Lawrence Durrell has been such a daring and innovative writer. His obsession with the seemingly opposed worlds of science and religion has been the motivation behind the research. A striking discovery evolved has been that science and religion are no longer poles apart but rather complementary. Almost every modern discovery in science done and being done have had their precedence in Eastern religions.

Modernism was carried to its extremes after the Second World War leading to what we call postmodernism in literature. Traits of postmodernism like indeterminacy, plurality, metafictionality, heterogeneity, intertextuality, decentering are all exhibited by *The Alexandria Quartet*. The *Quartet*, above all, illustrates the kind of self reflexive concern with art which has become a frequent feature of fiction since then. Critics have therefore labeled the *Quartet* as metafiction, since it explores the theory of fiction through the practice of fiction writing.
The immense panorama of futility and anarchy that was contemporary history could not be contained within traditional patterns and set rules. The aim of Durrell was to portray a realistic picture of the postmodern world - its anxieties, frustrations, uncertainties, despair and disappointments. Existential anguish loomed large, and Durrell’s Alexandria becomes a cross-section of the world at large. Without roots, family or background Darley stands for the postmodern man’s displacement in a valueless, order-less world. Justine, Nessim, Balthazar, Mountolive, Leila, Keats are all representatives of the Twenty-first century. We find them all amongst us; men and women who have lost their identities in their struggle for existence, which they hope to recover, but in vain.

The main concern of the thesis has been to trace down the mystical elements in *The Alexandria Quartet* with special focus on the quest motif. Placed against the background of a love-lost, warring Alexandria, the Alexandrians are found to be groping ahead in the dark in search of a light that will drive them ahead to a better world. It is only when Man is confronted with difficulties and sorrows that he will strive for a relief from them. But in the process he will linger on the existential realities of life as we find in the Alexandrians. Even when the soul craves to know and love God, the path gets obstructed.
A person embarking on the spiritual quest must have something to spur him on. Darley and Clea are spurred on by Art which eventually reaches them to the final bliss. Chapter 2 traces the spiritual evolution of Darley, the Tantric-yogic way and concludes by affirming that he attains cosmic consciousness in the end. Justine fails in her attempts to reach God because she lacks the spur to carry her ahead. Justine’s attempts and her inability to cover all the chakras, though she reflects the Goddess figure, is described in chapter 3.

Ego, Time and Death must be mastered to reach the final world of Self-Realisation. Man’s worries and his efforts to recover from his deformities will also act as the driving force. Then it becomes an unconscious quest for God or the Self or Nirvana. Chapter 4 unites some of the remaining characters like Pursewarden, Melissa, Narouz, Clea, Balthazar, Capo, Keats in the common head of Death and concludes that they reach the Heraldic Universe through different means.

Mysticism is no longer a thing of the past. On the contrary it alone guarantees a viable future. In the present Age of destruction and terrorism, spiritualism is the only option for a better world. Without yoga and meditation there can be no evolution. The vast and immense richness of Eastern religions should be fully explored. Man
has realised it now, and hence the global revival of interest in the occult. The timeless truths have now become timely and Heaven lies within our reach. All our onward march in science and technology has made us stronger and civilized, but weaker and worldly.

Love, tolerance and mutual understanding should be cultivated. It is the will of man to create his own world. He can create a heaven as well as a hell out of it. Darley and Clea are harbingers to a new world of love and understanding. They stand as symbols of Creation while Nessim - Justine are symbols of Destruction. The world is born from ananda (joy), and it should live and flourish in ananda. Durrell’s life itself becomes his message. He imbibed the wisdom of the East and tried his best to propagate it through his writings. If the East and the West join together we shall create a new and healthy world.

The Quartet is a promising study for future scholars of research. Durrell’s interest in mysticism is boundless, and if probed it would take one deeper and deeper into the subject. It can be connected to other branches of study like psychology, history, religion or even politics. Freud, Jung and Groddeck who dominate the Quartet may be fully explored through the Alexandrians. Alexandria as a place, in itself offers a wonderful scope of research. The Quartet can be studied
in relation to all major religions. The foul world of politics and the issue of colonialism can be highlighted. Durrell has written in most of the genres of literature while trying to satisfy his powerful creative urge. His works include poetry, fiction, criticism, and travel literature, each undertaken in various degrees of seriousness, and for various reasons, literary as well as monetary. The quality of Durrell’s work makes him suitable for critical judgment as a novelist, as a poet and for commentary on the merit of his non-fiction as well—especially his much celebrated travel recollections. Humour, an undying trait in Durrell, as a man and as a writer, would be another exciting study on Durrell.