



Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive

By Hala Halim



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Interrogating how Alexandria became enshrined as the exemplary cosmopolitan space in the Middle East, this book mounts a radical critique of Eurocentric conceptions of cosmopolitanism. The dominant account of Alexandrian cosmopolitanism elevates things European in the city's culture and simultaneously places things Egyptian under the sign of decline. The book goes beyond this civilization/barbarism binary to trace other modes of intercultural solidarity.

Halim presents a comparative study of literary representations, addressing poetry, fiction, guidebooks, and operettas, among other genres. She reappraises three writers--C. P. Cavafy, E. M. Forster, and Lawrence Durrell--whom she maintains have been cast as the canon of Alexandria. Attending to issues of genre, gender, ethnicity, and class, she refutes the view that these writers' representations are largely congruent and uncovers a variety of positions ranging from Orientalist to anti-colonial. The book then turns to Bernard de Zogheb, a virtually unpublished writer, and elicits his Camp parodies of elite Levantine mores in operettas one of which centers on Cavafy. Drawing on Arabic critical and historical texts, as well as contemporary writers' and filmmakers' engagement with the canonical triumvirate, Halim orchestrates an Egyptian dialogue with the European representations.



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Editorial Review

Review

This book is firmly in the postcolonial mode, and on a topic that is both timely and important. As Egypt and other countries in the Middle East begin a political journey that takes them further and further out of the control of Western political institutions, it is essential to have nuanced studies that allow us to begin to understand how we (as Western writers and thinkers) have created comfortable spaces for certain non-western elites while excluding others.- Susan Stephens, Stanford University

An excellent exercise in rigorous comparative literature scholarship.-Roger Allen, University of Pennsylvania

"The masterful culmination of years of research by a world expert on Alexandria. Halim introduces Egyptian writers, such as Edwar Al-Kharrat and Ibrahim Abdel Meguid, into the previously predominantly European dialogue."--Banipal

"This is a labour of love, written by no other than a native Alexandrian, Hala Halim, and bound up by a profound love for the coastal city." -Ahram Online

"Hala Halim, who was born and bred in Alexandria and teaches at New York University, has a unique perspective from which to view the four male writers whose work she studies in her book." -Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies Vol. 38 No. 2

"In her 'Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism; An Archive,' Hala Halim explores enduring and critical literary constructs of Alexandria and its long touted "cosmopolitanism. " Halim's Text will be of great interest to students of comparative literature, cosmopolitanism, postcolonial writing and Mediterranean studies." -Al Jadid

"The strength of this work lies in Halim's ability to offer a much-needed postcolonial critique on the ubiquitous literary trope of Alexandrians, as a cosmopolitan city." -Mara Naaman, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*

"*Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism* is a treasure trove of information and original, groundbreaking critical insights not only on four important authors of world literature, but also on a city which is as versatile and

inspiring as Venice, for instance, with its uniqueness, literary aspect, and history."-*Comparative Literature Studies*

"Hala Halim's book is a provocative and erudite study of the modern European literary discourses that have constructed Alexandria as the exemplary site of what we might call cosmopolitan desire."-*Arab Studies Journal*

"The institution of Orientalist categories-and the new understanding of history through which these categories are given-set the terms for what came to be rendered as literary history, Arabic and others, and one legacy of this setting of terms is imparted through "the discourse of Alexandrian cosmopolitanism," which Hala Halim considers in her stunning intervention *Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive*."--*Journal of Arabic Literature*

About the Author

Hala Halim is Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Comparative Literature at New York University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jennifer Howard:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, going to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book can be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing you will ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to try out look for book, may be the reserve untitled *Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive* can be great book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Donnie Matthews:

Precisely why? Because this *Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive* is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap that but latter it will zap you with the secret this inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who also write the book in such remarkable way makes the content within easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any longer or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book have such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I have been you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

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Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive can be one of your starter books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort to put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive yet doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource data that maybe you can be among it. This great information can certainly drawn you into brand new stage of crucial thinking.

Bernice Cofield:

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