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# Decadence A Very Short Introduction

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**FLORES ELIANNA**

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**The Decadent Society** Hippocrene Books  
Tracing the movement of literary decadence

from the writers of the fin de siècle - Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, Ernest Dowson, and Lionel Johnson - to the modernist writers of the following generation, this book charts the legacy of

decadent Catholicism in the fiction and poetry of British and Irish modernists. Linking the later writers with their literary predecessors, Martin Lockerd examines the shifts in representation of Catholic decadence in the works of W. B. Yeats through Ezra Pound to T.S. Eliot; the adoption and transformation of anti-Catholicism in Irish writers George Moore and James Joyce; the Catholic literary revival as portrayed in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*; and the attraction to decadent Catholicism still felt by postmodernist writers D.B.C. Pierre and Alan Hollinghurst. Drawing on new archival research, this study revisits some of the central works of

modernist literature and undermines existing myths of modernist newness and secularism to supplant them with a record of spiritual turmoil, metaphysical uncertainty, and a project of cultural subversion that paradoxically relied upon the institutional bulwark of European Christianity. Lockerd explores the aesthetic, sexual, and political implications of the relationship between decadent art and Catholicism as it found a new voice in the works of iconoclastic modernist writers. **Decadence** Johns Hopkins University Press  
"Freedman's final book is a tour de force that examines the history of Jewish involvement in the decadent art

movement. While decadent art's most notorious practitioner was Oscar Wilde, as a movement it spread through western Europe and even included a few adherents in Russia. Jewish writers and artists such as Catulle Mèndes, Gustav Kahn, and Simeon Solomon would portray non-stereotyped characters and produce highly influential works. After decadent art's peak, Walter Benjamin, Marcel Proust, and Sigmund Freud would take up the idiom of decadence and carry it with them during the cultural transition to modernism. Freedman expertly and elegantly takes readers through this transition and beyond, showing the lineage of Jewish decadence all the way

through to the end of the twentieth century"-

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*The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction*

Hippocrene Books

A richly detailed history of Britain at its imperial zenith, revealing the simmering tensions and explosive rivalries beneath the opulent surface of the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. The popular memory of Britain in the years before the Great War is of a powerful, contented, orderly, and thriving country.

Britain commanded a vast empire: she bestrode international commerce. Her citizens were living longer, profiting from civil liberties their grandparents only dreamed of and enjoying an expanding range of comforts and

pastimes. The mood of pride and self-confidence can be seen in Edward Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, newsreels of George V's coronation, and London's great Edwardian palaces. Yet beneath the surface things were very different. In *The Age of Decadence*, Simon Heffer exposes the contradictions of late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain. He explains how, despite the nation's massive power, a mismanaged war against the Boers in South Africa created profound doubts about her imperial destiny. He shows how attempts to secure vital social reforms prompted the twentieth century's gravest constitutional crisis—and coincided with the worst

industrial unrest in British history. He describes how politicians who conceded the vote to millions more men disregarded women so utterly that female suffragists' public protest bordered on terrorism. He depicts a ruling class that fell prey to degeneracy and scandal. He analyses a national psyche that embraced the motor-car, the sensationalist press, and the science fiction of H. G. Wells, but also the nostalgia of A. E. Housman.

**Catastrophe and Philosophy** Oxford University Press  
 Nordic Literature of Decadence fills a gap on the map of world literature and participates in a thriving area of research by extending

the investigation of broadly understood fin de siècle decadence to unexplored areas of Nordic literature, which remain practically unknown to Anglophone audiences. In the Nordic countries the new Parisian movements were seen as having caused a malicious invasion, a 'black flood' that was spreading over the North destroying the very foundations of Nordic national cultures. Nevertheless, the appeal of this controversial movement was irresistible to discontents and innovators, even in countries where the old moral, religious and nationalist atmosphere still retained its stranglehold and modern urban, industrial and social

developments lagged behind that of the metropolises breeding this new literature and art. The Nordic countries developed their own distinctive manifestations of decadence favouring allegorical and allusive forms, local rural settings and depictions of primitive nature, coupling the philosophical underpinnings of fin-de-siècle decadence with ancient Nordic mythology and rising national movements. Nordic decadence thus became a distinctive and recognizable phenomenon, which travelled back to France and other European countries, influencing the ongoing debate on decadence as it was conducted on a global scale. Nordic Literature of

Decadence discusses literature from five Nordic countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Estonia and offers additional and alternative perspectives to the cosmopolitan traffic and cultural exchanges of literary decadence that have been explored so far in the English language scholarship.

### **The Age of**

**Decadence** Oxford University Press, USA  
Decadence and Literature explains how the concept of decadence developed since Roman times into a major cultural trope with broad explanatory power. No longer just a term of opprobrium for mannered art or immoral behaviour, decadence today describes complex

cultural and social responses to modernity in all its forms. From the Roman emperor's indulgence in luxurious excess as both personal vice and political control, to the Enlightenment libertine's rational pursuit of hedonism, to the nineteenth-century dandy's simultaneous delight and distaste with modern urban life, decadence has emerged as a way of taking cultural stock of major social changes. These changes include the role of women in forms of artistic expression and social participation formerly reserved for men, as well as the increasing acceptance of LGBTQ+ relationships, a development with a direct relationship to decadence. Today, decadence seems

more important than ever to an informed understanding of contemporary anxieties and uncertainties.

Nordic Literature of

Decadence OUP Oxford

For thousands of years bloodlines have been held as virtually unassailable credentials for leadership, with supreme political power perceived as a family affair across the globe and throughout history. At the heart of royal dynasties, kings were inflated to superhuman proportions, yet their status came at a price: whilst they may have reigned, they were very often ruled by others who sheltered behind the ruler's proclaimed omnipotence. Descent through the female line

also occurred, subverting our common view of dynasty as built on father-son succession. Everywhere, women were important as mothers of boy-kings, and could even rule in their own right in some places. In this Very Short Introduction Jeroen Duindam connects the earliest history of kings and queens to contemporary examples of family-based leadership. His sweeping overview of five millennia of dynastic rule brings to light recurring predicaments of families on the throne. Examining persistent family conflict and the dilemmas of leadership, he shows how the challenge of governing the family was balanced by the

necessity of family scions, close or distant, for the survival of dynasties. Tensions between ageing fathers and eager sons can be found among ancient kings as well as in modern business empires. Guidebooks for rulers throughout history provided counsel that will appear strikingly familiar to contemporary leaders. The thoughts and confessions of rulers added a more personal touch to these rules of thumb. Throughout, Duindam sheds light not only on similarities, but also on divergence and change in dynastic practice. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject

area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

*Decadence and Modernism in European and Russian Literature and Culture* Lexington Books

From ancient Egypt through the nineteenth century, *Sexual Personae* explores the provocative connections between art and pagan ritual; between Emily Dickinson and the Marquis de Sade; between Lord Byron and Elvis Presley. It ultimately challenges the cultural assumptions of both



conservatives and traditional liberals. 47 photographs.

*Decadent Women*

National Geographic Books

In *Literature and the Politics of Post-Victorian Decadence*, Kristin Mahoney argues that the early twentieth century was a period in which the specters of the fin de siècle exercised a remarkable draw on the modern cultural imagination and troubled emergent avant-gardistes. These authors and artists refused to assimilate to the aesthetic and political ethos of the era, representing themselves instead as time travelers from the previous century for whom twentieth-century modernity was both baffling and disappointing.

However, they did not turn entirely from the modern moment, but rather relied on decadent strategies to participate in conversations concerning the most highly-vexed issues of the period including war, the rise of the Labour Party, the question of women's sexual freedom, and changing conceptions of sexual and gender identities.

### **The Jewish Decadence**

Bloomsbury Publishing  
From the New York Times columnist and bestselling author of *Bad Religion*, a “clever and stimulating” (The New York Times Book Review) portrait of how our turbulent age is defined by dark forces seemingly beyond our control. The era of the coronavirus has tested

America, and our leaders and institutions have conspicuously failed. That failure shouldn't be surprising: Beneath social-media frenzy and reality-television politics, our era's deep truths are elite incompetence, cultural exhaustion, and the flight from reality into fantasy. Casting a cold eye on these trends, *The Decadent Society* explains what happens when a powerful society ceases advancing—how the combination of wealth and technological proficiency with economic stagnation, political stalemate, and demographic decline creates a unique civilizational crisis. Ranging from the futility of our ideological debates to the repetitions of our

pop culture, from the decline of sex and childbearing to the escapism of drug use, Ross Douthat argues that our age is defined by disappointment—by the feeling that all the frontiers are closed, that the paths forward lead only to the grave. Correcting both optimism and despair, Douthat provides an enlightening explanation of how we got here, how long our frustrations might last, and how, in renaissance or catastrophe, our decadence might ultimately end. *Democracy: A Very Short Introduction* Routledge  
As femme fatale, cabaret siren, and icon of Camp, the Christopher Isherwood character Sally Bowles has become this

century's darling of "divine decadence"--a measure of how much we are attracted by the fiction of the "shocking" British/American vamp in Weimar Berlin. Originally a character in a short story by Isherwood, published in 1939, "Sally" has appeared over the years in John Van Druten's stage play *I Am a Camera*, Henry Cornelius's film of the same name, and Joe Masteroff's stage musical and Bob Fosse's Academy Award-winning musical film, both entitled *Cabaret*. Linda Mizejewski shows how each successive repetition of the tale of the showgirl and the male writer/scholar has linked the young man's fascination with Sally more closely to the

fascination of fascism. In every version, political difference is read as sexual difference, fascism is disavowed as secretly female or homosexual, and the hero eventually renounces both Sally and the corruption of the coming regime. Mizejewski argues, however, that the historical and political aspects of this story are too specific--and too frightening--to explain in purely psychoanalytic terms. Instead, *Divine Decadence* examines how each text engages particular cultural issues and anxieties of its era, from postwar "Momism" to the Vietnam War. Sally Bowles as the symbol of "wild Weimar" or Nazi eroticism represents "history"

from within the grid of many other controversial discourses, including changing theories of fascism, the story of Camp, vicissitudes of male homosexual representations and discourses, and the relationships of these issues to images of female sexuality. To Mizejewski, the Sally Bowles adaptations end up duplicating the fascist politics they strain to condemn, reproducing the homophobia, misogyny, fascination for spectacle, and emphasis of sexual difference that characterized German fascism. Originally published in 1992. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available

previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905. [The Second Dedalus Book of Decadence](#) Cambridge University Press Romantic writers had found in Christianity a poetic cult of the imagination, an assertion of the spiritual quality of beauty in an age of vulgar materialism.

The decadents, a diverse movement of writers, were the climax and exhaustion of this romantic tradition. In their art, they enacted the romance of faith as a protest against the dreariness of modern life. Ellis Hanson teases out two strands--eroticism and aestheticism--that rendered the decadent interest in Catholicism extraordinary. More than any other literary movement, the decadents explored the powerful historical relationship between homoeroticism and Roman Catholicism. Why, throughout history, have so many homosexuals been attracted to Catholic institutions that vociferously condemn homosexuality? This perplexing question is

pursued in this elegant and innovative book. Late-nineteenth-century aesthetes found in the Church a peculiar language that gave them a means of artistic and sexual expression. The brilliant cast of characters that parades through this book includes Oscar Wilde, Charles Baudelaire, J.-K. Huysmans, Walter Pater, and Paul Verlaine. Art for these writers was a mystical and erotic experience. In decadent Catholicism we can glimpse the beginnings of a postmodern valorization of perversity and performativity. Catholicism offered both the hysterical symptom and the last hope for paganism amid the dullness of

Victorian puritanism and bourgeois materialism.

*From Dawn to Decadence* Simon and Schuster

The product of the author's lifetime, this powerful narrative, intersperses the author's analysis of wars, philosophy, science, manners, sex, religion, morals, art, et al, from the Reformation to the present day, with biographical sketches of influential historical figures. His conclusion is that the decadence of the current age is merely a watershed for a new age in which Western culture will again flourish.

**Decadence in the Age of Modernism**

Harvard University Press

A cream-of-the-crop selection of Murakami's

brilliance and piercing wit. This collection shows sides of Ryu Murakami that even avid fans may not be expecting. The intriguing, somewhat disturbing stories that *Topaz* was based on are included here, as are three entertaining and revealing portraits of the artist as a young man back in the Transparent Blue period of the late sixties and early seventies. We hear tales told by four very different individuals living in eighties Tokyo, each with his or her own problems but all with a thing about a certain pro baseball player, and we meet a brokenhearted young woman who finds an unexpected moment of love in the nineties and a single mother who stumbles on a ray of

hope in the hard times of the noughties. Mixed in there somewhere are three linked stories about desire and obsession, with the timeless, seductive rhythms of Cuban music in the background. This book contains explicit content and is not suitable for minors. About the author: Ryu Murakami was not yet 24 when he won the prestigious Akutagawa Prize for his debut novel, *Almost Transparent Blue*. He has now published some forty best-selling novels, a dozen short-story collections, an armful of picture books, and a small mountain of essays. In his spare time, Ryu hosts a popular and long-running weekly TV show focusing on business and economic

topics, and has for many years promoted tours and produced records for Cuban musicians. He has written and directed five feature films, of which *Topaz* a.k.a. *Tokyo Decadence* (1992) is probably the best known, and many of his novels have been made into films by other directors (notably Takashi Miike's *Audition*). Translated novels include *Coin Locker Babies* (Noma Prize for New Writers), *Sixty-Nine*, *Popular Hits of the Showa Era*, *Audition*, *In the Miso Soup* (Yomiuri Prize for Literature), *Piercing*, and *From the Fatherland, with Love* (Noma Prize for Literature and Mainichi Publishing Culture Award).

**A Baedeker of Decadence** Open

### Book Publishers

The far right is back with a vengeance. After several decades at the political margins, far-right politics has again taken center stage. Three of the world's largest democracies - Brazil, India, and the United States - now have a radical right leader, while far-right parties continue to increase their profile and support within Europe. In this timely book, leading global expert on political extremism Cas Mudde provides a concise overview of the fourth wave of postwar far-right politics, exploring its history, ideology, organization, causes, and consequences, as well as the responses available to civil society, party, and state actors to

challenge its ideas and influence. What defines this current far-right renaissance, Mudde argues, is its mainstreaming and normalization within the contemporary political landscape. Challenging orthodox thinking on the relationship between conventional and far-right politics, Mudde offers a complex and insightful picture of one of the key political challenges of our time. *Dynasty Reaktion*

### Books

From popular histories through to reworkings of classical subject matter by contemporary poets, dramatists, and novelists, the classical world and the masterpieces of its literature continue to fascinate readers and audiences in a huge



variety of media. In this Very Short Introduction, William Allan explores what the 'classics' are and why they continue to shape our Western concepts of literature. Presenting a range of material from both Greek and Latin literature, he illustrates the variety and sophistication of these works, and considers examples from all the major genres. Ideal for the general reader interested in works of classic literature, as well as students at A-Level and University, this is a lively and lucid guide to the major authors and literary forms of the ancient period. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in

almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable. Decadence and the 1890s Cambridge University Press The Romantic myth of Bohemia originated in the early nineteenth century as a way of describing the new conditions faced by artists and writers when the previous system of aristocratic patronage collapsed in the wake of the Age of Revolution. Without the patron system, the artist was free to move around, to seek an audience wherever

fortune beckoned. This marketing model likening the artist's vagabond career to the "gypsy" life helps to explain part of the bohemian myth, but not all of it. Most bohemians have scant interest in commercial gain and are not so itinerant after all, confining their movements to down-market urban neighbourhoods where the rent is cheap and the morals are loose. This Very Short Introduction traces the myth of Bohemia through its various fictional manifestations, from Henry Murger's novel *Scenes of Bohemian Life* (1851) and Giacomo Puccini's opera *La Bohème* (1896) to Aki Kaurismäki's film *La vie de Bohème* (1992), and

Jonathan Larson's musical *Rent* (1996). It goes on to examine the history of different bohemian communities, including those in the Latin Quarter of Paris, the Schwabing section of Munich, and the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York. David Weir also considers the politics of Bohemia and traces the careers of the artists Gustave Courbet and Pablo Picasso and the great chanteuses Yvette Guilbert, Fréhel, and Edith Piaf in the Montmartre neighborhood of Paris, where a rich tradition of popular culture indebted to Bohemia also developed. Weir concludes with a discussion of the legacy of Bohemia today as something

outworn and dying, an exhausted tradition that somehow continues.

### **Tokyo Decadence**

OUP Oxford

Decadence, that flowering of a mannered literary style in France during the Second Empire, and in the last two decades of the nineteenth century in Britain, holds an endless fascination. Yet the ambiguity of the term 'decadence' and the challenges of identifying its practitioners make grasping its contours difficult. From the obsession with classical cultures, to the responses to the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, this book offers one of the most comprehensive histories of literary Decadence. The essays here interrogate and

expand the formal, geographical, and temporal frameworks for understanding Decadent literature, while offering a renewed focus on the role played by women writers. Featuring essays by leading scholars on sexuality, politics, science, translation, the New Woman, Russian and Spanish American Decadence, the influence of cinema on Decadence, and much more, it is essential reading for all those interested in the literature of the 1890s and Oscar Wilde.

### **The Scientific Revolution: A Very Short Introduction**

Cambridge University Press

'He had become the dandy of the unpredictable.' A quest for new sensations,

and an avowed desire to shock possessed the Decadent writers of fin-de-siècle Paris. The years 1880-1900 saw an extraordinary, hothouse flowering of talent, that produced some of the most exotic, stylized, and cerebral literature in the French language. While 'Decadence' was a European movement, its epicentre was the French capital. On the eve of Freud's early discoveries, writers such as Gourmont, Lorrain, Maupassant, Mirbeau, Richepin, Schwob, and Villiers engaged in a species of wild analysis of their own, perfecting the art of short fiction as they did so. Death and Eros haunt these pages, and a polymorphous perversity by turns hilarious and horrifying. Their stories

teem with addicts, maniacs, and murderers as they strive to outdo each other. This newly translated selection brings together the very best writing of the period, from lesser known figures as well as famous names. Provocative and unsettling, these extraordinary, corrosive little tales continue to cast a cold eye on the modern world. ABOUT THE SERIES: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the widest range of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert

introductions by leading authorities, helpful notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

### **Sexual Personae**

Oxford University Press  
Decadence and Modernism in European and Russian Literature and Culture: Aesthetics and Anxiety in the 1890s rewrites the story of early modernist literature and culture by drawing out the tensions underlying its simultaneous engagement with Decadence and Symbolism, the unsustainable combination of this world and the other. With a broadly framed literary and cultural approach, Jonathan Stone examines a shift in perspective that

explodes the notion of reality and showcases the uneasy relationship between the tangible and intangible aspects of the surrounding world. Modernism quenches a growing fascination with the ephemeral and that which cannot be seen while also doubling down on the significance of the material world and finding profound meaning in the physical and the corporeal. Decadence and Symbolism complement the broader historical trajectory of the fin de siècle by affirming the novelty of a modernist mindset and offering an alternative to the empirical and positivistic atmosphere of the nineteenth century. Stone seeks to recreate a significant

historical and cultural moment in the development of modernity, a moment that embraces the concept of Decadence while repurposing its aesthetic and social import to help navigate the fundamental changes that accompanied the dawn of the twentieth century.

### **Babylonia** Рипол

#### Классик

The cultural phenomenon known as "decadence" has often been viewed as an ephemeral artistic vogue that flourished briefly in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe. This study makes the case for decadence as a literary movement in its own right, based on a set of aesthetic principles that formed a

transitional link between romanticism and modernism. Understood in this developmental context, decadence represents the aesthetic substratum of a wide range of fin-de-siecle literary schools, including naturalism, realism, Parnassianism, aestheticism, and symbolism. As an impulse toward modernism, it prefigures the thematic, structural, and stylistic concerns of later literature. David Weir demonstrates his thesis by analyzing a number of French, English, Italian, and American novels, each associated with some specific decadent literary tendency. The book concludes by arguing that the

decadent sensibility  
persists in popular  
culture and  
contemporary theory,

with multiculturalism  
and postmodernism  
representing its most  
current manifestations.