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Gertrud Eysoldt and the Persistence of Decadence on the German Avant-Garde Stage

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In October 1901, Max Reinhardt's avant-garde Berlin cabaret 'Schall und Rauch' ['Sound and Smoke'] added to its line-up a new skit entitled 'Die Dekadenten' ['The Decadents'].¹ The piece was based on a parody of Decadent and Aestheticist sensibilities that had appeared in 1898 in the magazine *Jugend* [see Fig. 1]. In it, two young men lounge in a *fin-de-siècle* café, smoking, drinking absinthe 'the way Verlaine used to', and discussing the effects of specific colours on their nerves. After basking in the notion of a blue house with a green roof lit from within by a cadmium-yellow flickering light, the two barely escape dying of 'an excess of bliss' by getting up and leaving the café, carrying on their shoulders 'the great weariness of the declining century'.² The clichéd, overwrought Decadence of this 1898 vignette clearly still has traction in October 1901, as can be seen in a magazine illustration of Reinhardt's 'Schall und Rauch' version [see Fig. 2].³ Reinhardt had already lampooned the aesthetics of the Yellow Nineties in 1901, when his cabaret ensemble parodied Maurice Maeterlinck's Symbolist play *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1893) as 'Ysidore Mysterlinck's "Carleas und Elisande"';⁴ but with 'Die Dekadenten', he underscored his apparent rejection of the Aestheticist, Decadent, and Symbolist traditions. It was on that very same 'Schall und Rauch' stage one year later, however, that the company gave its famous private performance of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* with Gertrud Eysoldt (1870-1955) in the title role – the performance that would inspire Richard Strauss to write his 1905 opera.⁵ Over the course of the next several years, as 'Schall und Rauch' morphed into the Kleines Theater and Reinhardt also took on directorship of the Neues Theater and the Deutsches Theater, the same ensemble that had mocked 'The Decadents' in 1901 performed *Salome* over 140 times and brought a number of other Decadent and Symbolist plays to the attention of Berlin audiences.⁶ The association of

Reinhardt with Decadence was soon strong enough that the critic Leo Berg could write in 1906 of there having been two types of young playwright at the turn of the century: ‘the Idealists ... who clung to Shakespeare and Schiller, and the Decadents, who were adopted with great success by Max Reinhardt’.⁷

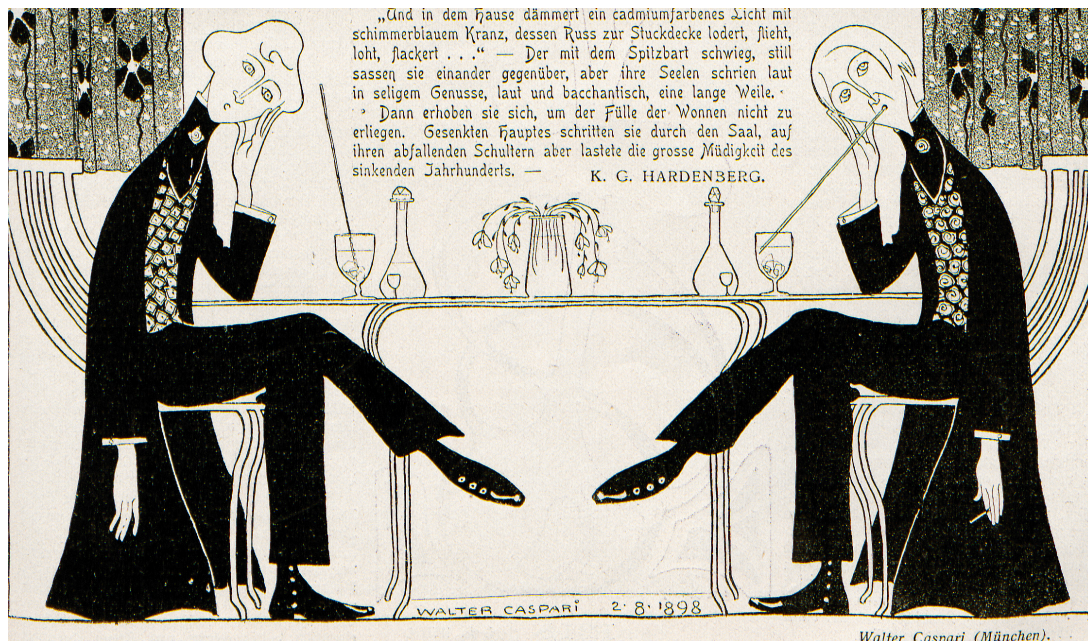


Figure 1. Walter Caspari, ‘Die Dekadenten’, in *Jugend*, 3 (1898), p. 695.

Source: Digitalisierungszentrum der Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, Signatur: G 5442-10 Folio RES



Figure 2. C. Hall, ‘Aus Schall und Rauch: Die Dekadenten’

Source: *Bühne und Brett*, 2 [25 October 1901], p. 13.

We could read Reinhardt's vacillations about Decadence as a typical artefact of the period during which he was fighting to modernize German dramaturgical practices.⁸ For almost two decades, scholars of Decadence have been demonstrating how modernists and avant-garde innovators (like Reinhardt) represented themselves as breaking away from Decadence in order to obscure – consciously or unconsciously – the ways in which they were in fact indebted to it.⁹ But in Reinhardt's case, the move from ridiculing Decadence to giving the Decadent canon a new lease of life was part of a broader, self-conscious effort to break the dominance of a particularly hide-bound mode of Naturalism in Berlin's theatre world.¹⁰ Gertrud Eysoldt, I argue in this article, helped Reinhardt develop his post-Naturalist repertoire by drawing his attention to serious Decadent plays. Eysoldt, who joined Reinhardt's ensemble in December 1901, two full months after he had produced 'Die Dekadenten',¹¹ steered Reinhardt's 1902-1903 rehabilitation of Decadence and Symbolism because she was drawn to the opportunities she found in the works of Wilde, Maeterlinck, and Hugo von Hofmannsthal to defy the limits of language with stylized movement and gesture, to explore the modern psyche, and to represent sexually dissident figures on stage. Reinhardt's commitment to an intimate theatre of emotional connection between audience and actor provided her with a platform to explore the intense emotional and psychic lives of the Decadent women she played. Eysoldt's 'post-Victorian Decadence', to use Kristen Mahoney's phrase, was not reactionary – not a means for her to '[refuse] to assimilate to a modern moment that [she] found fundamentally wanting' – but rather an aesthetic practice that allowed her to help create that moment, disturbing the status quo of the German stage and paving the way for avant-garde innovations in German theatre.¹² As a celebrated actress in the decade leading up to the Great War, she did so by taking on such roles as Salome, Frank Wedekind's Lulu, Hofmannsthal's Elektra (a character written for her), and Maeterlinck's Selysette; and, as a theatre director in the early years of the Weimar Republic, by fighting a legal battle to stage Arthur Schnitzler's classic of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese Decadence, *Reigen* [*La ronde*]. After a brief sketch of Eysoldt's career and the scholarship that has addressed it, I will

elaborate on her Decadence in two ways in this article: first, by exploring the queer and New Woman circles in which she moved in the 1890s, networks typical of those that for Matthew Potolsky help constitute ‘the decadent republic of letters’, and spaces where Eysoldt cut her political teeth;¹³ and second, by examining in greater depth the active role that she played in deploying the canon of theatrical Decadence (through her association with Reinhardt) with a view to forwarding her modern understanding of gender, sexuality, and social politics on the early twentieth-century German stage.

Eysoldt’s Background and Early Career

Gertrud Eysoldt was an actress, acting teacher, radio actor, and theatre manager who was active between 1890 and 1933. She was a star in her day, but is remembered now for two main reasons: because she was a renowned portrayer of *femmes fatales* under (the even more famous) Reinhardt and because a prestigious annual acting prize was established in her name in 1986.¹⁴ Since the 1980s, German theatre historian Carsten Niemann has made a valiant effort to recover Eysoldt’s story, publishing some of her writings as well as a short biographical essay based on his dissertation; while Leonhard Fiedler and Dagmar Walach, respectively, have edited Eysoldt’s letters to playwright Hofmannsthal and to theatre director Max Martersteig, Eysoldt’s first husband.¹⁵ In much of this work, Eysoldt is produced as a figure worth remembering either because hers is an exemplary case of a talented actor who embraced the radical transformations of dramaturgical culture at the turn of the century, or because she was close to some of the great and influential men of her day – Reinhardt and Hofmannsthal, especially.¹⁶ Only two scholars have recognized a feminist or political streak in Eysoldt’s oeuvre, and celebrated her as a thoroughly modern figure in her own right: Sara Jackson has shown how Eysoldt complicated the figure of the *femme fatale* with portrayals of Salome and Lulu that ‘contested the patriarchal paradigm of the fantasy’;¹⁷ and, in her magisterial biography of Johanna Elberskirchen (the life partner of Eysoldt’s sister), Christiane Leidinger has outlined the political and socially

progressive networks within which the Eysoldts moved.¹⁸ But much is still lacking in the secondary literature on Gertrud Eysoldt: studies downplay her intellectual prowess; her feminist background and resistance to heteronormativity has been almost erased from the record; little has been made of her engagement with progressive political and social developments during her lifetime; and the extent of her involvement with transnational networks of writers, artists, and photographers remains underexplored. While the present article cannot elaborate fully on each of these aspects of her biography, it can point to some promising lines of investigation.

Eysoldt studied at the Royal Bavarian School of Music and took on her earliest minor roles as a trainee at the Munich Hoftheater [court theatre] in 1889. Her first professional contract was with the Hoftheater Meiningen, a forward-thinking company committed to the kind of theatrical innovation that was later championed by Reinhardt.¹⁹ Although she was trained in the Fach [category] of the ‘naïve and sentimental young girl’ [see Fig. 3], and played such roles in Meiningen, Riga, and Stuttgart in the 1890s, Eysoldt was anything but a naïve and sentimental young girl.



Figure 3. 1890s publicity postcard of Eysoldt in aesthetic dress and with an Easter lily; photographer unknown. Source: author’s own collection.

In her teenage years she had been exposed to feminist and socialist circles through her mother, Bertha Eysoldt. Bertha had divorced Gertrud's father in the 1870s and was raising Gertrud and her sister Anna as a single mother. When Anna expressed an interest in studying medicine, Bertha did what she could to ease Anna's path into the University of Zurich, the first European university to admit female students into its medical programme. She arranged for Anna to be tutored for the entrance exam alongside Frida Bebel, daughter of the German socialist politician and Eysoldt family friend August Bebel, and she moved the family to Zurich in anticipation of Anna's acceptance.²⁰ Here Bertha opened a boarding house designed to help the young female pioneers of the medical field to find a supportive home in the city; this is where Gertrud lived until moving to Munich to study acting in 1888.²¹ In Zurich, Anna socialized with a group of medical students in the orbit of the author Ricarda Huch, and became friends with many of the women who would become the first female physicians in the German-speaking world. (These Zurich circles of gender non-conformists would be captured in Aimee Duc's 1901 novel *Sind es Frauen? Roman über das dritte Geschlecht* [*Are They Women? A Novel about the Third Sex*].)²² Anna's studies soon took her to Bern, where she met, married, and very quickly started divorce proceedings against a lawyer named Ernst Aebi. It was during this tumultuous time that she met the medical student with whom she would share the rest of her life, Johanna Elberskirchen.²³

Gertrud had meanwhile embarked on her drama studies in Munich, where she was joined by her mother. This time Bertha set up a photography studio and a school for female photographers to provide the family with a reliable source of income.²⁴ Here Gertrud trained to be a photographer even as she was developing her acting credentials.²⁵ Bertha's business partner at the Atelier Therese was Anna Deneken, an author and translator who would go on in 1906 to publish a pamphlet on lesbianism, gender norms, and the law.²⁶ Bertha, too, was engaged in feminist activism in Munich: she lobbied for women's access to the kinds of secondary school ('Gymnasien') that prepared students to enter university, and was elected to the board of the

‘Club for the Founding of a Gymnasium for Girls’ in May 1894.²⁷ The Eysoldts also socialized with Anita Augspurg and Sophie Goudstikker, the lesbian feminists who ran Munich’s more famous photography studio, the Atelier (later Hof-Atelier) Elvira.²⁸ This studio, run solely by Goudstikker – ‘Puck’ to her friends – from the mid-1890s on, was a gathering place for Munich’s bohemians and social dissidents: anarchists, socialists, New Women, homosexuals, and such figures as Heinrich Mann, Lou-Andreas Salomé, and Rainer Maria Rilke. ‘In the world of Munich cultural, artistic, and gender politics’, as Irit Rogoff has put it, ‘it is the Hof Atelier Elvira [sic] which stands out as [...] the site of convergences’.²⁹ Ernst von Wolzogen’s 1899 novel *Das dritte Geschlecht* [*The Third Sex*] is set in a fictionalized Hof-Atelier Elvira, and portrays the world of Sophie Goudstikker, dubbed ‘Box’ in the novel.³⁰ Whenever work took Gertrud Eysoldt to Munich in the late 1890s, it was in the Hof-Atelier Elvira that she stayed with her good friend Puck [see Fig. 4].³¹



Figure 4. Portrait of Gertrud Eysoldt in Munich in 1898, taken by Sophie ‘Puck’ Goudstikker at the Hof-Atelier Elvira. Source: Porträtsammlung Manskopf, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Frankfurt am Main, Signatur S36/F08537.

Another ‘site of convergence’ in Munich at the time was the Akademisch-dramatischer Verein [Academic-Dramatic Club], a mostly amateur drama group run by Wolzogen that specialized in presenting avant-garde plays for private audiences so as to evade the censor.³² In 1895 Eysoldt performed in their production of Ibsen’s *Wild Duck* alongside the young Thomas Mann,³³ and in 1897 she joined the group for *Dämmerung* [*Twilight*], an Ibsenesque play by Elsa Bernstein.³⁴ *Dämmerung* deals with women’s emancipation through the story of a young woman with poor eyesight and the doctor called in to treat her. Her widower father is shocked to find that the eye specialist is a short-haired New Woman – even more so when the doctor hints that the daughter’s condition might be a nervous complaint, or the result of a sexually transmitted disease he may have picked up in his youth. He rejects this latter suggestion outright, but slowly comes to trust in the doctor’s expertise. She successfully operates on the daughter (suggestively named Isolde and played by Eysoldt), but when the physician gets engaged to the widower, Isolde attempts suicide, breaking up the romance.³⁵ The amateur dramatist Sophie Goudstikker received rave reviews for her portrayal of the short-haired doctor.³⁶

Gertrud, Anna, and Bertha Eysoldt were very well established, then, in the ‘two overlapping circles’ of ‘new women of the fin de siècle’ that Marti Lybeck has identified as key forces in the German women’s emancipation movement: ‘the first generation of women university students in Zurich and the radical feminist activists living in Munich’.³⁷ The anarchists, free thinkers, and ‘life reformers’ among whom Anna Eysoldt lived with Johanna Elberskirchen in Tessin in the 1890s constitute yet another counter-cultural group to which Gertrud was exposed before her career took off in Berlin.³⁸ But biographies of Eysoldt leave out this aspect of her intellectual development, focusing instead on her attempts to further her acting career in the 1890s, or on the fact that she married her older theatre manager in 1894 and tried to start a family. In these accounts, Eysoldt’s adventures in Bohemia only began when she moved to Berlin around 1900, but clearly she already moved in feminist and New Women circles in her late teens, and the ‘happy families’ narrative must be disturbed by the newly-married Eysoldt writing

to a friend in 1894 that ‘being a wife and a mother can never be my goal in life. I work towards my artistic goals, and have every right to do so’.³⁹

Eysoldt’s career, however, was stagnating in the 1890s. While she was gradually trusted with more substantial roles at the Königliches Hoftheater [Royal Court Theatre] in Stuttgart, throughout the decade she could be more regularly found playing trouser roles, many of them minor, but some as important as Shakespeare’s Richard III.⁴⁰ This was a phenomenon that would continue over the decades: at the height of her fame, Eysoldt played a genderbending Puck in Reinhardt’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* [see Fig. 5] and the sexually amorphous Euphorion in Goethe’s *Faust II* [see Fig. 6]; while Hofmannsthal even created the male role of Kreon’s Sword Carrier specifically for her in his 1906 play *Oedipus and the Sphinx*.⁴¹ Trouser roles were not uncommon for female actors of the era, of course, but in Eysoldt’s case there is evidence that theatre managers, playwrights, and critics found her looks plain, child-like, or even masculine, and sought less feminine roles for her.⁴² Carsten Niemann has found a note in which Ludwig Chronegk, the theatre manager in Meiningen, describes the actress as “‘funny-looking” – a *genuinely* naïve girl’, suggesting perhaps that her looks made her unfit for any man’s advances.⁴³

Perceived issues with her looks notwithstanding, by the end of the 1890s Eysoldt had graduated to more substantial roles, including such oppressed but resilient heroines as Ibsen’s Nora (*A Doll’s House*) and Gerhardt Hauptmann’s *Hannele*. Her breakthrough came when in 1901 she began to work with Reinhardt, and her association with his Deutsches Theater would continue for the next thirty-three years. It was in Reinhardt’s troupe that she played the roles that would make her a household name in the pre-war years: the prostitute Nastja in Gorki’s *The Lower Depths*; Wedekind’s Lulu, Hofmannsthal’s Elektra, and of course, Wilde’s Salome.



Figure 5. Portrait of Gertrud Eysoldt as Puck in Reinhardt's hugely successful production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
Source: author's own collection.



Figure 6. Postcard of Eysoldt as Goethe's Euphorion, ca. 1911, photographed by Hans Böhm.
Source: author's own collection.

Max Reinhardt's Kleines Theater

Max Reinhardt had emerged in the 1890s as an important actor at Otto Brahm's Deutsches Theater, a venue closely associated with programmatic Naturalism. His first move towards independence was a foray into cabaret: he set up an informal pop-up club, 'Die Brille' ['The Spectacles'], with a group of colleagues as a kind of comic relief from the gloomy, socially responsible repertoire they were presenting on Brahm's stage. This was the group that went on to found the more permanent 'Schall und Rauch' in 1901. In both of these endeavours, Reinhardt was experimenting with post-Naturalist stances, ways to counteract the prevailing mode in which he had been working for the previous decade. Satire was clearly the first route he explored, but in August 1902 he wrote to Arthur Schnitzler that he had founded a 'purely artistic' theatre, the Kleines Theater [Little Theatre], and that he had negotiated a release from his contract with Brahm to focus fully on developing the unprecedented 'potential' of his new venture in 'intimate theatre'.⁴⁴

At the Kleines Theater Reinhardt would revolutionize the praxis of German theatre by allowing productions to emerge from the work of an ensemble rather than through some slavish devotion to the words of a playwright – a practice that had typified the theatre of German Naturalism. In this intimate, actor-centred space, Reinhardt was more concerned with the creation of an emotional bond between actor and audience than he was with instrumentalizing theatre in support of some specific social or political message.⁴⁵ As he told his assistant Arthur Kahane,

What I have in mind is drama that gives people joy again. That takes them out of themselves, out of the grey misery of their everyday lives into the bright and pure air of beauty. I feel it, how people are fed up with always seeing their own hardships on the stage, and how they yearn for brighter colours and a heightened life.⁴⁶

Reinhardt cast a wide net when it came to material that would serve these ends, practising what Peter Marx has called a kind of 'programmatic eclecticism'.⁴⁷ Reinhardt, writes Marx, did 'not make the typical avant-garde move of establishing one style by discarding all others; rather, he

demonstrate[d] the strength of the new theatre by means of pluralism, of a diverse range of parallel, coexisting modes'.⁴⁸ If one of the modes 'adopted with great success' by Reinhardt was Decadence,⁴⁹ it was thanks to Gertrud Eysoldt. Eysoldt had joined Reinhardt's acting ensemble at this turning point in his professional career, when he was moving from satire ('Schall und Rauch') to 'purely artistic' theatre (Kleines Theater) and was actively looking for new material with 'brighter colours and a heightened life'.⁵⁰ It was the well-read Eysoldt who introduced him to Wilde's *Salome* as well as the works of Frank Wedekind, just as it was Eysoldt who ensured that Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* premiered on Reinhardt's stage in 1903.⁵¹

Eysoldt was no passive vessel through which Decadent texts, subjected to Reinhardt's methods, were transmitted to German audiences. It was Eysoldt's own intervention that brought about this cultural moment: in an interview in the 1940s, Eysoldt recalls that because she was a great reader, Reinhardt often turned to her for new material for the stage. It was she who proposed *Salome* to him:

I had read a lot, and I can tell you now, I was a great support for him [Reinhardt] back then, a motivator, because I was really spirited, and had read such a lot [...] [He] was always asking me 'What could we put on now?' and all kinds of things occurred to me [...] that had not yet been produced in theatres at all. Things like, well, *Salome* by Oscar Wilde and Wedekind's *Spring Awakening*, which the censor at the time found abhorrent.⁵²

This is no idle boast. There is plenty of evidence that Eysoldt was a voracious and intelligent reader, one who saw reading as the cornerstone of self-education.⁵³ In her letters she is constantly describing literary, historical, dramaturgical, philosophical, psychological, and even medical books that she has been reading, and always surprised that her correspondents are not as well read as she is.⁵⁴ She writes to Hofmannsthal in 1905, for instance, that she has been reading Edward Gordon Craig's *Die Kunst des Theaters* [The Art of the Theatre], and finds it cold and contrived – quite the opposite of Reinhardt's approach to theatre, or Wilde's 'beautiful', imaginative reflections in 'The Truth of Masks'.⁵⁵ Eysoldt, then, is at work on and beyond the stage, helping build what will become the German canon of Decadent literature. Her *Salome* inspires Strauss to write his opera, her *Nastja* inspires Hofmannsthal to write his play *Elektra*,

and her radically new performance in that play is translated by Strauss into some of the most radically new music of the early twentieth century.

Eysoldt was interested in these figures because their Decadent traits allowed her to represent, in her own words, ‘modern, problematic female characters’.⁵⁶ She rejected the idea that they were archetypes, *femmes fatales*: for her, each was a specific, idiosyncratic psychological case to be presented to an audience.⁵⁷ For this reason she was pleased that reviewers found an incongruity between her own looks and the presumed beauty of the character she was playing. It upset the expectation that the *femme fatale* was a simple seductress and paved the way for a portrayal that would use gesture and movement to convey the character’s deeper psychological dimensions.⁵⁸ In terms of audience experience, it is a winning strategy for Eysoldt, though she does come up against a certain amount of resistance behind the scenes – with Wedekind, for instance, lobbying to have different Reinhardt actresses take on the role of Lulu, afraid that Eysoldt’s psychological approach to the character would damage the simple superficiality with which he had invested the character. Nevertheless, for a short period of time, Eysoldt’s praxis as an actor, as Sara Jackson has argued, undermined and complicated prevalent notions of the *femme fatale*.⁵⁹ Her fellow Reinhardt actor Eduard von Winterstein, who remembers Eysoldt as a ‘small, dainty little thing, almost infantile in appearance, without any striking vocal power’, recognized that it was her ‘passionate temperament’ in ‘difficult’ and ‘demanding’ roles that allowed her to achieve ‘entrancing’ effects. She ‘set trends’, he adds: ‘people talked of “Eysoldt roles”, and all young girls who took to the stage in those years wanted to play nothing but Eysoldt roles’.⁶⁰

Eysoldt’s Post-Victorian Decadence

Salome, Lulu, and Elektra were figures who helped define Decadence in popular German culture in the early twentieth century. Critics who saw the private staging of *Salome* on 15 November 1902, its reprise the following February, or its official public run in the autumn of 1903, were quick to label the play Decadent, some in a positive, some in a negative sense. The reviewer for

the *Nationalzeitung* admired Wilde's 'hyper-refined, almost morbid taste for the unusual, the shocking, and also the perverse. If the buzzword "Decadence" is ever to be used appropriately, it is here', he writes, in this play with an 'artistic core' but a 'decayed rind'.⁶¹ Another critic finds that 'never has decadent culture been brought to life on the stage with such ingenious fantasy as it is in this terribly sultry drama by this Englishman [*sic*];⁶² while a later reviewer calls on all critics to protect young people from seeing a play by an 'effeminate weakling', filled as it is with 'hysterical images' that will lead them to find 'sexual perversity' 'wonderful and brilliant'.⁶³ Such press responses to *Salome* and to Eysoldt's performance in it have been documented and analysed elsewhere,⁶⁴ but while W. Eugene Davis is right in thinking that we ought to avoid making sweeping generalizations about the German critical response to the play, reviews of the Reinhardt production indicate a consistent trend among reviewers to see *Salome*, the play and the figure, as exemplifying Decadence at the turn of the century.⁶⁵

Reflecting later in life on this and her other famous roles, Eysoldt characterized them not as Decadent but as avant-garde. 'I belonged to the avant-garde from the very beginning', she told her friend Carl Seelig, '[n]ew shores, new oceans – that's what I longed for. That's why I was chosen by directors with a preference for modern, problematic female characters. Wedekind, Maeterlinck, Strindberg, Claudel'.⁶⁶ For her, there is no great contrast between Strindberg and Maeterlinck: both are different expressions of what she characterizes as 'avant-garde' in that they cover new dramatic territory, and people that territory with challenging, modern women. In her correspondence with Hofmannsthal she claims that what sets her apart as an actress is that she has the 'courage to suffer',⁶⁷ a commitment to embracing the psychological make-up and psychological scars of her troubled female characters. Hofmannsthal, still in the throes of his famous loss of faith in the power of language to express feelings,⁶⁸ finds that her genius lies in her ability to 'take something that cannot be said, something buried deeply within, and translate it into a gesture',⁶⁹ an aspect of Eysoldt's talent that Fiedler calls her 'rhetoric of the body' and Jackson identifies as one of the ways Eysoldt 'asserted significant autonomy in performance and

staged feminist interventions in socio-cultural constructions of female subjectivity'.⁷⁰ In her use of stylized, exaggerated, and even grotesque gestures – movements encouraged by the style and content of Decadent and Symbolist dramas – Eysoldt expresses the psychological suffering of her characters in a profoundly avant-garde way [see Fig. 7]. Her work brings to life the same anguish captured by the twisted figures of Expressionist painters like Oskar Kokoschka or Egon Schiele.⁷¹



Figure 7. ‘Gertrud Eysoldt as Elektra, after a photograph by A. Hartwig’.
Source: Rudolph Lothar, *Das deutsche Drama der Gegenwart* (Munich: Müller, 1905), p. 225.

Decadent texts provide Eysoldt with an opportunity to portray devastating human emotion within the tightly controlled rhythms of a stylized text; her grotesque poses and awkward movements produce a discomfort that only works within a rhythmically taut framework. This balance is a crucial element of avant-garde theatre for her. In December 1905, she writes to Hofmannsthal that she has just played Elektra in Bremen and Magdeburg. Both performances were well received by critics, but she was very dissatisfied as other characters on stage began to mimic or echo the gestures and movements she had developed to express Elektra’s suffering and this meant a dreadful loss of ‘the rhythm of the piece as a whole’.⁷² It is

also a lack of balance between chaos and order that leads her to critique the performances of Russian innovator Konstantin Stanislavski's touring company in April 1906. She is not moved by them, as they are too controlled, too 'vollendet' [complete]; they lack the 'Erschütterung' [unsettling tremors] of a Reinhardt production, and so will never disturb the 'bequeme Bürgerlichkeit' [comfortable bourgeois existence] of the audience.⁷³ Eysoldt is repeating here a point that she has already made to Hofmannsthal: the 'coldness' of Gordon Craig's dramaturgy will never be as transformative as the anti-pedantic, imperfect, open-ended theatre of illusion championed by Wilde in 'The Truth of Masks'.⁷⁴

Eysoldt and Weimar Decadence

Over the course of the next thirty years, Eysoldt also taught at Reinhardt's acting school, training over 2,000 men and women in the psychologically intensive and collaborative style demanded by the Deutsches Theater,⁷⁵ and for two seasons at the start of the 1920s she directed the Kleines Schauspielhaus, where she defied the censor and survived a show-down in court to give Arthur Schnitzler's notorious, sexually licentious play *Reigen* (1900) its belated world premiere.⁷⁶ The production was targeted for political reasons, and Eysoldt and her director, Maximilian Sladek, were warned that they would be arrested if they went ahead with opening night. They resisted these threats, and before the curtain went up on 20 December 1920 Eysoldt made a 'moving speech' to the audience: 'Frau Eysoldt declared', reports Wilhelm Heine, 'that she would rather go to prison than sacrifice a work of art due to personal fear of philistine persecution'.⁷⁷ Eysoldt and her team dodged this initial short-lived legal threat, and the play became a roaring success, but social conservatives and anti-Semites successfully lobbied for a new prosecution on the grounds of offenses to public morals. This time the case went to court, where the defendant, Frau Eysoldt, defended her actions using the Wildean argument that works of art cannot be moral or immoral: the play could not be considered 'obscene' as it was a work of art.⁷⁸ The only judgement that can be made of a theatrical production is whether or not it does justice to the

work of art on which it is based. ‘I said to myself’, she testified, ‘if a true artist is driven by some inner need to produce a work of art, then that work is artistically sublime’, regardless of what the public or even the artist says about it.⁷⁹ Eysoldt’s arguments won the day; the case was dismissed when the court watched a private performance of the play.

As the 1920s progressed, Eysoldt was given fewer roles by Reinhardt, and supplemented her income with some radio work, but as a single widow supporting her ageing mother she struggled financially. Still, she remained committed to political and social change. She supported the socialist cause, telling Carl Seelig that political systems should ensure a fair distribution of wealth, one in which people ‘possess the things that they need’ to maintain their individual freedom, but should not be consumed by money, ‘for wealth can enslave people’.⁸⁰ Throughout the Weimar Era she supported progressive causes, doing public readings in honour of the socialist revolutionaries of 1919 and at Magnus Hirschfeld’s Institut für Sexualwissenschaft [Institute for Sex Research]; signing the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee’s petitions to abolish the law against homosexuality; and volunteering for such charitable organizations as ‘Women in Need’.⁸¹

Despite the financial precarity of her domestic situation, she travelled when she could to Colpach, where she participated in the renowned intellectual salon of Aline ‘Loup’ Mayrisch, a wealthy writer and translator who cultivated Franco-German cultural exchange in the early twentieth century, and gathered such figures as Annette Kolb, Paul Claudel, and Hermann Graf Keyserling around her.⁸² Before becoming a wealthy arts patron, Mayrisch had worked with Eysoldt’s first husband Martersteig; she and her good friend André Gide had also been great fans of Eysoldt since seeing her perform in 1903, and may well have socialized with her that year in Weimar with their mutual friend, the dandy Harry Graf Kessler.⁸³ Eysoldt was able, too, to enjoy the Berlin of the Roaring Twenties, where she was very much at home. The most famous out lesbian of the era, Claire Waldoff, recalls seeing Eysoldt regularly at a dance club called ‘The Pyramid’, with a ‘mixed clientele’ of mostly lesbians, but also actors, dancers, artists, and even

‘beautiful elegant women who wanted to visit the underbelly of Berlin’ – a scene, Waldoff adds, ‘typical of Berlin nightlife with its sin and its colour’.⁸⁴ I am not trying to label Eysoldt a lesbian here. She was married twice, bore three children, and lived for almost a decade in an open relationship with Edmund Reinhardt, Max’s brother,⁸⁵ and we have no evidence of any romantic involvement with another woman, but there is a queerness to Eysoldt’s gender presentation both offstage and on – one reviewer in 1915 praises outright the ‘lesbian’ aspect of her performance as Elektra⁸⁶ – that testifies to the continuity of her commitment to the Decadent texts and counter-cultures of the modern era.

Conclusion

Decadent dramas served differing aims for Reinhardt and Eysoldt. While he had initially caricatured Decadence as the realm of ennui, exhaustion, aestheticism, and excess [see Fig. 2], Reinhardt (guided by Eysoldt) began to include Decadent works in the broad repertoire of plays that he could use to break with the conventions of Naturalism and express the ‘pure air of beauty’, ‘brighter colours’, and ‘heightened life’ he thought lacking on German stages.⁸⁷ Eysoldt found in them characters that allowed her to show her commitment to ‘modern’, ‘problematic’ women and to practise her own particular brand of physically, emotionally, and psychologically demanding acting. Eysoldt’s commitment to the Decadent tradition was deeper than Reinhardt’s, and was expressed in multiple ways: she read Decadent texts and urged others to read them, too; she inspired a generation of German actresses to play Salome, Lulu, and Elektra; and she even used Decadent philosophy in court to justify the staging of a Decadent work. She can perhaps best be characterized as a member of ‘the decadent republic of letters’, a broad, transnational ‘counterculture’ that imagined ‘new forms of affiliation and sociality’ around the turn of the century.⁸⁸ For Potolsky,

Decadent texts describe a striking range of quasi-utopian communities and promote new ideas about affiliation in the ways they address their readers. Significantly overlapping with the emerging gay and lesbian countercultures, decadence also provided a medium

for writers to define communities united by sexual dissidence and non-normative desires.⁸⁹

Eysoldt exemplifies the kind of figure for whom dissident countercultures and Decadent texts are mutually constitutive. Her networks – from the Zurich and Munich New Women circles of the 1890s, through the subcultures of 1920s Berlin, on to such transnational intellectual communities as those around Kessler in Weimar or Mayrisch in Colpach – constitute the kinds of ‘amenable imagined communities’ that for Potolsky are ‘composed of like-minded readers and writers scattered around the world and united by the production, circulation, and reception of art and literature’.⁹⁰ She is Decadent, then, not just because she ‘realize[s] a doctrine or make[s] use of certain styles and themes, but because [she] move[s] within a recognizable network of canonical books, pervasive influences, recycled stories, erudite commentaries, and shared tastes’. By committing herself to the physical embodiment of Decadent figures, she herself became the ‘decadent text [that] borrows from and expands the network, locating itself by reference to the names or books it evokes, and leaving its own contributions behind’.⁹¹

¹ For a history of this ground-breaking, if short-lived, Berlin cabaret, see Peter Jelavich, ‘From Artistic Parody to Theatrical Renewal: Reinhardt’s Sound and Smoke’, in *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 62-84; Harold B. Segel, *Turn-of-the-Century Cabaret* (Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 137-42; and Peter W. Marx, *Max Reinhardt: Vom bürgerlichen Theater zur metropolitanen Kultur* (Tübingen: Francke, 2006), pp. 43-54.

² K. G. Hardenberg, ‘Die Dekadenten’, *Jugend*, 3 (1898), 695. Unless otherwise noted, translations from the German throughout this article are my own.

³ Triboulet, ‘Vor der Rampe’, *Bühne und Brett*, 20 October 1901, pp. 2-13 (p. 12).

⁴ Under the title ‘Don Carlos an der Jahrhundertwende’ [‘Don Carlos at the Fin de Siècle’], Reinhardt presented three short parodies of Friedrich Schiller’s classic play at ‘Schall und Rauch’ in the spring of 1901: one in the style of a sub-par provincial acting troupe, one in the Naturalist style, and one as a Symbolist play. See Max Reinhardt, *Schall und Rauch* (Berlin: Schuster und Loeffler, 1901), pp. 27-125.

⁵ *Salome* (the German translation uses no acute diacritical mark on the name) was part of a double bill with *Bunbury* [*The Importance of Being Earnest*] on 15 November 1902. This was not the first time Wilde’s play had been performed for a German audience, although it is often referred to as such. *Salome* had been produced by the Munich Akademisch-dramatischer Verein [Academic-Dramatic Club] on 4 March 1901, with the Wiesbaden-based actress Jenny Rauch (1878-1904) in the title role; and by the Lobetheater in Breslau on 12 May 1901, where Marie Wendt (1876-1961) took on the role of Salome. See ‘Akademisch-Dramatischer Verein’, *Allgemeine Zeitung* (Munich), 6 March 1901, p. 6; *Deutscher Bühnen-Spielplan 1900-1901* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1902), p. 663.

⁶ Such titles would include Frank Wedekind’s ‘Lulu’ play *Erdgeist*, Wilde’s *A Florentine Tragedy*, Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s *Elektra*, Maeterlinck’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Aglavaine und Selysette*, and Friedrich Freska’s *Sumurun*. For a full list of Reinhardt productions, see Heinrich Huesmann’s encyclopaedic *Welttheater Reinhardt: Bauten, Spielstätten, Inszenierungen* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1983). For a list that focuses solely on Berlin productions from 1901 to 1910, see Huntly Carter, *The Theatre of Max Reinhardt* (London: Palmer, 1914), pp. 316-26.

⁷ Leo Berg, ‘Echo der Bühnen: Berlin’, *Das literarische Echo*, 1 December 1906, pp. 365-68 (p. 365).

⁸ Reinhardt's innovations were both technical (using cutting-edge technology in set design, stage management, sound, and lighting) and dramaturgical (actors rehearsed for longer periods, worked as an ensemble, and paid more attention to the vision of the director than to the stage directions provided by the author). He also dispensed with the old 'Fach' [category] system, whereby each actor specialized in a particular type of character and could be relied on by a theatre company to already know the lines and standard blocking for the most famous roles in that 'Fach'. He advanced reforms in German theatre that had begun at the Meiningen court theatre in the 1870s and introduced a mode of 'Regietheater' [director-driven theatre] that still dominates in the German-speaking world. See Huntly, and J. L. Styan, *Max Reinhardt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁹ In 2001, Jessica Feldman cautioned that 'when modernist writers insist upon radical discontinuity, we should not take them at their word. We should examine those words and the resulting works of art carefully, because Victorian practices often vitally inform modernist works. What is dismissed is also summoned' (Jessica R. Feldman, 'Modernism's Victorian Bric-à-Brac', *Modernism/modernity*, 8.3 (2001), 453-70 (p. 454)). Scholars who took up Feldman's challenge to 'examine these [...] works of art carefully' include Vincent B. Sherry, *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Stephen C. Downes, *Music and Decadence in European Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), and Kate Hext and Alex Murray, eds, *Decadence in the Age of Modernism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019). Kristin Mahoney, meanwhile, has focused on those writers of the early twentieth century who continued to defiantly embrace Decadence in the face of modernism. See Kristin Mahoney, *Literature and the Politics of Post-Victorian Decadence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015). In a recent review essay, Robert Volpicelli has helpfully characterized this entire turn in the field as 'The New Decadence'. See *Modernism/modernity*, 26.1 (2019), 213-18.

¹⁰ See Rudolf Kommer, 'The Magician of Leopoldskron', in *Max Reinhardt and His Theatre*, ed. by Oliver Martin Saylor (New York: Brentano's, 1924; repr. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), pp. 1-15 (p. 6); Marx, pp. 29-30.

¹¹ Her first Reinhardt engagement was to sing 'Danish Street Songs' for a 'Schall und Rauch' evening in December 1901. Carsten Niemann, ed., *Gertrud Eysoldt (1870-1955): Bilder aus einem Schauspielereleben* (Bensheim: Stadt Bensheim, 1989), p. 45.

¹² Mahoney, p. 15.

¹³ Matthew Potolsky, *The Decadent Republic of Letters: Taste, Politics, and Cosmopolitan Community from Baudelaire to Beardesley* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

¹⁴ The prize was established by theatre critic and Eysoldt devotee Wilhelm Ringelband; the winner is awarded a monetary prize as well as the honour of wearing a specially-designed ring (the Eysoldt-Ring) for the year.

¹⁵ Niemann, ed., *Gertrud Eysoldt*; Carsten Niemann, 'Die Schauspielerin Gertrud Eysoldt als Darstellerin der Salome, Lulu, Nastja, Elektra und des Puck im Berliner Max-Reinhardt-Ensemble' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, 1993); Carsten Niemann, 'Ein Leben für das Theater: Die Schauspielerin Gertrud Eysoldt (1870-1955)', in *Das Herz meiner Künstlerschaft ist Mut: Die Max-Reinhardt-Schauspielerin Gertrud Eysoldt* (Hannover: Theatermuseum, 1995), pp. 16-93; Leonhard M. Fiedler, ed., *Der Sturm Elektra: Gertrud Eysoldt, Hugo von Hofmannsthal Briefe* (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1996); Gertrud Eysoldt, *Das schöne Muster unseres Erlebnisses: Briefe an Max Martersteig*, ed. by Dagmar Walach (Berlin: Institut für Theaterwissenschaft der FU Berlin, 2002). A helpful biography of Eysoldt has been published online by Stephanie d'Heil, 'Gertrude Eysoldt' <http://www.steffi-line.de/archiv_text/nost_buehne/04e_eyoldt_gertrud.htm> [accessed 29 December 2017]. Niemann, who manages the Gertrud-Eysoldt-Sammlung in the Stadtarchiv Bensheim, was at one point collaborating with Fiedler on a lengthier biography of Eysoldt. See Leonhard M. Fiedler, 'Gertrud Eysoldt: Ein Festvortrag' in Niemann, ed., *Gertrud Eysoldt*, pp. 10-18 (p. 15).

¹⁶ See for instance Elke-Maria Clauss, 'Nur Schaffen will ich und geschaffen werden': Zum Verhältnis zwischen Schauspielerin und Dichter am Beispiel von Gertrud Eysoldt und Hugo von Hofmannsthal (Oldenburg: Bis, 2001).

¹⁷ Sara E. Jackson, 'Embodied Femmes Fatales: Performing Judith and Salomé on the Modernist German Stage', *Women in German Yearbook*, 31 (2015), 48-72 (p. 65).

¹⁸ Christiane Leidinger, *Keine Tochter aus gutem Hause: Johanna Elberskirchen (1864-1943)* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2008), pp. 40-53.

¹⁹ Niemann, 'Ein Leben', p. 20. See note 8 for a discussion of some of these innovations.

²⁰ Leidinger, pp. 40-44.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-50.

²² Aimee Duc [Minna Wettstein-Adelt], *Sind es Frauen? Roman über das dritte Geschlecht* (Berlin: Eckstein, 1901; repr. Berlin: Gabrielle Meixner, 1976). Broadview Press's English edition of this novel is forthcoming.

²³ Leidinger, p. 41. Leidinger offers an extraordinary account of the complications of Anna Eysoldt's marriage and divorce. Elberskirchen wrote a series of pamphlets in the 1890s accusing Aebi of physical and mental abuse of his young wife, and of trying to force Anna to live in a ménage-à-trois with the 'sexual psychopath' Clara Willdenow. The pamphlets caused a cascade of legal problems, including multiple arrests, for Elberskirchen, who eventually had to flee Switzerland. It took a decade for Anna Eysoldt to finally get her divorce and for Elberskirchen to clear her name. Gertrud was supportive of the couple during these difficult years. Anna Eysoldt's death notice in 1913 listed

- Elberskirchen as the first mourner, and only then her mother and sister, Bertha and Gertrud. Leidinger, pp. 57-68; 276.
- ²⁴ Niemann, 'Ein Leben', p. 19; Leidinger, p. 50.
- ²⁵ Leonhard M. Fiedler, 'Nachwort', in *Der Sturm Elektra*, pp. 113-26 (p. 123).
- ²⁶ Anne von den Eken [Anna Deneken], *Mannweiber, Weibmänner und der §175: Eine Schrift für denkende Frauen* (Leipzig: Spohr, 1906).
- ²⁷ G. U., 'Verein für Gründung eines Mädchengymnasiums', *Das humanistische Gymnasium*, 5 (1894), 104-06.
- ²⁸ See Rudolf Herz, 'Das Fotoatelier Elvira (1887-1928)', in *Hof-Atelier Elvira, 1887-1928: Ästheteten, Emanzen, Aristokraten*, ed. by Rudolf Herz and Brigitte Bruns (Munich: Münchner Stadtmuseum, 1985), pp. 63-128.
- ²⁹ Irit Rogoff, 'Tiny Anguishes: Reflections on Nagging, Scholastic Embarrassment, and Feminist Art History', *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 4 (1992), 38-65 (p. 56).
- ³⁰ Ernst von Wolzogen, *Das dritte Geschlecht* (Berlin: Eckstein, 1899). For a helpful contextualization of this *roman-à-clef*, see Brigitte Bruns, 'Das dritte Geschlecht von Ernst von Wolzogen', in Herz and Bruns, eds, *Hof-Atelier Elvira*, pp. 171-90.
- ³¹ Leidinger, p. 50.
- ³² See note 5, above, for a discussion of how this club was responsible for the German premiere of Wilde's *Salome*.
- ³³ Niemann, 'Ein Leben', p. 37.
- ³⁴ Ernst Rosmer [Elsa Bernstein], *Dämmerung* (Berlin: Fischer, 1893).
- ³⁵ This account is taken from a contemporary, unsigned review. 'Feuilleton', *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 April 1897, p. 1.
- ³⁶ The anonymous reviewer in Munich's *Allgemeine Zeitung* found that her 'diction, stage presence, and acting were all excellent'. 'Feuilleton', *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 April 1897, p. 1.
- ³⁷ Marti Lybeck, *Desiring Emancipation: New Women and Homosexuality in Germany, 1890-1933* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), pp. 14-15.
- ³⁸ Bensheim's Gertrud-Eysoldt-Sammlung contains a photo of Gertrud visiting the two women in Tessin in 1897. See Leidinger, pp. 53-59.
- ³⁹ Quoted in Leidinger, p. 45.
- ⁴⁰ Niemann's dissertation reproduces several images of Eysoldt in these early trouser roles. See Niemann, 'Die Schauspielerin', pp. 23, 42, 45.
- ⁴¹ Fiedler, ed., *Sturm*, p. 24; Marx, p. 59.
- ⁴² William Grange, 'Eysoldt, Gertrud', *Historical Dictionary of German Theater*, 2nd edn (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), p. 142.
- ⁴³ Niemann, 'Die Schauspielerin', p. 19.
- ⁴⁴ The contract officially came to an end on 1 January 1903. *Der Briefwechsel Arthur Schnitzlers mit Max Reinhardt und dessen Mitarbeitern*, ed. by Renate Wagner (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1971), p. 41.
- ⁴⁵ Reinhardt famously avoided expressing his theories of theatre in writing: he believed his work was about revolutionizing practices and should therefore be inferred by audiences and critics from what they experienced in the theatre. Scholars have looked mainly to letters and the memoirs of others for most of their evidence as to his methods and aims. See Hugo Fetting, ed., *Max Reinhardt: Ein Leben für das Theater: Schriften und Selbstzeugnisse* (Berlin: Argon, 1989).
- ⁴⁶ Quoted in Sally McMullen, 'From the Armchair to the Stage: Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* in Its Theatrical Context', *MLR*, 80 (1985), 637-51 (p. 641).
- ⁴⁷ On Reinhardt's 'programmatische[r] Eklektizismus', see Marx, p. 33, emphasis in original.
- ⁴⁸ Marx, p. 45.
- ⁴⁹ Berg, p. 365.
- ⁵⁰ *Der Briefwechsel Arthur Schnitzlers*, p. 41.
- ⁵¹ Fiedler, ed., *Sturm*, pp. 5-9.
- ⁵² Michael Berneis, a descendant of Eysoldt and her second husband Benno Berneis, has uploaded this interview to YouTube under the simple heading 'Gertrud Eysoldt Nachruf', <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kc2C7ab3WKI>> [accessed 30 May 2018]. It is in all likelihood the interview conducted on 6 December 1949 with Karl Ebert and listed by Carsten Niemann as 'Ich aber nannte ein Geschlecht, das starb'. See Niemann, 'Die Schauspielerin', p. 244.
- ⁵³ Niemann, 'Ein Leben', pp. 19-20.
- ⁵⁴ She tells Hofmannsthal that she loves Göttingen because 'it has so many bookstores'. Fiedler, ed., *Sturm*, p. 35.
- ⁵⁵ The book in question is Edward Gordon Craig, *Die Kunst des Theaters*, trans. by Maurice Magnus (Berlin: Seemann, 1905). Fiedler, ed., *Sturm*, p. 31.
- ⁵⁶ Quoted in Carl Seelig, *Walks with Walser*, ed. and trans. by Anne Posten (New York: New Directions, 2017), n.p. Google ebooks.
- ⁵⁷ Fiedler, ed., *Sturm*, p. 35.
- ⁵⁸ For a discussion of criticism of Eysoldt's physical traits in this context, see Niemann, 'Ein Leben', p. 79.
- ⁵⁹ See Jackson, 'Embodied', *passim*.

- ⁶⁰ Eduard von Winterstein, *Mein Leben und meine Zeit* (Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 1982), p. 248.
- ⁶¹ M. O., *Nationalzeitung*, 18 November 1902. This review is in a clippings folder labelled 'Wilde: Salome' at the University of Cologne's extensive theatre archive, the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung. No page number is recorded.
- ⁶² R. Kr., 'Bühnen-Telegraph: Stuttgart', *Bühne und Welt*, 5 (1903), 479.
- ⁶³ G. Z., 30 September 1903. This review is in a clippings folder labelled 'Wilde: Salome' at the University of Cologne's Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung. No newspaper title or page number is recorded.
- ⁶⁴ W. Eugene Davis, 'Oscar Wilde, *Salome*, and the German Press 1902-1905', *English Literature in Transition*, 44.2 (2001), 149-80; Yvonne Ivory, 'The *Skandalautor*-Funktion: Oscar Wilde and the Theatre Critics in Fin-de-Siècle Germany', *Skandalautoren: Zu repräsentativen Mustern literarischer Provokation und Aufsehen erregender Autorinszenierungen*, ed. by Andrea Bartl and Martin Kraus (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2014), pp. 403-14.
- ⁶⁵ Davis, p. 167.
- ⁶⁶ Quoted in Seelig, n.p.
- ⁶⁷ Fiedler, ed., *Sturm*, p. 38.
- ⁶⁸ See, for instance, Thomas A. Kovach, 'Hofmannsthal's "Ein Brief": Chandos and His Crisis', in *A Companion to the Works of Hugo von Hofmannsthal*, ed. by Thomas A. Kovach (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002), pp. 85-95.
- ⁶⁹ Fiedler, ed., *Sturm*, p. 18.
- ⁷⁰ Fiedler, 'Nachwort', p. 120; Sara E. Jackson, 'Staging the Deadlier Sex: Dangerous Women in German Text and Performance at the Fin de Siècle' (doctoral thesis, University of Michigan, 2013), pp. xi, 177-79, <<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015089700200>> [accessed 28 February 2019].
- ⁷¹ Compare Fig. 7 with the figures in Kokoschka's 1907 work *The Dreaming Boys*, say, or Schiele's agonized portraiture. Oskar Kokoschka, *Die träumenden Knaben* [The Dreaming Boys], MoMA, The Louis E. Stern Collection, <<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/26721>> [accessed 28 February 2019]; Egon Schiele, Portrait of the Publisher Eduard Kosmack (1910), Belvedere, Vienna, Austria, <<https://www.wikiart.org/en/egon-schiele/portrait-of-the-publisher-eduard-kosmack-1910>> [accessed 28 February 2019].
- ⁷² Fiedler, ed., *Sturm*, p. 35.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- ⁷⁴ Oscar Wilde, 'The Truth of Masks', in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 8 vols to date (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000-), IV (2007), pp. 206-28 (p. 228). For Eysoldt's praise of Wilde's essay, see Fiedler, ed., *Sturm*, p. 31.
- ⁷⁵ Gerhard Ebert, '100 Jahre Schauspielschule Berlin: Von Max Reinhardts Schauspielschule des Deutschen Theaters zur Hochschule für Schauspielkunst Ernst Busch Berlin', <<http://www.berliner-schauspielschule.de/>> [accessed 13 June 2018]; Niemann, 'Ein Leben', p. 80.
- ⁷⁶ A thorough explication of the *Reigen* case as well as a transcript of the court proceedings was published that same year by a prominent politician: Wolfgang Heine, ed., *Der Kampf um den Reigen. Vollständiger Bericht über die sechstägige Verhandlung gegen Direktion und Darsteller des Kleinen Schauspielhauses Berlin* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1922). For more scholarly treatments of the case, see Annette Delius, 'Schnitzlers *Reigen* und der *Reigen*-Prozess: Verständliche und manipulierte Mißverständnisse in der Rezeption', *Der Deutschunterricht*, 28.2 (1976), 98-115; Otto P. Schinnerer, 'The History of Schnitzler's *Reigen*', *PMLA*, 46.3 (1931), 839-59.
- ⁷⁷ Heine, p. 6.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22. It is in the epigrammatic 'Preface' to the 1891 version of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* that Wilde makes these assertions, which he, too, would later paraphrase on the witness stand. See *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 8 vols to date (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000-), III (2005), pp. 167-68; H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), pp. 109-10.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- ⁸⁰ Quoted in Seelig, n.p.
- ⁸¹ On 5 January 1919, Eysoldt recited poems at a 'Feier zu Ehren der Revolutionskämpfer' [Celebration in Honour of the Revolutionaries] whose musical entertainment included the Marseillaise and the 'Internationale'. See 'Lebenslinien: Otto Gross & Zeitgenossen', <<http://www.dehmlow.de/index.php/de/database/lebenslinien>> [accessed 2 February 2019]. For a discussion of Eysoldt's association with Hirschfeld's circle, see Leidinger, p. 51. A poster for the 'Women in Need' event can be seen in the online collection of the Berlinische Galerie. See 'Ausstellung "Frauen in Not"', <<http://sammlung-online.berlinischegalerie.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=209210&viewType=detailView>> [accessed 30 June 2018].
- ⁸² Eysoldt, *Muster*, pp. 23-24, 30, 48-51. For a discussion of Colpach, see Elana Passman, 'The Cultivation of Friendship: French and German Cultural Cooperation, 1925-1954' (doctoral thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2008).
- ⁸³ On Gide and Mayrisch seeing Eysoldt in Berlin, see *Muster*, p. 51. There is circumstantial evidence that the three knew each other in Weimar. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Kessler was trying to establish a new German cultural hub in Weimar, the city of Goethe, Schiller, and, more recently, Nietzsche. Hofmannsthal and Eysoldt were among the artists he brought to the city as part of his push to establish a new National Theatre (*ibid.*,

pp. 101, 108). Gide came to give a reading as Kessler's guest in August 1903. See Klaus Bellin, *Das Weimar des Harry Graf Kessler* (Berlin: A.B Fischer, 2013), pp. 26-27. For photos showing Gide in Weimar, see 'Fondation Catherine Gide', <[https://www.fondation-catherine-gide.org/component/abook/tag/tag/129-Weimar%20\(Allemagne\)?Itemid=398](https://www.fondation-catherine-gide.org/component/abook/tag/tag/129-Weimar%20(Allemagne)?Itemid=398)> [accessed 2 February 2019]. (The anonymous figure in photo PH-30-21 is clearly Kessler.)

⁸⁴ Ilse Kokula, 'Lesbisch leben von Weimar bis zur Nachkriegszeit', in *Lila Nächte: Die Damenclubs der zwanziger Jahre*, ed. by Adele Meyer (Berlin: Edition LIT Europe, 1994), pp. 101-23 (p. 106).

⁸⁵ Fiedler, ed., *Sturm*, p. 99 and p. 118.

⁸⁶ Reviewing a performance of *Elektra* in Vienna in 1915, Fritz Blank praises Eysoldt's artistry in an otherwise poor production: 'Like a flame, she grows ever taller, flickering blindingly; hatred abides not only in her heart but in her throat, and there is something Lesbian [etwas Lesbisches] about her tenderness to Chryosthemis. Here the actress has captured the precise sense in which the poet pushed Elektra into the realm of the Third Sex'. Fritz Blank, 'Theater und Kunst', *Der Humorist*, 10 September 1915, p. 2.

⁸⁷ McMullen, p. 641; see also Fetting, ed., pp. 73-74.

⁸⁸ Potolsky, p. 6.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 5.