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# Necrocinephilia, or, The Death of Cinema and the Love of Film: An Introduction by the Guest Editor

David Weir

The Cooper Union

In 1995, at the centenary of the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière's invention of the *cinématographe*, the device that made public viewing of moving pictures possible, Susan Sontag assessed 100 years of film history thus: 'Cinema, once heralded as *the* art of the 20th century, seems now, as the century closes […], to be a decadent art'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, she thought capitalism was the culprit, finding 'movie making everywhere in the capitalist and would-be capitalist world' devoted to the production of 'films made purely for entertainment (that is, commercial) purposes' that were 'astonishingly witless' – a form of 'derivative film-making, a brazen combinatory or recombinatory art' capable only of 'reproducing past successes'.[1] Sontag died in 2004, so she did not have the pleasure of seeing *Avengers: Endgame* (2019), the fourth film in the *Avengers* series and the twenty-third feature in the Marvel Comics franchise (now owned by Walt Disney productions), nor did she have the satisfaction of knowing that it is now the highest grossing film in cinema history, having banked almost $2.8 billion in box-office gross to date. Ever the cosmopolitan internationalist, Sontag would likely have found scant solace in knowing that just shy of 70% of that enormous haul came from foreign distribution.[2] Not to put too fine a point on it, but if Sontag were alive today she might well look back to the decadent year of 1995 as the golden age of cinema (the year, after all, of Amy Heckerling's *Clueless,* Brian Singer's *The Usual Suspects*, and Todd Solondz's *Welcome to the Dollhouse*).

Sontag's use of the epithet 'decadent' to describe a type of art that has become 'derivative' and 'formulaic' will be familiar to most readers of this journal who know how apt those negative descriptors are to the literature of certain periods (the usual example is fourth-century CE Roman poetry). Equally familiar is the ideological association of decadence with capitalism, the stock-in-trade of Soviet-era agitprop that made Western socioeconomic arrangements the foil of the

supposedly superior system of Marxist-Leninist communism. Sontag, of course, was writing after the collapse of the communist system (one of them, anyway), the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 being the harbinger of the complete disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991. Sontag does not mention this epoch-shifting development, perhaps because the demise of communism was too recent for her to draw the conclusion that seems obvious today: that capitalism triumphant and unchained could only compound the problem of witless, derivative cinema she had identified. The events of 1989 and 1991 led the latter-day Hegelian historian Francis Fukuyama to describe the collapse of communism as 'the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government'.[3] Fukuyama went on to explain that he did not mean that history as the simple 'occurrence of events' had arrived at a terminus, but, rather, that History had ended, 'history understood as a single, coherent, evolutionary process'. Karl Marx had posited communist society as the end of this process, while G. W. F. Hegel believed the process would conclude with the liberal state.[4] In the decades since the fall of the Soviet Union, new challenges have emerged that pose problems for liberal democracy (populism, terrorism, political corruption, ethno-nationalism, etc.), and reasonable people can debate how best to ensure that economic equality obtains in the liberal state (free trade, regulated capitalism, socialism, etc.), but, by and large, for better or worse, Western liberal democracy seems here to stay, even if the best form of that system remains aspirational.

This may seem a rather ponderous way to introduce the topic of decadence and cinema, but it is necessary to acknowledge at the outset that there may be something inherently antagonistic about decadence, whose original apologists and practitioners expressed considerable unease with Western bourgeois liberalism, and cinema, the preeminent form of mass entertainment today (and not only in the West) whose ongoing commercial success depends completely on the capitalist system, the economic engine of that same bourgeois liberalism the decadents decry. At first, the temptation is to seize on this disharmony and declare that cultural manifestations of decadence

simply cannot coexist with commercial ambitions, but that assertion is readily refuted by, for example, Oscar Wilde's career prior to 1895 and the posthumous exploitation of both his life and his works, including by film producers, beginning in the early decades of the twentieth century and continuing to this day. Even though the most recent Wilde project, Rupert Everett's *The Happy Prince* (2018), is still a long way from recovering its relatively modest production costs of $13 million,[5] as I have pointed out elsewhere Wilde's numerous 'screenwriting' credits show a willingness on the part of profit-minded producers to return to his work in search of cinematic material time and time again.[6] That said, there is no shortage of examples of films that deal somehow with decadence but come to commercial ruin because of it. The best example is probably Alla Nazimova's production of Wilde's *Salomé*, which foundered at the box office and drove the erstwhile megastar Nazimova into bankruptcy.

Nazimova's *Salomé* also points to some additional issues that attend the problem of extending the study of decadence to cinema. Decadence is certainly more than a cultural movement, but to the extent that it is considered as such the tendency has been to fix on the fin de siècle as the predominant period when decadence as a culture of decline (paradoxically) flourished. The fact points to another disharmony, namely, the chronological disconnect between fin de siècle decadence and its cinematic treatment. Such disharmony does not obtain in the case of a number of other cultural movements that have found expression though the medium of film. Take expressionism, for example: while the movement was established in painting well before it took form in the art of cinema with Robert Wiene's *Das Cabinet des Dr Caligari* [*The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*] (1920), that film is clearly contemporary with expressionism generally. Likewise with surrealism: Germaine Dulac's *La Coquille et le clergyman* [*The Seashell and the Clergyman*] (1928) appears at a moment when the movement was perhaps at its height. Fin-de-siècle decadence, however, obviously appeared at a time when cinema was in its infancy, the *cinématographe* at first functioning as little more than a visual recording device, with a few notable exceptions, such as Alice Guy Blaché's *La fée aux choux* [*The Cabbage Fairy*] (1896), made the same year that Georges Méliès, a

former magician, began his long run of trick films with *The Vanishing Lady*. By the time cinema developed into a more mature artistic medium in its own right, fin-de-siècle decadence was well in the past. Nazimova's *Salomé* includes some memorable efforts to make its fin-de-siècle material contemporary, as when Salomé envisions herself as a 1920s flapper atop a mountain of jewels, but generally speaking, such efforts only serve to make the film seem even more disconnected from the tradition that inspired it.

Nazimova's flapper Salomé does, however, remind us that artists well removed from fin-de-siècle decadence can take that decadence as both inspiration and material for the exploration of contemporary concerns. Considering film art in relation to decadence, in short, provides an opportunity not only to expand the meaning of decadence but also to engage with it in a more intellectually serious way by asking what the social and political conditions are that allow us to make the cultural determination of decadence in the first place. To take the Nazimova *Salomé* as an example, the 1922 film appeared not only in the wake of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote in 1920 but also in the context of the virulent xenophobia that periodically emerges in the United States. Anxiety over the recent empowerment of women at the ballot box has to be understood as a possible cause of the unease that the predominantly male Hollywood production establishment felt over the involvement of women in the industry they controlled. Add to this the fact that the film made by the Russian-born Nazimova appeared between the passage of the 1917 Immigration Act imposing (among other strictures) a literacy test on all immigrants and the enactment of the Immigration Law of 1924 that established a highly restrictive quota system (not overturned until 1965).[7] Moreover, it had not been that long since the notorious 'Red raids' of January 1920, when US government agents literally broke into the homes of suspected 'Bolsheviks' in the middle of the night.[8] Given this historical context, it is perhaps unsurprising that United Artists decided to re-release D. W. Griffith's racist epic *The Birth of a Nation* (the first film ever screened for a US president at the White House)[9] on the same date (15 February 1923) that *Salomé* had its official première (see my essay in this issue for further

discussion). More importantly, the context suggests additional insight into the problematics of decadent culture during the period. While it is true that decadence was undergoing both a revival of its fin-de-siècle practitioners and an adaption of that earlier culture to modernist expression during the 1920s, when Nazimova's *Salomé* appeared a number of ideological forces, purist and regressive, were operating against the decadence her film embodied. The recent tendency to construe the cultural expression of decadence as a form of 'political' resistance perhaps finds some historical support in the Nazimova case, even though the director-producer-writer-actor does not appear to have thought of her *Salomé* in such charged ideological terms at the time.

For my part, I first came to consider the role of decadence in cinema almost by accident, when I happened across a presentation copy of Ben Hecht's novel *Fantazius Mallare* (1922) and discovered a book plate indicating that the book once belonged to one Roderick La Rocque [fig. 1], who had received it from Wallace Smith, the artist whose drawings illuminate (in a dark way) the depravities of his friend Hecht's decadent narrative. Smith's inscription reads: 'For Rod La Rocque – who has a thousand masks for his face – but, thank Christ, never an one for his heart' [fig. 2]. More important, it is dated 'Hollywood 1926'.[10] The name Rod La Rocque was vaguely familiar to me from a line in the voice-over narration in Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) spoken from beyond the grave by Joe Gillis (William Holden) when he recalls looking out of his garage apartment at the empty swimming pool owned by Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson): 'And of course she had a pool. Who didn't then? Mabel Norman and John Gilbert must have swum in it ten thousand midnights ago, and Vilma Banky and Rod La Rocque'.[11]

I already knew that Hecht was a Hollywood screenwriter, and I knew that his prior literary career had led some critics to relate his fiction to the decadent tradition, but Smith's inscription to La Rocque helped cement the probable connection between decadence and cinema. As did H. L. Mencken before him, Hecht received his education in fin-de-siècle literature from the journalist James Huneker. Hecht wrote several books reflective of Huneker's influence, and then took the decadent sensibility with him when he moved to Hollywood early in 1927, the very year when the

need for screenwriters escalated with the advent of sound technology that allowed the formerly silent ghosts on the screen to have conversations with one another that audiences could actually hear.

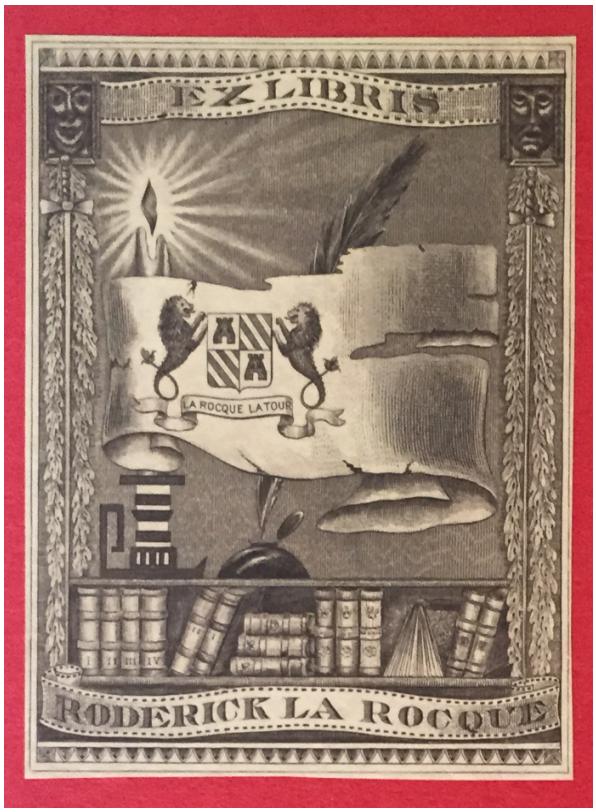


Fig. 1: Bookplate of Roderick La Rocque in a presentation copy of Ben Hecht's *Fantazius Mallare* (1922).

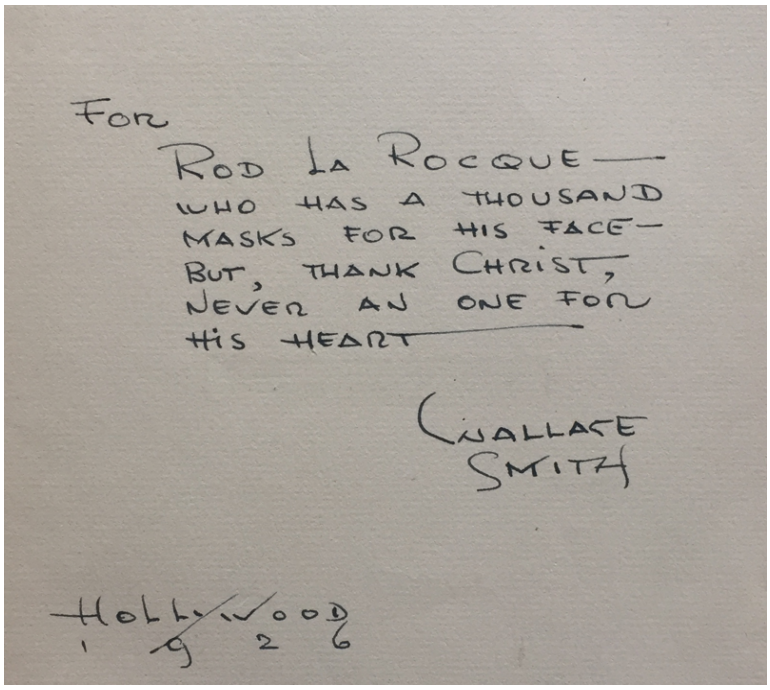


Fig. 2: Wallace Smith's inscription to Roderick La Rocque.

In my first book on decadence, I summarized the cultural transmission of literary decadence to commercial cinema rather too alliteratively as a line running from 'Huysmans to Huneker to Hecht to Hollywood'.[12] But that bit of stylistic bombast does not gainsay what now seems like a rather significant observation – that decadent culture flourished at a critical point in the development of classic Hollywood film.

In the case of Hecht, more work remains to be done to gauge the extent to which the decadent sensibility he displayed in his novels made it into the films he scripted. In my 1995 book, I mentioned *The Scoundrel* (1935), which Hecht not only scripted but also directed – most assuredly a film that should be included in the as-yet unformed canon of decadent cinema. The *New York Times* reviewed the film as 'a suavely mannered portrait of decadence' in which Noel Coward plays 'the New York publisher, Anthony Mallare, a man of brilliant surfaces and a bad case of elephantiasis of the ego. Mallare postures against a background of sick intellectuals, the degenerate literati who pose blearily in the warmth of their own wit and their superior disinterest in the world outside'.[13] As this review shows, one rationale for understanding a film as 'decadent' inheres in the way it captures the culture of decadence by transposing it from the medium of literature to the medium of cinema. That is a rather different rationale from the simple filmic adaptation of a recognized work in the literary canon, such as Nazimova's *Salomé* or Anthony Asquith's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1952) – not that adaptation is always necessarily simple, as such cases as Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* [*Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*] (1975) or Ken Russell's *Salome's Last Dance* (1988) show, the former involving a complex ideological transposition from French absolutism to Italian fascism and the latter a double adaptation of both Wilde's play and Nazimova's film. The larger point here is that any consideration of decadence in relation to film must involve a clear rationale for doing so – but, as the essays in this issue illustrate, the rationale will vary depending on differing definitions and understandings of the capacious concept and culture of decadence.

In addition to my own efforts to bring cinema into the orbit of decadence,[14] David Wayne Thomas uses Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* (1989) to interrogate 'a specifically decadent procedure of social representation',[15] and Kostas Boyiopoulos incorporates Greenaway's *The Pillow Book* into an analysis of 'the eroticized text' of decadent literature.[16] (Greenaway does seem an apt candidate for inclusion in discussions of 'decadent cinema', not least because his avant-garde technique, like all avant-garde aesthetics today, seems belated.) Also, a number of recent screenings and special issues of academic journals suggest that interest in decadence and film is on the rise. These include a special issue of the journal *Offscreen* (August 2017) titled 'Europe and a Cinema of Decadence', where the focus is on 'films that set their sights on the notion of a fallen glory, or a bounty of goodness gone too far'. That last formulation seems hardly to encapsulate the idea of decadence, but, nonetheless, we are told that there is a category of 'films that often focus on a lifestyle or class (usually upper) that exhibits both cultural and aesthetic elements of decadence'. This dual idea of decadence becomes clearer with the discussion of actual films, such as Federico Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1959) and Max Olphüs' *Madame de…* (1953; known in English as *The Earrings of Madame de…*). Fellini's film presents social decadence in the context of the alienation and emptiness that follows from the sort of manic hedonism made possible in Italy by the post-WWII boom known as *il miracolo economico*, while Olphüs' involves such an intensely aesthetic experience of visual elegance that, according to Rita Quelhas, cinema becomes 'a necessary, revealing and extraordinary disease'.[17] At base, the *Offscreen* essays take two basic approaches to decadence and cinema that are familiar enough from literature: the first considers some social conditions as decadent for whatever reason (aristocratic depravity, anarchic individualism, loss of organic wholeness, and so on), while the second regards certain styles of representation as decadent for whatever reason (ostentatious elegance, ornate fragmentation, excessive conventionality, and so on). A recent symposium at Birkbeck, University of London, in June 2019 approached decadence in terms of disease, as the title of the symposium makes clear: 'La Maladie Fin de Siècle: Decadence and Disease'. The proceedings included a screening of one

Russian silent, Yevgeni Bauer's *The Happiness of Eternal Night* (1915), and one Ukrainian, Vyacheslav Vyskovsky's *Satan Married Them* (1917), both introduced by Olga Kyrylova of the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University in Kyiv.

Notions of decadence as both illness and excess – and the political sensibility those conditions engender – motivate the selections in a recent film series curated by Tara Judah for Watershed in Bristol in the summer of 2019. Titled 'Gluttony, Decadence, and Resistance', the programme featured such films as Greenaway's *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* and Marco Ferreri's *La grande bouffe* [*The Big Feast*] (1973), in which several characters literally eat themselves to death. Judah herself provides a full description of the series in this issue. Finally, a recent issue of *Moveable Type* devoted to decadence (vol. 11, 2019) includes an essay by James Jackson on the now-classic art film *Pink Narcissus* (1971) directed by the photographer James Bidgood.[18] Although released two years after the Stonewall protests, the film is at base a fantasia inspired by the pre-Stonewall gay underground in downtown New York City. The designation 'decadent' is justified partly because same-sex desires were understood as both immoral and illegal at the time the film was made (sodomy laws remained enforceable in New York until 1980),[19] but, historical context aside, we can no longer accept such a rationale for considering a film 'decadent' because to do so would validate both bourgeois morality and legally sanctioned homophobia. Jackson quite rightly explores other rationales for describing the film as decadent, including the lush aestheticization of the filmic representation of sexuality. Future investigations of cinema and decadence include my own essay planned for the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Decadence* on filmic adaptations of decadent literature and Kate Hext's work-in-progress, provisionally titled *Wilde in the Dream Factory*, a study of how Wilde and the decadent tradition influenced Hollywood filmmaking from 1915 to 1945. No doubt there are more such explorations of decadence and cinema forthcoming than those I have mentioned here.

The present special issue of *Volupté* shows just how rich and varied cinematic explorations of decadence can be, beginning with Michael Subialka's 'Acting Aestheticism, Performing

Decadence: The Cinematic Fusion of Art and Life'. Subialka argues that 'a decadent-aesthetic paradigm' informs the identification of performer and performance in the silent-screen diva in early Italian films. The fusion of person and persona made the diva into a sort of synthesis of the two most pervasive female types in decadent culture – the New Woman and the femme fatale. The *homme fatal* puts in an appearance in the next essay, Kate Hext's study of the influence of fin-de-siècle decadence on cinematic scenarios from the silent era in 'Decadence on the Silent Screen: Stannard, Coward, Hitchcock, and Wilde'. The least familiar of those four names is likely to be that of Eliot Stannard, whose parents welcomed the exiled Wilde to their home in Dieppe in 1897 when Eliot was nine years old. Stannard went on to become a prolific screenwriter, adapting the plays of Noel Coward for the screen and scripting scenarios for Hitchcock, notably *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (1927), a film about a man (the aforementioned *homme fatal*) who may or may not be a Jack-the-Ripper-style murderer of young women (the story is too foggy for certainty).

The New Woman or, more precisely, the *neue Frau* also appears in Alcide Bava's analysis of the way Paul Czinner's 1928 adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's 1924 novella *Fräulein Else* transposes the world of fin-de-siècle Vienna into a version of Weimar society in the late 1920s. By modernizing the literary narrative about one decadent society (Vienna during the Austro-Hungarian Empire) into a cinematic scenario of contemporary social decadence, Czinner's film offers evidence of the cinematic unconscious Siegfried Kracauer identified in Germany during the interwar period. Weronika Szulik's essay, '*The Powerful Man*: Young-Poland Decadence in a Film by Henryk Szaro', examines how the director has modernized the fin-de-siècle decadent culture that finds its way into the work of Stanisław Przybyszewski in his trilogy of novels published from 1911 to 1913. The first of these, *Mocny Człowiek* [*The Powerful Man*], is taken as the title of Szaro's film about a kind of anti-*Übermensch* who will stop at nothing to acquire the fame he thinks is his due (Przybyszewski was highly influenced by both J.-K. Huysmans and Friedrich Nietzsche, whom he insisted was essentially a Polish writer).[20] As with Czinner's *Fräulein Else*, Szaro's *Mocny Człowiek* 'updates' its fin-de-siècle material by taking advantage of the modernity of the medium itself, especially as

practised in contemporary Berlin, where Szaro lived and worked in 1923–1924. Indeed, Szulik takes stock of Szaro's evident debt to several innovations in Weimar filmmaking, including the expressionist devices of an earlier era of German cinema as well as the later aesthetic known as new objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*).

With Richard Farmer and Melanie Williams's essay on *The Touchables* (1968) and Ainslie Templeton's study of *Myra Breckinridge* (1970) we enter a different era of decadence – the sexually liberated, mod world of 'Swinging London' in the late 1960s and the equally liberated Hollywood scene of the early 1970s. Of course, this 'decadence' is so only from the perspective of the outraged bourgeoisie of the times, but it is ever thus: regardless of the age, the culture of decadence always derives a measure of its weary energy from the opposition of those mandarins of morality whose outrage often turns on the hypocritical self-righteousness of seeing their own private perversions put on public display by those who are more accepting of the delights of depravity. That depravity may be more vacuous than vigorous in Richard Freeman's *The Touchables*, but it is perhaps all the more stylish for that very vacuity. This is an exceedingly rare, almost forgotten film, but Farmer and Williams argue that it deserves to be remembered for the way an earlier aesthetic of decadence – primarily the design aesthetic – finds its way into the rebellious youth culture the film both represents and embodies. Templeton's analysis of *Myra Breckinridge* mostly concerns the 1968 novel by Gore Vidal, but the argument that fin-de-siècle sexological conceptions of 'inversion' and the like have a later life as a heteronormative means of dealing with trans feminine identities is certainly borne out by the 1970 film adaptation. The casting choice to pass over the trans actress Candy Darling in favour of the sex symbol Raquel Welch to play the transgender woman Myra speaks volumes about how trans people were misunderstood and misrepresented in mass entertainment – at the height of the sexual revolution, no less.

There are moments in both *The Lodger* and *Mocny Człowiek*, each relatable (in different ways) to an earlier culture of decadence, that clearly look forward to the cinematographic stylizations of film noir [fig. 3]. What seems merely suggestive in those films becomes explicit in another cult film

that is the subject of the essay by Kostas Boyiopoulos. He makes a convincing argument for the alignment of decadence and film noir in 'Decadence and the Necrophilic Intertext of Film Noir: Nikos Nikolaidis' *Singapore Sling*'. The film is subtitled *The Man Who Fell in Love with a Corpse*, which functions not only as an allusion to Otto Preminger's *Laura* (1944) but also as a capsule description of Nikolaidis' own necrophilic love affair with film noir and other genres buried in cinema history.

Fig. 3 (00:11:47): A proto-noir moment from Henryk Szaro's *Mocny Człowiek* (1929).[21]

Finally, I round out the issue with 'Alla Nazimova's *Salomé*: Shot-by-Shot', a study concerned less with the film as an adaptation of Wilde's play and more as an example of the state of cinematic art at a particular time, including the industry conditions that made the production, direction, and distribution of films by women difficult if not impossible. The study includes two appendices that I hope will be useful as resources to those who wish to teach the film.

Paradoxically, the essays in this special issue, demonstrating as they do how decadent culture, variously understood, often informs the art of cinema, also serve in some measure to refute Sontag's claim that at the centenary of its birth cinema had become 'a decadent art'. The lone hope Sontag holds out against the encroachment of witless, industrialized filmmaking is cinephilia – that

ardent, eccentric love of film that, 'by the very range and eclecticism of its passions', helps to keep the art alive.[22] Although she does not remark on the development of computer-generated imagery (CGI) in her essay, the digital revolution in cinema (the origins of which can be traced to Disney's *Tron* (1982)) gained momentum in the 1990s, with Stephen Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* (1993) and George Lucas' *The Phantom Menace* (1999) both revealing a mastery of CGI technology.[23] I mention the digital revolution in filmmaking here because it points to another paradox, namely, that digital technology has not only facilitated the making of artless, formulaic films, it has also made possible a dramatic renaissance in cinephilia. All of the films discussed in this issue are available in digitized format, either as DVD/BD transfers or on streaming platforms like YouTube, Criterion, and others. While the true cinephile will always prefer to watch films projected onto a screen in a theatre amid fellow movie-lovers, that classic enactment of cinephilia has become increasingly rare for many devotees of film art (especially those who do not live in major cities where revival houses still operate). The paradox that finds the art of film revived by that same digital technology that not only leads to formulaic filmmaking – decadent art, in short – but also makes possible a new, digital cinephilia that gives movie-lovers the opportunity to see and study films whenever they want seems, to me at least, yet another example of the complex dynamics of decadence whereby endings often engender new, enriched beginnings. This issue of *Volupté* demonstrates that paradox at work: for our contributors have used decadence itself to argue for an alternative to the 'decadent art' of cinema that so unsettled Sontag at the end of the twentieth century. They may not have put an end to the end of cinema, exactly, but they offer ample reason to luxuriate in that ending. As anyone who has given up all hope of knowing knows, nothing stays decline like the delectation of decay.

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[1] Susan Sontag, 'A Century of Cinema', in *Where the Stress Falls: Essays* (New York: Picador, 2002), p. 117. The essay originally appeared in a German translation in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* of 30 December 1995 before appearing as 'The Decay of Cinema', *New York Times Magazine*, section 6, pp. 60–61.
[2] 'All Time Box Office', Box Office Mojo, IMdB Pro, https://www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/world/. Accessed 9 October 2019. The *New York Times* uses this site to report box office revenue.
[3] Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', *The National Interest*, 16 (1989), 3.
[4] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 2006), p. xii.

[5] The film has thus far grossed less than $2.5 million. See *The Happy Prince* (2018), The Numbers, Nash Information Services, LLC, https://www.the-numbers.com/movie/Happy-Prince-The-(UK)-(2018)#tab=summary. Accessed 10 October 2019.
[6] See my *Decadence: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 110; and 'Decadence and Cinema', in *Decadence and Literature*, ed. by Jane Desmarais and David Weir (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 300.
[7] Information about the immigration legislation of 1917 and 1924 is taken from the *Congressional Record*, 64th Congress, 2nd Sess. (5 February 1917), chap, 29; and 68th Congress, 1st Sess. (26 May 1924), chap. 190.
[8] See Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919–1920* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), especially chapter 13, 'The January Raids' (pp. 210–22).
[9] See Donald E. Staples, 'Wilson in Technicolor: An Appreciation', in *Hollywood's White House*, ed. by Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), pp. 115–16.
[10] The inscription appears on the unnumbered page 3 of Smith's presentation copy to La Rocque of Ben Hecht, *Fantazius Mallare: A Mysterious Oath* (Chicago: Covici-McGee, 1922). Collection of Alice Condé and Jessica Gossling.
[11] *Sunset Boulevard*, dir. Billy Wilder, Paramount Pictures Corp., 1950, DVD.
[12] David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), p. 189.
[13] Andre Sennwald, 'The Music Hall Presents Noel Coward in the New Hecht-Macarthur Film, The Scoundrel', *New York Times*, 3 May 1935, p. 23.
[14] In addition to my *Decadence and the Making of Modernism*, see the 'Afterword' to my *Decadent Culture in the United States: Art and Literature against the American Grain* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), pp. 191–202, and 'Decadence and Cinema', in *Decadence and Literature*, pp. 300–15.
[15] David Wayne Thomas, 'Decadent Critique: Constructing "History" in Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*', in *Perennial Decay: On the Aesthetics and Politics of Decadence*, ed. by Liz Constable, Dennis Denisoff, and Matthew Potolsky (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 102.
[16] Kostas Boyiopoulos, '"Use my body like the pages of a book": Decadence and the Eroticized Text', in *Decadence and the Senses*, ed. by Jane Desmarais and Alice Condé (Cambridge: Legenda, 2017), pp. 101–20.
[17] Rita Quelhas, 'The Gaps and Detours in *Madame de…* Part 1: The Enigmatic Body', *Offscreen*, 21.8 (August 2017). https://offscreen.com/view/the-gaps-and-detours-in-madame-de-part-1. Accessed 19 October 2019.
[18] James Jackson, 'Decadence, Homoeroticism & the Turn Towards Nature in James Bidgood's *Pink Narcissus*', *Moveable Type*, 11 (2019). https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10079971/1/III%20James%20Jackson%20Pink%20Narcissus%20[Final].pdf. Accessed 23 October 2019.
[19] See *People v. Onofre*, 51 N.Y.2d 476, 434 N.Y.S.2d 947, 415 N.E.2d 936 (1980), certiorari denied sub nom. *New York v. Onofre*, 451 U.S. 987 (1981) and discussion in Arthur S. Leonard, *Sexuality and the Law: An Encyclopedia of Major Legal Cases* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 109–15.
[20] For this point about Przybyszewski's insistence on the essential Polish nature of Nietzsche's writing, and for a detailed survey of Przybyszewski's career, see George C. Schoolfield, *A Baedeker of Decadence: Charting a Literary Fashion, 1884–1927* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 117–31.
[21] With one exception (the image from *Thaïs* in the first essay), time indications for all screenshots are indicated in standard 00:00:00 format, as here. Time counters vary, however, depending on the device or the streaming software being used. In this issue, most time indications are based on the VLC media player counter.
[22] Sontag, 'A Century of Cinema', p. 122.
[23] For a discussion of the origins and development of CGI technology, see J. Hoberman, *Film after Film: Or, What Became of 21st-Century Cinema* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), especially Part I, 'A Post-Photographic Cinema', pp. 3–46.