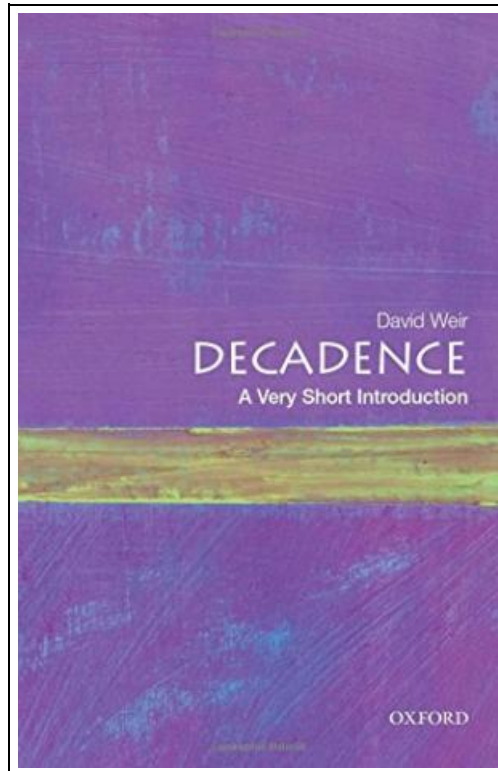


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Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, 2018. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. The history of decadent culture runs from ancient Rome to nineteenth-century Paris, Victorian London, fin de siècle Vienna, Weimar Berlin, and beyond. The decline of Rome provides the pattern for both aesthetic and social decadence, a pattern that artists and writers in the nineteenth century imitated, emulated, parodied, and otherwise manipulated for aesthetic gain. What begins as the moral condemnation of modernity in mid-nineteenth century France on the part of decadent authors such as Charles Baudelaire ends up as the perverse celebration of the pessimism that accompanies imperial decline. This delight in decline informs the rich canon of decadence that runs from Joris-Karl Huysmans's *A Rebours* to Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Aubrey Beardsley's drawings, Gustav Klimt's paintings, and numerous other works. In this Very Short Introduction, David Weir explores the conflicting attitudes towards modernity present in decadent culture by examining the difference between aesthetic decadence--the excess of artifice--and social decadence, which involves excess in a variety of forms, whether perversely pleasurable or gratuitously cruel. Such contrariness between aesthetic and social decadence led some of its practitioners to substitute art for life and to stress the importance of taste over morality, a maneuver with far-reaching consequences, especially as decadence enters the realm of popular culture today. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.



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