

of *Graphic Design* by Phil Meggs, or *The History of Printing Types* by John Berkeley Updike. Moreover, printers and typesetters have long reflected on their position in culture; similarly, font design has seen a serious revival with the introduction of personal computing.

Another issue partially addressed but perhaps not completely covered is the use of italics. Historians of typography offer multiple and often diverse narratives and theories regarding the motivation behind not only the initial development of italics, but its revisions, shifting uses, and altered appearances over the course of five hundred years. It is important to note that the term “italics” is often applied to the oblique version of any font, though some purists view this as a misconception. Typographic histories commonly state that italics were initially designed in Venice at the turn of the sixteenth century as a comprehensive font, and their use as a marker of emphasis or difference did not develop until centuries later. The commonly accepted point of origin is the Venetian Aldine Press run by Aldus Manutius, the Roman scholar-turned-printer. What also has not found its full treatment in this volume is the way paratexts exist outside the formal narrative of the literary text while still being a part of it. They include things such as the title page, the copyright information, the index, and the acknowledgements. But several of the chapters included here do point out at various junctures how a font or typeface is likely to carry historical associations. When Genette introduces typography in *Paratexts*, he simultaneously presents notions of imitation, of pastiche, and of style. On the typesetting of the 1852 edition of Thackeray’s *Henry Esmond*, Genette writes: “Those characters gave the book its ‘bewigged and tapestried’ look and contributed greatly to its effect as pastiche. It must at least be admitted that two versions of that book exist: one in which the imitative intention is extended to the typographical (and orthographical) paratext, the other in which the imitative intention is limited to theme and style. The very division becomes paratextual” (34). In other words, Genette isolates typography’s ability to communicate and imitate a given era’s “style,” despite the work’s publication in an entirely different period. Such issues of period style have also become preoccupations of designer-historians such as Tibor Kalman, who is anxious about non-chronological style, or style not motivated by the “natural history” of design, because it detaches forms from their original purposes.

Readers of German literature should welcome this focused but interdisciplinary exploration of types and literature—even if (or perhaps precisely because) it makes us want to ask for a lot more along these lines.

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—Peter Krapp

### **Orienting the Self: The German Literary Encounter with the Eastern Other.**

By Debra N. Prager. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2014. x + 327 pages. \$85.00.

In recent years there has been a flurry of publications about German Orientalism. Inspired by Edward Said’s groundbreaking study, and yet reacting against his rather dismissive comments about Germany’s role in the imperial era, historians have rediscovered the relatively brief period of German colonialism, and literary critics have explored the much longer history of what Susanne Zantop termed Germany’s *Colonial Fantasies* (1997). While Debra N. Prager acknowledges the significance of previous

publications in the field, she stresses that her interests diverge “from much of post-colonialist criticism, in that [she is] more concerned with the formation of the European self through or by way of the encounter with the Oriental Other than with the Orient as an epi-phenomenon of Western cultural imperialism” (2). To pursue this emphasis, she investigates “the ways in which the presence of the Orient facilitates an exploration of the protagonist’s inner life” (3), leaving “the issue of the extent to which Germany participated in a battle for political, economic, and ideological hegemony aside” (7).

*Orienting the Self* features close readings of five major works: *Parzival* (ca. 1200–1210), the anonymous prose novel *Fortunatus* (1509), *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1800), *Effi Briest* (1895), and *Der Zauberberg* (1924). The historical scope of the study is as broad as the textual analysis of each individual work is deep. Three of the five works feature prominently in older studies of the *Bildungsroman*, such as those by Melitta Gerhard and Martin Swales, both of which Prager cites favorably in her book, in keeping with her focus on the inner development of the protagonist rather than the ideological analysis of German imperialism. Each protagonist has an encounter with the East: Parzival meets his heathen half-brother Feirefiz, Heinrich von Ofterdingen meets crusaders and plans to travel to the Holy Lands, and Hans Castorp comes under the spell of Chauchat, Naphta, Krokowski, and Peeperkorn, all of whom are associated with Eastern Europe or Asia in one way or another. Prager spells out the significance of each figure in detail and illuminates the impact of their influence on the protagonists of each text.

*Fortunatus*, the tale of a man who journeys from Cyprus to the Middle East and Europe, is likely to be the least familiar of the five works, but Prager shows how it fits into the larger pattern traced in her book, as the early modern traveler undergoes experiences that shape his inner self in ways that anticipate the greater psychological depth of more recent fiction. Effi Briest is the only female protagonist that Prager discusses in her book, and Fontane’s novel is not what most critics would categorize as a *Bildungsroman*, but it does portray a character who matures before her life is cut short, and images of the Orient play a crucial role in her psychological development, as Prager shows. Effi’s fascination with Orientalia such as a Japanese folding screen for her bedroom expresses her repressed sexual desires, while her fear of the Chinese ghost inadvertently drives her into the arms of her seducer.

Prager’s thematic focus on the image of the Orient as it relates to individual character development could be said to blunt the critical edge of postcolonial criticism. While acknowledging with Said that the “Orient” conjured up in these literary works is often more a figment of the Western imagination than an objective description of an actual place, she is not primarily concerned with the ideological function of these fantasies in any given historical period or with the individuals who might inhabit a given place in the East. Instead, she focuses on fictional encounters with imaginary figures that have a formative impact on Western character development, thus reproducing rather than exposing the Orientalist paradigm. The East becomes once again *disponible*, available for export and use within German fictions of psychological development.

To her credit, however, Prager makes no secret of her distance from post-colonial criticism, stressing from the start that she is concentrating on literary encounters, not ideological critique. Her readings of individual works are clearly written,

carefully researched, and closely argued. In the end, a conciliatory vision of the German encounters with the East emerges from *Orienting the Self*. Against contemporaries who tended to demonize the Oriental other, Wolfram von Eschenbach depicts courteous Saracens whose only flaw is that they are not (yet) Christians. As a Cypriot, the protagonist of *Fortunatus* is just as foreign in Europe as he is in the Middle East; thus the author seems less interested in perpetuating Orientalist stereotypes than in portraying “the subject’s encounter with difference” and his “experience of being alien” in both East and West (106). Heinrich von Ofterdingen indulges in a brief desire to join the crusaders in the conquest of the Holy Lands, but soon yields to sympathy for one of their victims. Hans Castorp snatches a brief glimpse of harmony between East and West before being plunged into the chaos of war, while Effi Briest pays the penalty for her Orientalist fantasies of erotic adventure with social ostracism and premature death. Prager’s sensitivity toward the plight of these characters and her sympathy for the redemptive potential of their encounters with the East make her work a valuable contribution to the study of a central theme across several centuries of German literature.

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—Todd Kontje

### **German Culture and the Modern Environmental Imagination: Narrating and Depicting Nature.**

By Sabine Wilke. Leiden: Brill, 2015. 236 pages + 9 color illustrations. €59,00.

Despite Germany’s green image and its rich history of poets and thinkers contemplating nature, North American scholarship in the environmental humanities that specifically considers German texts and contexts has been slow in coming. We can only speculate about possible reasons for this lacuna: perhaps Europe’s more densely populated countryside forestalled discourses on wilderness and nature writing in comparison to North America? Perhaps the Nazi ideology of *Blut und Boden* taints a celebration of German nature to this day? Whatever the answers are to these questions, German ecocritical scholarship is rapidly growing, with Sabine Wilke’s volume being a milestone in the formation of a new canon.

With *German Culture and the Modern Environmental Imagination*, Wilke manages to offer an introduction and brief history of German environmental thought; consider disciplines as diverse as aesthetics, art, film, and literature; address discourses from the tropics to the poles; and pull together an impressive array of scholarship. Thus her volume is bound to become a handy standard to introduce the environmental views of German thinkers, researchers, and artists from Immanuel Kant to Alexander von Humboldt, Georg Forster, and Werner Herzog, and to familiarize oneself and one’s students more generally with German environmental contexts. In a broad analytic arch, Wilke credits first Georg Forster and in his wake Humboldt with an influential framing of nature that made possible the modern idea of landscape taking hold in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and finding artistic expression in Caspar David Friedrich, Albert Bierstadt, Leni Riefenstahl, and Werner Herzog. With such emphasis on the cultural imagining of nature, a focus on agency and interaction in light of material ecocriticism comes second, though it finds some articulation in Wilke’s text.