

Preface

The publication of this issue of *Volupté* is momentous in various ways. Not only does it position cinema as a prime site for engaging with decadence and establish ‘deciné’ (the editors’ shorthand for this site) as a fruitful comparative research area bringing together scholars of literature, cultural, and film history, but this is the first issue not to be based, either in whole or in part, on conference papers. *Volupté* is taking proper root. Since we launched in June 2018, our digital footfall has substantially increased, our pages viewed by visitors from 23 countries, and rising.

I am especially delighted to announce the publication of the very first BADS essay prizewinners, in the categories of ‘best postgraduate essay’ and ‘best essay by an established scholar’. Our warm and seasonal congratulations to Amelia Hall (Cornell University) and the independent scholar, Graham John Wheeler, who treat us to impressive, wide-ranging essays. Our judges reserved particular praise for their innovative arguments and interdisciplinary approaches. They described Hall’s essay on ‘Elliptical Thinking: Planetary Patterns of Thought in *De Profundis*’ as

saying something truly new about the manner in which astronomy allowed Wilde to conceptualize his time in prison and the events that placed him there. The author has [...] worked to extend this reading to the visual culture surrounding Wilde and the manner in which artists such as Beardsley and Beerbohm represented him as a planetary body and an outsize figure bringing lesser figures into his orbit.

And they commented on Wheeler’s essay on ‘Apuleius and the Esoteric Revival: An Ancient Decadent in Modern Times’ as

a thoroughly researched and fluent interdisciplinary essay, [...] build[ing] on previous discussions of the influence of *The Golden Ass* by identifying elements of style and narrative which seem particularly relevant to decadent preoccupations. The essay is innovative in its exploration of connections between mannered and transgressive texts and esoteric religion, emphasizing the intrinsic similarities between ancient and modern decadence as well as questions of influence.

Voluptuous thanks to our judges, and to our expert peer reviewers, who keep us on our toes and whose feedback, guidance, and advice are very much appreciated.

Before I hand over to our Guest Editor, David Weir, I would like to announce one more thing that our eagle-eyed readers will certainly notice. While we will always respect individuals’ preferences, we have decided from here on in to go ‘small-d’ decadence (consistent with both Chicago Manual of Style and MHRA guidelines for cultural terms). For many years, I, and others too, capitalized the word ‘Decadence’ as a way of signalling its significance as a distinct field of scholarly enquiry. As *Volupté* and the extraordinary burst of scholarly activity over the last decade attest, however, decadence studies has arrived and is now a defined field of considerable depth and complexity. As we go lower-case, the field goes high.

Jane Desmarais
Editor-in-Chief
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