examples given above Durrell prefers to bring words together to create unusual noun phrases, some of which result in ambiguity in interpretation. The following excerpts taken from the novel is another example indicating the common features inherent in his noun phrases:

An ancient city changing under the **brush-strokes of thoughts** which besieged meaning, clamoring for identity; somewhere there, on the black thorny promontories of America the **aromatic truth of the place** lived on, the bitter **unchewable herb of the past**, the pitch of memory. (p. 11)

The preference for using such complex, ambiguous and unusual noun phrases can be linked to the novel's emphasis on the importance of relativity and lack of absolute truth in understanding life. In other words, the novel emphasizes that the subjective position of the observer has an effect in interpreting the meaning. This actually reflects the modernist trends observed in a number of literary works during the twentieth century. In fact, some critics evaluate *the Alexandria Quartet* as representative of modernist fiction (Niska, 2008, pp.17-18). The description of *the Quartet* as a modernist fiction, however, results from its exhibiting some aspect of literary modernism, especially the novel's attention to relativity and the lack of an absolute truth, which is also reflected in the author's choice of unusual noun phrases to describe especially the feelings and moods of the characters in the novel.

### ***Onomatopoeic Words***

Though it is known that onomatopoeic words are the ones imitating or suggesting the source of the sound that it describes, Durrell uses them in a very different way. The function of onomatopoeic words in Durrell's style is not to describe a particular sound, but to produce a sensuous rendition even if the words used together with them would not involve sensuous imagery in normal conditions. As a result, in most part of the novel, we end up having unique combinations of onomatopoeic words. In the following example, Durrell presents a very idiosyncratic usage for the onomatopoeic word "bubble": "The sea had become a vast empty ante-room, a hollow **bubble** of darkness (p. 24)". In this sentence, the abstract noun "blackness" is attributed a sound belonging to water that is flowing. Another unusual point in this example results from the usage of the modifier "hollow" before "bubble". How can "bubble" be hollow, or is "bubble" something that we can curve? As a result, it is not so easy to interpret what author wants to say in this phrase formed with an onomatopoeic word.

Durrell also uses such words in a way that they do not suggest the real sound of an object or animal. While defining the sound of the wind, he prefers to say "click-click of the wind" rather than using the word "whistle" (p. 46). As is clear, sound of a clock is attributed to the wind, resulting in an unusual noun phrase. In my opinion, Durrell intentionally forces us to hear the wind in this specific tone.

Durrell's deviation from the normal usages of onomatopoeic words manifests itself in some parts where the features specific to animals are used to define human beings. Actually, Durrell has a high degree of fondness for using animal imageries throughout the whole novel. In one of them, he describes the sound characters' shoes make while they touch the ground as follows: "We started to clip-clop down the length of the familiar street" (p. 79), conjuring in our minds the sound of a horse-shoe.

The use of such unique combinations of onomatopoeic words can be linked to one of the main themes dealt in the novel, Darley's growing up as an artist/writer. In other words, these efforts to produce creative expressions show the character's appreciation of the form in the representation of the content. It is also possible to mention that this stylistic device serves for the portrayal of Darley as a maturing artist. On the other hand, the author is said to be under the influence of post-modernist tenets of his era, which gives importance to imaginative processes.

### ***Nouns Modified by Compound Adjectives***

Another distinctive feature of Durrell's language is that he bases much of his narration on description, which makes it indispensable to benefit from expressions flavored with adjectives to a large extent. However, it should be kept in mind that Durrell's adjective laden language cannot be analyzed in a vacuum. In fact, the abundance of adjectival modifiers in Durrell's language has a functional role in the representation of the content. Steiner sheds light on this aspect as follows: "The long and glittering

arabesques of adjectives with which Durrell surrounds objects are not only exercises in verbal acrobatics. They are successive assaults on the inner mystery of things, attempts, often exasperated and histrionic, to trap reality inside a mesh of precise words” (p. 284). What is more, we know that depiction of the city, Alexandria, occupies an important space in the novel. Durrell throws light on this issue in the preface of *Justine* with the following statement: “The characters in this story, the first of a group, are all inventions together with the personality of the narrator, and bear no resemblance to living persons. Only the city is real.”

A look at the common structure of adjectives brings us face to face with the fact that Durrell generally prefers to use compound adjectives merged often with a hyphen. In his style, it is generally observed that usage of adjectival constructions is more dominant than relative clauses. However, it should be kept in mind that the frequency of adjectives increases or decrease with the flow of the plot. While there is an overloaded usage of adjectives in the first part of the novel where Durrell focuses more on the description of Alexandria, a war-stricken city, and its effect on main characters, it decreases a lot as we move towards the middle of the book focusing on the sexual relationships of the characters. Durrell starts to adopt a less elaborate style as it becomes more important to reveal the mysteries unsolved until that time.

Now, I would like to give some examples in which Durrell creates potent compound constructions. While talking about an island house and its surroundings, he uses an expression of “smoke-silvered olives and almonds” (p. 13). Using the word “smoke”, he might have wanted to describe the dust that covers the olive and almond trees. Rather than expressing this phrase in a relative clause as “the olives and almonds that are covered smoke”, he puts it into a succinct form. Similarly, he creates another phrase with a compound adjective that may suggest many other meanings. In order to define the complexities of the city, Durrell forms a sentence as follows: “[...] tug of the **leaf-veined** city which my memory had peopled with masks (p. 23)”, in which the compound adjective written in bold implies many things in just two words. As is clear, Durrell has a great tendency to encapsulate what he wants to render in his novel.

Then we move to more interesting examples where he uses very imaginative modifiers to define nouns. Some of them include “leather-faced specimen” (p. 22) used to depict soldiers’ skin that has most probably become brown after getting burnt because of cold weather they have to live through during the war, “ink-shadowed line of cliffs” (p. 22), “fig-shaped minarets” (p. 28) to describe the shape of Arab minarets in a unique way, and finally “pewter-skinned Lebanese” (p. 33).

If we take a further step and analyze the complex structure of compound adjectives, we need to mention some of the examples in which Durrell pieces compound adjectives together with nouns in a very liberal way, creating expressions that transform his style into a marked one. Somewhere in the novel, Durrell mentions a scene from a festival taking place in the Arab town during the war. While defining the night, he uses the phrase “lice-intoxicated night”, which I found very imaginative. In this phrase, by using the word “lice”, he seems to make reference to dirty Arab people having no chance to clean themselves during the war time and he suggests personification by defining the night as made drunk by these Arabs. Similarly, “will-intoxicated memories” (p. 175) is another striking phrase used by Durrell. Obviously, it is not so easy to capture the meaning at first glance, resulting from Durrell’s general tendency to incorporate meaning into condensed forms. As we move along the page where this phrase is mentioned, we understand that Durrell refers to the old memories that are full of events shaped by character’s own will. However, whether these events created bad or good results is not obvious in this phrase because the expression “intoxicated” can have positive or negative connotations depending on the context and the person using it. Therefore, it is possible to say that Durrell usually creates cryptic messages in the novel.

Before ending my discussion on the idiosyncratic adjectival usages of Durrell, I would like to talk about another common trend encountered throughout the novel. In Durrell’s descriptions, we observe his fondness for using adjectives before abstract nouns, often with the first one suggesting personification. They also provide us with unusual adjectival phrases. For instance, in the following example, it is easy to

see how Durrell applies this method: "I feared the intrusion of a single thought or idea which, inserting itself between these moments of **smiling peace** might inhibit them, turn them to **instruments of sadness**" (p. 98). Here, Durrell also resorts to concretization of an abstract noun "sadness" apart from personifying the word "peace". In another example, he provides a very imaginative expression as follows: "Even the hail of shards which swept the streets, could not disturb the **dreaming silence** we harvested together" (p. 97). This sentence depicts a scene where Clea and Durrell have fallen asleep, causing silence to become dominant in the room. Therefore, the expression of "dreaming silence" mentions the situation created by their sleeping. As is clear, his construction of such adjectival phrases is quite effective because these adjectives do not literally apply the nouns coming after them in normal conditions. Durrell's misapplication of adjectives constitutes one important aspect of his unique style.

### ***Mixing Senses Together***

As I mentioned above, sensuous expressions have foremost role in Durrell's style. In some parts of the novel, we observe that he uses them in a way that we are not often used to, combining expressions that address to different sense organs. While reading these parts, readers may become forced to experience two sensuous renditions at the same time. Among many examples, I would like to analyze the most interesting ones. For example, he offers such a usage while defining the sound of waters coming from the sea: "[...] the soft **swelling unction** of water's rhythms" (p. 22)". While "unction" is a feature defining a sweet tone of water, Durrell modifies it with "swelling", which makes us assume that unction is something seen with eyes. In other words, aural details are mixed with those of visual ones. Then we move to another example where Durrell describes "silence" as something that is possible to see: "We felt **silence draining** out around us, emptying some great reservoir" (p. 52). This time, readers are forced to imagine silence as flowing around the characters. In my opinion, Durrell creates a revitalizing effect on the word "silence". In order to make this point clearer, the following examples provide similar atmosphere in which we see the mixture of senses: "The dark air of the night outside grew darker, swelled up with the ghastly **tumescence** of a **sound**, like the frantic wing-beats of some pre-historic bird, swallowed the whole room, the candles, the figures."(p. 96)" and "**serrated** edges of conflicting voices giving orders" (p. 211).

Finally, I would like to talk about another example where Durrell modifies rain in an unusual way: "Its (rain) **delicious swishing** had lulled our sleep" (p. 233)". While the word "swishing" is associated with the sound rainfall produces, modifying it with "delicious", Durrell creates a flamboyant expression.

### ***Sensuous Imagery***

Sensuous rendition is the most distinctive stylistic feature one can recognize while reading the novel. As Steiner points out, in Durrell's language, "each word is set in its precise and luminous place". In other words, he builds "his array of sensuous expressions into patterns of imagery and tactile suggestion so subtle and convoluted that the experience of reading becomes one of total sensual apprehension" (p. 281). In such expressions, you are likely to hear the aural music and see the light of the language Durrell uses. In the excerpts given below, it is demonstrated how Durrell brings an inner rhythm into prose with the specific choice of words in the same paragraph. In the first two examples, you will hear the voices while reading, enriched mostly by auditory details regarding a street in Alexandria:



[...] and **deafening** as was the **roaring** which now filled our ears it was possible to isolate many of separate **sounds** which orchestrated the bombardment. The **crackle** of the shards which fell back like a **hailstorm** upon the corrugated roofs of the waterside cafes: the **scratchy** mechanical voices of ships' signalers repeating...(p. 25)

The little tin tram **groaned** and **wriggled** along its rusty rails, curving down those familiar streets which spread on either side of me **images** which were absolute in their fidelity to my memories. The barber's shops with their fly-nets drawn across the door, tingling with colored beads: the cafes with their idlers squatting at the tin tables." (p. 32)

In other examples, we observe more colorful imagery that includes words addressing to various senses and hence producing a rich sensuous rendition:

So back into the city along the **windless** seafront drugged by the **clop** of the horse's hooves on the macadam, the **jingle** of harness, the **smell** of straw, and the dying strains of **music which** flowed out of the ballroom and dwindled way among the stars. We paid off the cab at the Cecil and walked up the **winding deserted** street towards her flat arm-in-arm, hearing our own **slow steps** magnified by the **silence.**" (p. 94)

I remember it so clearly, this spring day without flaw: a green **bickering** sea lightning the minarets, softly spotted here and there by the dark gusts of a fine racing **wind**. Yes, with mandolins **fretting** in the Arab town, and every costume **glowing** as brightly as child's colored transfer. [...] but if tragedy strikes suddenly the actual moment of its striking seems to **vibrate** on, extending into the time like the sour **echoes** of some great **gong, numbing** the spirit, the comprehension. (p. 208)

As mentioned before, the novel presents the process of sensuous absorption as the prerequisite of capturing the truth in life, which is subsequently reflected in the author's use of rich sensuous imagery. On the other hand, as is seen in the examples above, the use of sensuous expressions is closely linked to the descriptions of Alexandria, which is the place where the investigation of modern love and the interrogation of human values take place.

### *Simile*

As discussed above, Durrell bases most of his narration on description, which consequently requires him to resort to various imageries. In the novel, imageries draw heavily upon similes, formed in a very creative manner. Here, I will make reference to some of them constituting the most prominent characteristics of his style. In my view, he has an incredible skill for observing the world where we live, which is apparent in the following examples. Let us take, for instance, a sentence in which the current time is likened to a gorgeous meal slipping through one's fingers as quick as a wink: "For most of us, the so-called Present is snatched away like some sumptuous repast, conjured up by fairies – before one can touch a mouthful" (p.14). Rather than just saying "time flies" as Hemingway would prefer to do, he creates a very strong picture in which the quick passing of time is emphasized in a very unusual way. Let us give another example, where the usage of an idiosyncratic simile results in ambiguity: "The dauntless eyes of Melissa, slanted a little at the edge; and sometimes, intermittently, like a forgotten grain of sleep in the corners" (p. 16). In order to understand this sentence, it is important to know that Melissa was a very coward woman, who died during the delivery. Here, Durrell talks about Melissa, making specific reference to her eyes reflecting her courageous personality. However, it is not easy to understand why Durrell compares the eyes with a grain of sleep. What may be the connection between a fearless eye and the sleep in the corner?

He moves a step further and provides a much more complicated imagery in the following example: "Their [old sea captains] warm embraces smelt like wrinkled crab-apples" (p. 20). In order to form such a simile, he must have known the smell of crab-apples, which might have something to do with the smell of sea. Otherwise, why has he chosen to use the crab-apples as his object of comparison? This simile also demonstrates how careful he is in his choice of words. In fact, he treats words like someone embroidering, which is manifested clearly in the following simile: "His heavily salivated 'Yes, sir' and 'No, sir popped out from between his dentures with senseless regularity of cuckoos from a cloak" (p. 158). The way the old character utters the sentences is likened to cuckoos' movement on a cloak.

His narration draws so heavily on usages of simile that even in the same sentence it is highly probable for Durrell to provide more than one representative example as follows: "The summer rode down upon us like some famous snow-ship of the mind, to drop anchor before the city, its white sails fading like the wings of a seabird" (p. 158). Here, snow-ship refers to a sailing vessel. The reason why Durrell compares summer's coming to snow-ship of mind remains ambiguous for me.

In the final example, he shows his fondness for using sensual expressions to create imageries: "They smoke gluttonously, gushing the blue smoke from mouth and nostrils like voluptuaries" (p. 22). The way people smoke is likened to that of the ones having a sexual intercourse.

The fact that Durrell's style is shaped heavily by usages of simile and descriptions shows us he is under the influence of baroque prose tradition of the eighteenth century. As mentioned in the previous parts of the study, baroque prose is shaped by condensed forms embellished with detailed descriptions of characters and settings. Affected by the tenets of this tradition, Durrell manages to become distinguished from other contemporary novels.

### ***Animal Imagery in Simile***

When we analyze the various similes used by Durrell throughout the novel, it is easy to realize that he resorts to animal imagery a lot in order to describe people. Almost in each simile, animal specific features are attributed to people, which can make one assume that Durrell is an animal lover or a specialist in animals, about which I have not encountered any information to cite. However, it is also possible to mention that for someone basing his narration so much on description, it is an indispensable outcome to benefit from all kinds of imageries. Nevertheless, Durrell's excellent talent for observation shows itself strongly in such kinds of descriptions. Even though there are hundreds of examples in the specific novel on which I am working, I will provide space to just some of them in the following part.

While depicting a character's act of guiding the others behind him, Durrell utters a sentence in which he uses an animal imagery in order to make readers visualize his condition: "He swelled up toad-like, staring into my eyes with a mischievous content." (p.19). How better could he have reworded it while describing the ascending movement of the character? Then we move to the imagery related to a woman character defined as a sexual object with a particular simile: "She had become a woman at last, lying there, soiled and tottered, like a dead bird in a gutter, her hands crumbled into claws" (p. 62). Here, Durrell depicts a woman who has become breathless after a sexual intercourse. We can see similar expression in the following sentence: "It was an expression of her pride, too, to sleep there in the crook of my arm like a wild bird exhausted by its struggles with a limed twig" (p. 96), which again brings us face to face with the depiction of the woman who has become tired after a sexual act.

Before ending my words, I would like to give two more interesting examples: "Pompal was perched quite upright, attentive as a **rabbit**, as he gazed into her eyes- the eyes of this handsome matron" (p. 91); "No, it was only the harbor at which the enemy scratched and scratched, like a **dog** at an inflamed scab" (p. 103).

### ***Personification***

As mentioned in the preface of *Justine*, Alexandria is the most important character of *the Quartet*, whose influence never diminishes until the last novel. Through the city, it is tried to be stressed that

human identity is largely shaped by the place where he/she lives. However, the city personified in *Clea* is very different from that of the current war-stricken city. In one of the interviews made with Durrell, he also mentions that he has found Alexandria much changed from the city he had known when he wrote *the Quartet*:

The city seemed to him listless and spiritless, its harbor a mere cemetery, its famous cafes no longer twinkling with music and lights.” Foreign posters and advertisements have vanished, everything is in Arabic; in our time film posters were billed in several languages with Arabic subtitles, so to speak.” His favorite bookshop, Cite du Livre on the Rue Fuad, had gone, and in others he found a lamentable stock. All about him lay “Iskandariya”, the uncomprehended Arabic of its inhabitants translating only into emptiness. (Derbyshire, 2011, p. 25)

The Alexandria of *the Quartet* was a cosmopolitan city where “five races, five languages, a dozen creeds” live as Durrell says in *Justine*. Arabs and Jews, Greeks and Italians, French and British, Armenians and Turks were living together. Between the mosques and synagogues, you could find churches of Copts. At that time, there was also a linguistic variety. While Arabic was the majority language of the city, French was the commercial *lingua franca*. As Derbyshire mentions, “Alexandria was a city of a type more common then now: busily commercial and apolitical, with a fondness for making money and indulging the pleasures of the senses”. Some families used to have their mansions while the poor have their hovels. A multitude of traders, clerks, officials and foreign bohemians had a living standard in between. “Vice was rampant; the law capricious; anything could be bought” (p. 26).

In *Clea*, Durrell provides us with a picture of a dirty and immoral city that does not offer anything good to its inhabitants. With such a picture, he wants to stress that it is not possible expect from the characters, including Justine, living in this city to be morally and psychologically good. I would like to justify the points made above with an example where Durrell gives a depiction of Alexandria:

Alexandria, **princess and whore**. The royal city and *anus mundi*. **She** would never change so long as the races continued to seethe here like must in a vat; so long as the streets and squares still gushed and spouted with the fermentation of these diverse passions and spites, rages, and sudden calms. A fecund desert of human love littered with the whitening bones of its exiles. Tall palms and minarets **marrying** in the sky. A hive of white mansions flanking those narrow and abandoned streets of mud which were racked all night by Arab music and the cries of girls who so easily disposed of their body’s wearisome baggage and **offered** to the night the passionate kisses which money could not disflavor. (p. 63)

Here, we are presented with a city that is defined both as beautiful and immoral, suggesting personification. She lives together with various people of different races consisting mostly of passionate and furious ones. As long as these people continue to live there, the city will not lose anything from its diversity. Another possible interpretation that can be inferred from the excerpt is that the city no longer represents its cosmopolitan nature so much as it was in pre-war period, for many people were forced to leave there. It is not possible to talk about pure human love any longer, either. In the fifth line, Durrell forms a very creative expression, in which palms and minarets are made to marry in the sky, suggesting another striking personification. Finally, in the last part, he refers to the whorehouses in which children are used as prostitutes whose bodies are offered to the night. Thanks to his condensed narration, he manages to incorporate many details regarding the city in a short paragraph, over which many pages can be written.

Similarly, the following examples talk about the city as a living person: “The city was always **perverse**, but it **took its pleasures** with style at an old-fashioned tempo, even in rented beds: never up against a wall or a tree or a truck” (pp. 104-5); “Alexandria was virtually at norm once more, lying in the deep backwater of the receding war, **recovering its pleasures**” (p. 207).

### **Complex Sentence Structure**

Durrell's syntax is shaped by long sentences linked to each other generally by adverbial clauses added to the previous main clause to provide extra information. In my view, he attempts to give many details within one sentence as much as possible. Sometimes, he lists a great number of phrases one after the other without using a single verb. What is more, he often adds descriptions or definitions into parenthesis, which also contributes to the complexity of the structure, making it difficult to follow. It is not possible to find a simple sentence in Durrell's novel that gives a message directly like Hemingway. In short, his language structure is complex, elaborate and jeweled, whose richness results mostly from accumulation of glittering words.

Now, I will give two big chunks taken from *Clea* which represent the points we discussed throughout the paper as distinctive stylistic features of Durrell. Let us start with the first example where he depicts a scene from the Greek island:

The Grecian world was already being invaded by the odours of the forgotten city-promontories where the sweating sea-captains had boozed and eaten until their intestines cracked, had drained their bodies, like kegs, of every lust, foundering in the embrace of black slaves with spaniels' eyes. (The mirrors, in the heart-rending sweetness of the voices of blinded canaries, the bubble of narguilehs in their rose-water bowls, the smell of patchouli and joss.) They were eating into one another, these irreconcilable dreams. And I saw my friends once again, irradiated anew by the knowledge of this departure [...] At night I walked again those curling streets with Melissa (situated now somewhere beyond regrets, for even in my dreams I knew she was dead), walking comfortably arm in arm; her narrow legs like scissors gave her a swaying walk (p. 13)

A look at this excerpt makes us discover many stylistic traits adopted by Durrell. Firstly, sentences consisting of compound structures such as "city-promontories", "heart-rending sweetness of the voices" and "rose-water bowls" show that Durrell has a tendency to choose sophisticated expressions while defining something. Secondly, almost every sentence has simile of various types, one of which includes animal imagery (with spaniel's eyes). As usual, sensuous imagery dominates the whole excerpt, which is obvious from the word choices like "odour", "crack", "voice of blinded canaries", "bubble", "curling streets", "smell of patchouli", "sweating sea-captains". Here, Durrell arouses various senses of the reader at the same time. What is more, "dreams" are defined in a way that suggests personification with the modifier "irreconcilable" coming before it.

Finally, let me cite another example that includes almost all features of Durrell's authentic language. In this example, Durrell depicts an air raid on Alexandria in an elegant way.

Then, suddenly there passed a sudden breath, a whiff like a wind passing across a bed of embers, and the nearer distance glowed pink as a sea-shell, deepening gradually into the rose-richness of a flower. A faint and terrible moaning came out across the water towards us, pulsing like the wing beats of some pre-historic bird-sirens which howled as the damned must howl in limbo. [...] The harbor suddenly outlined itself with complete clarity upon the dark panels of heaven, while long white fingers of powder-white light began to stalk about the sky in ungainly fashion, as if they were the legs of some awkward insect struggling to gain purchase on the slippery black. A dense stream of colored rockets now began to mount from the haze among the battleships, emptying on the sky their brilliant clusters of stars and diamonds and smashed pearl snuff-boxes with a marvelous prodigality. (p. 24)

## Conclusion

In this study, I have tried to examine various elements that constitute Durrell's distinctive style through relevant examples and comments. In my analysis, I have generally paid attention to emphasize how these stylistic elements contribute to the representation of the communicative effect of the last novel in the tetralogy. In my opinion, Durrell's style contributes to creating a proper atmosphere in *Clea*, which illustrates the relativism and radical uncertainty of truth, basing itself on the relationship between same or different sexes. Several choices in the novel points to this fact, including the structure of the work and the statements made within it. Key incidents are told and retold throughout the four novels, each time differently, with subsequent narrators explicitly or implicitly denying the interpretations of their predecessors. Apart from its main focus on the relativity in life, *Clea* also gives a depiction of the war-stricken city, Alexandria, and its influence on the characters. As a result, Durrell's language is condensed with descriptions of individual scenes and individual moments in the lives of characters. In order to render character's repressed desires, feelings and memories, Durrell draws upon imageries and adjectives to a great amount.

Durrell's use of rich imagery and descriptions shows us that he is under the influence of baroque prose tradition of the eighteenth century, which was shaped by elaborate forms embellished with detailed descriptions of characters and settings. On the other hand, the novel's attention to relativity and the lack of an absolute truth, which is also reflected in the author's choice of unusual noun phrases to describe especially the feelings and moods of the characters in the novel, reflects some aspects of literary modernism that started to flourish in the early twentieth century. In addition, we observe the use of imaginative and creative expressions throughout the novel, which can be said to serve for the representation of one of the main themes in the novel, Darley's growing up as an artist/writer. Giving importance to imaginative and creative expressions, the author can also be said to be under the influence of post-modernist stylistic devices of his era that developed especially during the latter half of the twentieth century. As is seen, with his idiosyncratic style, the author manages to distinguish himself from his contemporaries like Hemingway in many aspects. As a result, it is possible to conclude that Durrell's work is also a good illustrative of the dominant trends and transformations in the literature of the era when many new ideas clashed against traditional trends. The incorporation of tenets of different traditions makes it difficult to locate Durrell's style within a specific literary tradition. The fact that Durrell feeds his style with different literary traditions can also be linked to the process of Darley's self-discovery as an artist.

To conclude, I do not hold the same opinion with the ones directing harsh criticism against Durrell, blaming him for being very pompous and flamboyant. One of the critics mentions that the outlines become blurred in the novel by the "constant gorgeous pitch of the prose, and the author has been charged with not saying very much or at least not enough to justify the expense of apparatus employed (Weatherhead, 1964, p.128). This kind of statement can be favored by modern English readers who are fond of simplicity instead of tiresome baroque style. As Steiner points out, when you compare a page written by Durrell to that of Hemingway, you are actually "setting a gold-spun and jeweled Byzantine mosaic next to a black-and-white photograph" (p. 282). On the other hand, one can also question why Durrell wants to apply a narrative style of early periods in twentieth century. However, in my opinion, one should not underestimate Durrell's language in the overall representation of the communicative value inherent in *Clea*. I believe that Derbyshire sheds good light on Durrell's language use in *the Alexandria Quartet* with the following statements: "*The Alexandria Quartet* nevertheless sticks in the mind and with all its faults keeps one's attention and forms a rounded, satisfactory whole-creates a world. 'You might try a four card trick in the form of a novel,' Pursewarden tells Darley in *Clea*. Lawrence Durrell did, and somehow he pulled it off" (p. 29).

## References

- Creed, W. G. (1973). Pieces of the puzzle: The multiple narrative structure of 'The Alexandria Quartet'. *Mosaic*, 6(2), 19-35.
- Derbyshire, J. (2011). Alexandria, Durrell & the Quartet. *The New Criterion* 30, Retrieved from: <https://newcriterion.com/issues/2011/10/alexandria-durrell-the-aoequarteta>.
- Friedman, A. W. (1970). *Lawrence Durrell and the Alexandria Quartet*. Norman: University of Oklahoma.
- Lawrence, D. (1960). *Clea*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc..
- Niska, T. J. (2008). *Bridging the gaps: Lawrence Durrell's Alexandria Quartet as a transitional work in Twentieth Century literature*. Retrospective Theses and Dissertations. Iowa State University, Iowa.
- Short, M. H. (1983). Stylistics and the teaching of literature. In C. J. Brumfit (Ed.) *Teaching literature overseas: Language-based approaches* (pp. 67-84). Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Steiner, G. (1960). Lawrence Durrell: The baroque novel. *Yale Review*, 49(4). 488-495.
- Weatherhead, A.K. (1964). Romantic anachronism in 'The Alexandria Quartet'. *Modern Fiction Studies*, 10(2), 128-136.