

Decadence and Orientalism in England and Germany, 1880-1920: "The Indispensable East" by Katharina Herold-Zanker. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2024. viii, 280 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-888097-4. \$105.00.

The publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) over four decades ago has provoked much critical debate among scholars and continues to bear on a range of disciplines. Katharina Herold-Zanker adds to the rich reception history of Said's theory with her monograph, in which she yokes together Orientalism and decadence by demonstrating that "the engagement of European decadence with the 'East' was one of its most defining elements as a literary movement and artistic mode." Thus, by highlighting Orientalist imagery in the work of English and German decadent writers, she studies its influence on "Anglo-German literary relations." She examines the East as a fantastical space crafted by European writers, but also acknowledges some of the historical and political realities of these actual Eastern places in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Herold-Zanker understands decadence as a global concept and effectively reminds her readers that England's decadent movement did not happen in isolation; rather, transnational networks, global communities, and pluralities were always being (re)negotiated. As a result, the notion of cosmopolitanism is important for this project; she defines decadent cosmopolitanism as "'a cosmopolitanism of dissenting individualism and decadent refusal,' a refusal to be limited by national, moral, or even ethnic belonging." Therefore, the cultures of decadence and Orientalism demonstrate a versatility which becomes key for the argument.

The monograph covers the period 1880-1920, and across four well-organized chapters Herold-Zanker examines several authors and a selection of their works as case studies, including Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symons, Violet Fane (the pseudonym of Lady Mary Montgomerie Currie, 1843-1905), Paul Scheerbart (1863-1915), Else Lasker-Schüler (1869-1945), and Stefan George. These authors were either marginalized themselves or sought affiliation with stigmatized groups (foreigners, homosexuals, women, Romani), but what links them all is the fact they were each interested in performing, researching, and collecting foreign cultures as a form of nonconformity in their own societies. In addition to their nonconformity, these writers' engagement with these non-European cultures for various purposes is often rooted in objectification and appropriation. Though the monograph focuses on Anglo-German literatures, Herold-Zanker underscores how decadence transcends national boundaries by positioning these authors in relation to their French contemporaries and forerunners as well (such as Charles Baudelaire and Joris-Karl Huysmans). This grouping of established and lesser-known