



British Association of Decadence Studies

Digital Newsletter

April 2020



Online Occultism

Flower of Evil: Berthe de Courrière, The Satanic Woman of Belle-Époque Paris

Madeleine LeDespencer

In decadent Paris, no figure cut a more sensual and diabolical presence than that of Hyacinthe Chantelouve, the fictional femme fatale and satanic initiatrix of J.-K. Huysmans' (1848-1907) novel, *Là-Bas*. Madame Chantelouve was the dark reflection of the emancipated 'New Woman.' She seemed to represent in equal parts all that traditional society feared, yet secretly desired. This one-hour live lecture will examine the life of this remarkable woman and the influence she wielded in the demi-monde of Parisian literary circles at the end of the 19th century. She served as a catalyst for many enduring works of art and literature. She was a model and muse to the sculptor Clésinger and her likeness is etched into the visual history of Paris. As the lover and creative partner of Remy de Gourmont she inspired his works *Sixtine* and *Le Fantôme*. Her presence haunts the artistic output of the decadence.



Friday 24 April 2020 | [Weblink](#)

Women Who Bite: Chastity Belts, Castration Anxiety, and Feminism

Karen Bachmann

Humankind's earliest cultures were matriarchal in nature. The advent of agrarian civilization witnessed women's power gradually devalued by a growing patriarchy. Both Western and Eastern cultures have folklore and art history attesting to the leitmotif of the strong, fierce woman rising up against oppressive authority. This Zoom lecture will explore the myths, fables, and visual representations of the ferocious, toothed woman. Such imagery includes: chastity belts, male castration anxiety, vengeful goddesses, Amazon warriors, and vagina dentata. These subjects will be explored in all their frightening, savage, and often humorous incarnations.



Wednesday 29 April 2020 | [Weblink](#)

Treadwell's Online

Treadwell's has built an international reputation for its exceptional lecture series, which since 2003 has brought together academics, authors, practitioners and curious learners. For the first time a few of these lectures are available online, for a small subscription fee. Also available is 'Treadwell's 101', a free series of videos by Christina Oakley-Harrington introducing the essentials of practical magick, and a new Treadwell's podcast hosted by the staff at the bookshop.



Ongoing | [Weblink](#)

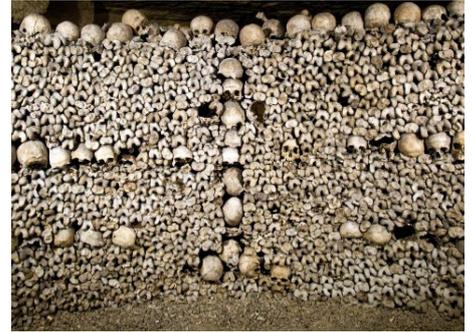
Virtual Tours

The Weird and Wonderful

Haute Macabre

To help relieve our collective cabin fever, these fascinating places, currently closed indefinitely, have virtual tours available online.

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Viktor Wynd's Wunderkabinett

The Last Tuesday Society

Pour yourself an absinthe and take a look at some of the items in The Last Tuesday Society Museum via their online brochure.

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Aubrey Beardsley

Tate Modern

Spanning seven years, this exhibition covers Beardsley's intense and prolific career as a draughtsman and illustrator, cut short by his untimely death from tuberculosis. Join Tate curators Caroline Corbeau-Parsons and Alice Insley as they discuss the life and work of the iconic illustrator of the 1890s.

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Five Virtual Garden Tours

House Beautiful

The list ranges from Claude Monet's garden in Giverny to the Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden to Waddesdon Manor in England.

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Online Theatre, Performance, and Cinema

Steven Berkoff's *Salome*

Digital Theatre

Steven Berkoff's adaptation of Oscar Wilde's lyrical drama tells the tale of the young Salome, who demands the head of an imprisoned prophet as a reward for dancing for her stepfather Herod. Captured live at the Ginza Saison Theatre in Tokyo in 1992, this production stars Berkoff as Herod, the Tetrarch of Judea, who must decide whether to break his oath or give Salome everything she desires.



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Watchlist: Curators' Picks - Short Films

Barbican

Tamara Anderson, a cinema curator for the Barbican Centre in London, has selected five strange animated shorts to raise a smile.



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Decadence and Cinema

Volupté: Interdisciplinary Journal of Decadence Studies

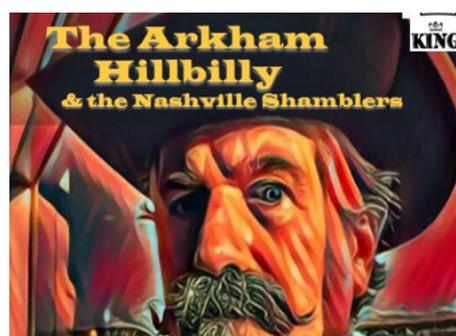
Many of the films discussed in the most recent issue of *Volupté*, on cinematic decadence, can be watched online. The editors of *Volupté* have compiled all the links into a helpful list alongside the photocredits, and you can read the whole issue for free [HERE](#). Also, watch out for the new issue Decadent Archives which will be launched on 21 June 2020.



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The Arkham Hillbilly

A new series of videos and songs that mix country humour and the Cthulhu Mythos. Lovecraftian lockdown entertainment for fans of decadent horror fiction.



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Podcasts and Blogs

Zola: Blood, Sex, and Money

Dan Rebellato

Between 1870 and the mid-1890s, Émile Zola wrote twenty novels which he intended to be a portrait of France's Second Empire. Click below to listen to Dan Rebellato's large-scale adaptation of Zola's twenty-volume 'Rougon-Macquart' novel sequence, divided into three intensive nine-episode seasons.

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Rimbaud and Verlaine Blog

The Rimbaud and Verlaine Foundation

An ongoing series of blog posts on decadent and aesthetic artists and writers. We particularly enjoyed the post on John Gray's *Silverpoints* by BADS Vice Chair, Matthew Creasy.

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Oscar Wilde

The University of Oxford

Lecture series on Oscar Wilde, his life, his works and his philosophy delivered by Sos Eltis, lecturer in English.

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Nunkie's 'Behind Closed Doors' season

Nunkie Productions

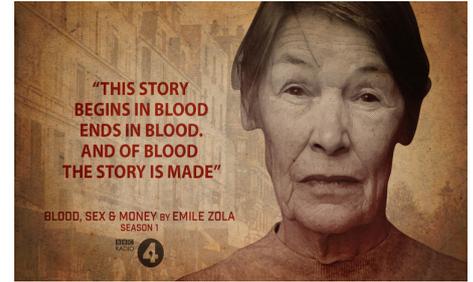
Nunkie is a storytelling unit which travels the earth. Until venues re-open in the UK, Nunkie's performances of stories by M. R. James, Sheridan Le Fanu, H. G. Wells and more will take place online.

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Sherds Podcast

A journey through the outskirts of literary history. Each episode takes an in-depth look at books that are criminally overlooked, have struggled to reach an anglophone audience, or are just downright odd. Hosted by Sam Pulham and Rob Prouse.

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Future Events and CFPs

Lafcadio Hearn and the Global Imagination at the Fin de Siècle

Durham University

30 October 2020

This symposium will consider the writer and translator Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904) and his significance for conceptions of global and transnational cultural exchange, both in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and in his legacies today.

Hearn is one of the most important writers in English on Japanese culture at the turn of the 20th century. He is now best known for his ghost stories and tales of terror, in such collections as *Shadowings* (1900) and *Kwaidan* (1903). In his earlier years, he also wrote extensively about Creole and African-American cultures in New Orleans and the West Indies. Scholarly interest in Hearn in Britain and North America has increased in recent years, following the turn in Victorian and Decadence studies towards questions of the transnational and the cosmopolitan.

Hearn also has a significant connection with Durham—he was a student at Ushaw College in the 1860s, and is recognised here by the Lafcadio Hearn Cultural Centre, part of Teikyo University's campus at Durham University.

We welcome discussion papers relating to all aspects of Lafcadio Hearn's life and writings. Papers might address topics such as:

- Globalization and cosmopolitanism in Hearn's writings
- Hearn's literary style, literary criticism and lectures on literature
- Hearn as a journalist
- Hearn as a pedagogue (e.g. lectures at the University of Tokyo)
- Hearn, creolization, racial identity and post-colonialism
- The body, the senses and disability in Hearn's works
- Translations by Hearn (e.g. of Gautier, Zola, and Maupassant)
- Hearn's international reception and publication (e.g. translations of Hearn's works, Hearn's biographers, Hearn's place in periodicals)
- Hearn and the arts (music, theatre, visual cultures)
- Hearn's multiple cultural heritages (e.g. Greece, Ireland, France, England)

Please submit an abstract of up to 300 words, together with a short biographical note to f.i.riddell@durham.ac.uk by **Monday 29 June 2020**.

In order to facilitate scholarly discussion at the symposium, we will encourage participants to circulate in advance a draft copy of their paper, or a primary text of focus. The organizers hope to include papers from the symposium in a special issue of *Volupté: Interdisciplinary Journal of Decadence Studies*, to be published in 2022.

Dickens and Decadence

Department of English and Department of Culture and Aesthetics, Stockholm University
17-18 December 2020

Keynote speakers: John Bowen (York), Dennis Denisoff (Tulsa) and Claire Wood (Leicester)

In chapter nine of Joris-Karl Huysmans' *À rebours* (1884), the protagonist des Esseintes determines to alleviate his ennui by travelling to London, inspired by his reading of Dickens. But stopping off en route in Paris, des Esseintes finds himself already lost in the Dickensian text, reading the city through his novels and transforming the French capital into a simulacrum of London. Huysmans' novel, that 'breviary of decadence' to use Symons' famous phrase, takes Dickens as being central to the concerns of the realist tradition of nineteenth-century literature, and a response to him central to the concerns of the decadent tradition which would problematise this realism.

Des Esseintes' aborted journey to London represents perhaps the most famous and influential of the 'decadent' responses to Dickens' work, but Huysmans was not alone amongst their number in having something to say about the novelist. Decadent writers from a large number of different nationalities responded to and reworked Dickens' writing: in England, Pater, Swinburne and Symons read him, as did Wilde and Moore in Ireland. In France, beyond Huysmans, Dickens influenced Baudelaire, Verlaine and Mallarmé, and elsewhere across Europe, Rodenbach in Belgium and Carrere in Spain, amongst others. Further afield, Dickens was also an influence on writers of the South American *modernismo* tradition. These responses were not always appreciative, but what joined these figures was the shared belief that Dickens' work was a substantial phenomenon which required working through. On the other hand, in the early twentieth century, conservatives such as Chesterton eagerly sought to invoke the name of Dickens against these decadents in their crusade against 'the hour of absinthe'.

And yet, in spite of these facts, no sustained critical interest has focused on Dickens' relationship with the decadent tradition. While literary history has continued to emphasise the roots of decadence in the Romantic and French Naturalist traditions, and the recent upturn in interest in the links between decadence and modernism, the same critical enquiry has not been focused on the ways in which decadence responded to Dickens and realism. Moreover, Dickens' anticipation of decadence – his interest in contemporary scientific and cultural ideas of individual and social degeneration, as well as the ways in which his late style itself can be considered a kind of decadence – remains largely unexplored.

Celebrating the sesquicentennial anniversary of Dickens' death in 1870, this conference invites papers which seek to fill in our knowledge of both Dickens' decadence and the decadents' Dickens. In so doing, the conference aims to contribute to the fields of Dickens studies, of comparative world literature, and of nineteenth-century British literary history more broadly, as well as the burgeoning field of decadence studies.

Possible points of departure might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The relationship of decadence to Dickensian realism
- The late shift in Dickens' writing from realism to proto-decadence

- Aspects of Dickens' work that might be characterised as being 'decadent', including his interest in the decadence of Empire, of the modern city, and his interest in contemporary science and theories surrounding biological and social dissolution
- The decadence of Dickensian characters such as Eugene Wrayburn of *Our Mutual Friend* or John Jasper of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*
- Dickens' importance for individual writers of the decadent tradition
- The ways in which conservatives mobilised Dickens in response to decadence

Please send an abstract of no more than 300 words, accompanied by a brief biographical note, to dickensanddecadence@gmail.com by **31 May 2019**. Individual presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes in duration.

[Webpage](#)

Call for Articles

English Literature: Theories, Interpretations, Contexts

The journal *English Literature: Theories, Interpretations, Contexts*, published at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, invites proposals on: The wonderful, the fantastic, and the preternatural and their verisimilar representation from the Gothic novel to Fin-de-Siècle Literature.

We shall be happy to consider essays that address the representation of the marvellous, the wonderful, the preternatural, the abnormal, the monstrous, the hybrid, and in general the 'fantastic' and improbable in English novels and/or prose works from the early Gothic to the long fin de siècle. In particular, the articles should consider how writers negotiated with the ruling style of modern novel, realism, and adapted the wonderful/preternatural/monstrous to the poetics and forms of mimetic presentation of events, characters, scenes, places (and vice versa), and to the expectations of the reading public (when the wonderful clashed, and/or collaborated, with mimesis; when the wonderful substituted, supplemented, or integrated realistic ways of fictional representation, when mimetic expectations suppressed or supplanted implausible or illusory stories).

The journal will also consider proposals for the Miscellany section of the journal on any topic, issue, subject-matter related to English literature and literatures in English.

The deadline for sending a proposal and abstract is **15 May 2020**. To send your proposal online please refer to the journal webpage: [English Literature](#), scroll down and click on 'Contacts', open and fill in the form complete with proposed title and abstract, then click on 'Submit'.

Alternatively, you may write to the journal's director, Prof. Flavio Gregori: flagre@unive.it attaching the abstract as word file.

Shortly after your submission of proposal you will receive an answer from the editors informing you how to access the journal website, where you will be able to upload the article and be updated about the peer reviewing and publication process.

The deadline for uploading the articles is **1 September 2019**.

AB 2020: Beardsley Re-Viewed

St Bride Foundation

21 August 2020

‘The Beardsley “craze”, indeed – if “craze” there be – is really just beginning’.

H. C. Marillier (1899)

AB 2020: Beardsley Re-Viewed will take place on Aubrey Beardsley’s birthday (21 August) at St Bride Foundation. The conference aims to reclaim Aubrey Beardsley for the twenty-first century and revive the subversive and transformative potential of the Beardsleyesque. Combining academic panels with poetry readings and film screenings, we will explore responses to Beardsley’s work from a variety of disciplines, cultural locales, and across the arts.

We are curious about the metamorphoses of Beardsley’s imagery and styles in China, Lithuania, and Russia, and their resonance in the twentieth-century cinema and the twenty-first-century classrooms. We are most excited to present a series of creative responses to Beardsley, bringing to life the artist’s queer aesthetics, camp sensibility, and transgressive humour.

AB 2020: Beardsley Re-Viewed is generously supported by the Alessandra Wilson Fund. The event is free and open for all but online registration is required.

[Webpage](#)

Further Reading (and Watching)

Translating Gabriele D’Annunzio for the Twenty-first Century Reader

Professor Susan Bassnett

[Webpage](#)

‘It’s Just a Matter of Form’: Edna St. Vincent Millay’s Experiments with Masculinity

Sarah Parker

[Webpage](#)

TLS Review of *Decadence and Literature*, ed. by Jane Desmarais and David Weir, and *Decadence in the Age of Modernism*, ed. by Kate Hext and Alex Murray

Violet Hudson

[Webpage](#)

Front Row Late

BBC iPlayer

Featuring an exclusive puppet production based on Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Masque of the Red Death’, created in confinement in Canada by acclaimed author Margaret Atwood and her sister Ruth.

[Webpage](#)

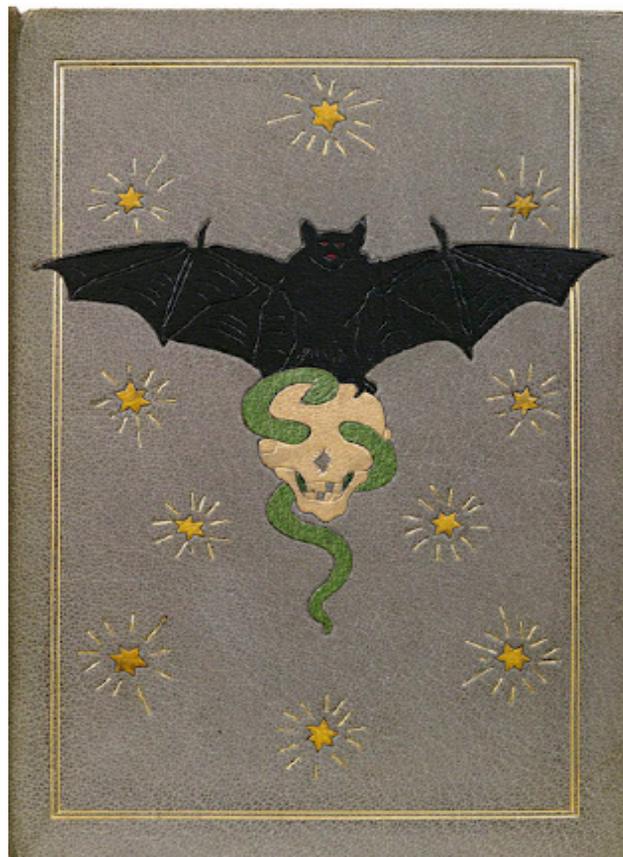
BADS Essay Prize 2020

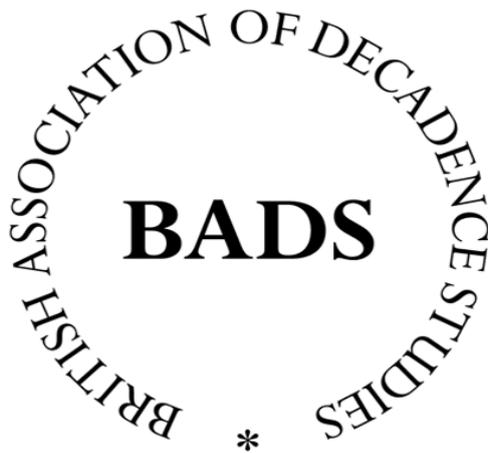
The BADS Essay Prize is an annual competition intended to promote an awareness of the broad scope of Decadence studies, from antiquity to the present. We welcome 5,000-word essay submissions from postgraduates on any aspect of Decadence. The essays will be judged by the Executive Committee of BADS according to certain criteria. The best essays will:

- be an original contribution to and thereby advancement of knowledge in the field;
- demonstrate a critical analysis of existing scholarship that is fair, accurate, and relevant;
- show awareness of the premises, limitations, and potentialities of the chosen methodology;
- have a coherent and balanced structure, and be well-argued;
- be written in grammatically sound English;
- be referenced accurately and consistently;
- be formatted in [MHRA style](#) and submitted as a Word document.

The winners will have their essays published in the Winter 2020 edition of *Volupté: Interdisciplinary Journal of Decadence Studies*. Please email your essay to bads@gold.ac.uk by **31 August 2020**.

[Webpage](#)





Thank you for reading the BADs Newsletter.
We look forward to welcoming you to one of our events soon.

Please email any material for the next newsletter to bads@gold.ac.uk.