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# DIONYSOS

Journal of Literature and Addiction  
Winter, 1997 Vol. 7, No. 1

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# Dionysos

Journal of Literature and Addiction

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## A Note from the Editor

This issue of *Dionysos* has, we think, a fashionably retro feel. Our major articles deal with *New Yorker* articles from the years after World War II (Mary Corey's "Irresolute Spirits") and with two classic films of the 1940's, as well as a more recent movie (Marty Roth's "Something Wild"). John Cheever, whom Professor Corey mentions, did much to codify the drinking mores of those years, and two letters to the editor comment on Cheever's own drinking and its effects on his creativity. Poems by Jack Williams and George Carmen offer witty commentary on the unpredictable outcomes of drinking.

Amid all this playful nostalgia, it's well to remember, especially since the fact eludes many Americans, that alcohol is one of the more powerful psychoactive agents available. Sam Friedman's "suits" are not as far from the street addicts down below as the suits think they are.

Thanks to all who have subscribed to the revived *Dionysos*. We hope you will continue to enjoy the contribution this journal makes to the fevered national debate on drugs legal and illegal.

Jim Harbaugh, S.J.  
Editor--*Dionysos*

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## Letters to the Editor

*Note: both letters to the editor are commenting on Jim Harbaugh's Review of Dan Wakefield's Creating from the Spirit. in the Summer, 1996 issue of this journal (Vol. 6, # 2), 21-24.*

9 Sept. 1996

Dear Editor:

Regarding your review of Creating from the Spirit in the Summer, '96 *Dionysos*: I appreciated your comments on the work of Cheever and Carver. Of particular interest to me was your trenchant comment that "It is too simple to say that work done under the influence must be somehow flawed, and work done in recovery must somehow be superior." I agree with that more than I can probably convey, and I've never managed to get it said just right.

It reminded me in its own way of a song by Graham Parker called "The Three Martini Lunch," in which the narrator sings, "I know what I'm doing, I just can't stop doing it." It's that sort of emotion that interests me the most, no matter how pleased I am with recoveries, fictional and factual.

In the best artwork with an addictive bent, it seems to me there's some sort of pivotal point at which the characters' and the author's own addictions figure most importantly. Just as it's often vitally important when the title of a novel comes into full exposure, it's also crucial when the artist manages a complete treatment of characters whose addictions mirror his [or her] own. Warts and all. Which is why I'd quickly agree with your feelings about Bullet Park versus Oh What a Paradise It Seems or Falconer. I felt much better when I completed the latter two -- like Farragut, I wanted to rejoice -- but Bullet Park haunted me like a drunken escapade you can never quite live down.

Jack Williams  
Loganville, Georgia

17 Sept. 1996

Dear Editor:

I thought your take on Cheever's last works to be right on the mark. I think that the notion that recovery from alcoholism is a miracle (which it is) leads to an overappreciation of alcoholic writers' sober work. I think this is the literary scholar's version of the widely held idea that because sobriety is a good thing -- a virtuous thing -- it carries with it a series of guarantees, among these the production of great art. Cheever's last two books, which he wrote sober [i.e., Falconer and Oh, What a Paradise It Seems!] certainly had a kind of serene transcendence that was not present in his earlier writing, but they also lacked the profound lyric ache that characterized his earlier deeper work. I think it is difficult for sober people to admit that sobriety does not promise either great art or great lives. What it does promise is life itself, without which there would be no art at all.

Mary Corey  
Beverly Hills, California

*[Prof. Corey's article, "Irresolute Spirits," leads off this issue of Dionysos.]*

## Irresolute Spirits

### Mary Corey

In this essay I will examine competing representations of drink and drinking in The New Yorker magazine in the period following the Second World War. My purpose here is two-fold: first, to demonstrate the ways in which the magazine's internal structure, its layout and its multiplicity of voices enabled it to present conflicting ideas about alcohol without attempting to reconcile them; and second, how this capacity to present contradictory meanings of drink made The New Yorker a superb window onto the penetration of changing ideas about alcohol in mid-century America.

During the postwar period The New Yorker's text was riddled with ambiguity -- an ambiguity which reflected an underlying conflict faced by the magazine's readers, who seemed to vacillate between a preoccupation with forms of life that separated sophisticated people from others and an emerging engagement with contemporary social problems. In the case of alcohol both sides of this equation came into play: for members of The New Yorker reading culture it was important to display sophistication by drinking and serving expensive imported spirits. It was also necessary to demonstrate a knowledge of alcoholism as a medical pathology requiring a cure.<sup>1</sup>

The critic Joseph Wood Krutch once described the postwar New Yorker as a magazine "whose scene is a bar -- especially a bar which is either very elegant or very low." High or low because of the centrality of drinking to the potent culture of letters in which the magazine emerged, even slight alterations in its representations of drink suggest a significant change in the way upper middle class cosmopolitans regarded alcohol. The magazine's initial attitudes about drinking had been forged in Prohibition, and its editors and readers were, by and large, a bibulous lot. The knowledge of the whereabouts of speakeasies and the possession of bootleg whiskey became marks of sophistication and proof of insider's status, indications of distinction highly prized by the professional middle class in its struggle for status. The cocktail party, a form of entertainment born in Prohibition, was a demonstration of this phenomenon. By transforming alcohol into a symbol of social defiance, Prohibition actually increased drinking in some circles. The traditional New Yorker attitude concerning drink can be understood as a part of this Prohibition mentality. Harold Ross, the magazine's founder and first editor, was a legendary hard drinker until his ulcers forced him to climb reluctantly onto the wagon. Dorothy Parker's and Robert Benchley's alcoholism is well-documented. John Cheever wrote copiously about his own

struggles with drink. James Thurber was a mean drunk who was described by acquaintances as the nicest guy in the world until after five o'clock. Many of the denizens of the Algonquin Round Table struggled with alcoholism and many of them died young. The post World War Two generation of New Yorker writers inherited this alcoholic legacy. Describing his morning regimen during his early heavy-drinking years on the magazine, E.J. Kahn explained: "I get out of bed and throw up and take a shower and shave and have breakfast." "You throw up?" Brendan Gill asked him with some alarm. "Of course," Kahn replied, "doesn't everyone?"<sup>2</sup>

In the postwar period The New Yorker's remarkable capacity to mingle highly inconsistent ideas about alcohol into a seamless whole produced an unreconciled array of Third Avenue barflies, Lord Calvert's-drinking Men of Distinction, happy inebriates in top hats, bourgeois drunks in drying-out hospitals, and solitary rummies sleeping it off in fleabag hotels. A single issue in August 1947 for example contained an ad in which "lovely singing star" Kitty Kallen offered a testimonial to Schaefer Beer, numerous advertisements that promoted imported spirits as elegant necessities of civilized social life, and a cartoon that depicted alcoholic hallucinations (of the pink elephant variety) waiting patiently outside an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for their owners.<sup>3</sup>

Where alcohol was concerned the postwar New Yorker covered all possible bases. Clubby gentlemen drinkers competed for page space with low-life drunks and high-rolling alcoholics who planned to quit; thin columns of type (sometimes devoted to parodies of liquor advertising) trickled between double columns of advertisements. As was so often the case, the magazine's variety of genres -- cartoons, hard journalism, fiction, advertising -- permitted a wide and disparate assortment of images related to drink and drinking. While the magazine's fiction often reflected reappraisals of drinking's social meaning, its cartoon portrayals of top-hatted inebriates being flung from various chic saloons retained the cavalier attitude toward drink that had predominated in The New Yorker of the twenties.

By mid-century, however, The New Yorker had clearly been touched by the decade-long alteration in the way the American middle class understood alcohol. Repeal, the Great Depression and the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935 all served to undercut the romanticization of heavy drinking and opened the door to an understanding of the more erosive aspects of alcohol. By 1945, when the film version of Charles Jackson's novel about a middle-class alcoholic, "The Lost Weekend" (which The New Yorker's movie critic described as "that prize winning temperance lecture") was released, the kind of people who read The New Yorker had reluctantly begun to see

alcohol as a substance that might pose a threat to people of their kind.<sup>4</sup>

But while the idea that alcoholism was a disease had penetrated the magazine, it was slow to wholeheartedly embrace the idea that alcoholism was a medical problem. For two decades drinking had been the axis of The New Yorker culture's world. Because of its affluent cosmopolitan readers (83% of New Yorker readers who were polled drank and served alcohol), its dependence on liquor advertising for revenue, and its association with cafe society, in its most unconscious element -- its cartoons -- the magazine continued to offer the kind of portrayals of alcoholic drinking that had predominated in the twenties. In these cartoons drinking to the point of unconsciousness was like slipping on a banana peel -- an antic mishap that could happen to anyone.<sup>5</sup>

A 1950 Peter Arno cartoon, for example, portrayed a tuxedo-clad gentleman passed out on a couch with a whiskey tumbler on the floor by his feet. The comatose guest is surrounded by men and women in evening dress who stare down at his supine body with equanimity. "Oh, you just missed it!" a woman says cheerily, "Mr. Casey's been absolutely scintillating."

In countless cartoons white jacketed butlers pushed unconscious guests on cocktail carts; inebriated men and women in evening dress were carried from elegant supper clubs by blasé waiters, and drunks in top hats were hurled from chic cocktail lounges. In all of these cartoons, in spite of their comatose central figures, the setting and the demeanor of those who bore the weight of these genteel drunks remained static and expressionless. Drinking in these instances did not interrupt the operation of business as usual or effectively spoil anything.<sup>6</sup>

The shadow of problem drinking, however, had begun to penetrate the magazine's fiction. Children of cosmopolitan drunks made martinis in the sandbox, husbands kissed other men's wives, alcoholic domestics tragically fell off the wagon, cafe society sots tried to sober up in fancy drying-out hospitals, alcoholic guests ruined social gatherings, and nights of festive drinking were more and more frequently punctuated by days of hangovers and bitter remorse. These bleaker characterizations of the impact of alcohol upon everyday life continued to coexist with representations of alcoholic drinking as fun, normal, and gay, and were nestled amongst advertisements promoting drinking as an upper-class pastime equivalent with riding to hounds.<sup>7</sup>

While the magazine traditionally portrayed the gentleman drunk as nothing more than an unconscious version of a guy who just wanted to have fun, hard drinking amongst lower-class men was idealized. The engine for this idealization was the lively romance between New Yorker writers (especially bourgeois Jewish ones) with lower class sporting culture. A. J.

Liebling, Meyer Berger, Alva Johnston, and Joseph Mitchell all carried on passionate affairs with New York's demi-monde in the magazine's pages. Liebling was a keen example of the tendency of some of the most literate offspring of prosperous Jewish immigrants to valorize the seamy worlds of "weight lifters, yodelers, tugboat captains and sideshow barkers, of the book-dutchers, sparring partners, song pluggers, sporting girls" -- the Manhattan "of crooks and pugs" and "mysterious ethnicity."<sup>8</sup>

The relish with which New Yorker writers approached the demi-monde -- the part of Manhattan that Raymond Sokolov has described as a "windowless antiworld of swarming tricksters" -- was, in the 20s and 30s, part of a larger cultural tendency to aestheticize the fringe. Although by the late forties it was clearly on its way to extinction, this reverence for barroom culture continued to be assumed in many of the magazine's cartoons, John McNulty's "Third Avenue Correspondent" pieces, "Talk of the Town" casuals, and occasional "Notes and Comment" items.<sup>9</sup>

The evolving understanding of the risks of alcoholism for the middle and upper classes did, however, have a discernible impact on the postwar New Yorker's portrayals of drinking amongst the lowly. On the one hand, the genre was energized by the new knowledge. While it was beginning to be problematic to aestheticize gentleman drunks, it was still possible to depict the alcoholic drinking of the lower-class inebriate as something picturesque -- the quaint custom of a "primitive" culture. On the other hand, although the vestigial assumption remained shakily in place that drinking, upper class, lower class, social, heavy, or otherwise, was an acceptable good man's vice, the innocence of this position had been appreciably eroded. John McNulty, who wrote for The New Yorker from 1937 until 1955, was the poet laureate of the Third Avenue bar and its denizens. "One heard [about McNulty] that he had once been well known for his drinking, but by the late Thirties he had long been careful not to drink at all." While the fact of McNulty's sobriety was not widely known by the magazine's readers, it does shed some biographical light on his ability to bridge the gap between the older paeans to drink and the newer cautionary tales of lives derailed by alcohol.<sup>10</sup>

McNulty delivered alcohol's tragic dimension. He told the stories of single men like Paddy Ferrarty, the night bartender in a Third Avenue Saloon, who "lives in a furnished room" where he "sleeps daytimes and reads westerns"; or of Grady, the Third Avenue cabman who makes a living following drunks from gin-mill to gin-mill and driving them home. His patrons are "fellahs that have good enough jobs to keep them in liquor money, works regular but mostly devotes themselves to drinking and singing and arguing. Not rum-dumbs, but warming up to be rum-dumbs."<sup>11</sup>

McNulty recreated the sad and predictable trajectory of an evening's drinking in "People Don't Seem to Think Things Out Straight in This Gin Mill," from "the lull between noontime hangovers and the late afternoon, when there's overcured hangovers and the early beginners on the night drinking." A loopy argument between Peter the bartender and a regular called the Red Baron about a barometer turns sour and winds up with someone throwing an old-fashioned glass into the mirror -- "the worst thing you can throw into a mirror, with the heavy bottoms they got. Any bartender will tell you that."<sup>12</sup>

McNulty's piece "This Lady Was a Bostonian They Call Them," clearly demonstrated his role as a literary broker between competing meanings of alcohol. Here McNulty appeared to stand outside the story's frame, directing the readers' attention to the social distance between the quaint low-lives they observed from a distance in New Yorker stories and the well-upholstered comforts of their own worlds. McNulty also seemed to be drawing attention to his mediating role as a translator of the cadences of one culture for the amusement of another. In this piece, the narrator is "Little Marty," a cabman who has "a way of talking that he can pronounce capital letters." Very late one night Little Marty picks up a woman in his cab; "she's a Bostonian they call them," he explains, who was in New York for the dog show. Marty's powers of observation are keen: "She got clothes look thicker than the clothes they wear here . . . I got to say I was surprised she had a husband -- somehow I got the idea from the thick clothes she wouldn't have a husband." The Bostonian asks Marty to have a drink with her at a bar, a request that strikes him as most peculiar coming from "a Lady like this." "And another thing," Marty explains, "I got no shave and I don't look good -- how can I look good wearing this cap?" He chooses a Third "Avenyuh" place where he has known one of the bartenders "since kids." Here, playing upon the identity of the assumed reader, McNulty commented on the class voyeurism of his own art: "In front of the bartender knew me for years," Marty explains with some bitterness, "this Lady Bostonian kept saying, 'This is quite a picturesque scene, isn't it?'. . . . How could it be a picturesque scene me with no shave, three o'clock in the morning, sitting up at a bar with a Lady I never seen before?" Fully aware that he is being patronized, Marty "maneuvers it" to leave the bar and take the woman home. "And then with the doorman there listening and all, damn if she didn't say it again, 'It was quite a picturesque evening.' I scrambled out of there."<sup>13</sup>

After 1945, McNulty's work displayed an increasing consciousness of the human toll exacted by daily drinking. The chilling "Third Avenue Medicine," for example, was an examination of a kind of "medical observation" practiced

by Third Avenue bartenders that could be summed up in two phrases: "The snake is out," and "the elevens are up." "The snake is out" refers to the vein that runs along the "left temple of a man's head," which is invisible until a drinking man gets into his fifties, when it "gets to acting up." A bartender telling a customer that "the snake is out" will make a man slow down on his drinking when "no amount of lecturing" could. The other phrase, "the elevens are up," is a death knell for old drinkers and is not said "to a man's face at all." The "elevens" are the two cords on the back of the neck which on an elderly alcoholic stick out like two 1's, "making the number 11." The bartender says: "The elevens are up . . . quietly and sadly, like a priest or a judge. . ." because the elevens denote fatal illness and "there's not much more time."

... "14

In the late forties, McNulty began to turn his attention away from Third Ave. rum-dumbs and toward the painful interior monologues of upper middle class alcoholics who were trying not to drink. In "Eleven Dollars a Day" a high rolling alcoholic is trying to sober up in a "pretty fancy hospital," while in "Slightly Crooked" a man sits on the veranda of his beach club and congratulates himself for perfectly balancing rye whiskey with ocean swims in order to cancel "out the harm of the whiskey and (keep) the fun of it." For a man "who tended to go overboard on drinking," McNulty explained, "that was the ideal seldom achieved."<sup>15</sup>

While upper-class drunks in New Yorker fiction displayed an increasing tendency to fret about their drinking, their children regarded drinking as a natural and particularly congenial element of adult life. Perhaps this was because when grown-ups drank they seemed more like children themselves. Deborah, the golden-haired three year old in John Cheever's "Sutton Place Story," was "a city child" who "knew about cocktails and hangovers." She saw her parents most often at the cocktail hour when she would be brought in to say goodnight to them while they drank with their friends. Sometimes she would be invited to pass the hors d'oeuvres and "she naturally assumed that cocktails were the axis of the adult world." Deborah had been known to "make martinis in the sand pile," and she thought that "all the illustrations of cups, goblets, and glasses in her nursery books were filled with Manhattans."<sup>16</sup>

Cheever's child observer saw cocktails as the "axis of the adult world," but in many New Yorker short stories alcohol was an elixir whose primary function was to disable social restraint -- the limitations of maturity. The striking distinction between mature daytime behavior and untamed nighttime party antics was amply represented in the magazine's fiction. Well into the fifties the drunken revel was assumed to be the hub of adult social life. These

fictional gatherings were depicted as stiff and awkward until alcohol cast its transformative spell. Once the serious drinking began, these evenings deteriorated into a series of debauched vignettes. The notion that each and every party had at least one obnoxious drunk was assumed to be a fact of normal social intercourse.

Nathaniel Benchley's "Deck the Halls" describes a New York sophisticates' tree-trimming party which turns psychedelic when the guests get too drunk to wait for the champagne punch, inhale the helium from the balloons, and talk in high chipmunk voices. It is the sort of party at which people say things like: "Poocy on Picasso . . . How about Botticelli?" and a guest is enlisted to give a humorous Christmas "medical lecture" -- "Tiny Tim Travels Through the Thorax." Two depressed writers stand by the helium tank and agree that if they don't each write a great book by the following year their careers will be over. A woman cries, a drunk sleeps it off in a chair, two men discuss naval tactics on the floor using forks and knives as submarines, and "a woman who kept her hat on, because she was letting her hair grow out, [got] up to explain the Mexican hat dance."<sup>17</sup>

James Thurber's "Six for the Road" concerned itself with the Spencers, a hard-drinking couple in a hard-drinking circle, who cross the delicate line between acceptable and unacceptable drinking behavior. For the Bloodgoods, the luckless hosts at an evening party attended by the Spencers, the trouble begins when Harry Spencer's recitation of the Gettysburg Address in Negro dialect ("All men are cremated eagles" ) drives John Greenleaf Hanty, a former editor of the Old Masses, from the party in a huff. The Spencers' behavior ultimately makes their host's stomach rash act up and drives everyone from the gathering. Undaunted, they continue to drink and perform their "talking-horse routine" and their tour-de-force -- the apache dance which they interpret "as it would be done by a Supreme Court justice and his wife, then by an arthritic psychiatrist and his amorous patient, and finally by a slain dowager and her butler, the slayer."<sup>18</sup>

The idea that alcoholism was a disease that could strike upper-middle class people penetrated the magazine in fits and starts. John O'Hara, a frequent New Yorker contributor, was the Boswell of the kind of powerful, affluent alcoholics whose acrimonious half-lives were played out on the beaches of Malibu and East Hampton and in the clubs of Manhattan and Beverly Hills. His alcoholic characters were either people on their way down from dazzling heights of fame and success, or those whose inner anguish was so profound that worldly success offered them no succor. Unlike the marginal figures who inhabited McNulty's demi-monde, O'Hara's characters were movie people like Dan Schecter, once a Hollywood high-flyer who has

become a sad fixture at the Klub Kilocycle, a place which people often called "the little club without charm."

Dan's drinking has progressed to the point where he is at the mercy of his social inferiors -- head waiters and bartenders who knew him in better days at better clubs. These underlings make sure that "one of the boys" drives him home so that when he wakes up he will make the "pleasant discovery" that he is alone in his own bed with his car intact. Although Schecter's decline is obvious to everyone in the story and to the reader, his alcoholic grandiosity keeps him from experiencing himself as he really is.<sup>19</sup>

For Leda Pentleigh, the aging movie queen of O'Hara's "Drawing Room B," alcohol, while arguably not the cause of her decline, enables her to continue living in denial of it. Leda, the occupant of Drawing Room B on the train from New York to Los Angeles, is a "striking, stunning, chic, glamorous, sophisticated woman, who had spent most of the past week in New York City, wishing she were dead." This coupling of natural gifts with unnatural despair was O'Hara's forte. Leda experiences the pain of her own descent as a series of affronts: "the wrong tables at restaurants . . . and the night of sitting alone in her hotel room while a forty-dollar pair of theater tickets went to waste . . . The standup by . . . the aging architect. . . . The ruined Sophie dress and the lost earring at that South American's apartment." The low point of the tale comes when Leda, assuming that courtship is what has brought a handsome New York stage actor to seek her out, discovers that he wants to ask advice about getting an agent. A nasty skirmish ensues in which she accuses him of patronizing her and of being a "swish." Shaken by her own loss of control, Leda pours "herself a few drinks, and rings for the porter." Drunk and contrite, she gives him ten dollars to find the actor and "ask 'im that I'd tell 'im that I'd like to see 'im, please." Leda is forced to entrust herself to the care of underlings who mutely bear witness to the vast disparity between who she thinks she is and who she has become.<sup>20</sup>

O'Hara's view of alcoholism, while it was clearly informed by the disease concept, skirted the issue of the powerlessness of the alcoholic over whether or not to drink. For O'Hara alcohol provided a brief respite from the keen disappointment of life near the top. It was not presented as the cause of the internal defeat experienced by these men and women, but was rather just one symptom of the erosion of their spirits. O'Hara's characters tended to be men and women who, in spite of the obvious bounty of their lives, were awash in bitterness, self-pity, and an overbearing hunger for a larger share of love and favor than it was their destiny to possess. Their common trait was a tendency to see themselves as blameless victims of a world in which the too scarce resources of affluence, beauty and passion had been meted out unfairly.

Although they were often told by others that their drinking was a problem, O'Hara's alcoholic subjects saw drinking as a solution. The power of O'Hara's work is derived from the fact that he wrote from inside the alcoholic subject. He could not problematize drinking because from the vantage point of his subjects it was a rational solution to a critical dilemma: the sense that try as one might, a piece of the puzzle of human happiness was always missing -- to get what one wanted did little to slake one's thirst for more.

Although The New Yorker was notably slow to abandon its traditional depiction of hard drinking as the normative center of the adult world, its faltering acceptance of the idea of heavy drinking as a pathology had a significant impact on its content in the postwar years. In a journal as concerned with class (and drinking) as was The New Yorker, the impact of the notion of alcoholism as a democratic disease, as likely to strike a senator as a cab-driver, was profound. Traditionally the magazine had presented affluent drunks as fun loving good fellows, and lower class drunks as picturesque sots. Over time the idea of the erosive power of alcohol disqualified both the magazine's devil-may-care high-society drunk and his rum-dumb lower class counterpart as objects for humor or light fiction. In the transformation of the way alcohol is represented in the postwar New Yorker it is possible to see alterations in the construction of the magazine's adult world. This change surely reflects something about alterations in the adult world itself.

#### End notes

1. This essay in a very different form is a small piece of a book length study: The World Through a Monocle: Goods and Goodness in the Postwar New Yorker Magazine (forthcoming from Harvard UP). In my study I take pains to explain the cultural work done by The New Yorker for its constituents as well as its power in postwar cultural formation. Unfortunately space does not permit me to adequately support claims for the existence of something I refer to as "The New Yorker reading culture" in this essay.
2. Joseph Wood Krutch, "The Profession of a New Yorker," Saturday Review of Literature, January 30, 1954. All of the books concerning TNY's history have something to say about the drinking habits of New Yorker contributors. See John Cheever, Journals (New York: Knopf, 1991); Susan Cheever, Home Before Dark: A Biographical Memoir of John Cheever (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984); Thomas Kunkel, Genius in Disguise: Harold Ross of The New Yorker (New York: Random House, 1995); Marion Meade, Dorothy Parker: What Fresh Hell Is This? (New York: Villard Books, 1988); Brendan Gill, Here at The New Yorker (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1975).

- 3 Schaefer Beer Advertisement, TNY, August 16, 1947, 17; Carl Rose, cartoon, TNY, August 16, 1947, 37.
- 4 Alcoholics Anonymous frequently found its way into the magazine's pages in the postwar years. For example, a "Talk of the Town" entry from 1948 reported that "The Baltimore branch of Alcoholics Anonymous has taken office space in the Bromo-Seltzer Tower Building." "Incidental Intelligence," TNY, November 20, 1948, 19. Thomas B. Gilmore points out that many of the most incisive literary studies of alcoholism appeared just before or around the time of repeal, including Dorothy Parker's "Big Blonde" (1929), in The Complete Stories of Dorothy Parker (New York: Penguin, 1995); F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Babylon Revisited" (1931) in The Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: The Viking Press, 1945); Eugene O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh (New York: Random House: 1939); Thomas B. Gilmore, Equivocal Spirits: Alcoholism and Drinking in Twentieth-Century Literature (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 16-17. Unsigned, "Review of 'The Lost Weekend,'" in "Goings on about Town," TNY, November 6, 1948, 18.
- 5 "Character of Readers," published by The New Yorker Magazine, 1949, 1954, 1956.
- 6 Peter Arno, cartoon, TNY, April 22, 1950, 37.
- 7 John Cheever, "Sutton Place Story," TNY, June 29, 1946; Astrid Peters, "Party at the Williamsons," TNY, December 28, 1946; Louise Field Cooper, "The Last of Grace," TNY, March 1, 1947; John McNulty, "Eleven Dollars a Day," TNY, February 3, 1951; James Thurber, "Six for the Road," TNY, December 18, 1948; Nathaniel Benchley, "Deck the Halls," TNY, December 5, 1948.
- 8 According to Thomas Kunkel, Ross, in an attempt to control the magazine's tone, had paid more for "highlife" stories than "lowlife" ones. The work of writers like Mitchell, Liebling and McNulty, however, "defied such facile classifications." Kunkel, Genius, 322.
- 9 Raymond Sokolov, Wayward Reporter: The Life of A.J. Liebling (New York: Harper & Row, 1980). A survey of TNY "Profiles" from 1925 to 1971 illuminates the decline and fall of the demi-monde "Profile." Between 1930 and 1945 the magazine published 18 pieces concerning wrestlers, boxers, saloon keepers, chorus girls, etc. Between 1945 and 1971, only four pieces in this genre appeared.
- 10 Gill, Here, 309.
- 11 John McNulty, "Bartender Here Takes Deep Dislike to 'Deep in the Heart of Texas,'" TNY, May 2, 1942, 15; "A Man Like Grady, You Got to Know Him First," TNY, September 26, 1942, 20.
- 12 John McNulty, "People Don't Seem to Think Things Out Straight in This Gin Mill," TNY, February 26, 1944, 20.
- 13 John McNulty, "This Lady Was a Bostonian They Call Them," TNY, March 28, 1942, 19.
- 14 John McNulty, "Third Avenue Medicine," TNY, December 13, 1947, 30-31.

- 15 John McNulty, "Eleven Dollars a Day," TNY. February 3, 1951, 34; "Slightly Crooked," TNY. September 7, 1946, 27.
- 16 John Cheever, "Sutton Place Story," TNY. June 29, 1946, 19. See also "Talk of the Town: Realist," TNY. January 19, 1948, 19.
- 17 Nathaniel Benchley, "Deck the Halls," TNY. December 5, 1948, 17-24.
- 18 James Thurber, "Six for the Road," TNY. December 18, 1948, 25-26.
- 19 John O'Hara, "Everything's Satisfactory," TNY. March 23, 1946, 25-26.
- 20 John O'Hara, "Drawing Room B." TNY. April 19, 1946, 25-28.

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## Original Poetry

### Snapshots of the Drug War

#### Sam Friedman

Brooklyn, 1992.

Troutman and Jefferson Streets.

Touts hawk their wares:

“No Exit”

“Dead Presidents”

“Cutthroat” “Royalty”

“Body Bag”

and

“American Airlines.”

Cars

from New Jersey, Connecticut & Manhattan  
fill nearby curbs.

Their drivers buy a bag  
of No Exit or Body Bag,  
hustle a needle

and walk to a dumpster  
by a decaying loading dock  
for their shot.

A post-modern Portobello Market,  
bustling;  
taking care of business.

Screams at both ends of the street.

Wall to wall cops screech

“Eat the cement!”

“Down on your bellies!”

and everyone lies in the street  
for hours,

6-year-olds,

junkies,

dealers,

hit doctors.

A pregnant neighborhood mom

coming home from the grocery  
 lies next to her sister  
 who hustles blow jobs down the block  
 to buy her smack.

Manhattan, 1987, 42nd and 3rd,  
 high in a tower five miles from those Brooklyn streets,  
 five miles like barbed wire.  
 Eggheads chat in suits;  
 friendly, affable, well-meaning white guys  
 confer about their latest education programs,  
 about pictures for the tube  
 of eggs scrambled  
 in a pristine frying pan  
 as the image of a brain on cocaine;  
 urging employers to fire users  
 from their jobs;  
 urging landlords and families to evict them from their homes,  
 urging everybody to lock them up.  
 Free the streets -- for the decent people.  
 Bullets -- or lifelong jail cells -- for the users.  
 "Tough love," they call it.  
 None of them twitch in withdrawal,  
 none squirm for their pipe or gouge their face with dirt-clogged nails.  
 After the meeting, they drift to art-walled offices,  
 not garbage-floored shells  
 where once there were apartments with intact floors.  
 Their children's aspirations are colleges and medical schools,  
 not the flashy clothes of dealers or the Chevies  
 of bought-off cops.  
 The eggheads in suits chat of vintages and promotions,  
 not of jobs flown from Bushwick Avenue to Shanghai.

Rotterdam.

The summer of '86.  
 In the morning, I hang out  
 with the Junky Union leader  
 in their government-funded storefront.  
 Exchange a few syringes  
 with two women who bring a baby  
 in a well-kept stroller

and neat clean clothes.  
We chat about the agenda  
for the coming meeting.  
He chases some dope,  
shoots some cocaine,  
later shoots some dope,  
in the Junky Union shooting room.  
After lunch, as he chairs the meeting  
of the National Federation of Dutch Junky Unions  
with reps from Amsterdam,  
Lelystad, Deventer  
and beyond, he chases the dragon again  
and yet again.  
The meeting goes well,  
as smoothly as the meeting of the suits  
in the suite above 42nd Street;  
but here they talk love, dignity,  
public health,  
not hatred,  
not contempt.

New on my job.  
It is 1984, Orwell's year,  
and I am in Bellevue Hospital,  
talking with a man who is not all there.  
Not drugs -- toxo.  
Toxoplasmosis.  
It lives in cat shit,  
we all encounter it,  
we all control it in our bodies;  
no problem.  
No problem -- 'til you get AIDS  
and it scrambles your brain  
worse than a suit.  
So, in Bellevue, I talk with a man  
who cannot really remember  
his age  
where he was born  
the last time he shot dope  
what he drank  
when he could still hustle that

blackberry brandy.  
Talking with a man who is not all there.

Brooklyn.  
1996.

After years of effort,  
a tiny needle exchange  
is legal,  
hands out needles 2 or 3 hours a week,  
needles that are legal,  
needles you can carry and the cops can't bust you  
if you have that enrollment card.  
So,  
the cops bust you,  
confetti the enrollment card for the Brooklyn breeze,  
bootstamp your syringes to plastic flakes  
next to the crack vials  
in Maria Hernandez Park,  
beat you up a little,  
pocket any cash they find  
in your now-torn pockets,  
and leave you battered to beg  
to "share a taste" from a buddy,  
to share a taste of drugs and the virus  
in a dumpster in this land of Lady Liberty,  
in this land of wealth and AIDS.

1992. Melbourne, Australia.  
Jetlagged out of my mind,  
my mind a tiny taste  
of daily life with toxoplasmosis.  
I am chairing a meeting 12 thousand miles from home.  
Australian researchers  
present evaluation results,  
show how government-funded syringe exchanges  
and government-funded users' groups  
operate,  
prevent infections,  
stop the AIDS epidemic  
in its tracks.  
For them, it is business as usual.

For me, it is the other side of the world.

(In Australia, it is the virus that goes homeless.)

## Something Wild: The Fruits of Filmic Intoxication

### Marty Roth

Hollywood is one of the major sources of the culture of denial that dominates American consciousness and tells us that life's problems are transitory or remediable. What is of perverse interest in the following films (George Cukor's Philadelphia Story (1940), Frank Capra's State of the Union (1948) and Blake Edwards' Blind Date (1987)) is how well they exemplify Hollywood's refusal to recognize heavy drinking as a problem, how dedicated they are to seeing alcoholic pathology as a temporary comic complication.<sup>1</sup> In fact the equation between alcoholism and comic complication is such a fixed Hollywood principle (the understanding of alcoholism so institutionally frozen), that film readers tend to see it as the logic of comic form itself. Peter Lehman and William Luhr, for example, claim that a Chaplin short which tells the story of a man returning home and trying to go to bed in a very drunken state is about nothing but its own comic moves.

Think for a moment of Chaplin's One A. M. (1916), where little more complicated than Chaplin's skills at playing a drunk negotiating his way into a house and upstairs into bed comprise the better part of the narrative as well as virtually define his character. The elaborate gags comprise nearly all the creative energy of the film; a thematic discussion of the consequences of drunkenness neither gives real insight into the film nor explains why we find such a film so funny today (1988: 22).

As if to announce its extraordinary properties, drink often appeared in film as a version of the magic potion or love potion. The potions of earlier legend and literature had, by the mid-nineteenth century, been largely identified as strong drink. In Felice Romani's libretto to Donizetti's L'Elisir d'Amore, for example, the peasant hero, Nemorino, wants an elixir that will cause Adina, the woman he loves, to fall in love with him. He got the idea from a story Adina had been reading about Tristan and cruel Isolde. "What a marvelous potion," Nemorino sings, "I wish I knew the recipe of that magic brew." A "famous scientist," Dr. Dulcamara, enters and Nemorino asks him if he has the "love potion of Isolde?"

"Of course, I distill it myself," the doctor replies. "But it's in great demand." What little money Nemorino has turns out to be the exact price, and the doctor slaps a label reading "elisir d'amore" on a bottle of red wine: in an

aside he even informs us that "it's Bordeaux wine, not elixir." He tells Nemorino to hold it to his lips and "drink in small sips and astonishing results will ensue."

In the three films I have just named the potion occurs as the "one drink" or "one drunk" that transforms the repressed into the amorous maiden, the modest maiden into the wild one. These films want to sprinkle drink on their stories and have everything turn magical as in Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream -- the heroines are so sensitive to drink that even one sip dissolves their inhibitions and turns them into Hippolytas -- but what is so bubbly and delightful here is also alcoholic, suggesting a connection between screwball comedy and the semantics of drinking. In the case of Philadelphia Story and Blind Date, some interpretation is offered to support this connection.

Beneath the comedy, the work of sexual adjustment to an ideological status quo also goes on: in the Cukor and Capra, the humbling of the too perfect wife, and in the Edwards an even more insidious allegory of patriarchal courtship. In the first two films the women are firmly under control, while the third presents a gynephobic fantasy unleashed by drink. For that reason, Blind Date, the inferior film, is both deeper and truer than its sophisticated cousins in playing out the rhythms of addiction.

Philadelphia Story relates the re-encounter of a divorced husband and wife on the occasion of her second marriage, and the film works to produce the wife's admission that the original marriage had been ideal. Cukor's film is understood to borrow from Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, even though the magical transformation in the former is produced by heavy drinking rather than flower magic. Nevertheless, Stanley Cavell identifies the husband, Dexter Haven (Cary Grant), with Puck because he has "some mysterious power to control events" (137), and another critic claims that Shakespeare's potion is retained in Dexter's cure for a hangover, which seems contrary: the stinger he offers his ex-wife, Tracy Lord (Katherine Hepburn), is made, he says "with the juice of a few flowers" (Shea 6).

The deep drunk that the film celebrates is not singular but a unique repetition: At some magical moment in the past, Tracy, like the goddess Diana, "got drunk on champagne and climbed out on the roof, and stood there, naked with your arms out to the moon, wailing like a banshee."

"I told you I never had the slightest recollection of doing any such thing."

"I know, you threw a blank, you wanted to."

"The fuss you made over that silly childish episode."

"It was enormously important."

Tracy's glorious drunk, which puts her on the track of her "true" life, coexists somehow with a narrative of Dexter's alcoholism, but the incongruity between a romantic and a clinical mode is minimized because his alcoholism is both marginalized and romanticized.<sup>2</sup> Cavell mystifies Dexter's pathology until it represents metaphysical insight:

He calls this problem of his "my gorgeous thirst." What is this thirst, which Tracy could not tolerate, a thirst for? And in curing himself of his thirst for alcohol, has he, are we to understand, cured himself of his gorgeous thirst? Since Dexter's praise of alcohol lies in its capacity to open your eyes to yourself, we might think of his thirst as for truth, or for self-knowledge, as well as for her desire, since his implied rebuke to her (that her eyes are closed to her own desire) is that what she could not bear was his thirst for whatever the alcohol represented, call this their marriage (145).

Cavell, the critic, takes on the role of the codependent, valorizing the attitudes and behavior of the alcoholic.

One might expect that Dexter's drinking had something to do with the breakup of his marriage, but the script says otherwise: the real cause was his wife's lack of understanding and support. So Tracy needs to get gloriously drunk once again in order to understand this and thereby come into her full humanity.

Although Dexter is an alcoholic, the only episode from his period of active drinking that we see is the violent aftermath of the marital dispute that opens the film. Dexter leaves the house with his suitcases, while Tracy follows him with his pipe-rack and golf bag. Vindictively, she drops the rack on the ground, then breaks a club over her knee. Dexter follows her back to the door (accompanied by a drum-roll on the sound-track, suggesting that the film is enjoying what is about to come) and taps her on the shoulder; he mimes slugging her but instead puts his hand on her face and pushes her down on the floor. "Did he really sock her?" Tracy's young sister Dinah (Virginia Weidler) asks.

"Did he really sock her? The papers were full of innundo [sic]."

"What?"

"Of innundo. Cruelty and drunkenness, it said."

And we, who have seen, should not disagree.

Although Dexter no longer drinks, he cannot be said to be sober. Throughout the film his behavior toward others is intrusive and manipulative.

He is rude to Tracy under the guise of wishing her well: he moves into her domestic space at a very intimate moment (the time of her second marriage), never acknowledging that his action might be inappropriate. He analyzes her shortcomings in her presence and often insults her directly. At one point Dexter suddenly moves toward Tracy, forcing her to back up, reprising his earlier stalking figure at the front door. Dexter's first appearance in the film takes the form of the silent stalking of Liz Imbry (Ruth Hussey) and Macaulay Connor (James Stewart) as he walks closely behind them, in step with them, through the offices of Spy magazine.

Many of the other men are also addicts. Tracy's father (John Halliday) doubles Dexter as a sexual addict whose philandery is accepted and protected by everyone in the family. Uncle Willie (Roland Young) is a double for both: he is the active alcoholic to Dexter's recovering one, and he plays the father for much of the film as a consequence of misidentification. A suburban satyr with a drink in his hand, Uncle Willie leers tipsily at women and pinches them on the ass. Alcoholism and compulsive sexualizing go together for Uncle Willie, while the project of the film is to get Tracy to accept her responsibility for both the father's affairs and Dexter's drinking.<sup>3</sup>

Dexter blames Tracy for his alcoholism --

"(You) never had any understanding of my deep and courageous thirst."

"That was your problem."

"Granted, but you took on that problem when you took me."

You were no helpmate there, you were so cold"

-- and Seth Lord blames her for his adultery: "The best mainstay a man can have is the right kind of daughter," he tells her. These resentments are illogical and unfair, but it's a fantasy shared by the codependent wife and daughter. Dexter drank because she was frigid, the father sleeps around because she is cold. Tracy plays the frigid woman so common in middle-class drama and film of the early twentieth century, and all of the men want to humble her.

The splendor of Tracy's first binge was due to simple intoxication, but her second is enhanced by the shame of sexual promiscuity. Next morning she is humbled, lorded over for not knowing who may have slept with her the night before. This trope is borrowed from the mythology of the female alcoholic, as in Sidney Lumet's The Morning After, where the woman is punished by having her wake up next to a corpse, not knowing if it was she who murdered him. Although the rhetoric of Philadelphia Story speaks of this moment as the recovery of some innate magnificence, what turns the character and the plot is silly tipsiness, sexual abandon, and then, applied to

the wrong person, blackout and shame.

Mother Lord (Mary Nash) sees nothing wrong with the notion that women are responsible for the men's abusive behavior, and Tracy accepts it as well although she hates the men for it, and her anger threatens to render her unfeminine. According to Dexter, her strength is her weakness: "You could be the finest woman on this earth -- I'm contemptuous of something inside you. Your so-called strength, your prejudice against weakness."

In the remake of Philadelphia Story, High Society (1956), the part of Tracy Lord is played by Grace Kelly, who two years earlier had played the role of a perfect woman in Alfred Hitchcock's Rear Window. The hero of Hitchcock's film, James Stewart, sees Kelly as both perfect and lacking, lacking by virtue of her perfection --

"Are you kidding, she's a beautiful young girl."

"She's just not the girl for me."

"Yeah, she's only perfect."

"She's too perfect, talented, beautiful, sophisticated too, everything but what I want."

Tracy is imperfectly perfect, the script tells us three decades before the resurgence of feminism, because she is a goddess, one of the contemporary names for the frigid woman: "You're slipping, I used to be afraid of that look, the withering glance of the goddess." As Dexter says, she "finds human imperfection unforgiveable," and he feels that he "was not intended to be a friend or husband but a high priest to a virgin goddess." The goddess motif makes sense in terms of the perfectionism of codependency, a neurotic excess that will be used in the film to convict Tracy as an imperfect perfectionist.

The film ends with a complete victory over Tracy who allows Dexter to become her ventriloquist. She is cured of her goddess complex, and her treatment is that reeducation so praised by Stanley Cavell in his Pursuits of Happiness. As the film puts it, "You'll never be a first-class woman until you learn pity for human frailty. A pity your own foot can't slip sometime."

With patriarchal arrogance, the film has sent the wrong party into treatment.

Because Frank Capra's State of the Union is a weak reprise of Philadelphia Story, there is little comic elaboration and no drunken behavior. Hepburn again plays the woman who doesn't drink, except once then and once now, each time with explosive results; but, because State is a typical film of the late 40s, little of this is said and even less shown. The present estrangement between Mary (Hepburn) and Grant (Spencer Tracy) was precipitated by the earlier eruption: "Our last encounter was something to remember . . . I inflated myself a little too, starting with martinis -- and told

her off. Off and out of my house. I played right into her hands, I acted like a fishwife." Again, the film stages a significant reenactment of an earlier moment.

Two professional kingmakers -- a political manager, Jim Conover (Adolphe Menjou), and the ruthless woman director of a newspaper empire, Kay Thorndyke (Angela Lansbury) -- groom Grant, a Western businessman, to be the Republican candidate for president. Kay is also the "other" woman who plans to take advantage of the rift in Grant's marriage. Although Kay presents a lesbian image and is never intimate with Grant, she is insistently proclaimed to be his lover.

Grant's complaint about Mary, on the other hand, is that she too is a mannish woman because she unmans him. Mary knows the great man when he's at home. When Conover expresses admiration for Grant, Mary is finding holes in his socks: "You and I know he's a big man. My bad days are when he knows he's a big man." Grant will eventually come back to a sense of simple priorities in a film about a Mr. Smith who temporarily succumbs to the temptations of self-importance and becomes just another politician.

Grant bears the name of our most notoriously alcoholic president, and, while he doesn't drink in the film, the politician Conover and the reporter, Spike McGinnis (Van Johnson), are almost always seen with drinks in their hands. In a symmetrical figure Mary's chatter prevents Conover from taking a swallow, while her native candor causes Spike to spit out his mouthful of drink. Mary is accompanied on her second binge by two Southern luses, a judge and his wife Lulubelle, who keep ordering bourbons and Sazeracs from the bar.

The issue over which Mary slips is the violation of the sanctity of her home by the media, allowing a campaign broadcast from her living room.<sup>4</sup> On the evening of the broadcast, the house is crammed with people, TV and radio crews, a brass band, and the Blue Note Quartet. When Conover clicks Kay's martini with his highball, something in Mary snaps, and she grabs a drink from the Judge, swallows it and then mimes a chest burn. She drinks Sazeracs with Lulubelle who has never "bothered to learn what's in them." Mary stammers ("I'd rather be tight than president") and slurs ("thick qwinker"). Although nothing scandalous happens, Lulubelle declares, "I haven't enjoyed myself so much since Huey Long died."

As a consequence of her rebellion, Mary refuses to make the radio speech expected of her. Kay plans to go on in Mary's place, but, as Kay and Grant come out, they find Mary at the mike. She begins reading the prepared speech which restores Grant to his humanity, it is suggested, as nothing else could. Even within the confines of Hollywood, however, Katherine Hepburn's 1948 binge poses no threat to proper domestic behavior.

In Blake Edwards' Blind Date, Walter Davis (Bruce Willis) has been ordered by his boss to find a date for an important business dinner with a Japanese tycoon. The film premises both sexual inexperience and awkwardness in Walter who must, therefore, get his brother Ted (Phil Hartman) to fix him up with a blind date. Ted tells Walter that Nadia Gates (Kim Basinger) will be a fine date except for one thing: "Don't get her drunk. She loses control completely."

Expecting to be disappointed as usual, Walter is swept away by Nadia's beauty. Forgetting Ted's warning, he feeds her champagne. They toast "auspicious beginnings," and she goes wild. Nadia is the "perfect" blind date: the one that Walter can't trust because the other blind dates have turned out so badly as well as the blind date that turns into a nightmare because of one thing that he does wrong.

Once Nadia has had a first drink she goes crazy. She causes chaos in the restaurant that evening, destroying the party and ruining Walter's career.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Kim Basinger lacks screwball buoyancy and all she is given to do is tear men's jackets and otherwise embarrass male chauvinists. The film received uniformly bad reviews, but few of them even mentioned that excessive drinking moves the plot. The ones that did generally turned that against the film, arguing that it is in poor taste to ground your comedy on the pitiful antics of a drunk. Blind Date is thus a key instance of cultural denial.

The entire film, however, is governed by a logic of intoxication and addiction: it reproduces all behavior as drunken. In addition to Nadia, Walter and David Bedford (John Larroquette) also operate out of wild, mood-altered states. Walter behaves weirdly long before his date with Nadia, particularly in an initial silent sequence where he wakes late and rushes to his office. Walter shaves and dresses in frantic haste and trips getting to his door; in the office building, he races up the stairs and through the hall, running into a woman and upsetting her and her papers. He runs on, jumping over a utility man. Bursting into his office, he yells "coffee" at his secretary, which he spills, and screams for papers which she calmly hands him. The explanation for such lack of control is that he has been up much of the night finishing a report.

After the disastrous dinner with Nadia, Walter decides that it is his turn to go wild. At another party later that evening he introduces himself to the first woman he meets as Walter Davis, rocket scientist, and thereafter invents a new occupation for every new acquaintance. He also begins to drink steadily. Nadia screeches, "No, Walter!" as he washes his hands in a punchbowl -- narrative circumstances arrange to produce the boor that Bruce Willis prefers to be.<sup>6</sup> "Do I hear a mambo?" he exclaims and runs with Nadia out onto the terrace. He cries "Arriba!" and wildly dances by the pool. "Why don't you just

pass out, Walter?" Nadia wails. At some point what started as payback has passed completely out of control, and we realize that we have not been informed when a manic, autonomous drive took over from what we had been asked to regard as a ploy.

Nadia's "psychotic ex-boyfriend David" also behaves erratically, but this is passed off as social eccentricity (a regular feature of John Larroquette's comic style). Like Nadia when drunk, he has no impulse control: he lunges for Walter several times and tries to strangle him; he also tries to run him down in his car.

What's wrong with Nadia anyway? As she says, "If only I didn't have this chemical imbalance, it's sort of like an allergy to alcohol, it makes me crazy." This is a common formula for alcoholism, which the film will not register. From a different perspective, though, a textual perspective, there is a long, suppressed history of drugs in the history of Blind Date, and this absence is marked both by the magic potion, the one drink of alcohol that produces unbelievable and incommensurate consequences, and the candy which Nadia admits she craves.<sup>7</sup> The substitution does not strain credibility since the one drink serves as well as the pharmacopia of the previous stages: Hollywood censorship here works just like Freudian censorship, and the censored content remains available.

According to Dale Lautner, who wrote the comedy, "In the first version, she has a substance-abuse personality . . . . It starts with a drink, and quickly moves to coke and acid" (Cooper 56). But Lautner was informed by Tri-Star (the production company) that the female lead's cocaine use was "undesirable." The script came back to him annotated: "Wish to remove Nadia's references to drugs, particularly cocaine."<sup>8</sup> The second draft omits cocaine and LSD and substitutes an accidental overdose of over-the-counter antihistamines. In the final version of the script, rewritten by Leslie Dixon and then by Blake Edwards, even the cold medicine disappears and Nadia is left only with too much drinking -- and even this is substantially modified to become merely an allergic reaction to a single drink (Cooper 56). The censors also allowed Nadia a safe but serious addiction to candy which points back to the missing cocaine.<sup>9</sup>

In the two earlier films the woman's so-called transformation comes as a result of one evening's unwonted drinking, an uncharacteristic "binge." In Blind Date, it is literally one drink. This can be read as the difference between intoxication and addiction, since what is written into the latter script is the AA concept of the first drink as the one drink that sets the alcoholic off. The authority for such a reading comes from Nadia's textual history as well as the semantics of the "one drink" that gets the person who is "allergic" to alcohol

roaring drunk. Edwards' film collapses the meaning "blind date" with "blind drunk."

The central premise of Blind Date was also presented as melodramatic thriller five years later in Final Analysis by Phil Joanou. This film, which also stars Kim Basinger, duplicates the situation of Blind Date. A doctor diagnoses a gangster's wife as suffering from pathological intoxication: "People with this syndrome will have a dramatic, often violent response to the slightest amounts of alcohol -- and never remember a thing. Keep her away from alcohol in any form." "Something happens when I drink, it's horrible," Basinger explains. "I become, I don't know what I become because I never can remember." She will soon murder her husband and be acquitted on a defense of pathological intoxication, while the film goes on to explore the question of whether or not she is faking (another sign of Hollywood's inability to credit pathology).

There is not much in the cultural record about people so sensitive to drink that one drink sends them over the edge. The most notorious instance, however, was an addict, Edgar Allan Poe, whose cousin Neilson attested 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). The mythology of the single glass of liquor is written into Poe's life and certain works of fiction -- like "The Angel of the Odd" or The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym -- and it reflects a notable feature of alcoholism, the reversal of tolerance. At this stage 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 (Bonaparte 87; see Ross 41).

George Cukor and Blake Edwards are no strangers to alcoholic drinking: Cukor made a pioneer film about an alcoholic director, What Price Hollywood?, as well as the third film in the sequence that it initiated -- the second A Star Is Born. Heavy drinkers also appear in Rockabye, Holiday, Her Cardboard Lover, Edward My Son, and The Chapman Report. Edwards made Days of Wine and Roses in 1962, one of two classic Hollywood films to take alcoholism "seriously." Alcoholism figures in a number of Edwards' films -- Days of Wine and Roses, "10", S.O.B., and Skin Deep -- but in all but the first it is covered by a sexual addiction, which seems a more obvious autobiographical corollary. In these films, the drinking problem seems incidental, but it will be revealed to be the underlying problem and the philandering will go when the man begins his recovery. Sexual addiction alone is central to another series of Edwards' films: Perfect Furlough, The Man Who Loved Women, A Fine Mess, and Switch.

Walter's offer of a drink to Nadia need not be regarded as an accident. It is, after all, a consistent twentieth-century dating practice. One of the features of American dating is the man trying to get the woman drunk without arousing her suspicions, because that is the way the man can get what he wants. In films like Something Wild (Jonathan Demme, 1986) or After Hours (Martin Scorsese, 1985) as in Blind Date, this practice is presented as releasing something the man doesn't want, something out of control. But isn't that really why men give their dates liquor? So that they will act out in wild and irresponsible ways? "What does 'lose control' mean?" Walter asks. "Oh," says Ted, "she gets real wild," but he says it sexy and barks.

"You got me drunk!"

"I didn't."

"You know I wasn't supposed to drink."

"Well, you didn't have to drink it."

"That's a cheap shot, Walter."

## Notes

1. The overall pattern is one of disavowal rather than denial. Films like The Lost Weekend, Smashup, Days of Wine and Roses will be made but will have no influence on subsequent fictions.
2. Cukor's 1954 A Star Is Born repeats this relationship between a sober wife and an alcoholic husband (reversed off-screen where Judy Garland was the addict). In both A Star Is Born and the earlier What Price Hollywood? (1932), the film director, a character based in both cases on George Cukor, is a hopeless drunk.
3. As a newspaper reporter and writer, Connor should be the alcoholic of the film if popular stereotypes held true: Dexter asks him if he drinks alcohol. "A little" is his reply. "And you a writer. I thought all writers drank to excess and beat their wives." Connor, however, is Tracy's partner on the night of her great drunk.
4. The real problem in the economics of film at this time is the telecast coming into the home.
5. Edwards' The Party works along opposite lines to the same end: in that film, Bakshi [Peter Sellers] doesn't drink. Each time the waiter offers him one, the waiter ends up drinking it for him. The drunken waiter [Steven Franken] "wreaks havoc among the servants and, with Bakshi, destroys the dinner that is the center of the evening's entertainment" (Lehman and Luhr 1988: 143).
6. Edwards, however, used Willis the next year in Sunset where he plays a permanently neat Tom Mix.
7. This equation was recycled from Edwards' earlier Days of Wine and Roses. Many reviewers and critics of that film pointed out that Kirstie's yen for chocolates prefigures her later alcohol addiction.

Here, Nadia takes a bite of candy and says, "I always was a candy person,

some people drink or do drugs, I do sugar." At the end of the film, Walter gets her back by injecting chocolates with brandy.

8. A cocaine scene was also deleted from Blake Edward's S. O. B. in which a bald midget in livery walks through a party with lines of coke on his head. People snort "with no more excitement than they would show taking canapés from a tray" (Meisel 20).
9. There are signs of the previous addiction in the final script. When arranging the blind date with Ted, Walter predicts he will recommend one of his psychotic friends: "You tried to find me Miss Right before only you forgot to mention one crucial detail, like she's a dope addict."

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## Original Poetry

### Tequila and the Will to Drive

Jack Williams

The cry goes out to eat the worm.  
The men applaud, the women squirm.  
The worm rotates without concern.

They clear the bar and place their bets:  
He will, he won't. The change upsets  
An ashtray choked with cigarettes.

The loudmouth cries "Hot damn it's mine!"  
And falling down he swears he's fine.  
He's fine, alright. A safe design:

The padded bar cushions the blow.  
Next round's on him. He gets up slow,  
Ignores the bruises. Outside, the snow

Keeps coming on, shot after shot.  
He calls for another round -- he's got  
The money anyway, and what

The hell, there's nothing else to do.  
That's it: there's nothing else to do.  
Inside him now, it's worming through,

And in the GTO he finds  
The going tough, and tougher kinds  
Of wrecks ahead that no one minds.

The road has run into a wall.  
The papers will inform us all,  
The reasons and the wherewithal.

Original Poetry**Binge****George Carmen**

I hope her heart will understand.  
If she were to leave, it would feel as if I had been  
ripped clean in half, by Earth and Moon.

There,  
She's sleeping.  
Blankets rising up, down, up, down.  
Love unquestioning.  
Raccoon sadness,  
Ancient stains of fear and anger,  
Security that kills for calmness.  
You're too high up to be let down.  
    "You're in big trouble."

I hope she's right.

## Book Review

Roger Forseth

Norman Kiell. Food and Drink in Literature: A Selectively Annotated Bibliography. Lanham, MD, & London: The Scarecrow Press, 1995. 361 pp \$62.50. [4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706]

With his characteristic slighting of nonsense, A. J. Liebling writes,

The Proust madeleine phenomenon is now as firmly established in folklore as Newton's apple or Watt's steam kettle. The man ate a tea biscuit, the taste evoked memories, he wrote a book. This is capable of expression by the formula TMB, for Taste > Memory > Book. Some time ago, when I began to read a book called The Food of France by Waverley Root, I had an inverse experience: BMT, for Book > Memory > Taste. Happily, the tastes that The Food of France re-created for me -- small birds, stewed rabbit, stuffed tripe, Cote Rotie and Tavel -- were more robust than that of the madeleine, which Larousse defines as "a light cake made with sugar, flour, lemon juice, brandy, and eggs." (The quantity of brandy in a madeleine would not furnish a gnat with an alcohol rub.) In the light of what Proust wrote with so mild a stimulus, it is the world's loss that he did not have a heartier appetite. On a dozen Gardiners Island oysters, a bowl of clam chowder, a peck of steamers, some bay scallops, three sautéed soft-shelled crabs, a few ears of fresh-picked corn, a thin swordfish steak of generous area, a pair of lobsters, and a Long Island duck, he might have written a masterpiece.<sup>1</sup>

One may reformulate Liebling as follows: food + booze > gluttony > literature > Norman Kiell's new bibliography, Food and Drink in Literature.<sup>2</sup> Kiell notes that this volume, an expansion of his lists that appeared in Mosaic.<sup>3</sup> "is the first full-length, annotated bibliography on the twin subjects of food and drink in literature, and as such should be considered a beginning" (3). It is an excellent start, and the logic of joining food and drink in one book is unassailable: the cardinal sin of gluttony, after all, includes

both -- as the passage from Liebling exemplifies.

Kiell's approach, in terms of subject-matter, is inclusive. "No aspect of eating and drinking," he writes, "is omitted in the works listed. They range from anorexia to cannibalism, from fine dining to dieting, . . . from starvation to gluttony" (5-6). The author pretty much restricts himself to secondary, mostly scholarly, items to the exclusion of primary works; and though the bibliography contains many references from previous periods, the emphasis is on recent work. The principles of selection here are, I think, proper, if the work is to remain of manageable length. The index, however, is confined to authors' names; a subject index is urged for the next edition.

I found myself, rather to my surprise, reading this book (I seldom read bibliographies any more than I do a phone book). The annotations are often full and the titles themselves fascinating, to note only a few: "Cannibalism and Anorexia: Or, Feast and Famine in French Occupation Narrative"; "'Hungry Man Is an Angry Man': A Marxist Reading of Consumption in Joyce's Ulysses"; "Feeding the Transcendent Body"; From Communion to Cannibalism: "The Edible Woman: Eating and Breast-Feeding in the Novels of Samuel Richardson"; "Colette's Passionate Palate"; und so weiter.

Kiell's section on food in literature is most useful, but it is to his list on drink that readers of Dionysos will, no doubt, turn with particular interest. (In the interests of full disclosure, it should be mentioned that Kiell, in the process of covering the contents of Dionysos comprehensively, comments most generously about this reviewer.<sup>4</sup>) Kiell observes that "there are almost twice as many articles and books on food to be found in the bibliography as there are on literature and alcoholism" (213), a not surprising discovery since a scholarly and critical interest in this subject is little more than a decade old: "The serious exploration of alcoholism in literature is in progress. Society is more open and with it the freedom to explore alcoholism and the creative writer will expand" (217). The primary emphasis here, as with the food section, is on print material, though the author does include representative entries on film and television. And, owing to space limitations, the list is confined to alcoholic beverages and literature, since the subject of narcotics and other types of substance use and abuse require their own bibliographies.

One can always think of items to add to a bibliography, but it would have been useful for him to have included references to seminal works that, while not strictly speaking about alcohol and literature, are often cited by researchers in the field. These would, for example, include Harry Gene Levine's "The Discovery of Addiction: Changing Conceptions of Habitual Drunkenness in America" (Journal of Studies on Alcohol 19 [1978]: 143-75), and Gregory Bateson's "The Cybernetics of 'Self': A Theory of Alcoholism"

(Psychiatry 34 [1971]: 1-18). And though he quite properly cites On Drink by Kingsley Amis, he misses the even more interesting Drink (Doubleday, 1979) by the poet and Dylan Thomas biographer Constantine FitzGibbon.

But these are quibbles. With this fine book, the author has given us more than enough to work with.

## NOTES

1. A. J. Liebling, Between Meals: An Appetite for Paris. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962: 9-10.
2. Dr. Kiell, who is professor emeritus of psychological services at Brooklyn College, teaches a seminar on psychoanalysis and literature for medical residents, and is the editor of the 3-volume bibliography, Psychoanalysis, Psychology and Literature (Scarecrow, 1982, 1990).
3. Mosaic 24.3/4 (1991): 211-63.
4. Kiell's work "goes up to 1993, although I have wandered into 1994" (3), and he therefore does not note that Dionysos resumed publication with Volume 6.

## Book Review

John W. Crowley

John Steadman Rice, A Disease of One's Own: Psychotherapy, Addiction, and the Emergence of Co-Dependency. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1996 (viii, 253 pages).

"You have heard the cry from the darkness. You have listened to the disconsolate yowling from the tenebrous depths of my soul," Tom Raabe ululates in Biblioholism: The Literary Addiction (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 1991). "And perhaps you feel inclined to offer up a plaint of your own, to wit: What -- another addiction? Don't we have enough addictions to worry about -- drugs, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, gambling, eating, not eating, shopping, shoplifting, sex, chocolate, work, television watching, fitness, religion, and who knows what else -- without having to worry about books too?" Later, in a section titled "Biblioholism: Weakness or Disease?", Raabe supplicates scientists to mount "a full-fronted, no-holds-barred" inquiry into the origins of this dread malady (one, I dare say, that afflicts a few readers of Dionysos!): "We need action, research, government grants. We need a book by Melody Beattie . . . . Don't let it be our fault!"

The "disease" concept of alcoholism, which originated in the eighteenth century and flourished during Temperance times, has become so entrenched in the modern period that it continues to inform both common sense and medical (AMA) orthodoxy. But the paradigm is getting threadbare. Always considered dubious by rigorous scientists, the disease concept -- stretched well beyond credibility by the burgeoning "recovery" movement -- has now devolved into a target for investigative journalism and a butt of satire such as Raabe's.

During the 1980s, with twelve-step programs spinning off like dervishes and rehabs proliferating faster than fast-food franchises -- to catch a bull market in addicts and to capitalize on third-party payments -- America ostensibly approached a state of pan-addictive grid-lock. "It has been estimated," reports John Steadman Rice in A Disease of One's Own. "that there are 15 million Americans in 500,000 recovery groups and [that] 100 million Americans are related to someone with some form of addictive behavior." Some shills for the "treatment industry" -- which includes rehabs as well as book publishers and purveyors of recovery kitsch -- have estimated

that 96% of all Americans currently suffer from some species of "co-dependency," or (worse!) that "the number of co-dependents in the United States exceeds the total population." Pretty scary. Pretty silly.

Rice's book, an outgrowth of his dissertation in sociology at the University of Virginia, offers a scrupulously fair-minded account of the co-dependency phenomenon, as reflected in meetings he observed of CoDA (Co-Dependents Anonymous) and in the immensely popular writings of Melody Beattie, John Bradshaw, and other gurus of recovery. Rice is critical of those, such as Wendy Kaminer, who have debunked co-dependency without any attempt to explain its massive appeal. Rice's purpose is not only to elucidate co-dependency as a belief system, but also to place its ideology within American cultural history. The result is an intelligent, disinterested, and readable (but unduly repetitious) book that will likely become a standard reference. (It should be understood that Rice's representation of co-dependency is more sociologically neutral than it may sound in my admittedly more partisan rendering of his book.)

Rice carefully distinguishes between Alcoholics Anonymous and its recent clones. Founded during the Depression, AA still exhibits the traditional American emphasis on bootstrap reform and personal responsibility. The therapeutic goal of AA is "adaptation to existing social and cultural standards." Members are "expected to direct their attention to the damage done by the addiction to themselves and to others rather than to seek a cause for the addiction in damage done to themselves." By contrast, CoDA and other groups under the co-dependency umbrella encourage their members -- in fact, oblige them -- to regard themselves as totally innocent victims.

This essential difference is traced to the roots of co-dependency in the "liberation psychotherapy" of the 1960s, a "revolutionary" discourse that preached the radical priority of the individual over society. "The self's overarching moral significance, expressed by the claim that every person has a right to autonomy from social and cultural proprieties, is liberation psychotherapy's central organizing principle." Co-dependency, according to Rice, assimilated liberation psychotherapy, including its rejection of conservative values. Co-dependency, however, is a "discourse of reform" that ultimately seeks accommodation with, rather than disruption of, the status quo.

Whereas liberation psychotherapy failed to provide for communal action and purpose, co-dependency forges a new type of community among its members, who embrace the binding premise of their common victimization -- conceived as the abandonment and abuse of the "inner child" by tyrannous parents who have been brainwashed by a repressive American society. The strength of this community hinges, however, on the power of its analogical

reasoning: "our problems are 'like' alcoholism -- and without that analogy, the common ground disappears."

In effect, the "disease" of co-dependency is a "dis-ease"; "co-dependency is not something one 'has' but, rather, something one believes." Co-dependency relies, that is, on a symbolic understanding of "disease" in which "addiction" describes a psychological process rather than a physiological condition; "the addiction itself is now a rhetorical rather than a biological category." Rice uses the term "process addiction" to differentiate co-dependency as a "learned disease" from addictions that are more demonstrably physical, such as those to alcohol or narcotics.

Thus although co-dependency evolved from the AA notion of "co-alcoholism," it revised AA thinking by reversing the causal logic between co-dependency and addiction. Co-dependency is "the cause of all addictions" rather than "the product of intimacy with an addicted person." Co-dependency "fuses liberation psychotherapy's causal model and cultural critique with the disease model of addiction's emphasis upon powerlessness. The logic of both symbolic systems is thereby subtly but significantly changed. On the one hand, addiction is caused by cultural repression (which it never was before); on the other, all problems in living become addictions." Given the "plasticity of symptoms" attributable to process addictions, it is no wonder that co-dependency has fostered a rash of hitherto unknown "diseases." Rice lists over three dozen You-Name-It Anonymous groups, each dedicated to "recovery" from one or another "addiction." All of these seemingly require the same regimen of treatment: twelve-step meetings that become "ritual enactments" not of the process addiction itself, but rather of a conversion process.

The only requirement for membership becomes a desire to belong. Converts to CoDA "consistently revealed a profound willingness to take the discourse's claims and apply them to their own lives on an entirely literal level": that is, to discover qualifying evidence of the violation of one's inner child. As one co-dependent put it in a CoDA meeting attended by Rice, "As some of you know, I know I was abused as a child, I just don't remember it. But I've been working on that in therapy -- going back into the past and trying to bring the memories into clearer focus."

It is only through such strenuous "self-identification as a process addict," Rice argues, "that groups such as Co-Dependents Anonymous became possible." Moreover, because of the cultural status of addiction in general, "being a process addict effectively requires membership in an Anonymous group." In principle, if not quite in practice, anyone can become co-dependent. Hence the astronomical calculations about the pandemic spread of "disease."

The increasingly patent absurdity of co-dependency ideology brings pressure to bear, in turn, on the efficacy of the "disease concept" in defining alcoholism and on public policy about its treatment. Having been applied so indiscriminately, the idea of addiction as "disease" seems more and more vacuous; it applies to everything and, therefore, to nothing. The disease paradigm was always tenuous in regard to alcoholism. As Rice suggests, "Given the equivocal evidence, it is not too much to say that public policy based upon biological factors has reflected what can fairly be called a willing suspension of disbelief. The moral legitimacy of the alcoholic as an addicted person and of addiction as a conditionally legitimate form of sickness have been granted on an 'as if' basis."

How much longer will disbelief be suspended? There are already indications that time is running out for the disease concept. One important sign of its possible demise is the growing resistance, under the aegis of "managed health care," to funding rehabs for alcohol and/or drug addiction. As HMO's turn the screws on treatment costs (as in California), the excesses of the recovery movement are being visited upon the least hypothetical of addicts: those with at least some claim to a biological, not merely rhetorical, ailment.

Obviously, one appealing effect of the disease concept is to lighten the addict's burden of guilt. But, as Rice points out, the public has always limited its willingness to relieve alcoholics of responsibility for their behavior under the influence. "Despite the official legitimacy of alcoholism, however, the alcoholic does not receive blanket absolution for his or her actions . . . . The social vilification and demonization of the drunk driver is only the most obvious example. In this case, the tacit reasoning is apparently that alcoholics had better find a way to control themselves when the decision as to whether or not to drive is the issue."

If, indeed, the disease concept does not survive much longer, at least in the form advocated by the Alcoholism Movement of the mid-twentieth century, then whatever will supplant it has yet to become apparent. But it is plausible to suppose in these neo-Prohibitionist days (so far only in regard to tobacco), that something like the Victorian idea of addiction may be revived: an uneasy compromise between medical and moral paradigms that held drunkards responsible for their sinful self-indulgence while forgiving them their human frailty and offering the partial absolution of regarding their disease of the will as also a physical illness.

Of course, there was a price attached even to the provisional Victorian notion of habitual drunkenness as a disease: as in the case of the insanity defense (another nineteenth-century invention), lack of moral accountability was linked to degeneracy. Insofar as the inebriate was not to be held morally

responsible, he or she was deemed to be physically and mentally defective, the product of bad hereditary stock. This is worth remembering, perhaps, as the search persists for a supposed gene for alcoholism.

## NOTES AND COMMENT

## Roger Forseth

"Edgar Allan Poe did not die drunk in a gutter in Baltimore but rather had rabies, a new study suggests. The researcher, Dr. R. Michael Benitez, a cardiologist who practices a block from Poe's grave, says it is true that the writer was seen in a bar on Lombard Street in October 1849, delirious and possibly wearing somebody else's clothes. But Poe was not drunk, said Dr. Benitez . . . 'I think Poe is much maligned in that respect,' he added" (The New York Times 15 April 1996: 18. For numerous studies of Poe's alcoholism, see Norman Kiell's Bibliography, reviewed above.) . . . Clarion has published Daddy Doesn't Have to Be a Giant Anymore by Jane Resh Thomas, a story about an alcoholic father, told from his child's point of view. . . . "The Head wasn't just a writer's bar. On a roaring Saturday night, it was more often filled with people that writers wrote about. On such nights, if you were young and trying to be a writer, you wanted to live forever" writes Pete Hamill in his obituary on the Lion's Head in Greenwich Village (The New York Times 18 Oct. 1996: A15). Mr. Hamill's A Drinking Life was recently published in paperback. . . . "Don Des Jarlais of Beth Israel Medical Center's Chemical Dependency Institute in New York estimates 10% to 30% of people who try heroin get addicted. He likens it to 'skydiving with a 10% to 30% chance your parachute isn't going to work'" (The Wall Street Journal 26 Aug. 1996: B1) . . . "Spirits and the Spirit: Alcohol and Religion in American Literature" (MLA Newsletter, Spring 1996: 26) is the (approximately) 17th Special Session proposal on drink rejected by the MLA Program Committee. . . . "When it comes to the terrors and compulsions of addiction, Wallace can write masterfully. Not everyone will buy his vision of addiction as a metaphor for American Society -- that might be a theory with which only addicts can feelingly concur -- but it is undeniable that addiction is a hot subject in today's world" (Brooke Allen, "Intellects and Addicts," a review of David Foster Wallace, Infinite Jest [Little Brown], The New Criterion May 1996: 66). . . . David Lenson's On Drugs (U of MN P 1995) "calls [according to the blurb] for the acceptance of a 'diversity of consciousness.' Magnificent . . . A classic. Timothy Leary." Dr. Leary died 31 May 1996. . . . Fox recently released a newly discovered film starring W. C. Fields "in the role of a professor who needs [a tail coat] for his lecture on temperance to the Uptown Association for the Downfall of Alcohol" (Minneapolis Star Tribune 14 May 1996: E2). The vignette is available on tape: Tales of Manhattan. . . .

Dwight B. Heath has published "The War on Drugs as a Metaphor in American Culture," in Drug Policy and Human Nature, ed. Bickel and DeGrandpre (Plenum 1996): 279-99. . . . "Another aspect of his romantic image, and somewhat on a par with Van Gogh's ear, was that he was the most renowned alcoholic who ever lived. I am sure many an extra martini has been downed in his memory," writes Scott Fitzgerald's granddaughter, Eleanor Lanahan, in "Scott and Zelda's Legacy: A Style That Lives On" (The New York Times 2 Sept. 1996: 16). . . . In A Genealogy of the Modern Self: Thomas De Quincey and the Intoxication of Writing (Stanford UP 1996), Alina Clej "argues that De Quincey's literary output, which is both a symptom and an effect of his addiction to opium and writing, plays an important role in the development of modern and modernist forms of subjectivity." . . . "Caffeine-Induced Disorders: Disorder #305.90. Caffeine Intoxication." "A. Recent consumption of caffeine, usually in excess of 250 mg (e.g., more than 2-3 cups of brewed coffee). B. Five or more of the following signs, developing during, or shortly after, caffeine use: (1) restlessness (2) nervousness (3) excitement (4) insomnia (5) flushed face (6) diuresis (frequent urination) (7) gastrointestinal disturbance (8) muscle twitching (9) rambling flow of thought and speech (10) tachycardia or cardiac arrhythmia (11) periods of inexhaustibility (12) psychomotor agitation" (D.S.M.-IV 212). . . . "Is Trainspotting [the new British film] dangerously glamorizing addiction for a generation that doesn't know better? Or [is it] a necessary dose of harsh reality? At one point in the movie, a junkie rhapsodizes about heroin: 'Take the best orgasm you've ever had, multiply it by a thousand, and you're still nowhere near'" (Michael Dwyer, "A Grungy Shocker on Heroin Comes Ashore," The New York Times 14 July 1996: 9). . . . To commemorate the opening of the Chester H. Kirk Collection of Alcoholism and Alcoholics Anonymous, Brown University's Center for Alcohol & Addiction Studies is planning a conference, "Information Resources for Alcohol Research," 16-18 May 1997. The Center's collection "contains over 15,000 archival items relating to AA's past and present, as well as the history of the temperance movement in America." . . . "Said Aristotle unto Plato / 'Have another sweet potato?' / Said Plato unto Aristotle, / 'Thank you, I prefer the bottle.'" -- Owen Wister (quoted in Dave Shiflett, "Here's to Your Health," [The American Spectator Oct. 1996: 26], a defense of moderate drinking).

[NOTE. The announcement, in the Summer 1996 "Notes and Comment," that the contents of Dionysos are on the World Wide Web was premature. They will, however, be listed soon. Keep posted.]

## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**George Carmen** lives in New Brunswick, N.J. He is working on his first novel, and is part of a traveling performance art duo called MRS. SICKLE'S CHAUFFEUR, where he performs abstract audio visual "proscapes" and "wordriots." Often seen in rare bookstores and subversive poetry readings . . . Capricorn.

**Mary Corey** is a visiting lecturer in history at UCLA. Her book The World Through a Monocle: Goods and Goodness in the Postwar New Yorker Magazine is forthcoming from Harvard University Press.

**John Crowley** is Professor of English at Syracuse University. He is author of The White Logic: Alcoholism and Gender in American Modernist Fiction (1994). He is currently editing a volume of Washingtonian temperance narratives from the 1840s.

**Roger Forseth** is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, and has published a number of articles on writers and addiction.

**Sam Friedman**, an AIDS researcher, has published approximately twenty poems. He has been a featured poet at several annual conventions of the North American Syringe Exchange Network, and has done readings for the Chai Project, a New Jersey "underground" syringe exchange which has been subjected to arrests.

**Marty Roth** teaches American literature and film studies at the University of Minnesota. He is presently working on a two-volume study of the play of intoxication and addiction in culture.

**Jack Williams** lives with his wife and children in Atlanta, Georgia, where he works for a software company. His writing has appeared previously in *Dionysos*. He is currently trying to find a publisher for two unpublished novels.

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