

# Alexandria, the Building of an Imaginary City – Frontiers and Silent, Inner Revolutions

Mário AVELAR  
Universidade Aberta, CEAUL-ULICES, Lisboa, Portugal  
[Mario.avelar@uab.pt](mailto:Mario.avelar@uab.pt)  
Orcid: 0000-0002-3149-1741

## Abstract

This article ponders on the multilayered dialogue enhanced by three 20th century writers, E. M. Forster, Lawrence Durrell, and Constantin Cavafy, with Alexandria. This city emerges in their work as the locus of an idealised ethos both anchored in a mythical imaginary – its foundation by Alexander, the Great – and in the unfolding of a historical encounter and welcoming of the Other, which eventually led to the coexistence of many religious denominations. Either represented in travel logs, or in the novel, either described in historical narratives or as psychic landscape of poetical meditations, Alexandria functions as a scenic background where love, namely a forbidden one, might exist. Yet these creative experiences were not solitary ones, since these writers developed an ongoing dialogue among them, thus assimilating in their own works the others' imaginative representations, and contributing to their recognition in alien borders.

**Keywords:** Alexandria, City, Memory, Representation, Imaginary.