DIONYSOS

the literature and addiction triquarterly

Winter 1992 Vol. 3 No. 3

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EDITORIAL

Readers of Dionysos will notice a change in our title. In the "Notes and Comment" of the last issue, I announced that the "editorial board of Dionysos has been discussing the possibility of a title change, replacing 'intoxication' with 'addiction.' A number of readers feel, for example, that 'addiction studies' is the preferred generic designation of our critical and research concerns. We welcome comment on this possibility from our readers." The consensus is that the change is in order. One of the more tiresome conditions of the current literary scene, to put it mildly, is the making of heavy weather of terminology. But, it seems, as the scholastic philosophers have taught us, nominalism is always more fun than realism. Semantic preoccupation, for instance, was very much in evidence last April at the University of Sheffield Conference on Literature and Addiction. There we were much concerned with such refinements as: Is it culturally polite to designate a French heavy drinker an alcoholic? Can a Northumbrian boozer be redefined as a social drinker so that he will not be deprived of the cultural benefits of his pub? Why, in any event, employ such a cruel, mean-spirited term as "alcoholic" (after all, it's just an Americanism)? A blunt realist from San Francisco finally broke up the game by declaring, Call it what you want, it's still a hell of a problem. It is, nevertheless, interesting to note that "intoxication," derived from the Latin word for poison (toxicum: The Oxford English Dictionary "1. The action of poisoning"; "2. The action of rendering stupid, insensible, or disordered in intellect, with a drug or alcoholic liquor; the making drunk or inebriated") did not originally convey that meaning of ambivalent ecstasy I for one had claimed (or hoped?) for it. On the other hand, "addiction," from the Latin for bondsman (addictus: OED "1. A surrender, or dedication, of any one to a master"; "2b. The . . . compulsion and need to continue taking a drug as a result of taking it in the past [the stopping of which produces withdrawal symptoms]"), has a nice etymological ring to it. One also notices that addiction, beginning as the more specific word, has developed into a more general term than intoxication. It's perhaps also worth noting that the demon shifts from the substance ("poison") to to the slave ("bondsman"), thus keeping in line with recent clinical research. But, as my good friend from San Francisco says, either way, it's a hell of an interesting problem.

--RF

THE UNQUENCHABLE THIRST OF EDGAR ALLAN POE

Marty Roth

> You are a physician, and I presume no physician can have difficulty in detecting the drunkard at a glance. . . . You will never be brought to believe that I could write what I daily write, as I write it, were I as this villain would induce those who know me not, to believe. In fine, I pledge you, before God, the solemn word of a gentleman, that I am temperate even to rigor.
> Poe, to Dr. J. E. Snodgrass

> To use . . . ["The Black Cat," "The Tell-Tale Heart," or "The Fall of the House of Usher"] as proof, or even as an illustration of a mental condition brought on by the overuse of alcohol and opium, is a psychological crime.
> John W. Robertson, M.D.

Is Edgar Allan Poe an alcoholic yet? The biographical record has oscillated from simple confirmation to heated denial, but as of the most recent biography by Kenneth Silverman (1991) it is taken for granted as an established fact.[1] However, if Poe biography has accepted the alcoholism, Poe criticism steadfastly ignores it. Critics have not taken Poe's alcoholism into account because criticism does not yet have a proper place for addiction in literary and cultural studies--whether addiction to mood-altering substances, love, money, or work.[2] W. J. T. Mitchell's statement of the critical position on madness fits alcoholism precisely: "one can speak of madness as a physician or perhaps as a 'naive biographer,' but not as a critic; to speak of madness in Blake or any other artist is to renounce the claim to speak critically."[3] The title of Marion Montgomery's promising critical study, Why Poe Drank Liquor, refers, he tells us immediately, to the questions that criticism must not ask if it wants to be taken seriously.[4]

Criticism will surely not assent to Jean-Charles Sournia's matter-of-fact incorporation of the entire Poe canon under the sign of addiction (particularly given the fundamental ignorance of his translator):

> He himself was not only an alcoholic, but also abused opiates and died during an episode of delirium tremens at the age of forty. Poe's tales almost certainly describe visions of the fantastic experienced either while under the influence of alcohol or during attempts to withdraw from it. . . . "The Crow," for example, has been interpreted as an expression of the threatening and terrifying hallucination of animals (or

"zoopsies"), experienced by those in a state of alcoholic delirium.[5]

Criticism's secret fear is that the literature will simply become alcoholic documents. As George W. Eveleth wrote to Poe in 1848: "[I] was afraid, from the wild imaginations manifested in your writings, that you were an opium-eater" (Thomas and Jackson 716).

The only tale of Poe's that has been read even minimally through his alcoholism is "The Black Cat." Elizabeth Phillips argues that the pathology in most of the tales comes from Poe's medical knowledge and not his own experience but admits that "The Black Cat" includes a mixture of both. T. J. Matheson leaves the author in control of his alcoholism: "Poe was very likely responding to what he saw as a timely opportunity to produce his own account of an alcoholic personality. . . . He would also have seen that an alcoholic narrator could be a singularly appropriate example of perverse behavior."[6]

In his tale "Bon-Bon," Poe generalized the connection between cultural production and drink:

> there are few men of extraordinary profundity who are found wanting in an inclination for the bottle. Whether this inclination be an exciting cause, or rather a valid proof, of such profundity, it is a nice thing to say. Bon-Bon . . . did not think the subject adapted to minute investigation;--nor do I. (2: 128).

I do, however, and in the first part of this article, I want to reverse conventional critical practice and read alcohol and alcoholism into Poe's writings to the fullest possible extent. This will not be a subtle or a difficult task since the alcoholic subject matter is right under our noses; alcohol is a constant preoccupation of the Poe canon as it is of the practicing alcoholic. In the last part, I try to tease the secondary manifestations of this condition--the structures, attitudes, and linguistic behavior it provokes--out of the literature, particularly the critical writings. As a recovering alcoholic, I have an interest in a version of culture and art that has a place for addiction.

In both families and texts, secrets are often reformulated superficially as jokes. Some years ago, a student of mine saw the joke under his nose in the title "MS Found in a Bottle." The title has anchor in the tale, and reading it in reference to intoxication tells us in a sly way where the tale comes from, just as "A Cask of Amontillado" is a story about the lengths to which some men will go to get a drink.

A cursory glance at Poe's fiction reveals it to be saturated with reference to alcohol and addiction. The first episode in The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym[7], for example, describes a binge and a blackout, while the second episode moves in a roundabout way until, in the dark of a ship's hold, it too becomes an account of craving, stupor, and delirium. Pym begins at a party where both Arthur and Augustus are "not a little intoxicated." Augustus goes to sleep immediately after but starts up half an hour later, swearing he will not sleep with so beautiful a breeze blowing. Pym thinks he is drunk, but Augustus proceeds "to talk very coolly . . . saying he knew that I supposed him intoxicated, but that he was never more sober in his life." Pym is caught up in his excitement and thinks this mad idea one of the most "reasonable things in the world."

After they have been at sea a while, Pym notices that Augustus is greatly agitated, "his face was paler than any marble, and his hand shook so excessively that he could scarcely retain hold of the tiller. . . . The whole truth now flashed upon me. . . . He was drunk--beastly drunk--he could no longer either stand, speak, or see. His eyes were perfectly glazed." A fierce wind and a strong ebb tide are hurrying them "to destruction," and Pym is incapable of managing the boat. A series of harrowing experiences follows, until Pym passes out and wakes to find himself on board a whaling ship. Augustus, who is also saved, retains "not the faintest recollection of this event" (6-14).

In the next section, Pym decides to stow away aboard a whaling ship, and Augustus arranges to hide him in the afterhold. The hold is dark and labyrinthine, but eventually they come to a four by six foot box where food, drink (including "half a dozen bottles of cordials and liqueurs"), and other comforts are stored. After four days in the hold, Pym awakens "strangely confused" and finds his food petrified and his water almost gone. Suffering from great thirst, he falls into a stupor and has ghastly nightmares. Again he sleeps long and wakes "burning up with fever" and intolerable thirst. He finds himself often "in a state bordering on insensibility," and he likens this to the "perturbed sleep occasioned by opium." All he has left to drink (and this is a "morning-after" twist that would only occur to an alcoholic) is a gill of peach liqueur "at which my stomach revolted." So of course he drinks it: "As this reflection crossed my mind, I felt myself actuated by one of those fits of perverseness which might be supposed to influence a spoiled child in similar circumstances, and, raising the bottle to my lips, I drained it to the last drop and dashed it furiously upon the floor" (15-37).

For the purposes of this article, the center of the Poe canon would be a series of tales in which drink is pervasive and flows on a variety of levels. "The Angel of the Odd" is a "drunk

dream" of an angel made out of liquor. The tale opens with the narrator sitting by the fire after a heavy dinner, with a small table holding "miscellaneous bottles of wine, spirit, and liqueur" by his side. When he reads an account of a freak accident of a dart in a blow-tube fatally drawn into the lungs, he becomes enraged and rails at this as "the lees of the invention of some pitiable penny-a-liner, of some wretched concocter of accidents in Cocaigne." The angel of odd accidents suddenly appears and accuses the narrator of being "so dronk as de pig" for not seeing him. The angel is presented as an alcoholic hallucination: his voice is taken for a rumbling in the narrator's ears, "such as a man sometimes experiences when getting very drunk." His "body was a wine-pipe, or a rum-puncheon. . . . In its nether extremities were inserted two kegs, which seemed to answer all the purposes of legs. For arms there dangled from the upper portions of the carcass two tolerably long bottles with the necks outward for hands." Hallucination or not, the angel proceeds to get the narrator even drunker and a long train of absurd and impossible catastrophes follows (6: 103-35).

"King Pest" tells of a foray by two drunken sailors into a plague graveyard where they encounter or hallucinate a ghostly carousal. As in "Angel," the hallucination opens on a world constructed by alcohol. Most of the animated corpses at the party display the marks of terminal disease--the last stage of a dropsy, a "galloping consumption," and delirium tremens: "His frame shook, in a ridiculous manner, with a fit of what [Hugh] Tarpaulin called 'the horrors.'" Again, alcohol has unrestricted circulation through the narrative and this is dramatized in a final deluge "so fierce--so impetuous--so overwhelming--that the room was flooded from wall to wall." The two sailors manage to escape with a dead female apiece (2: 168-184). "The Cask of Amontillado" is a story of entrapment and murder covered by a ruse about needing to walk miles underground for a rare pipe of Amontillado. Like "King Pest," it is the story of two men who go into a graveyard to get drunk. It is set during the "supreme madness of the carnival," and the victim, Fortunato, is extremely drunk as it begins: his eyes are "two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication" (6: 168, 170).

Part of the craziness of "The Cask of Amontillado" (and of alcoholism itself) is the counterpointing of exquisite connoisseurship and excessive, sloppy drinking. In the last tale in this series, "Bon-Bon," a connoisseur trope takes us through the restaurateur's day: "In his seclusions the Vin de Bourgogne had its allotted hour, and there were appropriate moments for the Côte du Rhone. With him Sauterne was to Médoc what Catullus was to Homer. He would sport with a syllogism in supping St. Pévay, but unravel an argument over Clos de Vougeot, and upset a theory in a torrent of Chambertin." Bon-Bon is visited by the devil, who yearns to eat a philosopher's soul, and together they talk and drink and begin to argue. As they move through their second

and third bottles, Bon-Bon gets incoherently drunk and begins to hiccup violently. Bon-Bon finally offers his soul, which the devil as firmly declines:

> "Am supplied at present," said his Majesty.
>
> "Hic-cup!--e-h?" said the philosopher.
>
> "Have no funds on hand."
>
> "What?"
>
> "Besides, very unhandsome in me--"
>
> "Sir!"
>
> "To take advantage of--"
>
> "Hic-cup!"
>
> "Your present disgusting and ungentlemanly situation."

Bon-Bon attempts to throw a bottle at the devil but only brings the chandelier down on his head (2: 125-146).

Another tale, "Hop Frog," is the story of a practical joke played by a king on a jester dwarf who is allergic to liquor: it "excited the poor cripple almost to madness" (6: 219). Like other artists, Poe signs his tales with his public portrait: he is both Fortunato, a fool in motley with a racking cough who grows wild with drink, and Hop-Frog the jester who is maddened with one drink. The mythology of the single glass of liquor that is written into this tale and into Poe's life reflects, I believe, a notable feature of alcoholism, the reversal of tolerance, whereby the alcoholic who has previously been able to drink inordinately without showing signs of intoxication suddenly finds himself weaving and slurring after just one drink.[8] "The Angel of the Odd" comments wryly on this common story: "He concluded a long harangue by taking off his funnel-cap, inserting the tube into my gullet, and thus deluging me with an ocean of Kirschenwasser, which he poured in a continuous flood from one of the long-necked bottles that stood him instead of an arm" (6: 110). The "Angel" expresses a quantitative truth as well; since Poe was a binge drinker, it would always be a first drink after a period of abstinence that would set him off for weeks.

Poe's opium addiction is sometimes regarded as a literary affectation modelled on De Quincy (a common posture of the period), but Jeanette Marks, Hervey Allen, Bonaparte, and Alethea Hayter[9] claim he was also an opium addict, and Allen claims

opium, not alcohol, was his drug of choice (297-98). I am not interested in settling this question and dividing Poe's addiction into its proper parts, but the reading of alcohol versus opium has fascinating cultural reverberations.[10] Hayter, for example, finds the opposition to be trans-Atlantic, "the partisans of Poe's opium addiction being mainly French . . . the skeptics being mainly American" (132). And Bonaparte has organized Poe's addictions into a neat paradigm in support of his sexual fears: "Only chastity remained allowed and the means by which to maintain it intact; drinking abroad with cronies or opium, taken in secret, at home" (107). For Bonaparte, opium is to alcohol as the private sphere is to the public, as depression to mania, and homosexual to heterosexual.

Two of Poe's tales are framed by opium instead of alcohol, "The Oval Portrait" and "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains." The opening of the original version of "The Oval Portrait" is a long, anxious dissertation on opium use. The subject of "Ragged Mountains" is Augustus Bedloe, a "singularly tall," thin, stooping man of absolutely bloodless complexion, whose eyes were "abnormally large." His suffering is extreme, and his attending physician treats him with morphine "which he swallowed in great quantity" every morning before he set forth alone. The anecdote in the tale, which occurs one day when the morphine endued "all the external world with an intensity of interest," can also be likened to a hallucination: Bedloe walks into the Ragged Mountains of Virginia and out into Benares, India, at the time of the insurrection of Cheyte Singh in 1780 where he is fatally wounded (5: 163-176).

If the reading of the title "MS Found in a Bottle," that I referred to earlier still seems at all far-fetched, let me invoke a similar moment in Pym where Poe puns on his drinking: wine that the survivors of a shipwreck drink while abandoned on a floating hulk produces a "species of delirium" in Pym's three companions, and Augustus approaches Pym with a serious air "and requested me to lend him a pocket comb, as his hair was full of fish scales, and he wished to get them out before going on shore" (94). The exchange only makes sense if the reader happens to remember that the cause of the intoxication was a bottle of "port" wine.

The tale, "Thou Art the Man," ends with a physical pun--not a manuscript in a bottle but a body in a wine-case--in a story of drinking and murder where there is much wine in bodies and supposed blood is actually wine. The murderer, Charlie Goodfellow, was a close friend of the victim, Barnabas Shuttleworthy. Charlie is a great guzzler of wine and Shuttleworthy had promised him a "big box of Château Margaux." After the murder, a "monstrously big box" arrives, and Charlie invites "half the borough" in to help him drink the wine. The narrator gives the top a few taps with a hammer and it flies "suddenly and violently off, and, at the same instant, there

sprang up into a sitting position, directly facing the host, the bruised, bloody and nearly putrid corpse" of the murdered man himself (5:292, 305-06).

Alcoholism has traditionally been regarded as a failure of will power. That strength of will is so central and powerful a motif in Poe is not an unrelated fact. "Ligeia" can be read as an allegory of the will, the story of a majestic dead woman who wills her spirit back into the body of her successor. Two tales that feature mesmerism--"The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" and "Mesmeric Revelations"--can also be read as fantasies of the will: "There can be no more absolute waste of time . . . [than to doubt] that man, by mere exercise of will, can so impress his fellow, as to cast him into an abnormal condition" (5: 241).

The will is variously inflected in Poe, not only as will-power but also as willfulness; as Poe wrote in 1849, "Each person, in his own estimate, is the pivot on which all the rest of the world spins round" (13: 166). The idiom, self-will run riot, commonly used to describe alcoholic behavior, is an apt phrase for those monsters of arrogance and grandiosity that star in his tales: that "petty Caligula," Metzengerstein (2: 188), or William Wilson, who "grew self-willed, addicted to the wildest caprices, and a prey to the most ungovernable passions" (3: 300). In "Never Bet the Devil Your Head," one of the signs of Toby Dammit's growth in iniquity is his peremptory refusal, at eight months of age, "to put his signature to the Temperance pledge" (4: 216).

The universe of Poe's fiction is a catastrophic one, and its ontological currents are clearest in his adventure fictions like <u>The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym</u>. "MS Found in a Bottle," "Descent into the Maelstrom," and "The Pit and the Pendulum." In "MS," a furious storm erupts from total calm, and the narrator suddenly finds himself in a "whirlpool of mountainous and foaming ocean." He scuds "with frightful velocity" for five days and nights, loses the sun in a world of eternal night, and has a huge ship fall on him from a height "more than a hundred times her own altitude" (2: 4-7). The most available and sensible anchor for such structures in the case of the alcoholic author should, I think, be the catastrophic thinking and feeling that is a part of the alcoholic condition. The alcoholic mirrors his emotional unmanageability (his secret anxieties and obsessions about unlikely turns of fortune) by viewing the world as catastrophically unstable.[11] As Robert Shulman perceptively writes about "A Descent Into the Maelstrom": "In this story, Poe apparently transformed and universalized his own experiences of alcoholic fugue states--the dizziness, the roaring in the ears, the descent into unconsciousness, and the emergence, interestingly enough, through the agency of a water-cask"[12] (254).

Poe's catastrophic world moves to the rhythm of mood-swings: "At times we gasped for breath at an elevation beyond the albatross--at times became dizzy with the velocity of our descent into some watery hell" ("MS" 2: 6-7). Like his universe, his characters are also manic depressive: the "man of the crowd," for example, has two manners--one of high excitation and one of stupor; Roderick Usher's "action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision" to a "species of energetic concision" (3: 279); and William Legrand is "subject to perverse moods of alternate enthusiasm and melancholy" (5: 96). This is also a characteristic of Poe's artist generally: "The vacillation of which I speak is the prominent feature of genius. Alternately inspired and depressed, its inequalities of mood are stamped upon its labors" (16: 273).

Poe's aesthetic is manic-depressive as well. In addition, it is an aesthetic of craving, thirst and hangover. At the center of "The Poetic Principle," for example, there is "a thirst unquenchable" which "belongs to the immortality of Man" (14: 273).[13] That, however, is only half of it, for the craving and thirst coexist with an aesthetic of rigid control, and this paradox is played out in the most scandalous theoretical problem in Poe, the incompatibility between "The Poetic Principle" (1848) and "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846), which are both offered as Poe's last word on creativity. One is a version of poetic creation as a burst of ecstatic rapture and the other a depressing account of artistic production as a problem in ratiocination.

The habits and attitudes written into Poe's fiction and rhetorically dramatized in his criticism constitute a virtual grammar of alcoholic traits: a mania for control, arrogance, grandiosity, perfectionism, paranoia, competitiveness and envy, self-pity, and, above all, self-destructiveness or perversity.

There is a terrible insistence in Poe's work that utter intellectual control is possible and that he is utterly in control: in one of his Marginalia, for example, he writes, "It is the curse of a certain order of mind, that it can never rest satisfied with the consciousness of its ability to do a thing. Still less is it content with doing it. It must both know and show how it was done" (16: 40); and in another he reacts to the adage that certain thoughts are beyond the compass of words: "For my own part, I have never had a thought which I could not set down in words, with even more distinctness than that with which I conceived it" (16: 88). His one overt temperance or anti-temperance tale, "The Black Cat," is very much about the control of narrative, and generally his fictions are either about control or loss of control (the meaning of those tales set in a physically or emotionally catastrophic universe). This is another way of identifying the canonical split in Poe: the tale

of terror shows his heroes out of control; the tales of ratiocination are grandiose delusions of total control.

The terms that comfort Poe are theory and logic. Every topic is susceptible to both logic and theory, and he is an expert in every topic: he has, or invents, theories about everything. In a review of Thomas Moore, he claims that any seemingly original poetic effect can be parsed into its constituent sources: "The wildest and most vigorous effort of mind cannot stand the test of this analysis" (10: 62). Poe will not allow anything to be probable; he needs it to be demonstrably true. His critical judgments all have the force of logical demonstrations: "That incongruity is the principle of all nonconvulsive laughter, is to my mind as clearly demonstrated as any principle in 'Principia Mathematica'" (Marginalia 16: 40); "There is always something new under the sun--a fact susceptible of positive demonstration, in spite of a thousand dogmas to the contrary" (10: 123).

Poe's mania for control is also expressed as grandiosity; he insists that only he may demonstrate such intellectual mastery, that he has no rivals: "one peculiarity [about William Godwin] which we are not sure that we have ever seen pointed out for observation" (13: 92); "In all commenting upon Shakespeare, there has been a radical error, never yet mentioned" (12: 226); "How thoroughly--how radically--how wonderfully has 'Undine' been misunderstood" (Marginalia 16: 48); "That punctuation is important all agree; but how few comprehend the extent of its importance!" (Marginalia 16: 130). This was the attitude exposed in Thomas Dunn English's temperance novel, 1844: "Do you see that man standing by the smiling little woman in black, engaged, by his manner, in laying down some proposition, which he conceives it would be madness to doubt, yet believes it to be known by himself only?" (Thomas and Jackson 663).

Such comments betray an intense competitiveness. At the end of "The Purloined Letter" and the beginning of "The Cask of Amontillado," we are told that the victor in a contest cannot savor his victory unless his victim knows who it is that has vanquished him. Poe is involved in a philosophical war with everybody--even himself (the notorious instance of this would be the tension between "The Poetic Principle" and "The Philosophy of Composition"). Everything that is difficult or impossible for anybody else is simple for him: "Now, all this seems to be the simplest thing in the world, and the only wonder is how men professing to be scholars" [could act so irrationally] (Marginalia 16: 73); "It seems to us little less than a miracle that this obvious point should have been overlooked" (12: 227). This trait is written into the fiction primarily through the figure of the detective, C. Auguste Dupin.

This unique logicality is one face of Poe's perversity in

that the proofs are so often the very opposite of common opinion. The figure of the detective both in the fiction and the criticism expresses a paranoid belief that truth is the opposite of what everyone accepts it as or what tradition says it is. It is often very precise perversity, as in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue": "the facility with which I shall arrive, or have arrived, at the solution of this mystery, is in the direct ratio of its apparent insolubility in the eyes of the police" (4: 169).

The narrator of "The Purloined Letter" discovers that Dupin is an agent of reversal: "You surprise me . . . by these opinions, which have been contradicted by the voice of the world. You do not mean to set at naught the well-digested idea of centuries" (6: 43). And in a grandiose version of this pose, Poe amuses himself "by endeavoring to fancy what would be the fate of any individual gifted, or rather accursed, with an intellect _very_ far superior to that of his race." Among other things, Poe notes that "since his opinions and speculations would widely differ from those of _all_ mankind--that he would be considered a madman, is evident" (16: 165).[14] In another _Marginalia_, a "flippant pretender to universal acquirement" is allowed to dazzle a large company "most of whom are profoundly impressed by his knowledge." He is particularly witty at the expense of a modest young gentleman who keeps silent and "finally, leaves the room as if overwhelmed with confusion" with the pretender laughing after him. Soon the young man returns, followed by a footman carrying an armful of books. He quotes back at the pretender the authorities he himself cited "each by each," refuting them all in turn (16: 142-3).

Perversity is Poe's major subject matter. One cannot officially declare even a trait as seemingly proper to alcoholism as perversity to be a necessary sign of the condition, but in a writer who is alcoholic and who is also insistently perverse, the alcoholism is a better ground for the perversity than existential metaphysics or romantic irony. Perversity is the attitudinal form of self-destructiveness, and that is commonly regarded as a primary symptom of alcoholism. On the surface of Poe's writing, this trait appears as tantalizing or teasing, but within the fiction it is a faculty working toward individual self-destruction, as in the repeated ending where a successful criminal is perversely prompted to give himself away to the police.[15]

Addiction studies are poised between two unacceptable extremes--one which allows too little to be explained by the alcoholism of the author and another which explains everything by it. At some future time, addiction studies may dispense with the concept of an alcoholic personality (as contemporary readings are learning to dispense with authors) but at this preliminary stage it still seems to be a necessary fiction. It may, indeed, be the

it still seems to be a necessary fiction. It may, indeed, be the return of the author, as Clifford Siskin suggests, a diseased recycling of the Romantic genius.[16] The notion of an alcoholic personality has come increasingly under attack in the clinical area, and it is, admittedly, hard to sustain. There is a deep and confusing circularity both in clinical experience and in literature between the construct of an alcoholic personality and symptoms of unmanageable, often abusive and self-destructive behavior that circulate through alcoholism. The construct keeps totalizing itself, threatening to pull every anti-social impulse, every pathological trait, into its whirl. The addictive personality is as cunning and baffling as the "disease" of alcoholism itself, which is either, chameleon-like, able to impersonate all other pathological structures and systems or, conversely, is the master disease of civilization.[17] To repudiate this construct because it lacks the firmness of clinical truth is to play the same game that civilization has traditionally played to protect its favorite alcoholic sons.[18] Earl Freed allows the concept of the alcoholic personality to exist, quite sensibly, not as a scientific paradigm but as "an intuitive clinical judgment, based upon experience, exposure to alcoholics, extrapolations of theory, and some data from research" (8).

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NOTES

[1] Studies which confirm Poe's alcoholism and addiction are Emile Lauvrière, Edgar Poe: Sa Vie, et Son Oeuvre (Paris: F. Alcan, 1904); Charles Goudiss, M.D., "Edgar Allan Poe: A Pathological Study," Book News Monthly, 25 (August 1907): 801-04; John W. Robertson, Edgar Allan Poe, A Study (New York: Haskell, 1970 [1921]); Marie Bonaparte, The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho-Analytic Interpretation (London: Imago, 1949); Elizabeth Phillips, "Mere Household Events: The Metaphysics of Mania," Edgar Allan Poe: An American Imagination (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat, 1979): 97-137; Kenneth Silverman, Edgar A. Poe: Mournful and Never-Ending Remembrance (New York: Harper, 1991). As for the facts themselves, The Poe Log: A Documentary Life of Edgar Allan Poe, 1809-1849 (Dwight Thomas and David K. Jackson [Boston: Hall, 1987]) contains a steadily unfolding account of Poe's drinking career.

The reluctance to admit the overwhelming fact of Poe's alcoholism is bound up in cultural shame. Even those who do admit it engage in strategies to exempt the alcoholic genius and to protect him from the force of real or imagined societal disapproval. One such strategy can be seen in Robertson, Lauvrière, and William Howard ("Poe and His Misunderstood Personality," The Arena [Boston, XXXI, Jan/June 1904]: 78-83), whereby Poe suffers from dipsomania or binge-drinking and not

alcoholism per se, and this distinction apparently makes a world of difference: Howard quotes from Poe's 1848 letter to George W. Eveleth and claims that it is "the first accurate statement we have of the definition of the disease dipsomania as distinguished from the vicious habit of drunkenness." Because Poe's clear distinction between the two has gone unheeded, "it remained for the present generation of scientists to take away the stigma of drunkenness too long attached to the memory of Edgar Allen [sic] Poe" (78). This is how the term dipsomania functions in discussions of literary addicts, and the model for this version of the artist as drinker in Poe may be Augustus Barnard in The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym (New York: Hill, 1960) who is so drunk that he is taken for sober.

Poe's alcoholism is such an absorbing topic that we are in danger of ignoring his obsessive gambling. According to Thomas Good Tucker, "Poe's passion for strong drink was as marked and as peculiar as that for cards" (in Thomas and Jackson 69); see also Eric Mottram, "Law, Lawlessness and Philosophy in Edgar Allan Poe," in Robert A. Lee, Edgar Allan Poe: The Design of Order (Totona, N.J.: Barnes, 1987) 160. Toby Dammit, in "Never Bet the Devil Your Head," is ruined by a fever for gambling, a habit which has "'grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength'" (Edgar Allan Poe, The Complete Works, ed. James A. Harrison, 17 vols. [New York: Crowell, 1902] 4: 216).

[2] An exception to this statement is an article by T. J. Matheson, "Poe's 'The Black Cat' as a Critique of Temperance Literature," in Literature and Altered States of Consciousness, Part I, Special Issue of Mosaic 19.3 (Summer 1986): 69-80.

[3] "Dangerous Blake," Studies in Romanticism. 2.3 (Fall 1982): 411.

[4] (La Salle, IL: Sherwood Sugden, 1983) 11.

[5] Jean-Charles Sournia, A History of Alcoholism (Oxford: Balckwell, 1990) 87-88.

[6] Like "The Black Cat," "The Man of the Crowd" is supposedly based on a sketch of gin-shops by Charles Dickens, and it also wraps itself in the language of the temperance tract--"Suddenly a corner was turned, a blaze of light burst upon our sight, and we stood before one of the huge suburban temples of Intemperance--one of the palaces of the fiend, Gin" (4: 144). G. R. Thompson has noted that the tale may be read as the "deluded romanticizing of a tipsy narrator, who perversely attributes a romantic significance to an old drunk who wanders from bistro to bistro" (in Jonathan Auerback, The Romance of Failure: First-Person Fictions of Poe, Hawthorne and James [New York: Oxford, 1989] 28). The two major classes observed in detail by the narrator are gamblers and drunkards.

[7] The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym (New York: Hill, 1960).

[8] See Virginia Ross, "Descent into Despair: William Styron's Darkness Visible." Dionysos 2.1, 40-43. Poe's cousin Neilson attested, "I think I can demonstrate that he passed by a single indulgence, from a condition of perfect sobriety to one bordering on the madness usually occasioned by long continued intoxication" (Robertson 121). N. P. Willis stated that after "a single glass of wine," although there was no appearance of intoxication, "his will was palpably insane" (Julian Symons, "Rescuing a Reputation," TLS, 24 Feb., 1978, 222).

[9] Jeanette Augustus Marks, "The Poetry of the Outcast," Genius and Disaster: Studies in Drugs and Genius (New York: Adelphi, 1925); Hervey Allen, Israfel: The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe (New York: Farrar, 1934); Alethea Hayter, Opium and the Romantic Imagination: Addiction and Creativity in De Quincey, Coleridge, Baudelaire and Others (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Crucible, 1988).

[10] For an excellent summary of the possible play of opium in the fiction, see Hayter, 136ff.

[11] It is not accidental that Buster Keaton, the silent movie clown who was also an alcoholic, traded in catastrophic situations to a greater extent than the others.

[12] Robert Shulman, "Poe and the Power of the Mind," ELH, 37.2 (June 1970): 254.

[13] See also "The Domain of Arnheim" (6: 188), a review of Longfellow's Ballads (11: 71) and of R. H. Horne's "Orion": "the origin of Poetry lies in a thirst for a wilder Beauty than Earth supplies . . . [and] Poetry itself is the imperfect effort to quench this immortal thirst" (11: 256). In "The Power of Words," this formula is repeated for science: The sole purpose of Aidenn is to "afford infinite springs, at which the soul may allay the thirst to know which is forever unquenchable within it" (6: 140). But it is also an aesthetic of tranquilization: "Poetry, in elevating, tranquilizes the soul" (13: 131); see also Marginalia 16: 88.

[14] "It is more than probable that from ten readers of the Culprit Fay, nine would immediately pronounce it a poem betokening the most extraordinary powers of Imagination. . . . but the greater part of it is utterly destitute of any evidence of imagination whatever" (8: 292-3); "That our definition will necessarily exclude much of what, through a supine toleration, has been hitherto ranked as poetical, is a matter which affords us not even momentary concern" (11: 75-6); "In a word, while the Prosodies, with a certain number of accents, express precisely nothing whatever, I, with scarcely half the number, have

expressed everything" (14: 252).

[15] The "Washington trip ['a drunken spree'] is the clearest example of how Poe always managed to spoil any chance of success" (Bonaparte 110).

[16] Clifford Siskin, The Historicity of Romantic Discourse (New York: Oxford, 1988) 183.

The stabilizing influence of an alcoholic personality behind the writing is merely one of several assumptions in regard to the alcoholic that I make in this article. The alcoholic I write about is also male. I believe that alcoholism is gendered and that it reproduces the politics of patriarchal imperialism.

[17] The verdict on the alcoholic personality is a compromised negative, like the "no and yes" figure in Donald Gallant's discussion: "There is no single psychodynamic formulation or specific type of personality that can explain the development of alcoholism. . . . However, in more cases, the denial mechanism plays a major role"; and "It is generally accepted that no typical character or personality pattern is shared by all alcoholics. However, exaggerated dependency needs and difficulty in expressing anger appropriately are quite common" (Alcoholism [New York: Norton, 1987] 35, 144). This is a complex that Earl X. Freed had already addressed: "I express my regrets to those who sought to clarify ambiguity and who may interpret these contents as adding to their irresolution by saying both yes and no" (An Alcoholic Personality? [Thorofare, N.J.: Slack, 1979] ix).

[18] In a recent article on Ben Jonson, Peter Hyland is able to turn the concept against Edmund Wilson who had "unfairly" charged Jonson with alcoholism: "If we look at the various personality deficiencies that accompany alcoholism, as outlined, for example, by Howard Jones in his book Alcoholic Addiction, we can find little to confirm Wilson's view. Although it may be an interesting area of study, there seems no reason to believe that Jonson was fixated on his mother, lacked personality, or felt inferior or socially inadequate" (Peter Hyland, "'The Wild Anarchie of Drink': Ben Jonson and Alcohol," in Literature and Altered States of Consciousness. Part I, Special Issue of Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature, 19(3), Summer 1986: 26-7).

I COULD DRAW YOU A PICTURE

George F. Wedge

One night, the man--whose name I now know, but whom I have referred to for years as "the man down the alley"--asks me to take him to the hospital. He has asked others before, then balked at the last possible moment. Certain that I cannot do the job alone, I persuade him to let a friend drive us both the twenty-odd miles involved. It is in the cards, my more experienced friend tells me, that our pigeon will take flight, but he agrees to drive us--perhaps because he thinks it time for me to learn more about our common illness, but more probably because one harbors always the hope that one small new ingredient may change the savor of the stew.

While we wait for my friend in my car by the phone booth, the man drifts into sleep in the middle of a sentence. I don't know whether it is better to keep him awake so that he will remember what we are doing or to take a chance and let him have the rest he needs. In the end, my indecision becomes a decision of itself, as frequently happens, and I sit there thinking about him.

We used to live in a house at the side of an alley that went the full length of the block, and on spring and summer evenings after supper, I would see him passing by on the way from the next block north to a shopping center a block further south. I admired the way he looked. His shoulders are still as broad as then, even though he does not hold them straight and balanced on the fulcrum of his swagger. But what struck me then, even from a distance, was his lean, clean hands, lightly accented by the way he turned the unbuttoned cuffs of his white shirt back just above the wrist--somebody must have starched those cuffs, the way they stood out. I have since been told that he may just have had the most skillful hands in his line of work in the whole state.

One day, while we were still living by the alley, when I answered a knock at the door, there was a disreputable old man standing there who looked a bit like him--enough like him, I thought, to be perhaps his father. It was June, but he was wearing a winter jacket and one of those lined caps that have earflaps you tie together on top. He wanted a cigarette, clutched at the one I offered with dirty, nicotine-stained fingers, and released more than smoke into my face as I lighted it for him. Could I spare a dollar for him to go to his father's funeral?

Somehow the question brought things into focus for me. Overnight, as it were, the man had become his own father. Fascinated, I fumbled a bill from my pocket and handed it to him. And that had been our only face-to-face encounter until this

night when he asked me at first just to drive him home, and then, when we got there, to drive him to the hospital.

Now, when my friend arrives, the man says he has to go home again to let his mother know where he is going. But when we get there, he says that we can talk to her while he goes for a little walk. He gets out of the car and heads straight for a large spirea bush on the neighboring lot. He pushes back some branches, stoops down, then kneels there in the darkness, groping about in still darker regions under that immense shadow.

"Looking for his bottle," my friend says.

"He looked there when we stopped earlier," I say. "I don't think there is one."

"If he really wants to go to the hospital," my friend says grimly, "he doesn't need one." But he continues to sit beside me until I give an answering nod. Then he gets out of the car and stands on the lawn, silhouetted by one of those yard lights people use to chase away the darkness.

It is an eternity, the time my friend stands there while the man crawls among those cruel branches, unmindful of light or dark or friend or foe. Then he realizes that my friend is standing there and scrambles to his feet.

"You go on," the man says. "It's all over now. I don't need you or anybody." The branches have set his hat--one of those straw cowboy affairs--askew, and the vigor of his gestures causes it to fall to the ground. "You just go on!" He is looking straight at my friend, but his hands continue to grope about, as if the air between them were the ground.

He stands there, bewildered, while my friend crosses to him, retrieves the hat, and holds it out to him. "C'mon," my friend says, in a voice as stern as his face, yet gentle, "Let's go!"

The groping hands meet the brim of the hat, and the man straightens up for an instant. "Hell, yes," he says. "Let's go!" He stares at the hat and starts to lift it to his head, then stops. "I won't need this where I'm going," he says. And he flips it surely in an arc so that it rests gently on one of the branches of the bush.

During the long drive to the hospital, he and I talk while my friend drives.

"I saw three angels once," he says at one point. "By my aunt's car, it was." He looks at me for reassurance and must see through my attempt at a noncommittal display of interest. "I'd tell you more about another time, but you wouldn't believe me

anyway. You'd think I'm crazy.

"I don't think you're crazy."

"Well, you will. Anybody would. I'll tell you, but you'll think I'm crazy." He gazes straight into the windshield, as if talking to his reflection. "It was when I went to my aunt's after I got out of jail. Not the same time I saw the angels. Another time, when I went right up to her door and knocked."

"You know how it is," he says, looking at me again. "How there's a screen and then a door inside? Well, it was the screen door. I knocked on the screen door."

He is neither musing nor, for the moment, drunk, but the words halt, and he stares into the windshield again, silent for several beats of the tires on those little ridges in the highway. "All of a sudden," the man says, "He was there, standing between the screen and the door. The door had never opened at all. 'What do you want?' He said. And I said, 'I don't want to go to jail no more.' That's what I said. 'I don't want to go to jail no more.'"

The man looks deep into my eyes, "And He said, 'O.K.' And He was gone--just like that."

I know that my face is wearing the same expression it wore that day I fumbled for a bill in my pocket and that I don't need to say anything.

"So when my aunt opened the door and said, 'What do you want?' I said,'I don't want nothin'.' and I ran away."

"That would scare anybody," I say.

"You bet it would! I was scared silly." He looks away again, and his voice is muffled as he says, "Do you believe it?"

"I believe you."

"But I saw Him. Jesus Christ. I could draw you a picture--just how he looked. He wore this long shirt. . . ." The man's words hang uncertainly in the air as he draws his hands down along his body from his shoulders almost to his knees and then looks hard at the hands themselves, seeming to forget what he was doing. He is still looking at his hands, not at me, as he continues, "Well, I could draw you a picture. You see?"

"Yes," I say. "I do."

"And He said, 'O.K.'!" The man's voice is now very firm. "You write that down," he said. "You just write that down."

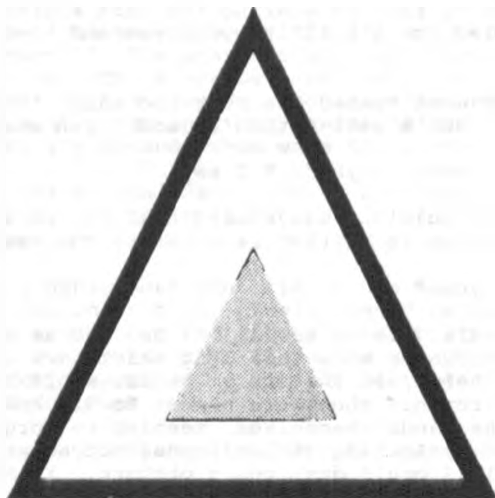
At the hospital, he explains that he wants any program but detoxification. And maybe, he suggests, they can fix his teeth? And after the physical examination, the doctor explains to my friend and me that the next "program" won't start until early next month. They can't, we are told, admit him to detox because he says he's only had three beers.

My friend says, "I haven't seen him sober in the last three years."

And the doctor says, "Well, I believe that too."

So he is put on the waiting list for the program. Maybe in two weeks or a month his number will come up. Maybe he will go. We are the same age, the man and I, and I have seen him when he was straight and tall and looked younger than I. We traveled the same road a distance together, and he has shown me the end I did not reach, groping in the air for solace.

I could draw you a picture.



APOCALYPTIC VISIONS, ALCOHOLIC HALLUCINATIONS, AND MODERNISM: THE (GENDERED) SIGNS OF DRINKING AND DEATH IN UNDER THE VOLCANO

Christine Ramsay

Signs organize, shape, and structure the world for us, making it a stable and predictable phenomenon. According to contemporary theoretical semiology, this structuring process is highly dependent on the faculties of speech and vision. In semiology, signs are said to emerge from the common use of recognizable and repeated forms made available and fixed through the configuratory powers of language (oral and written) and the gaze--the process that Roland Barthes calls "social usage added to pure matter."[1] Human consciousness can thus be theoretically understood as the history of making signs, of structuring and defining ourselves within the material limits of space and time: the fixing of signs and the idea of beginnings and endings secure consciousness for us by putting historical boundaries on space and time. This securing of consciousness, or, in Frank Kermode's formulation in "Apocalypse and the Modern," this "plotting of history,"[2] has been the function of apocalypse in the Christian world. As the grand sign system (or visionary language) that has traditionally fixed Western space and time, the Biblical apocalypse sets up the cultural parameters of what we look at and how we look at it. Apocalyptic thinking is thus central to the historical drama of Western consciousness and its struggle to secure fixed signs, stability of meaning, even spiritual grace. In the Revelation of John, the end of this world means harmony, love, and freedom from conflict in the next. Perpetual succor at the waters of life is the promissory vision: "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22.1).

But, to our contemporary Western sensibility--steeped more in the pluralist spirit of a complex Modern culture[3] than in the monist spirit of God and the Lamb--this singular vision of the heavenly stability of perpetual succor achieved through faith in Christian salvation and the Word is a wish, a fantasy, an illusion. Why? Because it is premised on what is now considered an impossible escape from an essentially destabilized world of signs in endless production--a "Modern" world where traditional historical values are in crisis, truth is relative, realities are multiple, and human consciousness is dialogical, energized, at "play" (Quinones 11). In Modern and Modernism Frederick Karl defines this world in terms of Alfred Wallace's principle of dynamic energy:

> Basic to Wallace's conception of dynamism was the flow of information and energy deriving from discoveries in nearly all fields of knowledge, in the natural sciences such as physics, evolution, genetics, and astronomy, as well as in the social

sciences.[4]

Indeed, developments in both the sciences and the humanities in the early 20th century began to posit meaning as no longer stable; rather, meaning came to be understood as having its basis in conflict, contradiction, ambiguity, and relativity. These changes in the conceptualization of meaning necessarily entailed changes in the conceptualization of language.

For Karl, meaning in modern culture is "profoundly connected to the reordering of our sense of time and space through the use of new languages" (13). Since traditional forms of language can no longer define what we mean,[5] he argues, modern writers abandon language as an agent of "analysis" and "description" in favor of using it idiosyncratically, in its "new role as agent of perception" (16). Fragmentation, stream of consciousness, spatial collage become the specific hallmarks of a literary modernism that knows and works to show the universe as relative and "bewilderingly problematic."[6] For the modernist author, the renewal and rebirth promised to Christians in Revelation cannot ultimately "win" the struggle for meaning because modernism teaches that they simply cannot be conceived of by human consciousness apart from their opposites. Struggling with the traditional sign system of apocalyptic thinking, then, and applying the insights of modernism, renewal and rebirth are rewritten by modernists as necessarily predicated on decay and death. Where meaning is now clearly based in conflict, contradiction, ambiguity, and relativity, the end is the enabling condition of the beginning, as the beginning is the enabling condition of the end. Paradoxically, ends propel beginnings forward, into action, and so, inevitably, to their ends. Realizing this, the modernist retires rationalism (binary logic and cause-effect linearity) in favor of dynamism, circularity, instability, and flux.

In Modernism. Peter Faulkner captures well the implications of modernism for literary form:

> Modernism is part of the historical process by which the arts have dissociated themselves from nineteenth-century assumptions, which had come in the course of time to seem like dead conventions. These assumptions about literary forms were closely related to a particular relationship between the writer and his readers--on the whole a stable relationship in which the writer could assume a community of attitudes, a shared sense of reality. (1)

In this century, modernist writers like Malcolm Lowry in Under the Volcano and D. H. Lawrence in Apocalypse[7] rethink the "shared

sense of reality" engendered historically by the biblical apocalypse and its signs. In Apocalypse. Lawrence complains that Revelation is a pathetic attempt to allow men to deny and escape the essentially dialectical nature of human consciousness and the cosmos. The cyclical nature of time and the open-endedness and transmutability of meaning (embodied for Lawrence by the sliding signs, myths, and rituals of pagan life) are fixed by the totalizing vision of John of Patmos: "God would no longer tell his servant what would happen for what would happen was almost untellable. He would show him a vision" (32). In Lawrence's formulation, Revelation and its static visions reduce the dynamic cosmos to a prison that seeks the death of the vital and conscious human body on earth and lusts for the illusory happy end: the "unearthly triumph" (32). The potentially invigorating signs of the apocalypse become part of a closed book. Lawrence's challenge to the fixed and ordered vision of the end in the apocalypse, and his call for a return to the vitality and sensuality of the Dionysian, are fundamentally modernist gestures. Further, modernism's obvious concern with the liberating potential of both apocalyptic visions and alcoholic hallucinations represents an ethic and an aesthetic that, as we will see, Malcolm Lowry is equally predisposed to develop and embrace in his work. The fixed and ordered visions of Revelation thus transmogrify into the "metamorphoses of dying and reborn hallucinations" in Under the Volcano (130).

Under the Volcano is a text which takes up the systems and meaning of the Christian apocalypse into modernist literary discourse by plotting the signs of drinking and alcohol (the "water of life," the Dionysian) in dialogical terms of beginnings and endings, rebirth and death, renewal and decay. In Under the Volcano the hallucinations of the alcoholic protagonist Geoffrey Firmin are laid in palimpsest over the visions of death and rebirth generated in the biblical apocalypse. The difference is that the Consul does not transcend to the illusory, everlasting waters of life but drinks himself dog-bone dry. The rupture in human consciousness represented by modernism causes Lowry to reject Revelation as a foundation text of our culture. Using signs of drinking and the end from the apocalypse, in concert with pagan images from the Jewish cabala, he imagines the end of the alcoholic drinker Geoffrey Firmin. Thus, the "end of the world" in the revelation of John of Patmos becomes the "end of an individual human consciousness" (and even the end, I will argue, of a broader "patriarchal consciousness") in the modernist writing of Malcolm Lowry.

I. Apocalyptic Visions, Alcoholic Hallucinations, and Modernism

According to Frank Kermode and Thomas Gilmore,[8] modernism is the intimate of both apocalypse and alcohol. In "Apocalypse and the Modern" Kermode argues that the modern is always essentially

apocalyptic in its abandonment of the comfort and support of old ways of knowing (84). Like the biblical apocalypse, the modern cries "away with the veil, in with the truth." The difference, however, is that for the modern, truth is not singular and fixed in heaven; rather, it is multiple and fallen to earth. Now, meaning and judgment are no longer seen to come from beyond man. Meaning in the modern sense is generated from within the very processes of human consciousness, and this shift changes the shape of the histories we plot and the stories we tell.

For Kermode, then, the modern novel rewrites the old mythic apocalypse and its full, transcendent ending with a view to recognizing and representing the actual human world (of mutually enabling conditions, withheld endings and denied salvation) in all its anxiety-producing complexity. As a result, these works become diffused throughout with the "sense of endings"; and death, not the fantasy of salvation, represents the "act of completion" (Kermode 101). Where Under the Volcano begins, the protagonist is already dead. Again, for modern consciousness, beginnings and endings have become mutually inclusive and inextricable. Given this new "reality," modernism as a movement is essentially a retreat to or recovery of irrationality, the Dionysian, the dance, and the reflexive reverberations of human consciousness:

> What is perhaps most characteristic of the modern period is that it has focused instead on the vehicle of what used to be the story line. (And in that sense has evolved, is evolving, a totally different sense of narrative.) Thus the concentration on language itself in writers like Beckett, Stein, Robb-Grillet; on mythic and folk structure (Faulkner, Gass, Barth); on symbolic and thematic exposition (Joyce, Lowry to some extent); on psychological processes (Woolf); on dreams and surrealism (Barnes, Hawkes); on the fabricating process itself. . . . Emphasis, need too, it would seem, has shifted, along with our disillusion.[9]

In modern literature, as Matthew Corrigan thus explains in his analysis of Lowry's work, the rationalist definitiveness of the linear story with its path to a satisfying end comes to be abandoned in the name of the richer Dionysian possibilities of the mythological, the psychological, the surreal, and the hallucinatory. And the search for the hallucinatory, of course, lands the apocalyptic modernist on the doorstep of alcohol.

In Equivocal Spirits: Alcoholism and Drinking in Twentieth-Century Literature, Thomas Gilmore argues that heavy consumption of alcohol is inextricably bound up in this modernist ethic and aesthetic which pursue primitive paths that essentially throw into question, alter, and destroy rational modes of perception.

He holds that modernist writers are particularly disposed to drinking because alcoholic inebriation offers an alternative state of consciousness to a disaffiliated group that is "radically dissatisfied with commonplace reality" and determined to undermine it at all cost (170). Moreover, the specific capacity of alcohol to effect erratic mood changes and weaken inhibitions,[10] and to engender out-and-out defiance of social dictates (Gilmore 8), lends the drinking subject an aura of gutsy audaciousness and macho heroism in the face of mundane reality. In other words, alcoholics take risks that other people won't. The exhilarating ups and highs of excessive alcohol consumption offer the modernist writer the opportunity to experience the wonder of the Dionysian: daily renewal, free-form consciousness, the strange magic of the unrestrained dance of spirited life (Gilmore 12). Indeed, it is no coincidence that Dionysus is the Greek god of wine. But, true to the dialectics of modern human reality already described, the highs of excessive alcohol consumption also have their inevitable corollary: depression, dissociation, delirium tremens, and ultimately the "dull slavery of addiction" (Gilmore 13).

The point to be understood is that, fundamentally, alcohol and apocalypse share an equivocal nature. The spiritual renewal that is the general goal of both alcohol and apocalypse ("spirits" is a common synonym for alcohol) is always potentially under threat and often undermined by forces of destruction and death:

> Alcohol, which in some uses seems to be a life-renewing force, is always potentially and sometimes actually a destructive force. When heavy drinkers themselves or when representing characters who are, modern writers seem particularly interested in exploring that borderland where the renewal of life, by extending the limits of ordinary perception or experience, impinges on destruction or death. (Gilmore 12)

Accordingly, with Under the Volcano, Malcolm Lowry proves to be the modern writer who perhaps most clearly demonstrates the analogy between alcohol and apocalypse and their centrality to modernism and its threat of instability and collapse.

II. Signs of Drinking and Death in "Under the Volcano"

In "The Symbolism of Drinking: A Culture-Historical Approach," E. M. Jellinek describes the two-fold social function of drinking. On one hand is the symbolic function, wherein many participants engage in alcohol as part of social or religious celebration. Symbolic drinking clearly involves the drive to spiritual renewal, ritual bonding, identification, and social

communication. On the other hand is the utilitarian function, wherein one or a very few individuals engage in alcohol for more personal reasons, whether to reduce the tensions of social interaction, alter consciousness, transgress sacred customs, or merely celebrate self-indulgently their own prowess in being able to manage excess. But "excess," of course, more often than not "leads to alcoholism."[11] In that state the original symbolic function of drinking is long lost, and the quest for spiritual renewal gives way to potential self-destruction and death.

According to Jellinek, the mythological connection between alcohol and the life-giving liquid substances (milk, water, blood) are explicit and highly significant. In all cultures, the act of drinking has always been primal and symbolic: when one drinks milk at the breast, or water from streams, one sucks in the life-force, power, fertility, and nurturance. From pagan times, however, milk and water have come to be replaced by wine, beer, and (eventually) distilled spirits in rituals involving symbolic drinking, primarily because the physiological effects of alcohol are seen to enhance and reinforce the spirituality and effulgence of the ceremony. Where alcohol is consumed, apart from symbolic associations and excessively, of course, alcoholism and the threat of death can result. In this sense, alcohol is a split sign within itself, if you will, across which varieties of drinking shift and through which they are linked.

The signs of both the symbolic and utilitarian varieties of drinking are clearly at work in Revelation, as well as in Under the Volcano. Both texts seem to ascribe a more-or-less positive value to the former and a more-or-less negative value to the latter; but, where symbolic drinking and the sense of beginnings are made to triumph in Revelation, utilitarian drinking and the sense of endings are predominant in Under the Volcano. This difference has to do, it would seem, with the fact that the John of Patmos' inspired visions open onto the hope of the newly born patriarchal Christian era, while Malcolm Lowry's infernal hallucinations grind down with modernism's horrible recognition of the acuteness of the era's failure. It is interesting, however, that in both cases the signs of symbolic and utilitarian drinking share a dependence on traditional gendered cultural signs (of empowered masculinity and split femininity) for their enunciation: that is, symbolic drinking becomes inscribed by signs of paternal and maternal nurturance, while utilitarian drinking becomes inscribed by signs of woman's threatening sexuality. The common denominator of apocalyptic visions, alcoholic hallucinations, and modernism would then seem to be the working out of specifically masculine fears and anxieties about male powerlessness (i.e. about impotence: literally, the "end" of supreme potency) in the face of the powers of the feminine. But, as we have determined from the insights of modernism, concepts like masculinity and femininity are not mutually exclusive opposites; one is the enabling condition of the other. When this

fundamental insight is lost, as Lawrence describes it is from the beginnings of Christendom through to the 20th century, cosmic imbalance occurs and human destruction is inevitable.

John of Patmos clearly puts the pagan symbolism of drinking as a sign of renewal and rebirth to work in Revelation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (22.17). Significantly, however, Patmos now privileges the life-force in masculine terms. And Christian communion becomes entrenched as the symbolic act of drinking the sanctified blood of the wounded Christ in the form of red wine. Thus, inspiring the thirst of congregations after more and more heavenly life in the name of the Father is one of the principal aims of Revelation.

But, in order to construct the symbolic, metaphorical drinking-in of Christ's blood and Christian doctrine as good, the dualistic logic of Revelation must construct "utilitarian" drinking as bad. It does this by associating non-communal wine with the impure--with the blood of the saints and martyrs tainted by the lips of the _fornicating_ woman:

> And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters. . . . And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. (17.1,4)

And the fornicating (sexually empowered) woman, in the history of Western patriarchal narrative, is also necessarily constructed as the _castrating_ woman. This is because any potential usurpation of the male prerogative to phallic omnipotence and exclusive rights to active/aggressive sexuality in these narratives must be judged negatively in order to justify and protect that prerogative. From the Greek gorgon Medusa, through Eve and Patmos' Whore of Babylon, to Freud's theory of female penis envy and the castration complex, female sexuality has meant trouble, threat, duplicity. Out of this, the polarity "Madonna or Whore" emerges and becomes entrenched. For Griselda Pollock in _Vision & Difference_, these poles are the "twin images of what will later be linguistically fixed as woman (as difference). One is the compensatory fantasy of the pre-Oedipal mother, still all-powerful, phallic; the other is the fantasy of woman not only as damaged, but as damage itself, castrated _and_ the symbol of castration."[12]

Under the Volcano as a modernist apocalypse will take up

this historical correspondence "fornicating woman/castrator" across the signs of both symbolic and utilitarian drinking, equating the masculinized water of life with the symbolically life-sustaining drink, while merging the dreaded mescal with the poisonous juices of the whore as the utilitarian and life-destroying one.

Like Revelation, Under the Volcano does posit the life-giving promise of symbolic drinking. Chapter Five opens with a long cabalesque paragraph/hallucination/dream that finds Geoffrey Firmin, open-mouthed and prostrate, in a crystal lake as he attempts to drink his fill of light, renewal, beginnings:

> He was lying face downward drinking from a lake that reflected the white-capped ranges, the clouds piled five miles high behind the mighty mountain Himavat. . . . Yet his thirst still remained unquenched. Perhaps because he was drinking, not water, but lightness, and promise of lightness. (129)

The image is a witty doubling and reversal, on Lowry's part, of a motif already firmly established as part of Geoffrey Firmin's alcoholic reality. On his drunken sojourn past the Calle Nicaragua, he is found "face downward on the deserted street" (82). Significantly, however, Lowry's treatment of the life-giving potential of symbolic drinking is clearly ironic: The Consul awakens from this dream and must stand up to face the horrifying reality of a hangover, and the desperation and humiliation of the alcoholic's needed drink:

> The Consul, an inconceivable anguish of horripilating hangover thunderclapping about his skull, and accompanied by a protective screen of demons gnattering in his ears, became aware that in the horrid event of his being observed by his neighbors it could hardly be supposed he was just sauntering down his garden with some innocent horticultural object in view. . . . The Consul . . . was running. . . . In vain he tried to check himself, plunging his hands with an extraordinary attempt at nonchalance, in which he hoped might appear more than a hint of consular majesty, deeper into the sweat-soaked pockets of his dress trousers. (129-30)

As Lowry rewrites the apocalypse, the beautiful and perpetual symbolic slaking of thirst that is promised in the hereafter (the "water of life") turns into the utilitarian reality of alcoholic collapse (emotional, psychological, and sexual) under the threatened patriarchy of modernism.

The symbolic aspect of drinking, as defined by Jellinek and

exemplified by Lowry in the character of the Consul, is intimately connected to memories of plenitude and oral satisfaction at the maternal breast. And imaginary unity with the all-attentive and nurturing mother is the "good" sign that haunts Firmin throughout Under the Volcano: "For he saw that the face of the reclining beggar was slowly changing to Señora Gregorio's, and now in turn to his mother's face, upon which appeared an expression of infinite pity and supplication" (342). Infinitely giving, suppliant, and self-effacing, the image of the good woman (mother/Madonna) is part of the culture-historical baggage that has served to feed and sustain patriarchy. According to the Lacanian model of psycho-social dynamics, however, that image comprises only part of the scenario. Kaja Silverman uses that model to explain that while the mother represents the desired realm of ideal imaginary unity, she also engenders anxiety in the child through her capacity to deny the ideal bond, withhold the breast, and push the child into the symbolic realm which demands ego-differentiation, social interaction, and the willingness to enter into relationships that acknowledge the desire of others: "The two registers complement each other, the symbolic establishing the differences which are such an essential part of cultural existence, and the imaginary making it possible to discover correspondences and homologies."[13] When the imaginary overwhelms and blocks progress to the symbolic register, however, regression ensues and the subject "perceives the breast as its missing complement, that thing the loss of which has resulted in a sense of deficiency or lack" (156).

The excessive drinker suffers such lack. In Frontiers of Alcoholism, Morris Chafetz uses the Freudian paradigm to describe alcoholism as an oral perversion resulting from the subject's fixation on and inability to forego the security of the mother's breast:

> An oral perversion results from traumata that occur during the earliest state of psychosexual development, at the time when the individual's means of achieving security and release from tension was through stimulation of the oral cavity. The tendency to fixation at the oral level may be heightened by consitutional factors tending toward increased intensity of oral drives.[14]

The intensity of Firmin's oral drives is legion in Under the Volcano. Clearly, succor at the endless stream of mother's milk now lost to the Imaginary is displaced by Firmin onto alcohol and the vessels that hold it in the Symbolic: "'I love you,' he murmured, gripping the bottle with both hands as he replaced it on the tray. . . . Behind him in the room he heard Yvonne crying" (95-6). Having rejected the "sexual" breast and the demands of another's adult desire, Firmin turns backward, longing for the

(seemingly) non-conflictual promise of the maternal breast. Of course, the endless bottle and its "magic" contents fail to replace her. Significantly, it is directly after the hallucination of his mother's face that reality leaves him detached and empty, clutching the ever-present glass of "magic" liquor:

> Closing his eyes again, standing there, glass in hand, he thought for a minute with a freezing detached almost amused calm of the dreadful night inevitably awaiting him whether he drank much more or not, his room shaking with daemonic orchestras. (343)

The profusion of liquor glasses and bottles littering the text are haunting signs for the Consul of the lost breast, the sanctuary of Eden. Indeed, he hides them in his private garden. "carefully and lovingly kept" (132). But nevertheless, given the painful reality of waking to hangovers, depression and despair, he knows that his liquid paradise is an illusion, a daemonic fantasy, a sham. Indeed, the Firmin garden in Under the Volcano is another double or split symbol, testimony to the inescapable fact of femininity and masculinity as mutually enabling conditions: on one hand the garden preserves and secures the sacred feminine bottles and their contents in the protagonists' Imaginary, but on the other it marks his own impotence on the level of the Symbolic. Standing there, Firmin realizes that the once-beautiful garden is now a ruins. His obsession with succor at the maternal bottle means that his "man's work" goes uncompleted: the "unusual tools" (the murderous machete, the "oddly shaped fork") are clearly phallic signs which, leaning against the fence, shamefully display their misuse and "nakedly impale" Firmin's impotence (his infirmity) on his own mind, as do his hallucinations generally. The sign of judgment he uncovers (and misreads) in the garden, asking "You like this garden? Why is it yours? We evict those who destroy!" implicates him in his own destruction. This judgment and guilt raise two spectres which become inextricably entwined: memories of the "white agony" of mescal, and of the desiring woman's (Yvonne's) abandonment of him. He is left by the sign with the bitter recollection that as Yvonne left that morning at the Hotel Canada, he once-and-for-all replaced the chill of maternal absence with "iced mescal" (132). The text layers and conflates meaning across the sign of mescal: mescal signifies alcohol addiction, separation from the nurturing mother, fertility/fear of impotence, union with the castrating whore, death, and the end.

In Under the Volcano mescal is the ultimate sign of Firmin's utilitarian drinking:

> "It's mescal with me. . . Tequila, no, that is healthful . . . and delightful. Just like beer. Good for you. But if I ever start to drink mescal again, I'm afraid, yes, that would be the end," the Consul said dreamily. (219)

He knows that it will kill him; he knows that he must avoid it at all costs; and he also knows that he cannot. For the spiritual ecstasy that mescal once seemed to afford is now lost to the abject, apocalyptic horror of addiction: obsessive, repeated drinking that never fulfills, that never stops, that cannot be controlled, and that cannot end in this case except in death:

> The Consul palsiedly readjusted the bottle to his lips, "Bliss, Jesus, Sanctuary . . . Horror" he added. "Stop. Put that bottle down, Geoffrey Firmin, what are you doing to yourself?" another voice said in his ear so loudly he turned round. On the path before him a little snake he had thought a twig was rustling off into the bushes and he watched it a moment through his dark glasses, fascinated. . . . Not that he was much bothered by anything so simple as snakes, he reflected with a degree of pride, gazing straight into the eyes of a dog. It was a pariah dog and disturbingly familiar. (131)

By this point in his life, thoroughly enslaved by the evil voices and hallucinations of alcohol addiction (symbolized by the snake and the pariah dog which haunt him throughout the text), it is only a matter of hours before Firmin succumbs once again and finally to ultimate self-destruction under the sign of the dreaded mescal and its final representative, the castrating woman.

Having just failed to achieve sexual reunion with Yvonne, Firmin hallucinates the alcoholic's idealized vision/oral version of the coital act, which Lowry writes as a self-reflexive and obvious metaphor for pouring a drink "on the rocks":

> Ah, none but he knew how beautiful it all was, the sunlight . . . flooding the bar of El Puerto del Sol . . . falling in a single golden line as if in the act of conceiving a God, falling like a lance straight into a block of ice--. (95)

But Firmin's golden stream of sunlight (alcohol/urine/sperm) that cuts so neatly into the glass of ice (vessel/woman/Yvonne) like a lance also neatly demonstrates what Jellinek observes as the ancient symbolic ties between male fertility and drinking. Under the "progressive" move of the Greeks away from the Dionysian

toward Christian patriarchy and the one male God, the nurturing stream of mother's milk becomes appropriated for the masculine as a sign of fertility: "All of the fertility gods tended to have something to do with wine and best known among them was Priapos, the phallic god" (Jellinek 858).

According to Jellinek, Priapos (supreme deity and creator of the world) was a monstrous figure, symbolizing ultimate potency but bent backward and imbalanced under the inordinate weight of his gargantuan phallus. As Priapos, so Geoffrey Firmin:

> He opened his eyes . . . But the abominable impact on his whole being at this moment of the fact that that hideously elongated cucumiform bundle of blue nerves and gills below the steaming unselfconscious stomach had sought pleasure in his wife's body brought him trembling to his feet. How loathsome, how incredibly loathsome was reality. (210)

"Reality"--the existential burden of acknowledging another's desire--is the ugly state of human affairs that the regressive Firmin cannot face. Ironically, where alcohol variously allows him the fantasy of masculine fertility, power, and potency, or escape to the security of the breast, excessive indulgence results in his ultimate phallic collapse: impotence and death. Ironically, he himself knows that "evil phallic death" haunts him because he no longer knows how to love. All of his desire has been transferred to the alcoholic fantasy of perpetual succor flowing in the "cantinas" (70).

Abandoning Yvonne and Hugh (Yvonne to Hugh), Firmin races toward the end he feels no one can prevent: "Es inevitalbe la muerte del Papa" (233). Significantly, he finally lands at the doorstep of the prostitute _Maria_. The figure, at once, of Madonna and whore, she signifies woman's role under patriarchy: the unconditional feeding and serving of masculine desire. In Maria's room he finishes _her_ bottle of mescal on a bed with blood-stained sheets, symbolically drinking in, two-thousand years later, the golden cup of abominations and filthiness of Revelation's Whore of Babylon. Of course, he cannot fully abandon Yvonne. As his wife (the magic synthesis for the male of the split between maternal and sexual femininity), her needs and desires are significant. They haunt him perpetually, taunting his alcoholic illusion that he is the only one who counts. During coitus, Marie literally _becomes_ Yvonne in Firmin's mind, calling up the calamity of his failed marriage, which failure pivoted, clearly, on his masculine fear of phallic immolation:

> (And it was this calamity he now, with Maria, penetrated, the only thing alive in him now this burning boiling crucified

> evil organ--God is it possible to suffer more than this, out of this suffering something must be born, and what would be born was his own death). . . . (350)

His escapist retreat through alcohol to the false security of the "good" breast having failed, he is forced to confront both the "bad" breast (the desiring, demanding, sexual side of Yvonne) and the brutal, violent world of the patriarchal Symbolic. In Lowry's formulation, the confrontation kills them both. Yvonne dies, the victim of the phallic, riderless horse of the masculine apocalyptic imagination. The horse that attacks her is, of course, a thinly veiled stand-in for Geoffrey Firmin himself. Its "protracted neighing" becomes "a scream almost human in its panic" (335). And Firmin, unable to mount that self-same horse and escape as hero, dies, shot by the police and thrown in the ravine like a dog.

Indeed, Under the Volcano can be read as one long, extended modernist-alcoholic-apocalyptic nightmare metaphor for masculine panic in the face of the fear of female desire and the "dreadful tyranny of self" that patriarchy historically engenders in men (Lowry 291). Trembling and unable to lift the all-too-heavy carafe of "water of life" to his lips after his calamitous encounter with Maria, Firmin replaces her threat and the impossible retreat to the Imaginary she represents with the ultimate sign of succor in the Symbolic. He hallucinates that Jesus, the patriarchal saviour of Revelation, has sent him a bottle of red French wine (350-51). Of course, the symbolic, ritual possibilities of Christian communion are long dead for Lowry and for the ethics and aesthetics of modernism. In the dialogic framework of a 20th-century human consciousness, there is no escape from death into everlasting life. From Revelation to Under the Volcano, the plot shifts: now, no one is "saved." There is no "unearthly triumph." Beginnings and endings are enabling conditions, forever intertwined. Accordingly, Geoffrey Firmin, ever the utilitarian drinker, pours the "blessed ichor" of Christ down his throat and turns toward visions of "El Infierno": the Farolito, more alcohol, and the abyss.

III. Gender and Disillusioned

> Señora Gregorio took his hand and held it. "Life changes, you know," she said, gazing at him intently. "You can never drink of it." (232)

While turning from the water of life, and just before he downs the Christ-wine with desperate irreverence, Geoffrey Firmin recalls the Señora's wise words: Life changes. You can never drink of it, or contain it. You cannot fix it. Its meanings are

based in conflict, ambiguity, relativity, and cyclical movement. Its signs shift. It ends. And it begins again.

Revelation is a text which, as we have seen, attempts to drink in life and write the final word on it. It does this by splitting consciousness into poles: beginnings and endings; waters of life and liquid abominations; positive masculinity and negative femininity. Under the Volcano, speaking from, to, and beyond the rationalist visions of Revelation from the vantage point of the Dionysian hallucinations of modernism, works to heal this split and merge the signs (the enabling conditions) heretofore torn apart: the happy ending is dismantled; the sense of endings (mescal) courses through the text; the various signs of drinking (Firmin's prostration, his garden, mescal) are doubled, layered, complex; Madonna (Yvonne) and whore (Maria) are overlaid and reunited in one body; the unslakable human thirst (symbolized by Geoffrey Firmin himself) is for death as well as life. Ironically, though, the healing of this split requires the rending of a new wound. It requires the destabilization and deconstruction of Western patriarchy and the sign systems of Christian salvation that privilege male power.

Matthew Corrigan reads the entire novel in terms of this "eviction": "it gestates through that book--Firmin's displacement, his being out of history, and even out of time, as that book drives toward death (the whole action of which takes place in the mind)" (414). If Revelation is the logical conclusion to the consequences of original sin and the eviction of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, Lawrence's focus is on the healing possibilities of a return to a Dionysian paradise. In Under the Volcano, however, this paradise is lost; Firmin's drinking may hold the keys to a beginning, a consciousness based upon Dionysian principles, but it also leads to his destruction: the apocalypse in Under the Volcano is both beginning and ending, curse and cure. But this unstable signification makes it possible to read the novel as opening up the possibility of a new hermeneutics where binary logic and patriarchal tyranny no longer hold sway. Here, apocalyptic visions, alcoholic hallucinations,and modernism come together to effect the disillusion of the rationalist. D. H. Lawrence read Revelation in negative terms: as the death of the cosmic female goddess (at once sexual and maternal), replaced in patriarchal consciousness by the Madonna/whore split. But we can read Under the Volcano inversely, positively: as the death of omnipotent patriarchy under the burden of its own gargantuan priapic weight, replaced in the modernist and alcoholic consciousness of Malcolm Lowry by a more fluid and complex system of signs.

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NOTES

[1] Mythologies (London: Paladin, 1973) 109.

[2] Frank Kermode, "Apocalypse and the Modern," Visions of Apocalypse: End or Rebirth?. Saul Friedlander, et al., eds. (New York: Holmes, 1985) 102.

[3] This formulation is borrowed from Ricardo J. Quinones in Mapping Literary Modernism: Time and Development (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1985), where he speaks further of "the new possibilities of freedom in subject matter and style that Modernism brought to art in the twentieth century. So wide is the range of their register, so heterogeneous their style, so multiple and complex their reference that their ultimate bequest to the generations that followed is precisely this tremendous range of reflexive and reflecting freedoms" (253).

[4] Frederick R. Karl, Modern and Modernism: The Sovereignty of the Artist 1185-1925 (New York: Antheum, 1985) 19.

[5] See Karl 33.

[6] Peter Faulkner, Modernism (New York: Methuen, 1977) 75.

[7] Malcolm Lowry, Under the Volcano (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1963 [c 1947]); D. H. Lawrence, Apocalypse (London: Penguin, 1974) 75.

[8] Thomas B. Gilmore, Equivocal Spirits: Alcoholism and Drinking in Twentieth-Century Literature (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1987).

[9] Matthew Corrigan, "Malcolm Lowry: The Phenomenology of Failure," Boundary 2 3 (1975): 425-26.

[10] Paul Schilder, "The Psychogenesis of Alcoholism," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol. 2 (1941-42) 277-78.

[11] E. M. Jellinek, "The Symbolism of Drinking: A Culture-Historical Approach," Journal of Studies on Alcohol. 38 (1977): 864.

[12] Griselda Pollock, Vision & Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art (London: Routledge, 1988) 139.

[13] Kaja Silverman, The Subject of Semiotics (New York: Oxford U P, 1983) 157.

[14] Morris Chafetz, et al., eds., Frontiers of Alcoholism (New York: Science, 1970) 8.

JAYS AND JAGS: GENDER, CLASS, AND ADDICTION IN HOWELLS' LANDLORD AT LION'S HEAD

John W. Crowley

A year before W. D. Howells' birth in 1837, the American Temperance Society, the first of such national organizations, was succeeded by the American Temperance Union, an even more powerful alliance of some eight thousand local chapters with over a million members. During the so-called "petition year" of 1838, pressure from these groups effected passage of several state laws (soon thereafter repealed) restricting the sale of ardent spirits.[1] After many political vicissitudes, the initial efforts to legislate prohibition ultimately triumphed in the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act, which went into force the year of Howells' death in 1920. Although he lived through the heyday of temperance, Howells kept his distance from the movement; and his fiction, concerned as it was with the contemporary American scene, touched only lightly on the matter of drinking. Howells' work reflected, nonetheless, the dominant understanding of alcoholism during the Gilded Age.

As Harry Gene Levine has shown, two competing concepts of alcoholism coexisted throughout the American nineteenth century. The older one, dating from colonial days, held that because "there was nothing inherent in either the individual or the substance which prevented someone from drinking moderately," a person had "final control" over the intake of alcohol. "Drunkenness was a choice, albeit a sinful one, which some individuals made." This view was gradually supplanted by the idea of alcoholism as an "addiction": "a sort of disease of the will, an inability to prevent oneself from drinking." The "disease" model--"the idea that habitual drunkards are alcohol addicts, persons who have lost control over their drinking and who must abstain entirely from alcohol"--lay "at the heart of temperance ideology."[2] It fostered a sympathetic attitude toward inebriates and gave rise to reformist attempts to save them from their powerlessness. But alcoholism was never entirely free from moral stigma; if no longer a "sin," it was still a mark of defective "character."[3]

Excessive drinking in Howells' fiction was represented, in accordance with this paradigm, as a "disease of the will," a sign of inner corruption. The moral decay of Bartley Hubbard in A Modern Instance (1882) is subtly suggested by his increasing consumption of beer.[4] In The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885), the overweening Paint King's inexperience with alcohol leads to his salutary humiliation when he takes too much wine at a Brahmin dinner party and then launches into a drunken monologue. The inebriation of Ralph Putney, an acerbate lawyer in Annie Kilburn (1889) and The Quality of Mercy (1892), brings his family to grief; once, on a binge, he crippled his beloved son. Lindau,

the fiery socialist in A Hazard of New Fortunes (1890), becomes all the more inflamed when he is (all too often) under the influence; his mixing of alcohol with radical politics proves to be fatal to himself and, worse, to the innocent Conrad Dryfoos.

Howells' most comprehensive treatment of drinking is to be found, however, in The Landlord at Lion's Head (1897), in which alcoholism is linked not only to individual defects of character but also to the social consequences of addiction. The Landlord at Lion's Head depicts the rise of Jeff Durgin from poverty to material success as the entrepreneur of Lion's Head, the fashionable hotel he builds on the ashes of his mother's country inn. There is no need here to summarize the novel's complicated plot because only one strand of it is pertinent. As a student at Harvard, Durgin encounters Alan and Bessie Lynde, representatives of the Boston elite. In Durgin's dealings with the Lyndes, Howells exposes the corruption of their class and traces its roots to addiction; for Alan is alcoholic, and Bessie is comparably obsessed by sexual desire.

Alan Lynde despairingly recognizes the insanity of his drinking, but he is helpless to stop. Although he submits himself periodically to a Keeley Cure,[5] Alan invariably returns to the bottle, until another drunken crisis drives him to yet another "cure." During one of his sober spells at home, Alan confronts his sister Bessie about her flirtation with Durgin. In the slang of the period, Jeff is a Harvard "jay," an outlander whose social inferiority renders him unfit in Alan's eyes for Bessie's company.

> "Then I don't understand how you came to be with him."
>
> "Oh, yes, you do, Alan. You mustn't be logical! You might as well say you can't understand how you came to be more serious than sober." The brother laughed helplessly. "It was the excitement."
>
> "But you can't give way to that sort of thing, Bess," said her brother, with the gravity of a man feeling the consequences of his own errors.
>
> "I know I can't, but I do," she returned. "I know it's bad for me, if it isn't for other people. Come! I'll swear off if you will!"
>
> "I'm always ready to swear off," said the young man gloomily.[6]

Later in the same conversation, Bessie compares her attraction to Durgin with a taste for "'some very common kind of whiskey'" when

"'If one must, it ought to be champagne'" (234). She then proposes a pact to her brother: "'No more jays for me, and no more jags for you'" (235).

Neither one can stick to the bargain. Within days, Alan gets drunk at a Bostonian ball--abetted by Durgin, who proffers more liquor to the already intoxicated Alan and then carries him home. Off on another jag, Alan cons his sister into leaving him alone with the decanters of whiskey and brandy she threatens to smash: "'That's over, now; you could put them in my hands and be safe enough . . . You can trust me, Bessie . . . I won't fail you, Bessie. I shall "keep well," as you call it, as long as you want me'" (274). By morning the decanters are as empty as Bessie's promise to swear off her jay.

Seeking the cause of her own weakness, Bessie questions the family physician about her brother's:

> "What is it makes him do it?"
>
> "Ah, that's a great mystery," said the doctor. "I suppose you might say, the excitement."
>
> "Yes!"
>
> "But it seems to me very often, in such cases, as if it were to escape the excitement. I think you're both keyed up pretty sharp by nature, Miss Bessie." . . .
>
> "I know!" she answered. "We're alike. Why don't I take to drinking, too?"
>
> The doctor laughed at such a question from a young lady, but with an inner seriousness in his laugh, as if, coming from a patient, it was to be weighed. "Well, I suppose it isn't the habit of your sex, Miss Bessie."
>
> "Sometimes it is. Sometimes women get drunk, and then I think they do less harm than if they did other things to get away from the excitement." (267)

Here, as throughout the novel, Howells equates Alan's alcoholism with Bessie's sexual desire. For a lady, the habit of drinking has been proscribed by the rules of Victorian gender differentiation. As a manly vice, inebriation is hardly imaginable in a woman, as the doctor's reaction testifies. Yet Bessie realizes that her own infatuation with Jeff is fundamentally no different from her brother's fascination with alcohol. In both cases nervous excitement fuels an addiction that results only in more excitement.[7]

In their class-related susceptibility to "excitement," the Lyndes are recognizably "neurasthenic." As originally defined by Dr. George Miller Beard during the 1880s, "neurasthenia" was a peculiarly American "disease" in which exhaustion of the nerves resulted from the stress of modern living in an increasingly urban and industrial culture. As George F. Drinka summarizes Beard's theory, "A person with a nervous tendency is driven to think, to work, to strive for success. He presses himself and his life force to the limit, straining his circuits." Like Herbert Spencer in his Social Darwinian speculations, Beard regarded neurasthenia as the price of evolutionary "progress," and he identified the condition with the "higher" classes: "persons born with a fine [nervous] organization--as opposed to those with a coarse organization--frequently associated with superior intelligence, and more often appearing in men than in women." [8] Those most vulnerable to neurasthenia were also thought to show a hypersensitivity to alcohol, narcotics, and even such milder "stimulants" as tea and coffee.[9]

The Lyndes, who are "keyed up pretty sharp by nature" of their higher-class refinement, exhibit a tendency to addiction that their neurasthenia ushers in. Once caught up in the compulsive cycle of "excitement," however, their evolutionary advantages are nullified. The greater "harm" to which Bessie alludes consists in her violation of the "civilized" standards that constitute the claim of her class to moral (and thus social) superiority. Landlord is primarily concerned with the erosion of Victorian moral certainties: the decline of "civilization" under the influence of men like Durgin, who lack anything resembling a proper character--at least in the view of Jere Westover, the puritanical artist who is the central consciousness of the novel. Although Howells undercuts the pretensions of the Bostonian elite, the novel validates Westover's anxiety about the Lyndes' lack of probity. Who, if not the supposed pillars of society, will dependably uphold the socially binding values?[10] Indeed the most damning effect of addiction on both Alan and Bessie is their loss of class identity.

When Durgin slips the drunken Alan out of the ball and pours him into his carriage, such discretion is lost on the lower-class bystanders who must wait outside in the cold to do their masters' bidding. "The policemen clapped their hands together, and smiled across the strip of carpet that separated them, and winks and nods of intelligence passed among the barkers to the footmen about the curb and steps. There were none of them sorry to see a gentleman in that state; some of them had perhaps seen Alan in that state before" (247-48). The strip of carpet, which symbolizes the class line that ordinarily divides Alan from the barkers, the footmen, and the police, has lost its signal force under these circumstances. The leveling influence of alcohol has not merely lowered Alan in their estimation; it has negated any

claim he might make to superiority. Implicit here is a derangement of the social order that threatens the gentlemanly customs for which Alan stands, however more often he may breach than observe them.

Bessie's fall from grace has similar social consequences. At the climax of her involvement with Jeff, the erotic energy that arcs between them results in a passionate kiss--which, in the euphemistic Victorian code to which Howells adhered in his fiction, is tantamount to a rape:

> He put his other large, strong hand upon her waist, and pulled her to him and kissed her. Another sort of man, no matter what he had believed of her, would have felt his act a sacrilege then and there. Jeff only knew that she had not made the faintest struggle against him; she had even trembled towards him, and he brutally exulted in the belief that he had done what she wished, whether it was what she meant or not.
>
> She, for her part, realized that she had been kissed as once she had happened to see one of the maids kissed by the grocer's boy at the basement door. In an instant this man had abolished all her defences of family, of society, of personality, and put himself on a level with her in the most sacred things of life. Her mind grasped the fact and she realized it intellectually, while as yet all her emotions seemed paralyzed. She did not know whether she resented it as an abominable outrage or not; whether she hated the man for it or not. But perhaps he was in love with her, and his love overpowered him; in that case she could forgive him, if she were in love with him. (336-37)

In the use of such words as "sacrilege" and "sacred," the narrator proves himself to be "another sort of man," one who sustains the class standards that the Lyndes are incapable of upholding--standards, it is suggested, that vouchsafe nothing less than the divine order. Jeff, by contrast, is associated with the "brutality" of the "lower" orders in his lust, which is not so much for Bessie as for the power to reduce her to his level. Emotionally "paralyzed," Bessie instantly loses her identity; stripped of her "defences," she becomes indistinguishable in her own mind from the maid.

Feeling degraded both socially and morally, she attempts to reclaim her accustomed "self" by rationalizing the incident in terms of the civilized code: Jeff must be in love with her, or else she must be in love with him. But Bessie immediately senses the falsity of this reasoning in her guilty awareness that she can "never tell any one, that in the midst of her world she was

alone in relation to this; she was as helpless and friendless as the poorest and lowliest girl could be. She was more so, for if she were like the maid whom the grocer's boy kissed she would be of an order of things in which she could advise with some one else who had been kissed; and she would know what to feel" (337).

Bessie does not know what to feel because, as a lady, she is supposedly devoid of any sexual feeling, except as it may be sublimated into "love." Although she is a prisoner of the repressive gender codes of her class--epitomized in the cult of True Womanhood[11]--Bessie's illicit flirtation, like Alan's drinking, nevertheless diminishes the moral authority of their class. For Howells, the disturbing prospect is that the corruption of the Lyndes can only hasten the cultural domination of those, like Jeff Durgin, who scoff at the Victorian ideal of "character" and who disclaim the power of will to affect human motives.

In his most sympathetic thoughts about Jeff, Westover muses that "this earth-bound temperament was the potentiality of all the success it aimed at. The acceptance of moral fact as it was, without the unconscious effort to better it, or to hold himself strictly to account for it, was the secret of the power in the man which would bring about the material results he desired; and this simplicity of the motive involved had its charm" (281). Such a charm exists, however, only because at this very moment Westover himself is under the influence of the alcoholic punch he has been imbibing as a remedy for a cold. The narrator remarks that in "the optimism generated by the punch," Westover temporarily suspends his strict accounting of moral facts and indulges "in the comfort we all experience in sinking to a lower level." The effects of alcohol, then, are linked by Howells to a devolutionary loss of "moral elevation" (282).

Rather than a cultivated (and therefore "unconscious") power of will to improve on "moral facts," Jeff embodies a simpler will to power in which nothing matters but "material results." Like the Dreiserian characters he anticipates, Durgin exemplifies a new and "ever more chimerical" type of "self-made manhood" emergent at the turn of the century, in which "'personal magnetism' began to replace character as the key to advancement." As "conventional definitions of 'will power' began to seem oversimplified and familiar feelings of selfhood began to seem obsolete," the disintegration of "character" produced the modern sense of unreality--the "weightlessness" that, as Jackson Lears argues, was symptomatic of the anxiety felt by civilized Victorians in the face of the modern.[12]

As the chimerical modern man, Durgin does not, significantly, betray any weakness for alcohol. Although he is rusticated from Harvard for a semester as the penalty for a single drunken escapade, he otherwise holds his liquor well.

Matching Alan drink for drink, Jeff shows no effects: "It was as if his powerful physique absorbed the wine before it could reach his brain" (239). His "brutality" renders Durgin resistant to the vices of the civilized Lynde, with his sharply pitched sensibility and attenuated physique. In terms of the Social Darwinian discourse within which the novel operates, Jeff is an atavism. Lower on the evolutionary ladder than the Lyndes, Durgin is commensurately less vulnerable to neurasthenic "excitement" and thus to addiction.

Like Beard and Spencer, Howells sees addiction as a byproduct of a class culture that has become so overly refined that a compensatory decadence has set in. The evolutionary "progress" of mental sensitivity has produced a disabling disjunction of mind from body, of "nerves" from the nervous system. Addiction, particularly in Bessie's case, is figured as a return of the (bodily) repressed: a drag upon spiritual aspiration from the inexorable claims of the "lower level"; a sign of an enfeebled capacity to choose the good within a cultural discourse that defines "character" as the accretion of such choices.[13] For Howells, any addiction, including alcoholism, presupposes a pernicious weakness of will that unbalances the mental poise essential to the moral life.

In his provocative reading of American naturalism, Walter Benn Michaels deconstructs this model of addiction by inverting its underlying assumptions. Michaels argues that in Dostoevsky, for example, addiction to gambling is represented "as a disease of the will, not because the gambler's will is weak but because his commitment to the power of his will (understood in <u>The Gambler</u> as absolute self-control) is total. . . . The gambler's mistake is thus to imagine that his fate is entirely within his control."[14] The illusion of control derives, in fact, from the Victorian idea of "character" as a product of willed acts, of deliberate choices.

In Howells' as well as in Dostoevsky's fiction, the function of "character" was to maintain a positive balance within what Michaels calls an epistemic "economy of scarcity," in which "power, happiness, and moral virtue are all seen to depend finally on minimizing desire." The threat to "the humane values of equilibrium and moderation" is seen to lie in an "economy of desire": "a conception of desire as disrupting this equilibrium, desire that, exceeding and outstripping any possible object, is in principle never satisfied" (35).

Within the "economy of scarcity," which also informed Victorian medicine--as in Beard's idea that good health depended on the conservation of precious life force--"addiction" named such an insatiable desire that outstrips its object.[15] If, as Michaels suggests, such desire was part and parcel of a "more general economy of excess" that is inherent to late industrial

capitalism and the structures of "self" produced within it, then it seems to follow that addiction in post-Victorian culture would, as Howells feared, spread pandemically. Within an emergent culture of "conspicuous consumption,"[16] "addiction" would become, in effect, the sign of modernity itself.

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NOTES

[1] Herbert Asbury, The Great Illusion: An Informal History of Prohibition (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1950) 35, 46-47.

[2] Harry Gene Levine, "The Discovery of Addiction: Changing Conceptions of Habitual Drunkenness in America," Journal of Studies on Alcohol. 39, no. 1 (1978) 149, 158.

[3] Levine argues that whereas nineteenth-century temperance ideology located addiction in the substance rather than the individual--hence the logic of prohibition--the twentieth-century "disease" model of alcoholism, as developed by E. M. Jellinek and others, abandoned the idea that alcohol was inherently addictive. "For the first time, the source of addiction lay in the individual body, and not in the drug per se. The result has been a somewhat 'purer' medical model--that is, there is less of a tendency to view addiction as self-inflicted disease" (162). This distinction is a little too sharply drawn, I believe. In the nineteenth-century paradigm, insofar as drinking was related to attenuated will power, addiction was not located exclusively in the substance; it was inseparable from deformed "character," for the proper building of which Victorians held each other morally accountable.

[4] The chapter in which Bartley staggers home to his wife impressed Mark Twain as "the best drunk scene--because the truest--that I ever read." As he told Howells, "There are touches in it which I never saw any writer take note of before. And they are set before the reader with amazing accuracy. How very drunk, & how recently drunk, & how altogether admirably drunk you must have been to enable you to contrive that masterpiece!" Mark Twain--Howells Letters: The Correspondence of Samuel L. Clemens and William D. Howells, 1872-1910. ed. Henry Nash Smith, William M. Gibson, and Frederick Anderson (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1960) 407-8.

Although Howells was raised in an abstemious household, he later became a social drinker. But he was not, says Edwin H. Cady, by any means a drinking man: "For one thing, alcohol made him sleepy. He tended therefore to avoid it when he wished to be alert and to use it pretty regularly for many years as a soporific--a favorite being hot Scotch at bedtime" (The Realist at War: The Mature Years, 1885-1920, of William Dean Howells

[Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 1958] 90). On Howells' attitudes toward drinking and prohibition, see also Edward Wagenknecht, William Dean Howells: The Friendly Eye (New York: Oxford UP, 1969) 224-27.

5 The "Keeley Cure," popularized during the 1890s by its inventor, Dr. L. E. Keeley, was a form of aversion therapy. Removed from his normal surroundings to a sanitorium, the alcoholic patient was then injected with Keeley's secret formula: "a solution of double chloride of gold, which purportedly caused a lasting repugnance to spirits in any form" (Tom Dardis, The Thirsty Muse: Alcohol and the American Writer [New York: Ticknor, 1989] 34). As Dardis suggests, the "Keeley Cure" was probably worthless except for the incidental opportunity it afforded for drunks to dry out.

6 W. D. Howells, The Landlord at Lion's Head (New York: Harper, 1897) 232-33. The novel is currently available in a facsimile edition (New York: Dover, 1983).

7 At the same ball at which her brother gets drunk, Bessie feels a similar nervous agitation that induces, in turn, a physical craving: "The party had not been altogether to her mind, up to midnight, but after that it had been a series of rapid and vivid emotions, which continued themselves still in the tumult of her nerves, and seemed to demand an indefinite sequence of experience" (255). The "sequence of experience" in her case means a renewal of her compulsive flirtation with Durgin.

Such a syndrome of "excitement" was described by Lewis Cass in 1833, when he addressed a temperance convention on the habit of intoxication: "The difficulty consists in the entire mastery it attains, and in that morbid craving for the habitual excitement, which is said to be one of the most powerful feelings that human nature is destined to encounter. This feeling is at once relieved by the accustomed stimulant, and when the result is not pleasure merely, but the immediate removal of an incubus, preying and pressing upon the heart and intellect, we cease to wonder that men yield to the palliative within their reach." Quoted in Levine, 155.

8 George Frederick Drinka, The Birth of Neurosis: Myth, Malady, and the Victorians (New York: Simon, 1984) 191, 193. On the cultural pervasiveness of "neurasthenia," see also Tom Lutz, American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1991).

9 "Whereas a man of 1830 'who could not hold more than one bottle of whiskey was thought to be effeminate,' according to Beard, an American citizen circa 1880 who could not drink nearly as much alcohol was the norm." Drinka (193) is quoting from Beard's American Nervousness (New York: Putnam, 1881) 34.

[10] In A Modern Instance, the lawyer Atherton articulates a similar concern. Speaking of Ben Halleck's resisting his illicit desire for Bartley Hubbard's wife, Atherton asserts that if a man of such "pure training and traditions had yielded to temptation," it would have been a "ruinous blow" to the general moral order: "'All that careful nurture in the right since he could speak, all that lifelong decency of thought and act, that noble ideal of unselfishness and responsibility to others, trampled under foot and spit upon,--it's horrible!'" (A Modern Instance, ed. George N. Bennett [Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1977] 416).

[11] See Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1800-1860," American Quarterly, 18 (Summer 1966). Welter's term has been widely adopted in feminist criticism to describe the ideological formation of bourgeois "femininity" in the nineteenth century.

[12] T. J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," in The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon, 1983) 8-9. See also Lears, No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

[13] In his review of William James's Principles of Psychology (1890), Howells endorsed James's belief that good character results from the discipline of good habits: "In fact the will of the weak man is not free; but the will of the strong man, the man who has got the habit of preferring sense to nonsense and 'virtue' to 'vice,' is a freed will, which one might very well spend all one's energies in achieving" (Editor's Study by William Dean Howells, ed. James W. Simpson (Troy, NY: Whitston, 1983) 324.

[14] Walter Benn Michaels, The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century (Berkeley: U of California P, 1987) 224 n.11. Michaels' argument recalls Gregory Bateson's brilliant analysis of alcoholic thinking. See "The Cybernetics of 'Self': A Theory of Alcoholism," in Steps to an Ecology of Mind (New York: Ballantine, 1972) 309-37.

[15] As Levine puts it, "In the 19th century, the concept of addiction was interpreted by people in light of their struggles with their own desires. The idea of addiction 'made sense' not only to drunkards, who came to understand themselves as individuals with overwhelming desires they could not control, but also to great numbers of middle-class people who were struggling to keep their desires in check--desires which at times seemed 'irresistible'" (165).

[16] The epistemic shift from the "economy of scarcity" to the "economy of desire" at the turn of the century involved not only the dissolution of Victorian moral categories but also the blurring of Victorian class distinctions. Whereas the traditional elite had justified its social hegemony by its stricter accounting of desire, the newly rich, as Thorstein Veblen observed, defined themselves through "conspicuous consumption," a material desire in excess of its object that created a hierarchy not of restraint but rather of excess. See The Theory of the Leisure Class (New York: Macmillan, 1899), which Howells reviewed enthusiastically, suggesting that the fictional rendering of Veblen's social analysis offered "the supreme opportunity of the American novelist" (W. D. Howells as Critic, ed. Edwin H. Cady [London & Boston: Routledge, 1973] 290).

NOTEWORTHY

David Frost Interview: Norman Mailer. PBS: 24 Jan. 1992

DF As you look back--the drugs and alcohol--what's the balance sheet: were they pluses or minuses in your life?

NM Well, they're absolutely separate. I'd say they each were pluses, but by God they were pluses on the order of what--of 54% to 46%. . . . If you get out with a small profit you're lucky. But there is a profit. I did learn things I would not have learned any other way. . . . However, [marijuana] wrecks the next day for you. . . . And then you get wild on marijuana, . . . and you can really mess up your life. . . . Now, booze is . . . like a working man's drug. It's something where . . . you just feel ballsier than you feel without it, and you've got more strength and you're more ready to be the manly side of yourself, if you're a man, or maybe the libidinous side of yourself, if you're a woman. . . . You can become addicted to booze, you can make a mess of it, and you can end up citing the twelve axioms of Alcoholics Anonymous . . . [With] marijuana, once you cut it out of your life, after six months or so I think you're over it and you don't really think about it all that much. With booze it's quite the contrary, . . . you give up booze and you know (God, people are so depressed when they give up booze completely), there are very few successful reformed alcoholics; . . . they succeed in not drinking, at great personal cost to themselves, but it hurts.

NOTES AND COMMENT

John Crowley (and I) recommend a fine essay, "The Landfill of Memory, the Landscape of the Imagination," by C. J. Hribal (in Townships, edited by Michael Martone [University of Iowa Press, 1992]), about the booze culture of rural Wisconsin ("Churches raised money in beer tents, . . . Drink Beer for Christ! I thought in my more cynical moments, though later I'd down a few for Jesus, too."). . . . Beginning with its Fall 1991 issue (No. 24), The Social History of Alcohol Review began publishing original research articles ("In the next issue, we hope to publish at least two articles and keep on increasing their numbers thereafter.") Drinking: Behavior and Belief in Modern History, edited by Susanna Barrows and [advisory board member] Robin Room was reviewed in the Fall issue (it was reviewed in the Fall issue of Dionysos by Nicholas Warner). . . . Two interesting (and visually stunning) articles--"Alcohol, the Legal Drug" and "Fetal Alcohol Syndrome"--appear in the February 1992 National Geographic. . . . Women With Alcoholic Husbands: Ambivalence and the Trap of Codependency, by Ramona M. Asher, will be published by the University of North Carolina Press in April ($29.95 cloth; $12.95 paper). . . . The Newsletter of the Alcohol & Study Group, published by the Committee for Medical Anthropology and edited by Dwight B. Heath (Anthropology, Brown University), contains valuable bibliographical information and research/conference announcements relevant to the humanities, including references to Dionysos. For information write to Dr. Heath. . . . Christopher Howse, reviewing The Faber Book of Drink, Drinkers and Drinking, edited by Simon Rae (Faber, 1991; £15.99), concludes: "On reading Mr. Rae's anthology . . . I felt by turns queasy, crapulous, tired of life, disgusted, fascinated, amused, horrified and slightly foxed. All for the price of 10 large vodkas" (London Spectator, 23 November 1991:46). . . . Pete Dexter, interviewed in Publishers Weekly (4 October 1991) by Wendy Smith, explains why, at "48, his drinking days [are] long behind him" (70). . . . "Drug dealers, power-trippers, serial killers, money-launderers, and other social pariahs are here. So are workaholics, substance abusers, gamblers and neurotics who mainly prey on themselves and people they love. Miserable and out-of-control, they are the subject of works by 24 artists in 'Addictions,' an exhibition opening today at the Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum" ("Artists Get Real in Santa Barbara" by Suzanne Muchnic, The Los Angeles Times, 2 November 1991:F1). . . . The Sixteenth Annual Conference on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was held in El Paso, 12-14 February. The program does not include a panel on literature and the arts. But since the American Psychological Association, among other meetings in the social sciences, has begun to do so, it might be worth inquiring about the possibilities of literature and addiction inclusion in similar gatherings ("Alcoholism and Drug Abuse" is sponsored by the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center).

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