7. "Dancing on the Threshold"[1]. Maud Allan and the English Salome Scandal

Maud Allan's misdeed

On February 16, 1918, the right-wing London journal *Vigilante* published an article under the insinuating title "The Cult of the Clitoris" (quoted in Hoare 1998: 90). The text warned against the harmful effects of a performance of Oscar Wilde's prohibited play *Salomé*. Staged by the private Independent Theatre Society, this was by no means a run-of-the-mill production. As a private theater performance, however, with only invited guests, it could pass the 1892 ban on Wilde's play.[2] The director was none other than the liberal, pro-German *Sunday Times* critic Jack (Jacob) Thomas Grein, and the role of Salome was assumed by the (in)famous and controversial dance artist Maud Allan. Skillfully blending political and sexual phobias, the conservative and patriotic Movement for Purity in Public Life exacerbated the ensuing public uproar once news of the performance had broken on February 10th (Kettle 1977). Early in 1918, a time in which a catastrophic Allied defeat still seemed possible and England remained gripped by war hysteria, the parliamentarian and leading figure of the Purity Movement, Noel Pemberton-Billing, advanced what was then held to be a thoroughly credible theory: together with the homophobic anti-Semite Harold Sherwood Spencer, Billing announced that a covert German military maneuver sought to debilitate the enemy's strength and patriotism via (homo)sexual infiltration.

Like the story of the "fifth column" that circulated during the Second World War, the combination of decadence and perversion was used to suggest

1 Heading in Dierkes-Thrun (2011: 15).

2 In 1892 the Lord Chamberlain prohibited public performances of the play because of its allegedly defamatory portrayal of biblical figures.

the existence of an "enemy within." Arnold White, a supporter of the Purity Movement, described German "sexual warfare" as follows: "The tendency in Germany is to abolish civilisation as we know it, to substitute Sodom and Gomorrah for the New Jerusalem, and to infect clean nations with Hunnish erotomania." (Hoare 1998: 89) This fear, virtually embodied in the wartime enemy, was part of a long-held national dialogue – the scandal designated by the name of Oscar Wilde. By the time of the First World War, more than thirteen years after his death and some twenty years after the original trial, Wilde was still seen as the personification of a culture of decadence, as suggested in this ambivalent and enigmatic statement from the turn of the century: "Wilde was a mythical figure: to some, a demon; to others a saint." (ibid: 15) In particular, Wilde was associated with his play *Salomé*, which had first been published in French and performed in continental Europe for some time before it was popularized by Richard Strauss's opera *Salome* (1905). For the British censor in 1918, the play symbolized the "degenerative" influence of liberal culture on puritanical England much more than at the time of its first prohibition by the Lord Chamberlain in 1892. That injunction was officially based on the general ban of biblical subjects from British theaters; the continued censorship of the play until 1931, two decades after the 1912 lifting of the ban on biblical plays, raises a few questions. With the help of sources from the archive of the British Library, Matthew Lewsadder (2002) has reconstructed the discursive field in which Wilde's *Salome* was consistently condemned by the Lord Chamberlain from 1892 to 1931. Lewsadder has shown that there was an "enigmatic relationship between Salome's active female sexual and essential carnal desire […] as well as the embodiment of a subversive female sexuality […] and the censorship of the play" (Lewsadder 2002: 520). For example, in a letter of 1892, written by the Examiner of Plays of the Lord Chamberlain's Office, Edward F.S. Pigott, to Spencer Ponsonby, the Controller of the Lord Chamberlaine's Office, Pigott stated that Salome's:

> Love turns to fury because John will not let her kiss him *in the mouth* – and in the last scene, where she brings in his head – if you please – on a "charger" – she *does* kiss his mouth, in a paroxysm of sexual despair. This piece is written in French – half Biblical, half pornographic – by Oscar Wilde himself. Imagine the average British public's reception of it. (Lewsadder 2002: 520)

In accordance with the Victorian moral discourse of "female passionlessness" (Cott 1978), with its idea that decent women "lacked sexual passion" and "were *less* carnal and lustful than men" (ibid: 221), Salome's sexual agency

in Wilde's play was depicted as *unnatural, morbid, immoral, perverse* and "half pornographic." When J. T. Grein decided to produce an English translation of Wilde's *Salome* in 1918 it was again Salome's transgressive female sexuality and her open desire for John the Baptist, which was in the centre of the debate and the later legal controversy with Noel Pemberton-Billing at the Old Bailey. As will be demonstrated in the end of this chapter, Maud Allan, who took over the part of Salome in the private performance, was identified with Wilde's *Salome* and fell victim to a modern witch-hunt. Her own dance choreography of Salome's dance, with which she began in 1906, was, however, neither banned nor censored. On the contrary "Allan was highly acclaimed for the artistry of her dancing and her ability to transcend the indecency of Wilde's figuration of Salome." (Lewsadder 2002:527)

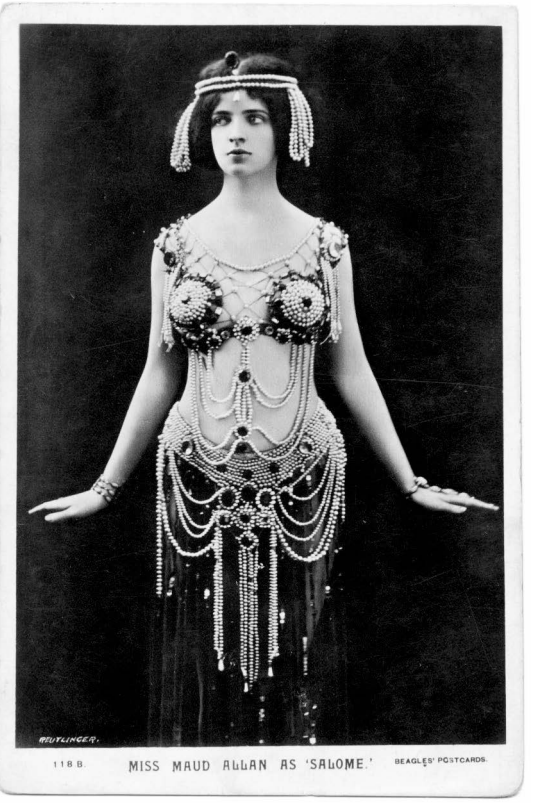
The Canadian barefoot dancer Maud Allan had begun her career as a Salome-dancer in Vienna and Berlin. As "the first influential modernist female interpreter of Oscar Wilde's play […] she shot to international fame with 'The Vision of Salome' in London in 1908." (Dierkes-Thrun 2011: 83) Inspired not only by Wilde but also by Strauss and Max Reinhardt, her performance went beyond Loïe Fuller's Salome routine in her *pantomime lyrique* at the Comédie-Parisienne in March 1895. Following Allan's arrival in London in February 1908, the Canadian epitomized both exotic decadence and Edwardian "respectable" eroticism, while fostering the dissolution of the boundary between "high" and "popular" culture. Especially her solo dance in "The Vision of Salome" was "understood as a gender rebellion against women's traditional modesty" (ibid: 84). In this performance the avant-garde dancer played with intertwining the racial and gender stereotypes that made up the foundation of English orientalism and gender order. As Amy Koritz notes:

> Maud Allan's representation of an Oriental princess in "The Vision of Salome" invited discussions that invoked two discourses in particular, Orientalism and a separate spheres gender ideology. [It was especially] two potential threats this dance posed to its audience – female sexuality and the racial Other. Allan's dance was potentially transgressive in that it violated the supposed polarity between East and West by presenting her, a Western woman, as an Oriental. In addition, Allan violated the terms under which the separate spheres ideology assigned the "privileges" of (middle-class) femininity by appearing on a public stage in a daringly scanty costume. (1994: 65)

Moreover, the ambitious Allan had managed to make a name for herself as dancer in London avant-garde artistic circles and amongst (notably mostly

pro-German) political advocates. Even Margot Asquith, the extravagant wife of Liberal leader Herbert Asquith, could be considered one of her fans. Before the war, during her husband's premiership, Asquith had opened the door of 10 Downing Street to cultural society "[…] and entertained the Souls with her risqué 'skirt dancing,' invented in Chicago by Loïe Fuller […]" (Hoare 1998: 81). Mrs. Asquith was also present as a guest at exclusive private *Salome* evenings which had been taking place in the absence of men at the residences of famous female socialites since 1908, and at which not only the VIP of the evening, Maud Allan, but also the female spectators used to wear a "Salome costume."

Fig. 14: Maud Allan in her costume (1908), postcard.



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A *New York Times* report from August 8, 1908, (Cerniavsky 1991) describes one such event:

> Each of the ladies proceeded to outview her sisters in providing herself with a costume matching in all the undress effect of Miss Allan's scanty costume […]. Salome's music was played […] and some of the more graceful members of the party demonstrated that they had not only succeeded in matching Miss Allan's costume, but had learned some captivating steps in movements. (ibid: 176)

The stir created by the "Cult of the Clitoris" publicly spread a paranoid history of subterfuge that had already been peddled for some time by right-wing English political radicals. According to this idee-fixe, the German Kaiser Wilhelm II, in one of his most egregious acts of war, and under the influence of a homoerotic circle (see Chapter three of this book), was attempting to "seduce" the English nation into submission by employing an army of gay and lesbian secret agents. Writing in the *Imperialist* on January 26th, Billing stated that a top-secret "little black book" in the Kaiser's personal possession contained not only lurid details "regarding the propagation of evils which all decent men thought had perished in Sodom and Lesbia […]" (quoted in Hoare 1998: 58), but also

> […] the names of 47,000 English men and women. […] It is a most *catholic list*. Privy Councillors, wives of Cabinet Ministers, even Cabinet Ministers themselves, diplomats, poets, bankers, editors, newspaper proprietors, and Members of His Majesty's Household […] prevented from putting their full strength into the war by corruption and blackmail and fear of exposure. (ibid: 58; original emphasis)

Such sexual demonization of the adversary had for centuries been a conventional technique plied in war-mongering propaganda. The original rumors of homosexuality involving the Kaiser were connected to the Eulenburg-Moltke trials, which had generated much public interest between 1906 and 1908. As detailed in chapter three, the trials concerned the case of a close friend of the Kaiser who was accused of homosexuality and thus defamed. Together with the emergence of the early studies of sexuality like Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* from 1894 and Otto Weininger's bestselling book *Sex and Character* (1903) and the first European gay movement(s) in Berlin, these scandalous court cases carried their own political significance. The earliest Berlin sexologies were especially associated with the Jewish doctor, reformist and

founder of the homosexual civil rights movement, Magnus Hirschfeld, and in 1897 the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee (Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee) was founded in Berlin. "Led by the Berlin medical doctor Magnus Hirschfeld, this group represented the world's first homosexual rights organization […] and would soon help to make Berlin a center of sexology research and the capital of homosexual rights activism." (Beachy 2015: 40) As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick observes: "Virtually all of the competing, conflicting figures for understanding same-sex desires […] were coined and circulated in this period in the first place in Germany, and through German culture, medicine, and politics." (1993: 66) The result of this concentration of events in the German capital was the stronger association of Germany than other countries with an already emergent European discourse on "homosexuality."

Thus thirteen years after the destructive trial of Oscar Wilde in London, resulting in his becoming the first victim of a new English law criminalizing all "homosexual" activity, the concept of a new "Cult of the Clitoris" merged with an already existing, politically-charged case of homophobia. Together with Allan's disturbing representation of the "Oriental Other", male as well as female homosexuality represented a feared new danger to the English nation. This all the more because the national discourse employed a rhetoric of "homogeneous masculinity as definitive of Englishness" (Koritz 1994: 77). At the center of these paranoid fantasies, in which the English notions of gender roles and the clear distinction between "West" and "East" were both felt to be under threat, was the barefoot dancer celebrated across Europe, Maud Allan, and her performance of *Salome*.

Crossing Gender Boundaries: Femme Fatale and *"Beautiful Jewess"*

As will be shown in the following, the culturally charged discourse used to review and analyze Allan's dance in "The Vision of Salome" indicated an interconnective rhetoric of femininity and orientalism. Why, however, did this particular embodiment of the biblical figure from the time of John the Baptist's Judean ministry generate such an emotional response and trigger public outcry? To begin with, the figure of Salome was still associated with Wilde's play and scandalous trial. Another reason, perhaps, is the figure's compatibility with other cultural discourses and obsessions atthe turn of the century: orientalism and two cultural images of female difference – the *femme fatale* and the *"Beautiful Jewess"*. Since the beginning of the 19th century, and strongly mod-

eled after Sir Walter Scott's Rebecca in his highly successful historical novel *Ivanhoe: A Romance* (1820), the "Beautiful Jewess" became a prominent literary and cultural figure in Europe. As the "Beautiful Jewess", this culturally constructed Jewess was connected not only to physical but also to spiritual and moral beauty (see Valman 2007: 1-21). "The Jewess continued to compel and provoke writers precisely because she threw into disarray clear categories of difference." (Valman 2007: 2) A radical shift in the literary and visual representation of the Jewess and the merging of the "Beautiful Jewess" with the notorious figure of the sexualized femme fatale began in the second half of the century alongside with growing antisemitism and reached its peak in the fin de siècle. Karla Hoven-Buchholz, however, maintains that in the European bourgeois society of 1900, the figure of the femme fatale "had long since ceased to represent the breaking of social taboo and instead belonged to the negative inventory of bourgeois culture as the embodiment of evil that was both warded off and indulged" (2008: 358).

As to the enduring fascination with Salome and her dance in turn-of-the-century Europe, this thesis may be doubted. Further, for the first time in the history of the figure, Wilde's Princess Salome performs her dance voluntarily. She even requests for herself – or as Wilde has her say, "for mine own pleasure" (Wilde 1967: 56) – the head of John the Baptist as reward. This detail places the fourteen-year-old virgin in intimate proximity to transgressing a taboo identified in Sigmund Freud's 1905 work *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, in which Freud dispels the illusion of "childhood innocence." What is more, Salome's hybrid, sexualized aggression crosses the boundaries of conventional femininity. In her active desire for the Baptist and brazen courtship of him, Wilde's Salome integrates characteristics and acts in ways that, at the time, would have been interpreted as "masculine." Freud writes: "The sexuality of most men shows a taint of aggression, it is a propensity to subdue, the biological significance of which lies in the necessity of overcoming the resistance of the sexual object by actions other than mere courting." (Freud, SE, 7 1953 [1905]: 22) Wilde's Jewish Princess comes forth as the – admittedly radical – embodiment of a new, modern woman who transgresses traditional gender boundaries. Especially with her mimicry, and parody of the Song of Songs, she uses the discourse of sexual desire in an inversion that feminizes Iokanaan. Hence, around 1900, Salome is made to appear so "disconcertingly arousing because her character unites both the shock that followed the collapse of a bourgeois image of childhood innocence with that of the weak, sexually passive woman – the femme fragile" (Unseld 2001: 70).

In the biblical legend, Salome and Herodias are characterized not only by their oriental femininity, but also by their being members of the royal family – and Jews by inheritance. "Richard Aldrich, the first *New York Times* reviewer [of Strauss's opera], commented that all of *Salome* was 'a picture set in the time of Jewish decadence and the Roman domination.'" (Aldrich 1907: 9, cit. in Gilman 1993: 198) Like the femme fatale, the "Beautiful Jewess" at the turn of the century was identified with a deviant and threatening femininity; a disturbing femininity that could merge with other anxiety-provoking and (often masculinized) figures, like the "prostitute," the "bluestocking" or the "female criminal." As Sander Gilman notes, "the dark hair and black eyes are the salient markers of this "Beautiful Jewess" [...]. The image of the 'dark' woman, while echoing the Western trope of the 'blackness' of the Jews, is at once and the same time a sign of the femme fatale." (ibid: 202) As is shown in Henri Renault's painting, Salome can also perform as an "uncivilized gipsy".

Further associated with such other deadly mythological figures as Judith, Delilah and Medusa, Salome is nevertheless a figure of fascination who attained prominence as the epitome of ambivalent fin-de-siècle movements and discourses. She was simultaneously the idol of female avant-garde dance, the prototype of striptease and the mythical *pathos formula* (*Pathosformel* in Aby Warburg' sense; see chapter eight) for the modern embodiment of female desire, violence and "perversion." Indeed, many academic interpretations of Wilde's play forcefully perpetuate this very discourse by apparently abandoning their critical distance from the source material. For example, in his book *Idols of Perversity*, Bram Dijkstra writes:

> The spectacle of Salome's bestial passion makes Herod shiver. But the outrages of feminine desire continue. In a passage in which Wilde directly equates semen and the blood which feeds man's brain, Salome, woman, the vampire hungry for blood, tastes the bitter seed of man, deprecates the spirit of holy manhood. (1986: 398)

The more such sexualizing interpretations of Salome focus on the mischievous femme fatale, the more they begin to concentrate on the dance of the seven veils and, as a result, the more uninhibited and lascivious Salome seems to become. Nineteenth-century artists also portrayed Salome as a courtesan: half-naked and in a fantastic costume by Franz von Stuck, or simply as a naked girl. Even:

Fig. 15: Henri Renault: Salome (1870), Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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Pablo Picasso's 1905 drawing of Salome has her throwing her legs in the air, as described by the Church Fathers, dancing naked while the executioner sits behind her with the head of John the Baptist on a platter, looking at her with admiration, ready to do anything she desires. (Neginsky 2013: 80)

Un-veiling of the Naked Truth

Both the Dance of the Seven Veils, which marks the historical origin of commercial striptease (Sanyal 2009), and the modern notion of being able to demystify the last secrets of feminine sexuality fit in many ways into the popular medical-cultural discourse on hysteria prevalent around 1900. Following George Didi-Huberman's (2003) study on the medical and iconographic invention of hysteria in the wards of the Salpêtrière, we can find a *tertium comparationis* for understanding the New Dance by comparing it to another phenomenon: the occasionally ecstatic performance of "social images of femininity and madness" (Hindson 2007: 103; Dierkes-Thrun 2011: 37). At the time, hysteria was considered as the principle means of revealing the "riddles of femininity", yet "hysteria both displays and obscures. It arouses by enshrouding, performs follies of seduction, and reveals itself by concealing. As such, it stimulates the imagination of the average male and theoretician alike who believe themselves to be capable of disclosing its secret." (Hoven-Buchholz 2008: 359) Salome and Freud's (that is to say, Breuer's) first female patient Anna O., whose real name was Bertha Pappenheim, seems to evince a remarkable resemblance to Salome in her self-dramatization of a body that simultaneously reveals and conceals itself and whose language is indecipherable. In both instances, the body acts as the medium and stage for the unconscious recitation of a personal language of memories and emotions. As Petra Dierkes-Thrun observes of fin-de-siècle culture, "[h]ysteria functions as a discourse of physical otherness that is worshiped as a form of ecstasy or madness, a spiritual as well as physical, perverse experience." (2011: 37) According to Gilman (1993), the association of the Salome figure with hysteria was also part of her turn-of-the-century antisemitic stigmatization.

The parallel cultural discourse of the "criminal" woman was not restricted to the femme fatale or Salome, and was also prominent in the new literary genre of the detective novel. Like the figure of the New Woman being proliferated throughout the London social circuit around 1890, "the New Criminal Woman [represents …] a specifically public form of femininity for a culture that was redefining […] 'public' and 'private' amid modern social change." (Miller 2008: 3) In his criminological study "Criminal Woman, the Prostitute and the Normal Woman", Césare Lombroso (1884) emphasized the codification of female violence during infancy. He writes "[…] that children, especially female children, were more atavistic than adults and closer in temperament to the prostitute and criminal" (Lombroso, quoted in Kaye 2007: 56). Another

field of discourse in which the protagonist Salome was embedded was, as already indicated, that of homosexuality. Salome's relation to homosexuality was emphasized even more after Wilde's humiliating trial in 1895. This line of inquiry has been pursued by those academic interpreters who aim at locating Wilde's alter ego in Salome and who understand the morally pure John's rejection of her to symbolize Victorian resistance to homosexual urges. In 1985, Elaine Showalter questioned whether "the woman behind Salome's veils [is] the innermost being of the male artist? Is Salome's love for Johanaan a veiled homosexual desire for the male body?" (Showalter 1985: 151) Examining the motifs of shrouding and unveiling in Wilde's work, Katherine Worth argues:

> [U]nveiling was an appropriate image for the activity that Wilde regarded as the artist's prime duty: self-expression and self-revelation. In performing the dance of the seven veils, Salome is then perhaps offering not just a view of the naked body but of the soul or innermost being. (1983: 66)

More recent literary study has been less interested in the secrets concealed beneath the veil than in the veil itself: it becomes a metaphor and a medium for the poetic text. (e.g., Endres/Wittmann/Wolf 2005) As Theodor Ziolkowski (2008) elucidates, the Dance of the Seven Veils, invented by Wilde for his Salome, also refers to older religious traditions. Thus the dance has a mythical precursor in the Sumerian legend of the mother-goddess Ishtar (Inanna/Astarte) who, in search for her dead son and lover Tammuz, must remove a veil at each of the seven stations of her walk into the underworld, finally to appear naked amongst the dead. In the Greek variant of the story, Demeter's search for Persephone, the daughter stolen by Hades, an archaic "belly goddess" with the appropriate name Baubo plays an important role: Baubo makes the grieving goddess laugh by exposing her vulva. According to Ziolkowski (2008), Wilde, for his part, established a particularly blasphemous link between sex and religion when he has Herod promise Salome the veil from the holy of holies of the Temple as a reward for her dance. The veil, in other words, which covers the Ark of the Covenant:

> The association of Salome's veils with the veil of the sanctuary hints that both veils conceal "the holiest of the holies" – in the one case, the raw sexuality that […] in the fin-de-siècle represented the destructive female power and, in the other, the Ark of the Covenant symbolizing God's presence in the Temple. (ibid: 70)

The veil, which enshrouds the body of the goddess or the woman in order to stress by staging its ritualized disappearance, has been associated with epistemological, sacred and sexual meaning in many cultures. For example, "in Hebrew the literal meaning of the word for bride (*kallatu*) is "the veiled one". By lifting the bride's veil the bridegroom symbolically exposes her pudenda and, by thus "'knowing' her, he symbolically performs the sexual act" (von Braun/Mathes 2007: 57). In their book *Veiled Reality: Women, Islam and the West*, Christina von Braun and Bettina Mathes (2001) reconstruct not only the complex (religious) meaning of the veil but also trace metaphors and media of an Occidental "search for truth" configured around the "unveiling" of the female body.(FIG Unveiling the truth) Referring to Erwin Panofsky's (1939) research on the figure of Nuda Veritas, Londa Schiebinger (1991) suggests that images unveiling the idealized female form had, by the 17th century, become an allegory for (the pursuit of) scientific truth. As further explained in the previous chapter, however, around 1900 "fetishism" was the buzzword that facilitated the new characterization of Salome's nudity in both symbolist literature and in commercialized mass culture (Fernbach 2001).

The Ambivalence of Orientalism

Drawing on Mario Praz, Koritz (1995) situates her reading of Salome within the context of orientalism. At least since the appearance of Gustav Flaubert's account of Kuchuk Hanem, who arrived on the scene at a time when colonial Europe was virtually obsessed with the veiled oriental woman, sexual fantasies had been focused on the act of unveiling and were set "beyond the reach of the constraints and taboos of European culture" (Graham-Brown 2000: 503). Salome's dance and nudity were subject to the dynamic pressures of mass media marketing, mutating into a fetish by around 1900. Accordingly, Allan's body was obsessively described, detailed, dissected and photographed:

> To drive the point home, pictures of her arms, hands, as well as legs, not to speak of her bare feet, were reproduced in the magazines, where journalists countered Salome's fetishism with their own fetishism of the Salome dancer. (Walkowitz 2002: 15)

The quasi-imprisonment of the female form by the male gaze (Mulvey 1975) corresponded at that time with the eternal "Otherness" of the exotic. Hence, as Edward Saïd maintained, the male conception of the Orient tends "to be

static, frozen, fixed eternally" (Said 1998 [1978]: 208). According to Koritz (1995), who again refers to Homi Bhabha, stereotypes of the Orient were indeed fixed but were by no means unambiguous or one-dimensional. On the contrary, they oscillated between the exotic, which is regarded as sensual and erotic, and the mystical, which is depicted as transcendent and infinite. This internal ambiguity of and in orientalism at the turn of the century, Koritz argues, implied potential ways of subverting the Orientalist "fatal-woman figure" (1995: 77). To verify this thesis, she adduces as a central example Allan's choreography "The Vision of Salome." Allan's own view of Salome in "The Vision of Salome" was as a child. In her autobiography, Allan writes "the Princess Salomé, hardly more than a child – fourteen, I take her to have been – surrounded by Galilean maidens who were her attendants, her playmates and her slaves" (Allan 1908: 121). In her childlike innocence, Salome is fascinated by the spiritual message she perceives in the Baptist's call from the cistern. As in the Bible, her mother, Herodias, exploits the child's body as a political tool and has her dance in order as to get rid of John. The dance in the "The Vision of Salome" takes place as a half-real and half-dreamlike event after the Baptist's death: "Drawn by an irresistible force, Salomé in a dream descends the marble steps leading from the bronze doors that she has just flung to, behind her frightened attendants." (ibid: 125) She soon reaches the empty terrace and first repeats the dance she performed in front of Herod. Then the severed head of John the Baptist seems to appear before her and she falls into a kind of somnambulistic ecstasy, "mingled with dread," and dances around the (imagined) head. She feels "every fibre of her youthful body quivering; a sensation, hitherto utterly unknown to her is awakened, and her soul longs for comfort" (ibid: 126).

The story of Salome that Allan "claims to depict in her dance is one of spiritual awakening. Salome is transformed in the dance from an obedient child accustomed to Oriental luxury into a woman anxious to submit to the superior power represented by the Baptist." (Koritz 1994: 66) In Wilde's drama, the dance remains invisible and undescribed. Even if some critics understood the plot of "The Vision of Salome" while watching Allan dance on stage, none of them considered Salome as an innocent child and no critic interpreted the dance around the head of John the Baptist as the story of Salome's spiritual awakening. The association with Wilde and his conviction for homosexuality rendered Salome's connection with sexual transgression and decadence even stronger.

As shown in the previous chapter, the dance of the seven veils first assumed its clearest orientalist shape in Richard Strauss's opera *Salome* of 1905. With the mélange of oriental tones and Viennese waltzes, the composer not only involved Herod and his libidinous guests in the proceedings, but also drew modern audiences in as observers. Strauss simultaneously experimented with the allure of striptease and the thrill of voyeurism. Although Allan did not present herself in her performances as a stereotypical "fatal oriental woman", and although the political subtext of the story remained intangible, many critics and also some suffragists recognized the castrating female power represented in the dancer. Here was a female dancer who danced for the beheading of a holy man, or in trance around his severed head:

> The performance of the dance derives its real allure from the cumulative knowledge of fantasies that combine sexual submission, castration and death. […] Thus, Salome's death at the end of the opera is a necessary component of her performance. (Hoven-Buchholz (2007: 361)

In its construction of the "Oedipus complex," Freudian psychoanalysis suggested, nearly parallel with the peak of Allan's fame, a way of integrating the male phantasm of castration into "normal" psychosocial development. Every young male must pass through and cope with the threat or fear of castration. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the status of the phallus as the only visible and therefore verifiable sex indicator is even connected to the perception of "female castration." In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan (1998) ponders the precarious question of what might lie beneath the veil of "'nothingness" of the female physique. He considers this precariousness as the driving force behind psychoanalytical-philosophical inquiry seeking to unveil the "mystery of femininity":

> In so far as the gaze, *qua objet a*, may come to symbolise this central lack expressed in the phenomenon of castration […] it leaves the subject in ignorance as to what there is beyond the appearance, an ignorance so characteristic of all progress in thought that occurs in the way constituted by philosophical research. (Lacan 1998 [1981]: 77)

As explained in chapter five, Freud's generalization of the "castration complex" was also a defensive construction against the antisemitic stigmatization of the "castrated" and thus effeminate Jewish male. In the case of Lacan, there has been much speculation about the misogynistic subtext of his theory

of female castration. For both psychoanalysts, the attempt to disempower the agency of women was certainly also in play. As an "absence," "void," or a person who has already been castrated, the normalized female is only a terrifying metaphor, and not an active agent of castration.

Female Visibility, Suffrage and Violence

Maud Allan was not a supporter of the suffrage movement. In the last chapter of her autobiography *My Life and Dancing*, she explained her "old fashioned" position: "to believe that the rightful destiny of every woman is to be the wife and mother, to make the inner sanctuary known by the sweet name of 'Home'" (Allan 1908: 114). As a self-supporting, unmarried woman and artist with public visibility, she attempted to downplay her transgressions of the separate spheres of gender ideology. She knew well enough that her dance and role as the prophet-slaying manipulator of regents Salome epitomized an uncontrollable, threatening femininity which, in wartime Britain, appeared dangerous. Allan's opponents considered her to be the incarnation of increasing female aggression and new female social visibility. Although her "The Vision of Salome" was rejected as immoral by the majority of suffragettes, it inspired some of them to create a symbolic performance. In their choreography of the Salome story, the dummy head of a well-known politician lay in the dancer's bowl (Walkowitz 2002).

The Canadian dancer who played with the decapitated head of John the Baptist on stage in the Palace Theatre must have been especially abhorrent to male British patriots of the Muscular Christianity movement, a group committed to a new, physically potent and puritanical masculinity. This movement combined "physical strength, religious certainty, and the ability to shape and control the world around oneself. [For] muscular Christians, the male body appears as a metaphor for social, national, and religious bodies." (Hall 1994: 7) The ideal of masculine Christianity, which focused on strengthening the male body through physical exercise, was championed in the middle of the 19th century by the liberal author Charles Kinsley and later by the Christian socialist Thomas Hughes. It exerted influence on the Boy Scout movement and quickly transformed itself into a patriotic, church-driven reform campaign. Proponents sought to halt the modern-day feminization of the Anglican Church and to strengthen the Empire: "To describe their new ideal man, his supporters even adopted a new word, the adjective 'masculine', which as Gail

Bederman points out, did not come into general usage until 1890s." (Puttney 2001: 5) What is especially interesting in this context is the fact that Kingsley was also a proponent of British Israelism, a movement that regarded Great Britain as the "New Israel", the nation of the "Chosen Race", and regarded the colonial Empire as the realization of a divine will. As heroic figures of Greek mythology and the Bible were chosen to represent this imaginary, idealized Britain, any public performance featuring early Christian heroes weakened or indeed beheaded at the hands of women would be understood as a heretical and political act. In this context, the very idea of a revived Jewish princess responsible for beheading John the Baptist and playing with his severed head was an attack on the Christian masculinity of the nation.

> The rhetoric of national character was overwhelmingly one of masculinity, while the character of the English*woman* was defined by the perfection of those domestic and maternal qualities felt to be universally present in female nature. (Koritz 1994: 71; original emphasis)

The inflammatory article published in the *Imperialist* on January 26, 1918, and the text that appeared on February 16, 1918 with the title "Cult of the Clitoris", portrayed very specific dangers. Above all, they warned of Salome's "appropriation" by an all-female circle for purposes of feminine self-arousal and masquerades, while also denouncing the corruptive influence of illicit lesbian erotica and seduction on the war effort. Both texts concluded by voicing the respective authors' suspicions that the private performances of Wilde's play served only as the pretense for further acts of subversion.

The biblical and literary figures of Salome were not only intertwined with the intention to provoke impassioned criticism and defensive responses; the dancer Maud Allan was herself identified as the Jewish princess, despite the fact that famous pioneers of dance, such as Loïe Fuller, Isadora Duncan, Mata Hari and Ida Rubinstein, had also performed this role in earlier productions. The identification of Allan with a Jewish woman was no mere coincidence. For Wilde, Salome's ideal embodiment and his original Salome was the Jewish actress Sarah Bernhardt. In June 1892, Wilde started to rehearse his play with Sarah Bernhardt at the Palace Theatre in London:

> Within a month, the Examiner of Plays for the Lord Chamberlain denied his approval for its performance, as it represented biblical figures on the stage. Wilde's anger at this was extreme; indeed, he threatened to renounce his British citizenship and become a citizen of France. And for a moment, this

> British theatrical scandal linked the figures of Salome and Sarah Bernhardt. (Gilman 1993: 203)

While some critics emphasized Allan's "Americanness", nationality or ethnicity were of less concern to her audience than her "Oriental" *and* "Western" femininity. As has been mentioned before, Allan used characteristics of middle-class female spirituality and "Oriental" sensuality to position her performance in a liminal sphere between "good" and "bad" femininity. This was accomplished, at least in part, by the way in which Allan subjectively united the infantile, exhibitionist and visionary aspects of the material in her choreography. She succeeded in dissolving the rigidity of then-contemporary visions of the East, especially the dichotomy between a sensual and spiritual-mystical orient. Even as she attempted "to transform what was 'Eastern' into something 'Western', something 'erotic' into something 'spiritual'" (Walkowitz 2002: 14), she simultaneously reproduced the impression of the superiority of the West when it compares itself to the East. Thus Allan's barefoot dance supports the appearance of the Empire's superiority over the "Orient." Using her Canadian/North American body, she succeeded, as her positive reception in the media suggests, in transforming the assumed "vulgarity" of "Oriental dance" into artistic beauty. One critic writing in *The Times* shares the view of many others:

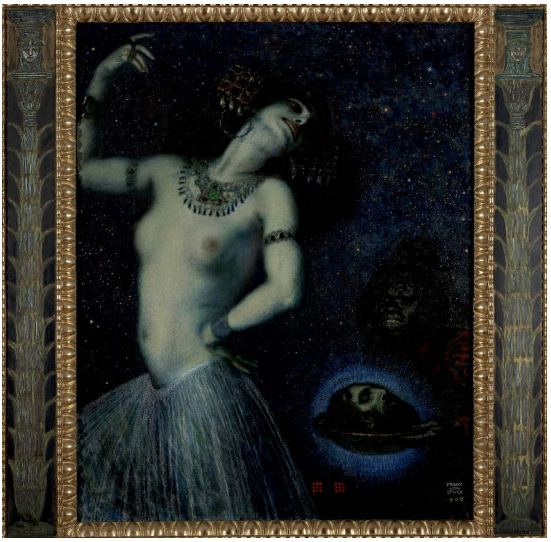
> Now it is obvious that the dancer [Maud Allan, U.B.] could make no movement or posture that is not beautiful, and in fact, her dancing as Salomé, though Eastern in spirit through and through, is absolutely without the slightest suggestion of the vulgarities so familiar to the tourist in Cairo or Tangier. (quoted in Koritz 1995:39)

In some respects, the depiction of Maud Allan in the London press oscillates between two extremes. On the one hand, she is demonic and hypersexual, a "white witch" and a vampire: "One moment she is the vampire […] next she is the lynx," wrote one reviewer of "The Vision of Salome,"

> [yet] always the fascination is animal-like and carnal […] Her slender and lissome body writhes in an ecstasy of fear, quivers at the exquisite touch of pain, laughs and sighs, shrinks and vaults, as swayed by passion […]. She kisses the head and frenzy come[s] upon her. She is no longer human. She is a Maenad sister. Her hair should be disheveled, her eyes bloodshot. (Cherniavsky 1991: 165)

One of the most impressive depictions of a demonized Salome is 1906 painting by Franz von Stuck, who is said to have been inspired not only by Wilde and Strauss alone, but by the expressive dance of Maud Allan. Some rumors even make her the model for his painting.

Fig. 16: Franz von Stuck "Salome" (1906), Lenbachhaus.



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Conversely, the Canadian was esteemed as an icon of pure, spiritual and "healthy" femininity, and not without good reason. After all, Allan's dance combined the most diverse and cosmopolitan of influences. Like Isadora Duncan, she was inspired not only by oriental but, above all, by Greek dance: "I have sought all my attitudes and movement," declared Allan in an interview with Raymond Blathwayt on July 18, 1908, "in the Art Galleries of Europe, on Etruscan vases and Assyrian tablets." (Allan 1908, quoted in Walkowitz 2002: 18) She was, however, also influenced by American popular dance, new gymnastics, body culture and strategies of expression devised by the French choreographer François Delsarte, who was then very popular in North America. Thus Allan certainly integrated thoughts and techniques of the life-reform movement into her Oriental dance: "Freedom through dance," as she writes in her private diary, can be achieved with "great strides, leaps and bounds,

uplifted forehead, and far spread arms." (Allan 1908, quoted in Cherniavsky 1991: 123) The particularly hybrid, cosmopolitan quality of her art allowed Allan to traverse the boundary between "popular" and "high" culture in her short but successful career: "[…] at the same time she violated the tacit rule that barred 'respectable' women from the public stage" (Koritz 1995: 31). Allan received her big break in 1907 when she was invited to perform in Marienbad before King Edward VII. The new dance, performed by a Canadian raised in California, certainly had an effect of seismic proportions on London culture. Judith Walkowitz writes:

> Her London performance enables us to track shifting conceptions of gender and the national body through spaces, moments, and [the, U.B.] center [*sic*.] that bordered the foreign, cosmopolitan, and proletarian district Soho. […] Allan's gestural system built on available constructions of corporality and subjectivity, but it gave unusual status to a self-pleasuring, embodied, and expressive female self and to the staging of the internal process of consciousness in public. (2002: 2)

1907 was also the year in which the Suffrage Societies staged their first mass demonstration in the streets of London in support of the enfranchisement of women. Many women, including some 1,500 "respectable women", now left the private spaces prescribed for them by political gender roles and burst into the public arena with force, visibility and violence. "In such a climate," as Koritz infers, "the public representation of an aggressively sexual figure such as Salomé would have a high ideological charge". (1995: 37)

A Feminist Salome?

Salome was not just a male creation: "[s]he was also an important resource for women performers and audiences, a vehicle for female self-expression and sexualized assertiveness." (Glen 2000: 98) Especially stars of European modern dance and of American popular theater featured the Dance of the Seven Veils, detached from its narrative context, as a solo piece. Salome's self-revelation set in motion the conquest of the stage by both avant-garde and burlesque dance artists, ranging from Ruth St. Denis and Ida Rubinstein to Anita Berger, and from Gertrude Hoffmann and Valeska Gert to Mae West and Gypsy Rose Lee. In sum, during this period London (and other European) theaters were

> […] a liberating arena for women. The stage was one of the few places where they could pursue and succeed in independent careers. […] [On the other hand, U.B.] The theatre's mixing of class and sexuality, and its susceptibility to the suspiciously new, combined to produce a threat to the moral status quo. (Hoare 1998: 29)

As women all across Europe began striking, singers, dancers, and choreographers bringing the male fantasy of the Oriental on stage were received with hostility. Evaluations by female avant-garde performers were also ambiguous: "'Jane Marcus sees Salomé's dance as the New Woman's art form', and yet she believes her dance to be as watered-down and curtailed as 'the tarantella danced by Nora in A Doll's House […]'." (Showalter 1985: 159) One of the first feminist attempts to transform Salome into a female subject and translate the "Oriental" and sexual exhibitionism into their own hybrid "Otherness" was ventured by the young Russian actress Ida Rubenstein.

In Europe, "Salomania" reached its zenith in the period of Allan's performances. Her middle-brow, spiritualized version of Salome's dance enjoyed 250 performances in 1908 at the Palace Theatre alone. Her stage appearances attracted more women than men. As the liberal *Daily Chronicle* reported in 1908, "at least 90 percent of the audience were ladies. 'It might have been a suffragist meeting […], the ladies were of all ages, well dressed, sedate'." (Walkowitz 2002: 17) In her cosmopolitan dance, Allan interpreted in new ways the fantasies associated with her and, in so doing, opened up

> [a] set of codes for female bodily expression that disrupted the Victorian conventional dichotomies of female virtue and female vice and pushed beyond such dualisms. Allan used the "Orient" as a register for female sensual expression, but she also built her dance from a range of other cultural forms, including American physical culture, theatrical posing, and modernist strategies of representations." (ibid: 6)

Did Maud Allen really succeed, however, in using the ambiguity of orientalism to escape the discursive prison that typically trapped the figure of the femme fatale and that of the "Beautiful Jewess"? The image of the homicidal, demonic dancer Salome had, already in the 14th century, been famously depicted on facades of European churches as the sinful incarnation of Synagoga, the antithesis of virtuous Ecclesia: "Innumerable churches of St. John depict Salome as the female embodiment of a diabolical Jewish evil, whether in stained-glass windows, sculptures or as the antagonist in stagings of the St. John Passion

performed on June 24th." (Hoven-Buchholz 2008: 374; translation Brunotte) As will be shown at the end of this chapter, in 1918 the "witch-hunt" trial of Maud Allan was based on misogynist, homophobic and antisemitic political paranoia. One especially scandalous detail of her production was the appearance on stage during the dance of the decapitated head of John the Baptist. Diana Cooper, a female audience member, wrote in her diary in 1908 that "[…] she was all but naked and had St. John's head on a plate and kissed his waxen mouth" (quoted in Showalter 1985: 162). The cultural association of Allan's Salome with suffragism was intensified in a "British [private] feminist production of Wilde's Salomé by New Stage Players at the Court Theatre on February 27 and 28 1911, unearthed by Judith Walkowitz" (Dierkes-Thrun 2011: 106).

As stated earlier, Salome was a role model, a symbol and mask for women; and this precisely because she was so "perverse", decadent and sexualized. That the Salome epidemic spread to fin-de-siècle America is therefore not surprising. As Glenn shows, the phenomenon of Salomania "provides a remarkably vivid example of the highly volatile interanimations (intersection) of race, ethnicity, and sexuality in early twentieth-century America" (2000: 100). In Europe, the Salome craze on popular stages, "marks a moment in dance history as white dancers used the mythical ['Oriental-primitive'] Salome as a vehicle to elevate barefoot-dance as a serious art form, a drama of the body" (Brown 2008: 178). Yet, as Koritz has explained, the appropriation of the oriental style did not mean that white Western women wanted to come into contact, let alone sympathize, with actual Middle Eastern or North African women. The situation was quite different in the United States, where women of color began to impersonate Salome and her dance. The most famous of these was the dancer and comedian Ada Overtone Walker. "With her version of Salome she claimed a right to black female self-representation and at the same time aligned herself with white modern choreographers and dancers" (Brown 2000: 181).

The Salome Affair in Court: The Pemberton-Billing Trial of 1918

In her autobiography *My Life and Dancing*, Allan seeks to create the self-image of a proponent of the conservative separate-spheres gender ideology. She used the discourse of "good" femininity and rejected all affiliations with women's suffrage. The same is true of her interpretation of the Salome story in "The Vi-

sion of Salome." She made the point particularly clear in the first part of her choreography: as in the biblical story, Salome's first dance before Herod "narrates the brutal (psychological) rape of a child by her stepfather and mother" (Böhme 1995: 379). The "Vision" then narrates the story of a second dance. For Allan, this dream dance is purely spiritual, full of beauty and "love." As if in a trance, the girl returns to the deserted scene of the terrible event and begins to dance, only now for herself, in the presence of the severed head. She relives all of the stages and emotions of the evening, only now subject to her own direction. The psychosexual "awakening" approximates a spiritual enlightenment. It leads on to a higher plane of religious awakening, which Allan clearly portrays as the triumph of purist Christianity over the sensuous, "bestial Jewish Orient":

> Now, instead of wanting to conquer, she wants to be conquered, craving the spiritual guidance of the man whose wraith is before her: but it remains silent! No word of comfort, not even a sign! Crazed by the rigid stillness, Salomé, seeking an understanding, and knowing not how to obtain it, presses her warm, vibrating lips to the cold lifeless ones of the Baptist! In this instant the curtain of darkness that had enveloped her soul falls, the strange grandeur of a power higher than Salomé has ever dreamed of beholding becomes visible to her and her anguish becomes vibrant. […] The Revelation of Something far greater still breaks upon her, and stretching out her trembling arms turns her soul rejoicing towards Salvation. (Allan 1908:127)

Nevertheless, for the audience, the half-naked body of the young woman remained the linguistic and performative medium of this spiritual awakening. Despite the emphasis on spirituality, the sexual overtones strongly influenced the reception of Allan's dance. An artistic interpretation of Salome portraying her as the victim of marital attrition rather than as a demonic perpetrator was neither shared nor understood by the London audience and critics. "When, in 1917, Maud Allan accepted the lead role in J.T. Grein's Salome production for the Independent Theatre Society in London (which specialized in a repertoire of controversial modern plays, especially Ibsen), […] neither Allan nor Grein seem to have expected trouble." (Dierkes-Thrun 2011: 108) The producer was Jack Thomas Grein, "a Dutchman who had become naturalized some twenty years before, […] and worked as the well-known dramatic critic of the *Sunday Times*. He now ran the Independent Theatre, which was a dramatic group with no theatre of its own specializing in producing plays considered 'modern', 'psychological' or 'decadent' – most of which were translated from the

German." (Kettle 1977: 16) In 1918 *Salome* was still considered explosive stuff. Wilde's play was banned, but Grein's performance took place in a private theater for an invited audience. Still, as Cherniavsky notes, "the decision to produce Salome in the spring of 1918 was politically unwise." (1991: 240) The private performance of Salome was the straw that broke the camel's back and provoked the slanderous and sexualizing article against Maud Allan in *Vigilante*, insinuatingly entitled "The Cult of the Clitoris" (Kettle 1977).

Against the backdrop of the World War I and the English cultural backlash mobilized by either homophobic or war hysteria, Allan's own non-mainstream interpretation of the figure of Salome could not prevail. On the contrary, the cultural imagination that created the sexually transgressive femme fatale combined with the living memory of Wilde's homosexuality and trial to stir up what amounted to a witch-hunt against Allan. In 1918, "the right-wing newspaper *The Vigilante* and its powerful lobby of conservative conspiracy theorists launched a vicious media attack against Allan, which led to the fateful events of the Pemberton-Billing Trial." (Dierkes-Thrun 2011: 109) As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Independent MP, founder of the Vigilante Society, and member of the Purity Movement, Noel Pemberton-Billing, initiated a campaign against Allan and her performance. For him, she (and Grein) were German spies who sought to infect Britain with homosexual and moral decadence. It was known that Maud Allan was invited to Downing Street by Margot Asquith, "whom her enemies all said was lesbian" (Kettle 1977: 18). However:

> He couldn't accuse Allan of sodomy, so he called the local village doctor, who furnished him with a certain anatomical term. The result appeared in the 16 February edition (1918) of the *Vigilante*, in a boxed paragraph under the heading in bold black type: "The Cult of the Clitoris." (Hoare 1998: 90)

The article under the heading referred to the conspiracy theory of a German (homo)sexual war strategy to infiltrate the English elite. Pemberton-Billing was convinced of the existence of a 'little black book' in the German Kaiser's personal possession containing the names of 47,000 English men and women, mostly liberal politicians and artists, who were willing to join or who had already joined this "perverse" circle. In the box under the heading "Cult of the Clitoris", the *Vigilante* reader was informed that:

> To be a member of Maud Allan's private performance in Oscar Wilde's *Salome* one has to apply to a Miss Valetta, of 9, Duke Street, Adelphi W.C. If Scotland

> Yard were to seize the list of these members I have no doubt they would secure the names of several of the first 47,000. (quoted in: Hoare 1998: 91)

It was the first time that a newspaper used such a salacious headline. Like the term "homosexuality" during the Eulenburg trial in Germany and Wilde's trial in London, the term "clitoris," a word previously used only in medical jargon, became known overnight and debated. Allan and her art fell victim to a cultural-moralist power game. She herself was victimized and both her art as well as Wilde's sexualized by a cultural discourse of "anomaly" and "perversion" (Foucault 1990 [1976]) that invented "deviant behavior" and stigmatized transgressive sexualities as a danger to society. When Grein and Allan saw the article, they immediately consulted their solicitors about bringing a libel case against Billing. As Michael Kettle (1977) has demonstrated with the help of detailed cross-examination transcripts, the trial, brandishing medical reports based on discourse from sexology like "sadism," "masochism and "fetishism," became a public stage for the "anomalization" (Foucault) of the defendants. New developments and terms in sexology, mainly from Richard Krafft-Ebing's book *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1894), were used to "cement the assumption that perverse art mirrored perverse minds and bodies and vice versa" (Dierkes–Thrun 2011: 114). This already started with the choice of the term "clitoris" in the sensationalist headline. Lucy Bland observes:

> From late eighteenth-century into early twentieth century, one of the most consistent medical characterizations of the anatomy of the lesbian was the claim of an unusually large clitoris. Not only was the clitoris associated with female sexual pleasure from reproductive potential, but lesbians were also assumed to be masculinised, and the supposed enlarged clitoris was one signifier of this masculinity. In presenting lesbians' bodies as less sexually differentiated than the norm – more masculine – it was inferred that they were atavists – throwbacks to an earlier evolutionary stage and thereby "degenerates". (1998: 184)

After lodging an accusation of libel against Pemberton-Billing on account of his "Cult of the Clitoris" diatribe, Allan was subjected to a personal witch-hunt. During the scandal-ridden public trial, it was not Pemberton-Billing who was the "accused" but the dancer Allan and her enactment of Salome. Not only was Allan identified with Wilde's Jewish Princess, but also Wilde's play (and person) became a central part of the trial. Maud Allan was even forced to read excerpts from the play aloud and commented upon them in court.

At first, Billing was concerned with emphasizing the openly sexual desire of Wilde's Salome. He highlighted it as neither innocent nor spiritual. During the third day of the trial, Dr. Serrell Cooke, a doctor who "had carefully studied Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*" (Kettle 1997: 149), became a part of the examination. He commented on the final scene of the drama when Salome has the head of John the Baptist in her hands. First the judge read from Wilde's play:

> Judge: "I love thee yet, Jokanaan, I love thee only… I am athirst for thy beauty; I love thee yet, Jokanaan, I love thee only… ; I am hungry for thy body, and neither wine nor fruits can appease my desire." Is there anything characteristic about that?
> Cooke: Simply love and a wish for sexual desire.
> Judge: But you say that is characteristic of sadism?
> Cooke: Yes, I should think it would be.
> Billing: She has the head in her hand at that time?
> Cooke: Yes, she has it just in front of her, and is addressing the head.
> Billing: The introduction of the head embodies sadism. And the presence of blood?
> Cooke: Exactly; it is the cruel association with blood; but there is something more than that. To clinch the sadism, she says: "I will bite thy lips… I will bite it with my teeth as one bites a ripe fruit.' […] Later in the play she said: 'Ah! I have kissed your mouth, Jokanaan, I have kissed your mouth. There was a bitter taste on thy lips. Was it the taste of love? But perchance it was the taste of love. Love has a bitter taste…"
> In the sadistic woman, particularly, what is known psychopathically as the love bite is exaggerated very often until blood is actually drawn, and with the tasting or the sucking of that blood, intense sexual excitement is going on until sexual orgasm is produced. (all quoted in Kettle: 155)

During cross-examination Allan insisted in vain that, in her understanding of the character as well as in her choreography, Salome's love for Jochanaan and her fascination with John's decapitated head was by no means a simple case of sexual perversion. On the contrary, as she suggested in her own address to the court, "the spirituality of the man has entered into the girl's heart and she wonders why this happens. That is my explanation." (quoted in ibid: 70)[3] For

3 Allan dedicated the entire last chapter of her autobiography, *My Life and Dancing* (1908), to misconceptions and misinterpretations concerning "The Vision of Salome."

Pemberton-Billing, who was allowed to take over Allan's cross-examination, she was already "guilty," if only because she knew the meaning of the term "clitoris." As a plea of justification for his article, he argued "that as a medical term, 'clitoris' would only be known to the 'initiated', and was incapable of corrupting moral minds" (Hoare 1998: 95). When Billing repeatedly returned to Salome's alleged sadism, Allan retorted: "I do not understand that she loved him in any other way than with quite pure love as any girl would love a person. […] Salome fell in love with the holiness and the beauty of this man […]." (ibid: 74) With no other obvious means of escape, however, Allan fell back on conventional oriental stereotypes to explain the "alienness" of the figure:

> But that is Oriental thought, is it not? […] It is quite uncustomary for a Westerner to understand the imagery of the Oriental people. […] I wish the Jury to understand that Salome lived in the Eastern world at a time when our rules were not in vogue, and when to see his head in front of her was nothing. I wish the Gentlemen of the Jury to know that Salome was not a perverse young woman. (ibid: 72 and 74)

Identified as the demonized and medically-diagnosed "pervert" and "mad" Salome, Allan was left with no room to maneuver. As in the case of Wilde, it was the "conflation of art with life and of artistic transgression with moral and sexual perversity – the old problem of mimesis" (Dierkes-Thrun 2011: 110). Consequently, Allan was charged with decadent irresponsibility and accused of every kind of sexual "aberrance", ranging from sadism, fetishism and exhibitionism to, of course, lesbian "perversion". Finally, both Wilde's Salome and Allan were expelled and banished from Anglo-Saxon culture: some accusations highlighted Allan's training in Berlin and Vienna. As Pemberton-Billing repeatedly told the court, "she introduced 'German' dancing into England, a type of dancing that was quite foreign to the British public before her performance." (quoted in Walkowitz 2002: 24) Others equated her "foreignness" with that of a "Jewess." One of Billing's especially antisemitic lines of argument culminated in the overtly racist description of Allan as a spy and supporter of "German-Jewish interests that promoted Salome productions and that were protected by the present government" (ibid). Again as in the case of Wilde, the spectacle of public trial was used to make an example of Allan. At the end the Jury agreed upon their verdict and found Noel Pemberton-Billing "Not guilty" (Kettle 1977: 266) upon the indictment. The courtroom drama in the Old Bailey of May/June 1918 held the attention of the press for six days: "There had not been a McCarthyite witch-hunt trial like this in England for long years – and

there has not, mercifully, been once since." (ibid: 311) What kept the London populace on tenterhooks just weeks after the Allied victory, and at the beginning of reconstruction in autumn 1918, harbored existential consequences for the artist who left the court morally "condemned." Once Maud Allan had lost the trial, and despite her once spectacular fame, her successful public career was over. She left England, fell into oblivion, and died in a Los Angeles convalescent home in 1956.

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