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Issue:
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Volume 9:Number 2(1999)
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Received: Sep 2 1999
University of Sheffield

Dionysos

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Journal of Literature and Addiction

Summer 1999
Vol. 9, #2

George Wedge Memorial Issue

DIONYSOS

Journal of Literature and Addiction
Summer, 1999 Vol. 9, No. 2

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A Note from the Editor

Word reached us in early June from the former editor of *Dionysos*, Roger Forseth, that George Wedge had died. George was a great friend to this journal: in addition to his personal support of its founding and its continuance, he also contributed some excellent critical articles and reviews over the ten years of its publication. He graced our most recent issue with his searching poem "The Inner Temple." I had the good fortune to spend some time with him at the American Literature Association convention in San Diego a year ago, and found him witty, warm, and wise.

This issue, like so many of this journal, includes several traces of George. First, at my request Roger Forseth, a long-time friend, has written a memorial of George, with which this issue leads off. Next, with the permission of George's wife of many years, Margaret, we are printing an article George submitted to *Dionysos* a couple of years ago. At that time it was shelved because it wasn't quite up to George's high standards; now it seems too precious not to see the light of day. Finally, with gratitude, respect, and affection, we would like to dedicate this entire Summer issue

To the memory of George Wedge

Elder Statesman

in the Study

of Literature and Addiction

Dionysos: The Journal of Literature and Addiction is published twice yearly (winter and summer) at the rate of $4.00 per issue, $8.00 annually for individuals, and $12.00 for institutions, USA and Canada (all other: $5.00/$8.00/$11.00, payment in dollars by international money order) by Addiction Studies, CSY331, Seattle University, 900 Broadway, Seattle WA 98122-4460. Please send manuscripts (two copies, plus self-addressed envelope, documentation according to The MLA Style Manual [New York: MLA, 1985] section 5.8), communications, and subscriptions to: Jim Harbaugh, S.J., Editor, *Dionysos*, Addiction Studies Program, Casey 331, Seattle University, 900 Broadway, Seattle, WA 98122-4460. Note: Copy deadlines are: March 31st (summer issue); October 15th (winter issue).. *Dionysos* is indexed in the MLA Bibliography.

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ISSN: 1044-4149
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Dionysos
Journal of Literature and Addiction

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George Francis Wedge III 1927-1999

Roger Forseth

> Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers who begat us.
> --Ecclesiasticus
>
> At Christmas, my father came from Boston,
> not home exactly, but to the city.
> He came to hear us sing at midnight
> and there were lights everywhere
> among the high voices.
> --George Wedge, The Inner Temple

In 1986 Dick Uhlig, with whom I had been corresponding about the writer and alcoholism, wrote to me that he knew of a fellow in Kansas named George Wedge who was well ahead of us. Since the three of us were to be in New York that Christmas for the MLA meeting, Dick suggested we get together. In the event, George Wedge showed up with "Drunken Quills: A Bibliography of Writers, Alcohol, and Alcoholism," an enormous database that contained then much of what we know now of the writer and drink. Shortly afterwards I wrote George, "The dinner in New York with you & Dick was pure delight; it's the sort of thing that helps make all the isolated research we do worthwhile."

Like solitary drinking, isolated research has its limitations, so the following year, this time at the San Francisco MLA convention, George and I met with Tom Gilmore, John Crowley, Nick Warner, and Joe Monda, where we came up with a plan to stay in touch through a newsletter. One result was Dionysos; the other was the enduring friendships that seem only to occur through the warmth that gives life to scholarship.

Through the years, after that fine gathering, George and I, along with our wives Margaret and Grace, met at so many conferences that the professional became the personal. Whether we were reading papers at Sheffield or Claremont, on Berryman or the Lost Generation, we more and more met for the simple fun of it. George's wonderfully quick mind had a way of distracting us (and I dare say him) from the reality of his declining health. I have never met anyone who faced his infirmities with better spirit and sounder mind than did George. On the last night we spent together, during the American Literature Association meeting last year in San Diego, the four of us had gone out to dinner. Afterwards, to save George the walk, I drove up to the restaurant door, and as I did so, George broke out in a perfect soft-shoe dance. Bojangles on bad legs!

On the Thursday before he died, George called to say goodbye. He had ordered the life support system to be turned off. He had trouble hearing us, but when we told him we loved him, he said, "I heard that." On the fifth of June he died. George's son Philip, in his fine poem "Car Keys," wrote:

> tomorrow we'll
> grow up and leave; tomorrow be all right;
> tomorrow Dad won't need long walks at night.

No—and yes. Requiescat in pace.

If "May Day" Isn't About Alcohol, Why Is Nearly Everybody Drunk?[1]

George Wedge

Contemporary reviews of Tales of the Jazz Age in Jackson Bryer's F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Critical Reception reveal a generally favorable opinion of the novella length short story "May Day." Some reviewers went so far as to call it "tragic." A few took offense at its portrayal of heavy drinking and what they considered its loose morality. Later critics have rejected both the label "tragic" and the implication that the story is about drinking. They see Gordon Sterrett's suicide as the result of his weakness of character, rather than as "tragic," and view "May Day" as an essay at social criticism that "not only conveys the atmosphere of a historical moment with incomparable vividness [but] is also a triumph of artistic form" (Way, 79). "May Day" does indeed vividly convey societal anxiety and restlessness after World War I by juxtaposing events at a Yale alumni dance and the red-baiting New York City riots of May Day, 1919. Its subject is a society that wastes its resources on trinkets and good times without regard for the opinion of orators and editors who point out the human cost to the working class.

It is curious, but not surprising, that in the criticism little attention has been directed to patterns of drinking and drunken behavior in the story. Curious, because observation of the drinking patterns reinforces the story's appraisal of the chaos and lack of ease in American society at this historical moment. What is not surprising about lack of attention to the drinking is that, until quite recently, drinking has been perceived as mere background or atmosphere in any fiction that does not specifically make alcohol or alcoholism its focal subject.

That Fitzgerald took care to relate drinking behavior to his theme is evident in his revisions of the magazine version of "May Day" for inclusion in Tales of the Jazz Age. In a study of these revisions Colin Cass reports that Fitzgerald removed some direct observations of Gordon Sterrett's drinking. In the scene in Philip Dean's hotel room, Dean's judgmental comments to Sterrett focus on Sterrett's inability to deal with women rather than on his loss of control of alcohol. In Sterrett's encounter with Edith Bradin at Delmonico's, the degree of Sterrett's inebriation is softened (Cass, 79-80). But Cass's interpretation of these changes,--that, for example, they make "Sterrett's drunkenness at Delmonico's seem circumstantial rather than habitual"--ignores how much evidence remains that Sterrett's drunkenness has become habitual. It is dramatically sound to show Sterrett, who is anxious to make a good impression on Edith, as having tried--and failed--to hide his drinking from her. The shift in the hotel scene from "drink" to "women"

characterizes Dean as much as it does Sterrett, reflecting Dean's casual attitude toward alcohol and his negative attitude toward women of Jewel's social class. Sterrett tells Dean that his affair with Jewel started during a round of parties with friends back from France. "That's the way it started, Phil, just from being glad to see everybody and having them glad to see me" (86). Dean focuses on the woman; another listener might have focussed on the partying. The changes do not substantially alter the story's presentation of the "weakness" that makes Sterrett vulnerable to Jewel and incapable of achieving the desired relationship with Edith.

Echoing the message of Temperance and Prohibition literature of the time, Philip Dean sums up Sterrett's situation, including the drunken letters with which Jewel is blackmailing him, in the observation, "You seem to be sort of bankrupt--morally as well as financially" (87). Temperance tracts do not differentiate between drinkers and drunks. But "May Day" does make distinctions among drinkers, distinctions that bear upon the social criticism at the heart of the story. These distinctions are also in close agreement with classifications of drinkers made by alcoholism specialists today.

Of the eight major characters, five become inebriated in the course of the story, and one, Edith Bradin, through contacts with all five endures what might be called the effects of "passive drinking," an emotional roller coaster ride in an alcohol-tainted atmosphere. Motives for drinking and the consequences of becoming drunk are clearly delineated. Two of the drinkers, Philip Dean and Peter Himmel, are what we call "social drinkers." Two, Carrol Key and Gus Rose, are "'situational" alcoholics, individuals removed from their normal family and community and placed in a situation where alcoholic drinking patterns are or become the norm; typically situational alcoholism develops in members of the armed services or such a social organization as the infamous Animal House fraternity. (The fifth, Gordon Sterrett, is addicted to alcohol.)

There is no textual evidence that Edith Bradin drinks. Given her age, her status, her swift appraisals of others' drinking, she may also be a social drinker, but if so she drinks very moderately. A reference to the smell of whiskey on Philip Dean's breath as he dances with her--"It made her feel quite at home."--was cut from the Smart Set version of the story (Cass, 90). The sentence carried too strong an implication about her own behavior--the only reference anywhere to the possibility that she drinks at all--while the purpose of the passage is to state her approval of the effect a drink or two has on her partners. "She liked men to have had something to drink; they were so much more cheerful; and appreciative and complimentary--much easier to talk to" (101). In keeping with this attitude, the later version replaces Edith's blunt statement to Gordon, "You're drunk" with the more politic "You look like the devil" (Cass, 80). But there is no question in either version whether she knows what is happening to Gordon, for in both versions this speech is

preceded by:

> For years she had seen men in various stages of inebriation, from uncles all the way down to chauffeurs, and her feelings had varied from amusement to disgust, but here for the first time she was seized with a new feeling--an unutterable horror (102).

After this meeting with Gordon, she finds the now "sublimely and happily drunk" Peter in a mushy and unpredictable condition and coolly arranges for her next dance partner to take her home (108). Edith is well aware of what alcohol does to some men and prefers those who do not get drunk, who have a good time, unmarred by Gordon's self-pity or Peter's forwardness.

Not much later, having left the party on her own to visit her brother's newspaper office, she is traumatized by the riot, a trauma which includes her response to vivid impressions of the drunken Key and Rose. Though she has been able to accept or cope with the earlier encounters with drunken men, she is not equipped to deal with this episode.

Philip Dean sees himself as being "on vacation," free of the usual restraints of his life and able to indulge himself. He drinks to have a good time and allows his normal social drinking to slide over into drunkenness for the occasion. Through to the end of the story, he consistently has the kind of good time he seeks. His motive for drinking is mild relaxation. As a self-possessed male, he sees no harm should having a good time lead to fairly heavy inebriation. If he has a hangover (and there is room for doubt that he will), he'll have time to deal with it and knows how. There are no signs that Philip Dean has any real problem with drinking.

Like Philip, Peter Himmel drinks for social reasons, but he becomes drunk for reasons that could indicate future problems with alcohol. His mood is not carefree, like Dean's, but troubled. He is hurt by Edith's rebuff and can't get back into a "good time" mood until he joins Dean in the game of Mr. In and Mr. Out. He sulks in the hall, "making up a sentence," which, "considerably deleted," goes like this, "Well, if any girl ever led a man on then jilted him, she did--and she has no kick coming if I go out and get beautifully boiled" (104). Anson Hunter in "The Rich Boy" rationalizes his more clearly alcoholic drinking in this way. Peter then proceeds through the supper room to a small room, "which he had located earlier in the evening, . . . a room in which there were several large bowls of punch flanked by many bottles" (104). That he had located the room in advance signifies a stronger interest in alcohol than that of the average social drinker.

Then "at the second highball, boredom, disgust, the monotony of time, the turbidity of events, sank into a vague background before which glittering cobwebs formed" (105). Peter discovers Rose and Key in the mop closet and draws them into the room to drink with him, tolerates their laughter and their mock sympathy when he talks to them about his feelings toward Edith. The

scene is highly amusing, an interesting parody of Edith's conversation with Gordon and her rejection of him. What alcohol specialists would find significant in this behavior is that drinking with social inferiors, sharing one's miserable feelings with them, is a premonitory sign of problem drinking.

We see only one night of Peter's drinking, and the apparent effect is similar to the effect on Philip. Yet Peter, like Gordon, drinks because he feels miserable, allowing drunkenness to draw him out of his normal social orbit and, later in the story, to threaten the waiter at Child's. Still, his bantering, playful manner with Rose and Key returns in the game of Mr. In and Mr. Out, so that one can in no way say that he has yet gone beyond what he, his society, and ours would perceive as social drinking, albeit risky social drinking.

At first glance, the "lower class" drunks, Carrol Key and Gus Rose, are less sharply differentiated than the "upper class" drunks discussed above. Both drink to get drunk, because drinking is something to do, and because it softens the hardness of their lives. Still, when Rose asks Key "Where to?" he has no specific expectation of what Key will propose and indicates that he will do whatever Key suggests. He agrees "enthusiastically" to Key's idea that they "get holda some liquor." From such slight hints and from Rose's behavior when he is on his own, after Key's death, one may draw out a differentiation: For Key alcohol has become truly important; for Rose it is a means to continue the unlikely comradeship of their shared military service.

Soldiers often drink more than they would in civilian life. This "situational" alcoholism may develop into "chronic" alcoholism or may disappear on return to civilian life. Key has many of the earmarks of the committed barroom drinker/brawler and may well have developed an irreversible addiction during his service. His brother George seems not to have developed such a habit though he grew up in the same family and social class. As he appears in the story, Key is at the border between "situational" and "chronic" alcoholism.

Gus Rose, on the other hand, though his thirst on this night is surely as great as Key's, did not suggest drinking as the way to pass the evening and, with Key gone, does not take the initiative to find more alcohol. He follows the Delmonico's crowd and Philip and Peter, continuing to observe the manners and mores of the upper class with the same astonishment he exhibited while peeping from the broom closet on the party at Delmonico's. If he is acquitted of the charge that he is the soldier who broke Bradin's leg, he may very well return to his hometown and drink less. I say "If he is acquitted," because considerable doubt may be held that Edith's charge is accurate. Rose was no longer at the front of the rioting soldiers when the lights went out and Edith did not know her brother's leg had been broken until after order had been restored. This loose thread in the story, beautifully

emblematic of the social chaos the story portrays, has not been noted in the major discussions of the story to date.

Gordon Sterrett, as Cass rightly observes, was more self-pitying in the Smart Set version of "May Day" and made comments that revealed more about his drinking in his initial interview with Philip Dean (Cass, 71). But Cass's observation that "In the revision, one very consistent pattern is to avoid references to Sterrett's drinking" (Cass, 79) is misleading. Excessive drinking is Sterrett's central weakness. Sterrett lacks what Fitzgerald considered a prime quality, "character," a term that, like some of Dean's terminology, may derive from Temperance tracts. Alcohol abuse is Gordon's central character deficiency. It is alcohol that has made him susceptible to Jewel, alcohol that gave her the letters she is using to blackmail him, alcohol and his affair with her that has lost him his job, drunkenness that precipitates their marriage, and a hangover that underlies his suicide. Even in the revised version, alcoholic self-pity and self-justification appear everywhere in Gordon's thoughts and dialogue. They surface most poignantly in his conversation with Edith (103):

"Why do you drink?"

"Because I'm so damn miserable."

"Do you think drinking's going to make it any better?"

"What you doing--trying to reform me?"

Examples of how this classification of drinkers supports the social content of the story are abundant; I will focus for the moment on only two. The commercial and political chaos of the city in 1919 and the resultant restlessness of both residents and visitors makes relaxation and partying--in a word, drinking--seem a highly satisfactory way of dealing with one's lack of ease. The trinkets and slippers that merchants fear will go out of stock are, after all, party accoutrements. The mixed gaiety and nervous energy of the city finds specific outlet in partying. The several stories--"or perhaps one"--told in "May Day" illustrate the satisfactions, the disappointments and the dangers of using alcohol as a means to social grace. Philip successfully negotiates the evening untouched by the violence and chaos surrounding them. Peter has had a carelessly safe, if somewhat disappointing, evening. Our last sight of the pair, when Mr. Out tells the elevator operator to take them to "Heaven" (126), implies the same kind of self-centered carelessness as Nick Carraway attributes to the Buchanans in The Great Gatsby. After Peter's drinking bout with Key and Rose, a disappointed Edith must ask a stranger for a ride home. Edith, Rose, Sterrett, and Key have encountered disaster: Edith has been roughly handled at her brother's office and is deeply shaken by the violence she encountered there, Rose is, presumably, on his way to jail, and Sterrett and Key are dead. Surely this display of drinking experiences is as relevant a criticism of society as the variety of displays in the merchants' shops in the prologue to the story.

Secondly, since the kind of social critique found in this story is also a feature in the major works that followed it, Fitzgerald's sharp observation of differences among drinkers and drunks in "May Day" may serve as a gloss for similar differentiations in The Great Gatsby and Tender Is the Night. Differentiations among drinkers and drunks are made in both novels, and the drinking episodes clearly contribute to Fitzgerald's commentary on society. Obvious examples include the drinking parties at Gatsby's estate, the carefully differentiated drinking and drunkenness of the Buchanan set, and the moral bankruptcy of society implied by the failure to make Daisy pay for committing vehicular manslaughter--or was it homicide? Fitzgerald's penchant for the Romantic overpowers readers still; we seem determined to be forever blind to Daisy's crime. Our own investment in his romanticism and a general defensiveness about the place of alcohol in our society help to account for our failure to grant significance to portrayals of drinking in his works. In "May Day" and in the novels, the intent of the party goers is to relax, to relieve tension; yet, in all these texts drinking increases tension and courts disaster. If we ignore this content, we fail to give the clarity and accuracy of Fitzgerald's views on drinking and drunkenness their proper weight in the balance that governs his art.

Notes

1. All references to "May Day" are to the text as it appears in Malcolm Cowley, ed., The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald. NY: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1951.

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Leading E. A. Poe through a Standard Test for Alcoholism

Todd Richardson

What disease is like Alcohol? --Edgar Allan Poe

Poe's alcoholism has been a matter for debate ever since his death nearly a hundred and fifty years ago. Part of the reason for the controversy is that medical knowledge of alcoholism during Poe's time was virtually non-existent. It was not recognized by doctors as a disease, so no official diagnosis was made during his lifetime, although there were observers who made their own amateur diagnoses of his drinking habits.

However, with the aid of an approved modern diagnostic tool, The Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test, Poe's alcoholism can be assessed with some accuracy. Devised by Dr. Melvin Seltzer, the test can produce a diagnosis for Poe without the need for any kind of ill-founded speculation. All the information that is needed is readily available in Poe scholarship. The diagnosis can both end uncertainty concerning Poe's condition and the circumstances of his death and add a new perspective for studying Poe's numerous works involving alcohol dependency.

The debate concerning Poe's alcoholism has persisted for another significant reason besides the unavailability of a reliable instrument for a medical diagnosis. The controversy is fueled by the culturally-held belief that alcoholism is a manifestation of moral turpitude. John Jung, author of Under the Influence, notes that this perception of alcoholism became prominent in the later Temperance and Prohibition eras, and that it includes the moralistic notion that drinking alcoholically is "sinful behavior" and demonstrates a "lack of willpower."[1] Relating this belief to Poe scholarship, Marty Roth notes that "The reluctance to admit . . . Poe's alcoholism is bound up in cultural shame."[2] The moralistic notion of alcoholism persists, in various forms, to the present day. Poe's supporters have felt obliged to downplay or deny his alcoholism by claiming that he suffered from a host of other maladies and afflictions. Conversely, Poe's detractors have seized upon evidence of alcoholism to defame his character or work, or to use as material for a thesis about the baleful effects of drinking.

Negative publicity about the cause of Poe's death began two days after the fact, with the appearance of Rufus Griswold's defaming obituary. It included the claims that Poe's death "will startle many but few will be grieved by it" and that "he had few or no friends."[3] In fact, Poe and Griswold were enemies due to their intense rivalry, played out in the American literary scene, and Griswold used Poe's tragic passing as an opportunity to wreck his reputation. Using to his advantage the profound social stigma against

alcoholism, Griswold announced that Poe "died in an unknown, out-of-the-way hospital in the city of Baltimore, in a fit of delirium tremens."[4] Other attempts at character assassination followed, including one in 1857 from Andrew Boyd, who referred to Poe's "drunken degradation" and proclaimed, like Griswold, that Poe had died of delirium tremens. Boyd concluded his diatribe by asserting that Poe had "an utterly evil heart, and a career of guilt, misery, and despair."[5]

Evidence of moralistic attitudes towards Poe and his alcoholism remain common even in present-day criticism. In his 1983 book, Why Poe Drank Liquor, Marion Montgomery presented Poe as a sinister character who represents much that is ill in modern society. In rebuttal, Kent Ljungquist noted that Montgomery's tone was self-righteous, and that Poe was condemned in order to promote a moralistic world view.[6]

To refute such moralistic detractors and to defend Poe's character, many of Poe's supporters have found it necessary to downplay Poe's alcoholism. In one of the first biographies defending Poe, John Ingram scarcely alluded to Poe's drinking habits. Poe's life did not end "in a fit of delirium tremens," as Griswold asserted. Instead, Ingram promoted the unsubstantiated story that Poe was "cooped," or captured by a mob, drugged, forced to vote many times for a particular candidate, then left for dead.[7]

Five years after Ingram's biography and thirty-six years after Poe died, John Moran, the physician who attended Poe at the time of his death, produced a more impassioned and even more unreliable account of Poe's last days. In A Defense of Edgar Allan Poe, Moran claimed that Poe's "last moments had more of sublimity than those of any of his contemporaries."[8] He further testified that "Edgar Allan Poe did not die under the influence of any kind of intoxicating drink."[9]

The twentieth century has continued the tendency to defend Poe by denying his alcoholism. Often, defenders make alternative diagnoses in order to demonstrate that Poe's real problem was not alcohol. Though well-meaning in their attempts, they only reinforce the long-held belief that Poe's alcoholism was shameful. For example, Jeanette Marks, trying to downplay the significance of Poe's alcoholism, stated, "Certainly Poe drank. But most of the gentlemen of his day did."[10] She suggested that his trouble can be traced to a lesion on the brain.[11] According to Haldeen Braddy, tuberculosis was the primary cause of Poe's problems, rather than alcohol.[12] Two reports, one from John Hill in 1968, and the other from David Sinclair in 1978, suggested that Poe's true problem was diabetes. In a similar vein, B. Cowan Groves in 1979 was sure that Poe's problem was hypoglycemia.[13] The quest for an alternative diagnosis does not end. In September of 1996, Dr. R. Michael Benitez of the University of Maryland's medical school postulated that rabies caused Poe's death, which provoked a brief media sensation.[14]

Even Kenneth Silverman's biography bears evidence of the same tendency. While the book did a great service in cutting through much of the myth that has come to surround Poe's life and death, Silverman noted that alcoholism is a "disgraceful" cause of death, and he championed Dr. Moran's unreliable account from 1885, in which it was claimed that Poe suffered and died from encephalitis, brought about by exposure.[15]

These differing critical opinions on Poe's alcoholism reveal an age-old dilemma. If his alcoholism is confirmed, Poe's reputation becomes tarnished; if facts regarding the alcoholism are ignored, the full picture of his life cannot be presented. Fortunately, we may slip through the horns of the dilemma by using current knowledge to demonstrate that, far from being a shameful moral issue, alcoholism is a disease like any other. A diagnosis of alcoholism, therefore, should have no moral stigma attached. All facts concerning Poe's medical condition, then, should be discussed without fear of pronouncing Poe shameful or weak.

Long before the medical community began to understand alcoholism to be a disease, a few writers made attempts to explain Poe's problems with alcohol in such terms. Poe himself referred to alcoholism as a disease in "The Black Cat": "But my disease grew upon me--for what disease is like Alcohol!"[16] In 1904, while most other critics either branded Poe a "drunkard" or denied that alcohol was a problem, William Howard, writing in The Arena, claimed that Poe was suffering from the disease called dipsomania, and was unable to control its effects.[17] In 1925, John Robertson, a medical doctor, produced a full-length, but perhaps unsystematic, study which also concluded that Poe suffered from dipsomania.[18] More recently, Benjamin Franklin Fisher's book The Very Spirit of Cordiality and Marty Roth's article "The Unquenchable Thirst of Edgar Allan Poe" have appeared.[19] Both pieces are useful tools for understanding the role that alcohol played in Poe's work. Kenneth Silverman's biography, except for embracing Dr. Moran's defense of Poe, also does a fine job of reporting on Poe's drinking even while remaining sympathetic to him.

Nevertheless, while these writers assume that Poe was an alcoholic, they do not attempt to demonstrate objectively the presence of alcoholism; therefore, the debate has not ceased. Even so, the dispute can be resolved by applying the Michigan Alcohol Screening Test (MAST) to biographical information provided by recent Poe scholarship.[20] Probably the most widely accepted diagnostic tool for alcoholism, the MAST can quickly and objectively establish whether or not Poe suffered from the disease. After The American Journal of Psychiatry published it in 1971, the MAST became one of the benchmarks for determining alcohol problems in both the public and private sectors (see Appendix). Two authorities in the field of alcohol studies, John Jung and Jean Kinney, comment upon the prevalence and effectiveness of the test. Jung remarks that it is "an established screening test,"[21] and

according to Kinney, "the reliability and validity of the MAST have been established in multiple populations." The test's twenty-five questions, focusing on the subject's drinking habits, can determine not only if a problem exists, but its severity as well. A score of five indicates that the subject suffers from alcoholism; scores higher than five indicate the relative chronicity of the subject's condition.

Because of the availability of excellent biographical material, we can, in a manner of speaking, request that Poe take the screening test.[22] The MAST may be subdivided into sections pertaining to work relationships, interpersonal relationships, drinking habits, and consequences of alcohol-influenced behavior. What follows is a review of the questions of the MAST which, when applied to Poe's biographical data, produce a final score for Poe.[23] (See the Note to the Appendix for the remainder of the MAST questions.)

One group of questions on the MAST refers to work relationships. A question worth two points asks, "Have you ever gotten into trouble at work because of drinking?" Another question, also related to job performance and worth two points, asks, "Have you ever lost a job because of drinking?" Poe's problems at various magazines are well-known; one such situation involved his time at The Southern Literary Messenger. In September of 1835, founder Thomas White invited Poe to come back to work for the magazine if he could stay sober.[24] Two years later, he wrote that Poe had to be terminated, because Poe had "forfeited" certain "conditions."[25] Later, Poe had trouble with William Burton while editing Burton's Gentleman's Magazine: he quarreled with him constantly. In the spring of 1840, Poe lost his job there, with Burton stating that Poe had been drinking and did not meet his editorial responsibilities.[26] Poe also had trouble at other magazines, including The Broadway Journal. Accordingly, Poe scores four points for affirmative answers to the two questions.

Another group of questions relates to the quality of Poe's personal relationships. He scores one point for a positive answer to the question, "Does your wife (or parents) ever worry or complain about your drinking?" Mrs. Clemm, his mother-in-law, and Virginia, his wife, often worried about Poe's drinking. In January of 1832, Mrs. Clemm scolded him for coming home drunk on the preceding evening.[27] On another occasion, Poe took a business trip to New York and went on a bender that lasted several days. When he did not return home as expected, Mrs. Clemm, who had become very worried, left for New York in order to look for him. Virginia stayed at home "almost crazy with anxiety."[28] So Poe, in addition, receives two points each for answering "yes" to the questions "Have you ever neglected your obligations, your family, or your work for two or more days in a row because you were drinking?" and "Has drinking ever created problems with you and your wife?"

Also concerning personal relationships, the MAST asks, "Have you lost friends or girlfriends because of drinking?" Poe lost several relationships, a fact which adds two more points to his score. Knowing of his problem with alcohol, Sarah Helen Whitman in 1848 agreed to marry Poe only if he stayed sober. He agreed, but, predictably, he was drunk within two months.[29] The MAST also asks, "Have you gotten into fights when drinking?" Poe must take a point for the question, since at one time he challenged to a duel John M. Daniel, the editor of the Semi-Weekly Examiner. According to Thomas and Jackson, "the duel, which never took place, was probably related to Poe's problems with money and alcohol."[30]

Other questions refer specifically to Poe's drinking habits. One question worth two points asks, "Do friends and relatives think you are a normal drinker?" Poe must have been aware of the thoughts of his friend Lambert Wilmer, who wrote in the spring of 1843 that Poe "is not a teetotaler by any means, and I fear he is going headlong into destruction, moral, physical and intellectual!"[31] A one-point question inquires, "Do you ever drink before noon?" Thomas Willis White, the editor of The Southern Literary Messenger, at one time warned Poe that "No man is safe who drinks before breakfast."[32] Another question valued at two points asks, "Are you always able to stop drinking when you want to?" Poe tried to stop on numerous occasions. In answering, he might have remembered his broken resolve of 1843: "I am as straight as judges, and, what is more, I intend to keep straight." Within seven months, he was drunk again.[33]

The trend continued: for the rest of his life, Poe was plagued by an inability to stop drinking for any sustained period of time. Accordingly, in the spring of 1848, another friend remarked that on one occasion Poe got drunk and became "insane and unmanageable." When some friends went to look for him, they found him "crazy-drunk in the hands of the police."[34] A year later, in July of 1849, Poe wrote to Mrs. Clemm that he had been arrested "for getting drunk."[35] Most likely the charge was for some kind of drunk and disorderly behavior. Poe, then, receives four more points for answering "yes" two times to the question "Have you ever been arrested because of drunk behavior?" (The latter question requires adding two points for each arrest.) In a drinking spree that occurred one month after the arrest, Poe landed in the care of Dr. Gibbon Carter. To the doctor, Poe expressed deep remorse over his drinking, and a firm commitment to stop.[36] Consequently, Poe takes one point for a positive answer to the question "Do you ever feel bad about your drinking?"

Soon after the resolve, which came as the result of several serious drinking episodes, Poe joined an organization known as "The Sons of Temperance," a precursor group to Alcoholics Anonymous.[37] Poe's willingness to take a pledge with the organization is notable because it was a public affair and potentially scandalous. Many newspapers published the

report that Poe had been initiated into the organization. Clearly, Poe was willing to do anything to change his condition, even if it meant further public humiliation. Poe therefore receives five points for answering "yes" to the question "Have you ever attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous?" Poe's pledge was not kept. Sadly, he must accept five points for an affirmative answer to the question "Have you ever been a patient in a hospital because of drinking?" In October, 1849, his friend Joseph Evans Snodgrass found Poe in a tavern "utterly stupefied with liquor."[38] Snodgrass took Poe to Washington Medical College for one final hospitalization on account of alcohol toxicity; Poe died there a few days later.

A tally of Poe's answers produces a MAST score of thirty-seven points--more than seven times greater than the score needed to produce a diagnosis of alcoholism. Since alcoholism is a condition that can be fatal if left untreated, the MAST diagnosis also helps to determine Poe's cause of death. Biographical information points to the strong likelihood that Poe died from withdrawal syndrome, one of the most dreadful effects of alcoholism.

According to The Poe Log. Poe's withdrawal lasted four days before he finally expired early on the fifth day. Given our knowledge of alcohol withdrawal, such a course is to be expected. According to Kinney, the worst effects of alcohol withdrawal begin on the third day of abstinence:

> [I]nstead of clearing by the second or third day, the symptoms . . . get worse. In addition to increased shakiness, profuse sweating, fast pulse, hypertension, and fever, there are mounting periods of confusion and anxiety attacks. In full-blown delirium tremens there are delusions and hallucinations. . . . In this physical and emotional state of heightened agitation, infections, respiratory problems, fluid loss, and physical exhaustion create further difficulties. These complications contribute substantially to the mortality rate.[38]

Poe's condition did worsen on the third day, just as in this description. According to Dr. Moran's original report, Poe became "violently delirious" on that day. The condition worsened on the fourth day, when he fought with nurses who tried to control him. He finally died, in a state of exhaustion, early on the fifth day.[39]

Medical knowledge at Poe's time had not progressed enough to sufficiently help those suffering from alcohol withdrawal. According to Kinney, twenty percent of cases of alcohol withdrawal, or delirium tremens, are fatal if they are not adequately treated.[40] With adequate modern treatment, however, Poe could have responded favorably, and might well have maintained permanent sobriety, since he had been able to overcome other obstacles and had achieved much in his life even with his debilitating disease. At the very least, with modern treatment, he would have survived the withdrawal, become

somewhat stabilized, and would have then been able to continue his work for a time.[41]

Given our current knowledge of alcoholism, alcohol withdrawal, and the facts of Poe's life, critics and commentators need not seek out other causes for Poe's death. The principle of Ockham's razor compels us to embrace the simplest and most logical theory--that Poe suffered from alcoholism and died from alcohol withdrawal. Causes of death such as encephalitis or rabies do not simply and clearly explain what happened to Poe. It is possible that Poe had a fever at the time of his death, just as he could have been suffering from hypoglycemia; such ailments, however, can only be understood properly if they are seen as symptoms of alcoholism and alcohol withdrawal.

The objectivity of the MAST can help to put an end to the debate that persists over Poe's alcoholism. Also, the fact that the medical community recognizes that alcoholism is a disease should successfully address and put aside any cultural shame that surrounds Poe's diagnosis. Future scholars and critics can work towards a complete integration of the facts of Poe's alcoholism into standard Poe biography and criticism. Therefore, the task for Poe biographers will involve a more confident and candid admission of Poe's addiction and an understanding that, as outlined above, Poe's medical problems and difficulties with friends, family members, and business associates share a common origin in alcoholism.

Additionally, critics may, with impunity, offer biographical readings of various Poe stories and poems involving obsessive drinking--the kind of readings discouraged by such notable critics as William Charvat in his Profession of Authorship. The latter criticized those who "used Poe's alcoholics and narcotic addicts as evidence about the author's private life."[42] Critics may proceed in the other direction, from Poe's biography to his corpus, and show how his fear and shame over his own alcoholic condition facilitated his ability to artfully render such a condition in the characters of his protagonists. Indeed, many of Poe's best-known stories center upon alcoholism. His tale "William Wilson" is the narrator's account of a descent into alcoholic despair beginning in prep school. The narrator reports, "I spurned even the common restraints of decency in the mad infatuation of my revels."[43] The experience mirrors Poe's which began at the University of Virginia. In "The Black Cat," the narrator describes the alcohol-driven compulsion to cut out the eye of his favorite cat. He writes, "I blush, I burn, I shudder, while I pen the damnable atrocity."[44] The protagonist in "Hop-Frog" murders the king and his court only after being forced to drink wine.[45] Fortunato, the man entombed in "The Cask of Amontillado," "had a weak point. . . . He prided himself on his connoiseurship in wine."[46] Through Fortunato's alcohol-induced docility, Montresor was able to lead him to his death. Finally, the narrator of "The Man of the Crowd" becomes obsessed with the motivations of a strange man he saw strolling about the city, which

he discovers when he follows the man into "one of the palaces of the fiend, Gin."[47] Here the story ends. Few American writers of the time used themes related to alcoholism to the extent that Poe did, suggesting that Poe's concern over his alcoholism worked its way into his creative life.

Accordingly, critics may wish to study the extent to which Poe's personal acquaintance with alcohol may have informed the plot structures and characterizations in his tales, as compared to those of other nineteenth century writers. Critics could clarify this point by studying Poe's description of the alcoholic experience against the background of the common cultural conceptions of alcoholism as portrayed in the publications of the ante-bellum Temperance movement. The movement produced both fictionalized and factual pamphlets--many now lost or in need of critical commentary—but these by and large only provide objective information on the damaging effects of alcoholism upon the drinker's family rather than an account of the alcoholic's psychological suffering. These Temperance accounts could well throw into relief Poe's intricate *subjective* descriptions of the compulsion, fear, shame and other motivations associated with alcoholic behavior, giving some insight into the degree to which he drew upon his own alcoholic experiences in the writing of his tales. Additionally, critics might read other Poe stories, such as "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Tell-Tale Heart," which are notable for their exploration of the common alcoholic experience of fear, guilt, and uncontrollable compulsion, in the light of Poe's alcoholism.[48]

The usefulness of the MAST, of course, is not restricted to Poe and his works. It might also prove valuable to literary studies generally. The MAST could be "given" to all authors for whom adequate biographical information is available. Once done, the wealth of information on alcoholism might be tapped to corroborate and augment the known facts of the authors' lives and to lend critical insight into their corpuses. Far from risking a reduction of literary studies to isolated alcohol case studies, the full use of information on alcoholism will only add substantially to our knowledge of various authors' lives and works.

Appendix

The Michigan Alcohol Screening Test

Melvin L. Selzer, "The Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test: A Quest for a New Diagnostic Instrument," The American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 127, p. 1656; copyright 1971, The American Psychiatric Association. Reprinted by permission.

Points	Question	YES	NO
	0. Do you enjoy a drink now and then?	____	____
(2)	1. Do you feel you are a normal drinker? (By normal we mean you drink less than or as much as most other people.)	____	____
(2)	2. Have you ever awakened the morning after some drinking the night before and found that you could not remember a part of the evening?	____	____
(1)	3. Does your wife, husband, a parent, or other near relative ever worry or complain about your drinking?	____	____
(2)	4. Can you stop drinking without a struggle after one or two drinks?	____	____
(1)	5. Do you ever feel guilty about your drinking?	____	____
(2)	*6. Do friends or relatives think you are a normal drinker?	____	____
(2)	7. Are you able to stop drinking when you want to?	____	____
(5)	8. Have you ever attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)?	____	____
(1)	9. Have you gotten into physical fights when drinking?	____	____
(2)	10. Has your drinking ever created problems between you and your wife, husband, a parent, or other relative?	____	____
(2)	11. Has your wife, husband (or other family members) ever gone to anyone for help about your drinking?	____	____
(2)	12. Have you ever lost friends because of your drinking?	____	____
(2)	13. Have you ever gotten into trouble at work or school because of drinking?	____	____
(2)	14. Have you ever lost a job because of drinking?	____	____
(2)	15. Have you ever neglected your obligations, your family, or your work for two or more days in a row		

	because you were drinking?	____	____
(1)	16. Do you drink before noon fairly often?	____	____
(2)	17. Have you ever been told you have liver trouble? Cirrhosis?	____	____
(2)	**18. After heavy drinking have you ever had Delirium Tremens (D.T.'s) or severe shaking, or heard voices or seen things that really weren't there?	____	____
(5)	19. Have you ever gone to anyone for help about your drinking?	____	____
(5)	20. Have you ever been in a hospital because of drinking?	____	____
(2)	21. Have you ever been a patient in a psychiatric hospital or on a psychiatric ward of a general hospital where drinking was part of the problem that resulted in hospitalization?	____	____
(2)	22. Have you ever been seen at a psychiatric or mental health clinic or gone to any doctor, social worker, or clergyman for help with any emotional problem, where drinking was part of the problem?	____	____
(2)	***23. Have you ever been arrested for drunk driving, driving while intoxicated, or driving under the influence of alcoholic beverages? (IF YES, How many times _____?)	____	____
(2)	***24. Have you ever been arrested, or taken into custody, even for a few hours, because of drunk behavior? (IF YES, How many times? ____)	____	____

*Alcoholic response is negative.
**5 points for Delirium Tremens.
***2 points for *each* arrest.

SCORING SYSTEM In general, five points or more would place the subject in an "alcoholic" category. Four points would be suggestive of alcoholism, three points or less would indicate the subject was not alcoholic.

Note to the Appendix

It is worth discussing the other points of the test where no answer could be established because no concrete evidence could be ascertained from Poe biography. The following questions, if such evidence were available, could only add to rather than subtract from Poe's MAST score of thirty-seven.

Question zero is inconsequential, since it has no point value. Concerning question seventeen, I could find no record that Poe was warned about liver trouble. I attribute this partly to the fact that medical science had not proceeded far enough to make such diagnoses. Poe could have had liver trouble since he was known in his later life to have a low tolerance for alcohol, and a decrease in tolerance is often a symptom of liver problems.[49] Question twenty-three is inapplicable, since cars

did not exist during Poe's time, and there is no evidence that he had trouble with "drinking and riding."

Items one, two, and four refer to the subject's inner state, and no compelling evidence has been found which shows that Poe would have given an affirmative answer to the questions. As to question one, however, Poe probably did not believe he was a normal drinker. Referring to question two, it is likely that Poe forgot different parts of days when he was drunk. For example, when Poe became drunk, then lost, and was later found "wandering in the woods on the outskirts of Jersey City," he most likely could not remember clearly how one event led to another.[50] The fourth item asks if the individual can easily stop drinking after starting. Poe probably could not, as is the case with most alcoholics. Frederick Thomas noted that "if he took but one glass of weak wine or beer . . . it almost always ended in excess . . ."[51] Also, regarding question eleven, I was not able to uncover conclusive evidence that Mrs. Clemm or other family members sought out help for Poe, though there is a good chance that they did.

Also, not enough evidence exists to show that Poe ever asked for help for his problem, so there is no conclusive evidence for questions nineteen, twenty-one, or twenty-two. At one point, Poe asked Sarah Whitman to save him from "some impending doom," but he did not specifically ask her for help with his problem with alcohol.[52] Since alcoholism was almost exclusively seen to be a personal moral deficiency, and assistance was generally not available for alcohol-related problems, Poe certainly would have been conditioned not to ask for help. Poe's pledge with the Sons of Temperance is not exactly an instance of asking for help, since he believed that, in order to uphold his oath, he needed to remain abstinent through his own moral strength. Before he took the pledge, he did not ask for help, maintaining that "he *would* restrain himself,--would withstand any temptation."[53]

I would like to thank numerous friends for comments and encouragement, especially J. A. Leo Lemay, Joel Myerson, Chris Penna, Hershel Parker, and Ken Todd.

NOTES

[1]John Jung, Under the Influence (Pacific Grove: Brooks Publishing, 1994), 7.2.

[2]Marty Roth, "The Unquenchable Thirst of Edgar Allan Poe," Dionysos 3.3 (1992): 3-16.

[3]Dwight Thomas and David K. Jackson, The Poe Log (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1987), 849.

[4]Quoted in John J. Moran, A Defense of Edgar Allan Poe (Washington, William F. Boogher, 1885), 12.

[5]Andrew K. H. Boyd, "Edgar Allan Poe." Fraser's 55 (1857): 684-700.

[6] Marion Montgomery, Why Poe Drank Liquor (La Salle, Il: Sherwood Sugden, 1983). Also see Kent P. Ljungquist, "Poe," in American Literary Scholarship: 1983, ed. Warren French (Durham: Duke U P, 1987), 53.

[7]John H. Ingram, Edgar Allan Poe: His Life, Letters, and Opinions (New York: AMS, 1965), 427.

[8]Moran, 8.

[9]Moran, 18.

[10]Jeanette Marks, Genius and Disaster: Studies in Drugs and Genius (New York: Adelphi, 1925), 37.

[11]Marks, 40.

[12]Haldeen Braddy, Glorious Incense (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1953), 184.

[13]The fact that Poe in his later life could not tolerate alcohol gives rise, in part, to the hypothesis that Poe was diabetic or hypoglycemic. See John Hill, "The Diabetic Mr. Poe?," Poe Newsletter 1 (1968): 32; David Sinclair, Edgar Allan Poe (Totowa: Rowan and Littlefield, 1977); and B. Cowan Groves, "The Death of Poe: The Case for Hypoglycemia," Artes Liberales 5.2 (1979): 7-19. According to Jean Kinney, diabetes and especially hypoglycemia often accompany alcoholism, since quantities of alcohol can greatly increase the body's blood glucose level. The alcoholism, however, is the primary illness. See Jean Kinney, Loosening the Grip: A Handbook of Alcohol Information (St. Louis: Mosby, 1991), 40. In any case Poe's lowered tolerance for alcohol can be understood as a function of the fact that he was in the later stages of alcoholism. E. M. Jellinek, a pioneer in the field of alcohol research, shows that, in the chronic phases of alcoholism, a decrease in the tolerance level of alcohol occurs, so that only a small amount is needed for the individual to become intoxicated (Jung 111).

[14] Blake Eskin, "Mad Dogs and English Professors," Lingua Franca 7 (December-January 1996): 10-11.

[15]Kenneth Silverman, Edgar A. Poe: Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 435-6. Silverman's source is Moran's Defense of Edgar Allan Poe, which is recognized to be an unreliable account of Poe's death, since it was written thirty-six years after the fact, when Moran had become deeply invested in rescuing Poe's reputation. Given the negative social attitudes towards alcoholism, such an effort, of course, would involve an assertion that Poe's death was not alcohol-related. Before he became interested in rehabilitating Poe's memory, however, Moran's accounts were more reliable, since he was reporting as Poe's primary physician and nothing more. On October 7, 1849, Dr. Moran visited Reverend William T. D. Clemm, Virginia's cousin, in order to discuss funeral arrangements for Poe. He informed the reverend that Poe, after arriving in Baltimore, met several old associates, and gave in to their suggestion to go out for drinks. According to Moran, "the result was a terrible debauch which ended in his death" (Thomas and Jackson 847).

[16]Edgar Allan Poe, The Complete Stories (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 648.

[17]William Howard, "Poe and his Misunderstood Personality," Arena 31 (1904): 78-83. Dipsomania is an archaic term for alcoholism. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "a morbid and insatiable craving for alcohol, often of a paroxysmal character."

[18]John Robertson, Edgar Allan Poe: A Study (San Francisco: Bruce Brough, 1921).

[19]Benjamin Franklin Fisher, The Very Spirit of Cordiality (Baltimore: Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1978).

[20]When I was an alcoholism counselor in Wilmington, Delaware, I often used the MAST. While I was researching Poe's alcoholism, the University of Delaware's student health center provided me with a copy of the MAST that it uses for its student population.

[21]Jung, 208.

[22]Kinney, 198-9. She states that individuals almost always answer the questions honestly, since the questions only pertain to facts, and not to their interpretation. Answering "yes" to any of the questions does not involve admitting to alcoholism or a drinking problem. For example, a "yes" answer to a question such as "Do you drink before noon fairly often?" only means that the individual is admitting to a certain behavior and not to the fact that it is a potentially harmful behavior (199). Whether Poe would have answered the questions honestly or not need not concern us too much, however, since we can arrive at an accurate figure for him by applying the MAST to basic biographical material available in The Poe Log and in Kenneth Silverman's Edgar A. Poe.

[23]I include only hard evidence in the scoring procedure, such as Poe's personal accounts of his actions, or first-hand accounts given by sympathetic friends or acquaintances. I have not added any points where excessive amounts of my personal interpretation of the evidence would have been necessary to produce an affirmative response.

[24]Thomas and Jackson, 171.

[25]Thomas and Jackson, 236.

[26]Silverman, 158.

[27]Silverman, 125.

[28]Silverman, 184.

[29]Silverman, 386.

[30]Thomas and Jackson, 750.

[31]Silverman, 185.

[32]Silverman, 108.

[33]Silverman, 185.

[34]Silverman, 343.

[35]Thomas and Jackson, 812.

[36]Thomas and Jackson, 822.

[37]Silverman, 427.

[38]Kinney, 151.

[39]Thomas and Jackson, 846.

[40]Kinney, 151. Even with the best available modern treatment, two percent of individuals die who go into delirium tremens (Kinney 151).

[41]Some have argued that Poe would not have been inspired to write his works if he had stopped drinking, and therefore, in an oblique way, that alcohol was not a problem. See, for example, Philip Lindsay, The Haunted Man (London: Hutchinson, 1953), 256. He writes almost perversely that "unlike ordinary men and women, [Poe] sought not contentment, but misery. . . . And for this we, his

literary inheritors, should be grateful. Had it been otherwise, he could never have written those great and terrible stories which haunt the reader." Quite possibly, the character of Poe's writing would have been different had he never drunk. If he had never drunk, or had he stopped drinking, however, he would have lived a longer life and would have had the opportunity to produce more work whose quality most likely would have been as good if not better. As Tom Dardis, author of The Thirsty Muse (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1989) notes, Eugene O'Neill stopped drinking and later crafted some of his finest pieces, such as The Iceman Cometh and Long Day's Journey into Night (10).

[42]William Charvat, The Profession of Authorship in America (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1968), 234.

[43]Poe, 411.

[44]Poe, 649.

[45]Poe, 930.

[46]Poe, 881.

[47]Poe, 449.

[48]See Kinney, 160. She gives a psychological composite of the alcoholic which meshes with Poe's characterizations.

[49]Kinney, 114.

[50]Silverman, 184.

[51]Silverman, 184.

[52]Thomas and Jackson, 766.

[53]Thomas and Jackson, 822.

De la convencion a nuestras casas

(NASEC 1995)

Sam Friedman

The hubbub is past,
days of disagreement about giving and getting needles,
giving and getting visions to communities:
that users have souls
and only HIV should be homeless,
mutually awestruck by the soul-lessness
of those who would cheer and conspire
for the success of the virus,
for the death of those in whom it lives.

Exhausted, we trickle into airplanes' long, thin bodies,
fly our way home
from the sultry paradise of Puerto Rico
from the tourist hotels and mountainous affluence
of the Island's business class
and wealthy professionals
and the Depth Valley of the users' barrios
the shooting spots
and the rotting sores burrowing
down
to the bones and souls
of the users
and the Island.
Our minds sputter from overuse
but our pulses beat solidarity with left-behind friends,
targets of the National Guard,
the scapegoaters
and
HIV.

Visions of beaches,
echoes of bickering voices
and heroic love
weaken in my mind
as the air pressure grows heavy
in ears descending towards daily
realities.
Determination

promises to Puerto Rican friends
promises to the movement
do not fall
do not remain floating in the sky.
They live within us
as we are squirted into the veins
of the teeming airport
from the syringes-with-wings
that carry us home.
We push forward
determined vectors
of the public health
viruses against profitable indifference
and hatred,
carriers of defiance
hope
solidarity
life.

Portadores de la vida,
de la solidaridad,
de el desafio,
y
de la esperanza.

Addiction Studies: A Review of the Literature

Roger Forseth
University of Wisconsin-Superior
Presented at American Literature Association Conference, San Diego: 28 May 1998

It has been ten years since the publication of Thomas Gilmore's Equivocal Spirits: Alcoholism and Drinking in Twentieth Century Literature, the first serious scholarly study of addiction/intoxication and literature. Concurrently, Dionysos, a journal dedicated to the scholarly, critical, and imaginative treatment of intoxication/addiction, was founded.[1] Since then, books on the subject have been published by Donald Goodwin, Tom Dardis, John W. Crowley, Nicholas Warner, and Edmund B. O'Reilly, in addition to collections of essays edited by Warner, Crowley, Sue Vice, and David Reynolds. In addition, a rich body of other periodical work has appeared. And, perhaps signifying a critical coming of age, Norman Kiell published in 1995 an annotated bibliography of drink in literature.[2]

The inaugural editorial of Dionysos (Spring 1989) states:

> One of the curiosities of modern criticism is that its preoccupation (one may urge its obsession) with mental and emotional states of writers and their creations, with the abnormal, indeed, with the bizarre, has nonetheless excluded or trivialized one of the more pervasive of all human conditions: intoxication. Other great taboos have fallen one after the other. . . Yet one taboo remains: the serious analysis of drink, drunkenness, addiction, and intoxication, an area best left, one gathers, to social workers, politicians, and comedians. But this will no longer do. The time has arrived for serious critical and scholarly work to be done.

While I am not one to overestimate my predictive powers, I believe that what I had hoped for in that editorial has, to a remarkable degree, come to pass; indeed, the current state of addiction studies is healthy.[3]

I don't wish to suggest that until about the last decade the subject, largely speaking, was an intellectual wasteland. On the contrary, in a number of disciplines researchers were seriously examining the cultural dimensions of "altered states of consciousness," altered, it might be added, naturally or chemically. Behavioral and social scientists, for example, began to explore the cultural as well as the clinical aspects of alcoholism and other forms of addiction. Marcus Grant reviewed the relationship between drinking and literary creativity; Alan Marlatt studied the controlled-drinking controversy and its powerful behavioral implications; and Robin Room took aim directly at the drinking habits of The Lost Generation.[4]

At about the same time medical and social historians were examining the societal effects of drink and narcotics. Such works, for example, as David Musto's The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control (1973), Harry Gene Levine's "The Discovery of Addiction" (1978), W. J. Rorabaugh's The Alcoholic Republic (1979). Ernest Kurtz's history of Alcoholics Anonymous (1979), and the historical work of Mark Edward Lender and his associates, have established a sound historical matrix for literary researchers.[5] And, in 1980, the Alcohol and Temperance History Group of the American Historical Association was established and began publishing its Social History of Alcohol Review.[6]

Yet serious analysis of the relation of drink to literature did not get underway, with a few notable exceptions, until about fifteen years ago, when Thomas Gilmore and Nicholas Warner organized several Modern Language Association special sessions on the subject. These exceptions were Art Hill's 1974 article on Under the Volcano[7] and the 1974 Intoxication and Literature issue of Yale French Studies.[8] a promising group of scholarly articles that pretty much remained isolated events. These essays were followed by Alfred Kazin's 1976 Commentary article, "'The Giant Killer': Drink & the American Writer"[9] and Donald Newlove's Those Drinking Days: Myself and Other Writers.[10] Unlike Hill's piece and the Yale French Studies issue, the works by Kazin and Newlove were to receive considerable attention, and, it seems to me, encouraged others to begin an in-depth examination of the connection between literature and drink.

This examination was initiated by the publication of a number of studies that were developed more or less independently of one another. In my own work, for example, I was disturbed, while preparing a paper for the Sinclair Lewis Centennial (1985), by the treatment of Lewis's alcoholism in Mark Schorer's Sinclair Lewis: An American Life (1961). Schorer's biography is impressively researched, but his treatment of Lewis' drinking is dismayingly simplistic and unremittingly contemptuous. My response, later published in Modern Fiction Studies.[11] aimed to correct Schorer's drunkalogue.[12] At about the same time, Nicholas Warner published his article, "Images of Drinking in 'Woman Singing,' Ceremony. and House Made of Dawn" and edited, as a special issue of Contemporary Drug Problems. Alcohol in Literature: Studies in Five Cultures;[13] and, in the same year (1986), Mosaic published the two issues of Literature and Altered States of Consciousness.[14] Also by 1986, it should be noted, George Wedge had compiled his annotated bibliography of writers, alcohol, and alcoholism, an unpublished database that is an invaluable resource.[15]

Thomas Gilmore's Equivocal Spirits (1987), Donald Goodwin's Alcohol and the Writer (1988), and Tom Dardis's The Thirsty Muse (1989) were

published so closely together that they must be judged independent enterprises.[16] They were also quite widely reviewed--and surprisingly reviewed positively, considering they dealt with what for many was a forbidden topic.[17] These works draw heavily on the disease theory of alcoholism (Goodwin is a psychiatrist) and the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) model of chemical dependency; and, though they differ substantially in content and method, they are remarkably similar in their sophisticated analysis of text and life, demonstrating that, without a thorough grounding in addiction theory, the critic or biographer is seriously handicapped when exploring the work of an addicted artist. By "joining literary analysis with scientific knowledge of alcoholism," Gilmore states, his

> book repeatedly if implicitly poses two broad questions: What new light can scientific knowledge of alcoholism provide for the students of literature? And how does literature confirm, intensify, dramatize, augment, or occasionally even challenge the adequacy of this scientific knowledge? (7-8)

Gilmore's meticulous handling of the evidence goes a long way to answer his questions. And a similar claim may be made for the works of Goodwin and Dardis.

The efficacy of this new critical approach was confirmed by the founding, in 1989, of the journal Dionysos. This event was followed by several major conferences, as well as by a series of panels at the Midwest Modern Language Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Literature Association. John Berryman: His Life, His Work, His Thought, held at the University of Minnesota in 1990, included a section on Berryman's alcoholism; the next year, The University of Sheffield sponsored The Literature and Addiction Conference. The proceedings of both of these meetings have been published.[18] And in 1996 The Claremont Graduate Center held Addiction and Culture, a multidisciplinary gathering. In addition to the book collections mentioned, the papers read at these meetings have appeared in Dionysos as well as in a number of other journals.[19]

It is not surprising that the principal critical concern of the first generation of addiction studies was with modern--primarily American--authors. Heavy drinking among them, after all, was almost endemic. Further, not only is there a large body of biographical information available on, for example, Fitzgerald and Hemingway, but the culture of drink appears prominently in these authors' works. And the theoretical framework of AA, founded in 1935, offered the means by which drink in literary works could be coherently explicated.

But could this framework, itself perhaps simply a Modernist, technological development, be historically applied? In his essay on Boswell's drinking, Thomas Gilmore asks:

> [D]oes Boswell, in his attitudes toward his drinking, stand as an

> important transitional figure at the beginning of a shift in Western attitudes toward heavy drinking, a shift culminating in the concept of alcoholism? The answer, I believe, is that Boswell is such a figure; and barring the unlikely appearance of an earlier candidate, I further believe that Boswell may be regarded as the earliest alcoholic of historical record. (338)

Gilmore carefully argues his case for Boswell, but so does John Maxwell O'Brien set forth his evidence for a much earlier example of alcoholism in Alexander the Great: The Invisible Enemy. an exhaustively researched biography of intoxication in the ancient world, and in his article on alcoholism in the new Oxford Classical Dictionary.[20] And adding further historical refinement will be Anya Taylor's forthcoming Bacchus in Romantic England: Writers and Drink 1780-1830 [see Marty Roth's review in this issue], who observes that while "excessive drinking is real in the period, observers and participants can still maintain ambivalence about its power to release or to debase the human being".[21] This historical research is most promising and one hopes to see much more of it; nonetheless, the main publications in the field continue to be in American literature.

Recently critics have begun to question the disease and/or AA models of alcoholism. These models no longer seemed sufficiently nuanced, conceptually or analytically, to account for all the literary expressions of heavy drinking. At about this time (1992), the Editorial Board of Dionysos changed the language of the journal's subtitle from The Literature and Intoxication TriQuarterly to The Literature and Addiction TriQuarterly. It was not a prophetic decision: shortly after the change, critics began to find that in art, booze, not to put too fine a point on it, is not all bad. The distinction between addiction and intoxication is not simply terminological, of course. The former has a painful, clinical air of finality about it--the latter, an open-ended sense of ecstasy: the one, moral--the other, fun. Further:

> Alcohol abuse is a behavioral disorder; whether it is also a moral defect, a disease, or a joke depends not only on the individual doing the describing but also on the culture within which that description takes place.[22]

It would appear, in short, that the more deeply one explores the subject of addiction/intoxication, historically and culturally, the more one finds the good and the bad in drinking to be opposite sides of the same coin.

The exchange between Lewis Hyde and George Wedge on the alcoholism of John Berryman is a case in point, Wedge finding it less clear than does Hyde that the poet's art was negatively affected by drink (Recovering Berryman). And John Crowley, by taking the title of his The White Logic: Alcoholism and Gender in American Modernist Fiction (1994) from Jack London's John Barleycorn. suggests that he is not solely concerned with

Demon Rum. Crowley, by tracing the transformation of intemperance from W. D. Howells to the refinements of Charles Jackson, in short, from the boilermaker to the martini, demonstrates that the literary history of drinking in America is a very rich culture indeed.

With Nicholas Warner's Spirits of America: Intoxication in Nineteenth-Century American Literature (Oklahoma 1997) we are treated to further critical refinements in a work that ends where Crowley's begins (one notes that "intoxication" has been restored to respectability). "[A]ntebellum authors," Warner writes,

> often reveal a profound ambivalence about intoxicant use that dovetails not only with a similar ambivalence in their society but also with a deeper, longstanding conflict in American culture. (4)

From Gilmore's Equivocal Spirits through Crowley's White Logic to Warner's "profound ambivalence" in Spirits of America is, in some respects, not a long journey, but in the process the disease and AA models have been modified almost out of existence.

In addition to the studies of Crowley and Warner, several other important books have recently been published or are forthcoming shortly. David S. Reynolds and Debra J. Rosenthal have edited The Serpent in the Cup: Temperance in American Literature (Massachusetts 1997), a collection of essays from David S. Shield's "The Demonization of the Tavern" to Edmund O'Reilly's "'Bill's Story': Form and Meaning in A.A. Recovery," which explore the intricate influence of the Temperance Movement on literary production. The volume concludes with Joan Hedrick's "Drink and Disorder in the Classroom," a fascinating account of a course on drink, reminding one of a pressing need for a systematic study of the various courses in literature and addiction now being offered.

The University of Massachusetts Press--adding to its distinguished series on addiction studies--has published Edmund B. O'Reilly's Sobering Tales: Narratives of Alcoholism and Recovery (1997). I recall that when Dionysos and the study of literature and drink were just getting underway, Ernest Kurtz, a chemical-dependency counselor, offered practical encouragement. He pointed out that narrative is a far more powerful therapeutic form of instruction than the typical clinical material. If further confirmation were needed, O'Reilly provides what John Crowley calls an "excellent study of AA narratives of recovery--the only such study I know and one that will likely be of great interest to AA members and scholars in the field".[23] Also, due out soon are Anya Taylor's Bacchus in Romantic England, already referred to, John Crowley's Drunkard's Progress: Narratives of Addiction, Despair, and Recovery, a collection of Washingtonian temperance tracts, Jane Lilienfeld's Reading Alcoholisms: Theorizing Character and Narrative in Selected Novels of Thomas Hardy, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf (Macmillan/St. Martin's),

and Lilienfeld's and Jeffrey Oxford's collection, The Languages of Addiction (Macmillan/St. Martin's).

Where, then, do we go from here? Not, I assume, in the direction of Avital Ronell's Crack Wars: Literature, Addiction, Mania (Nebraska 1992) or of Jacques Derrida's "The Rhetoric of Drugs" (appearing in the special On Addiction issue of differences[24]). "theorizing" flourishes that, it strikes me at least, confuse eccentricity with depth. Rather, I look forward to a synthesis--or at least a constructive exchange--suggested by those articles and reviews that have, for instance, appeared in recent issues of Dionysos. There is where I find the seeds of the future of addiction studies.[25]

NOTES

[1] Dionysos: Journal of Literature and Addiction was founded and edited by Roger Forseth (volumes I-V, 1989-1993), and is now edited by James Harbaugh, S.J. (volumes VI-, 1996-). All back issues are in print: Hill Library, University of Wisconsin-Superior 54880 (vols. I-V); Addiction Studies Program, Seattle University, 900 Broadway, Seattle, WA 98122 (vols. VI ff.).

[2]Norman Kiell, Food and Drink in Literature: A Selectively Annotated Bibliography. Lanham, MD & London: Scarecrow, 1995. See the review of Kiell, Dionysos 7.1 (Winter 1997): 36-38. There are also a large number of relevant bibliographical references in Dionysos.

[3]Owing to space limitations, I will not, for the most part, refer here to articles in Dionysos. or the edited collections.

[4]Marcus Grant, "Drinking and Creativity: A Review of the Alcoholism Literature," British Journal on Alcohol and Alcoholism 16.3 (1981): 88-93; G. Alan Marlatt, "The Controlled-Drinking Controversy: A Commentary," American Psychologist October 1983: 1097-1110; Robin Room, "A 'Reverence for Strong Drink': The Lost Generation and the Elevation of Alcohol in American Culture," Journal of Studies on Alcohol 45 (1984): 540-46.

[5]David E. Musto, The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control. New Haven: Yale U P, 1973 (Expanded Edition: New York: Oxford U P, 1987); Harry Gene Levine, "The Discovery of Addiction: Changing Conceptions of Habitual Drunkenness in America." Journal of Studies on Alcohol 39.1 (1978): 143-74; W. J. Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition. New York: Oxford U P, 1979; Ernest Kurtz, Not-God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous. Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1979; Mark Edward Lender and Karen P. Karnchanapee, "'Temperance Tales': Antiliquor Fiction and American Attitudes toward Alcoholics in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries," Journal of Studies on Alcohol 38.7 (1978); Mark Edward Lender and James Kirby Martin, Drinking in America: A History. New York: Free Press, 1982 (Revised and Expanded Edition: 1987).

[6]All back issues are in print: Ron Roizen, Secretary-Treasurer, ATHG, 1818 Hearst Ave., Berkeley, CA 94703.

[7]"The Alcoholic on Alcoholism," Canadian Literature 62 (1974): 33-48.

[8]Number 50, ed. Enid Peschel, who, in her introduction, writes: "In these [fourteen] articles, intoxication and its literary expression are studied in various ways: for example, the experience of inebriation is analyzed as a literary subject; the verbal consequences of intoxication as reflected in vocabulary, imagery and syntax are examined; and literature is explored as the ultimate intoxicant for both author and reader" (6).

[9]61: 3 (March 1976): 44-50. For other popular treatments, for example, see: Bob Dunham, "The Curse of the Writing Class," Saturday Review Jan/Feb 1984: 26-30; J. Anthony Lukas, "One Too Many for the Muse," The New York Times Book Review 1 Dec 1985: 1, 26-30.

[10]New York: Junction Books, 1981. Among other important writers' memoirs are: Barnaby Conrad, Time Is All We Have (New York: Arbor House, 1986); Dan Wakefield, Returning: A Spiritual Journey (New York: Doubleday, 1988); Pete Hamill, A Drinking Life (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994); Jack Erdmann with Larry Kearney, Whiskey's Children (New York: Vernal Press, 1994); Wilfrid Sheed, In Love with Daylight: A Memoir of Recovery (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995). One may include here Frederick Exley, A Fan's Notes: A Fictional Memoir (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

[11]"'Alcoholite at the Altar': Sinclair Lewis, Drink, and the Literary Imagination," Modern Fiction Studies 31 (1985): 581-607.

[12]Biographical treatments of alcoholism have often left much to be desired. Recent biographies, however, are beginning to demonstrate more sophisticated understanding of the subject. See, for example, Scott Donaldson, John Cheever: A Biography. New York: Random House, 1988; Ralph S. Voss, A Life of William Inge: The Strains of Triumph. Lawrence, KS: U of Kansas P, 1989; Paul Mariani, Dream Song: The Life of John Berryman. 2nd ed., Amherst: U of Mass P, 1996; Jonathan Yardley, Misfit: The Strange Life of Frederick Exley (New York: Random House, 1997). See, also, reviews in Dionysos. passim.

[13]Melus 11.4 (Winter 1984): 15-30. The issue of Contemporary Drug Problems (13.2; Summer 1986) contains articles on Finnish literature, American films, detective fiction, the Irish literary revival, Russian poetry, Chinese poetry, Berryman, and Hemingway. See the review of this issue by Paul H. Schmidt in Dionysos 2.1 (Spring 1990) 3-9.

[14]Mosaic 19.3-4 (Summer/Fall 1986). These issues contain essays on The Tale of Genji. Stephen Crane, Ernst Jünger, Walt Whitman, Ben Jonson, Herman Hesse, Merrill and Freud, Poe, Ved Mehta, the Book of Mormon. Jeanne Hyvrard, Robert Lowell, Emerson, and "Neutral" Consciousness. See also Diet and Discourse: Eating, Drinking and Literature, another special issue of Mosaic 24: 3-4 (Summer/Fall 1991), reviewed by Constance M. Perry, Dionysos 5.1 (Spring 1993): 44-46.

[15]George F. Wedge, "Drunken Quills: A Bibliography [of] Writers, Alcohol, and Alcoholism" and "Writing Under the Influence: Alcohol and Literary Creativity," Lawrence, KS 1986. See John W. Crowley, The White Logic: Alcoholism and Gender in American Modernist Fiction. Amherst: U of Mass P, 1994: 167-68n.

[16]Thomas B. Gilmore, Equivocal Spirits: Alcoholism and Drinking in Twentieth-Century Literature. Chapel Hill: U of N Carolina P, 1987; Donald W. Goodwin. Alcohol and the Writer. Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1988; Tom Dardis, The Thirsty Muse: Alcohol and the American Writer. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1989.

[17]My review of these three books, "Ambivalent Sensibilities: Alcohol in History and Literature," appeared in American Quarterly 42.1 (March 1990): 127-35.

[18]Richard J. Kelly and Alan K. Lathrop, eds., Recovering Berryman: Essays on the Poet. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1993; Sue Vice, Matthew Campbell, & Tim Armstrong, eds., Beyond the Pleasure Dome: Writing and Addiction from the Romantics. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.

[19]E.g., Hamilton E. Cochrane, "'Taking the Cure': Alcohol and Recovery in the Fiction of Raymond Carver," University of Dayton Review 20.1 (Summer 1989): 79-88; Paul H. Schmidt, "Addiction and Emma Bovary," Midwest Quarterly 23 (1990): 153-170; John M. Bowers, "'Dronkenesse is ful of stryvyng': Alcoholism and Ritual Violence in Chaucer's Pardoner's Tale," ELH 57 (1990): 757-84; Thomas B. Gilmore, "James Boswell's Drinking," Eighteenth-Century Studies 24 (Spring 1991): 337-57; Timothy M. Rivinus, "Tragedy of the Commonplace: The Impact of Addiction on Families in the Fiction of Thomas Hardy," Literature and Medicine 11 (1992): 237-65; Marty Roth, "Carnival, Creativity, and the Sublimation of Drunkenness," Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature 30.2 (June 1997): 1-18.

[20]London: Routledge, 1992. See the review-article: Roger Forseth, "Symposia as Ritual and Romance," Dionysos 4.2 (Fall 1992): 40-45. See also O'Brien's "Dionysus," Dionysos 4.1 (Spring 1992): 3-13; and his "Alcoholism," The Oxford Classical Dictionary. 3rd ed., Oxford: Oxford U P, 1996: 56.

[21]London: Macmillan/St. Martin's, 1998. See the review of the previously published chapter on Coleridge ("Coleridge and Alcohol," Texas Studies in Literature and Language 33 [Fall 1991]: 355-72) by Marty Roth, "Theory Skirmishes," Dionysos 5.1 (Spring 1993): 39-43.

[22]Roger Forseth, "The Alcoholic Writer By Any Other Name." A paper presented at the Theories of Alcoholism and Literature Conference, The Claremont Graduate School. Forthcoming (1999) in Jane Lilienfeld and Jeffrey Oxford, eds., The Languages of Addiction (Macmillan/St. Martin's).

[23]Book jacket blurb.

[24]See Marty Roth's reviews of Ronell and Derrida in, respectively, Dionysos 5.1 (Spring 1992): 39-41; and Dionysos 5.3 (Winter 1994): 45-48. See also Roger Forseth, "Editorial," Dionysos 5.1 (Spring 1992): 2.

[25]See also "Literature & Addiction: Critical & Ideological Issues, A Symposium," Dionysos 5.3 (Winter 1994): 3-15.

Xmas Junkies: Debasement and Redemption in the Work of William S. Burroughs and David Foster Wallace

Erik R. Mortenson

In a November 16, 1997 article in the Los Angeles Times entitled "Orphans of Addiction," Sonia Nazario relates the following scene to her readers:

> Dorene, her neck raw with needle marks, hunches over a tin plate, warming a mixture of heroin and water in a spoon. Theodora, who is HIV-positive, slams the solution into an arm marbled with track marks. Then, intent on smoking the last crumbs of crack, she gently lowers her girl onto a mattress moist with urine and semen. As mom inhales, Tamika sleeps, her pink and white sundress absorbing the fluids of unknown grown-ups (A24).

Nazario's description captures what is often considered the quintessential characteristics of the addict: degraded, self-involved, oblivious to everything around her except for the drugs she craves. When we think of addicts like Theodora one of two things usually comes to mind: disgust for the immoral life of a pleasure seeker or pity for a person caught in a difficult personal struggle. Either way the addict is usually held in contempt. The addict has somehow failed; they have taken the life given them and squandered it. Yet William S. Burroughs' stories "The Junky's Christmas" and "The 'Priest' They Called Him," along with a section of David Foster Wallace's novel Infinite Jest, challenge these preconceived notions. By contrasting images of junkies which confirm our worst fears with depictions of selfless sacrifice and concern for their fellow humans, these writers restore the addict's humanity and force the reader to consider addicts in a new, and more positive, light.

In order to more fully create a feeling of redemption in his readers, Burroughs first takes his junkies to the depths of depravity. The very title of Burroughs' piece prepares the reader for the debasement of Danny the Car Wiper that follows. "The Junky's Christmas" conflates two seemingly incongruous elements: the self-absorbed drug addict and the birth of the savior Jesus Christ. While the "reader's" Christmas might mean family gatherings and Yuletide cheer, for the addict it only means another day of struggling to acquire junk. The image of a junk-sick Danny, just released from jail, is rendered in almost animalistic terms by the narrator: "Sweat ran down his body. . . . His lips drew back off his yellow teeth in a snarl of desperation" (Burroughs, Interzone 24). Like an animal's, Danny's life has narrowed down to a few basic needs, the most pressing being his need for heroin. This total focus on obtaining junk governs all of Danny's actions. After his attempt to

rob a car fails, he immediately finds another opportunity in a suitcase standing in a doorway. But Danny finds more than he bargained for; the suitcase contains a pair of severed legs. And though he drops the legs "with a sneer of disgust," Danny nevertheless exclaims, "Well, I got a case anyway" (25), dumps the legs out, checks for bloodstains, and walks off in search of a buyer. Danny's addiction blinds him to any feelings beyond his search for drugs, and the reader cannot help but feel a lack of sympathy for a character so devoid of feeling for his fellow human. The rest of Danny's tale continues in a similarly callous vein: he brushes by an old friend with "the hatred of disappointment" (27) when he realizes that this friend has no heroin for sale, forces his way into a doctor's home and "whines" until he receives narcotics for his falsified illness, and then instantly complains that the doctor gave him only "a quarter G" (28). Danny thus represents the archetypal drug fiend, a person whose own appetites and desires eclipse any thought of another.

At first glance it appears as though Danny will remain as selfish at the end of the story as he was in the beginning. With heroin in hand, Danny now sequesters himself in his room, and "With a shot in front of him, his defenses gave way. . . . His legs began to twitch and ache. A cramp stirred in his stomach. Tears ran down his face from his smarting, burning eyes" (29). Danny's need is registered in physical terms, suggesting that, like an animal, his actions are based more on instinct and conditioning than on emotion. Junk has created a need in him that enslaves him to his own body. Yet Danny is obviously suffering, and the non-addicted reader is given a sense of how powerful the force of addiction must be. But just as Danny's pain begins to garner him sympathy, his actions undermine any compassion that his debased condition might have created. Danny hears a groan from another room, and reacts in a by now unsurprising manner: *"Why don't someone call a doctor?* he thought indignantly. *It's a bringdown"* [a "bringdown" is slang for a "bad time" or a "letdown"] (29).[1] Again Danny appears without pity or concern for another. His only thought is that the noise from next door disrupts the enjoyment of his narcotics. But as Danny goes to investigate the groan, we see a new side of Danny the Car Wiper, one that forces the reader to reconsider Danny's selfish actions.

While Danny appears hopelessly unfeeling for most of the tale, the end of Burroughs' story brings a redemptive transformation. As Danny enters the room to investigate the source of the disquieting groans, he is surprised to find that they come from a young man, not an old one. "What's wrong, kid?' Danny asks, but the kid's pain allows only a one word response: "Kidneys" (30). Danny realizes that the kid is suffering from kidney stones, a condition he himself has faked before. Danny understands that the kid's situation is genuine, and suggests calling an ambulance, but the kid informs him that the "Doctors won't come" (30). Then comes Danny's epiphanic moment as he touches the boy's shoulder and informs him "I--I'm sorry, kid. You wait. I'll

fix you up" (30).[2] Perhaps Danny feels guilt that by faking kidney stones he may have caused doctors to lose faith in legitimate patients, or perhaps he just feels sympathy for the obvious pain the boy is enduring. In either case, Danny is willing to sacrifice the shot he worked so hard to acquire in order to help relieve someone else's suffering. At this point Danny becomes redeemed in the eyes of the reader. We watch Danny's almost epic struggle to procure the tiny bit of drug that he so desperately needs, then watch him turn around and give it all away. The title immediately becomes charged with a second meaning. "The Junky's Christmas" is not describing a Yuletide soiled by the presence of an addict. Rather, the junky Danny epitomizes the spirit of Christmas in the sacrifice and charity he displays towards the kid. While the reader has little trouble feeling morally superior to Danny at the beginning of Burroughs' tale, by the end of it one questions whether they themselves would make the huge sacrifice that Danny made for the kid.

According to William Burroughs' editor, James Grauerholz, "The Junky's Christmas" dates "from Mexico or early Tangier days" and forms "the basis of a later, and much different, story: 'The "Priest," They Called Him'" (xvi). First published in the Weekend Telegraph in 1967 and then collected in a 1973 Viking edition entitled Exterminator! (Grauerholz xvi), "The 'Priest' They Called Him" draws extensively on "The Junky's Christmas." Like Danny, the Priest is at first rendered in unflattering terms so that his subsequent redemption gains more force for the reader. Just as the reader first encounters Danny as a newly-released convict, so we first meet the Priest in a dubious situation. Crying "Fight tuberculosis, folks" on a Chicago streetcorner, the Priest is selling what are undoubtedly counterfeit "Christmas seals" (Burroughs, Exterminator! 156). Like Danny, he encounters a suitcase that contains two severed human legs. But where a younger Danny drops the legs "with a sneer of disgust" and goes on to exclaim "Holy Jesus! . . . The routines people put down these days" (25), the more seasoned junky appears undisturbed, simply stating "Legs yet," and immediately thinks that the case "might bring a few dollars to score" (157). The Priest could easily be an older Danny, hardened even further by years of heroin addiction. Unlike Danny's "grating whine" the Priest remains expressionless while a dishonest doctor berates him, though he is equally ungrateful when he receives, as he himself terms it, "one lousy quarter G" (158). The Priest is, however, less callous to the groans of the young kid coming from the next room. Instead of lamenting the groans, as Danny did, the Priest's displeasure is merely registered in the text as a fact, and he immediately goes to the next room to quiet the disturbance so he can better enjoy his "medications" (158). Danny thus appears the more aggressive of the pair, while the Priest is the more detached from human emotion. But one point is clear: both protagonists' relentless quest for junk blinds them to anything besides their addiction. Every interaction these two characters

engage in is centered around obtaining junk or obtaining the money necessary to buy junk. Their actions and thoughts are less immoral than amoral, an inevitable result of their all-consuming need for heroin. Still, this lack of concern for anything but drugs certainly makes them both unsympathetic characters, and sets the reader up for the redemptions at the ends of their respective tales. But while Danny and the Priest's debasements function in much the same way, the impact that their redemptions have differ widely.

The most drastic difference between Burroughs' two endings is that Danny is rewarded for his actions while the Priest suffers for his sacrifice. As the "vegetable serenity of junk" settles over him, Danny goes "on the nod" (31), a junky's slang expression for the sleep-like state that junk induces. Even though he gives away his shot of junk, Danny is still rewarded with the contentment that he has so desperately sought. The Priest must endure a different fate. The narrator claims that, after the Priest returns to his own room, "Then it hit him like heavy silent snow, all the grey junk yesterdays. He sat there and received the *immaculate fix* and since he was himself a priest there was no need to call one" (159). The phrase "heavy silent snow" creates an image of burdensome loneliness that the isolated condition of the Priest, alone in his room, reinforces. "Grey junk yesterdays" draws attention to an earlier reminiscence that a young prep school kid inspired in the Priest, and points to the bleak, wasted life he has spent on junk. Instead of dulling his perception with the "vegetable serenity" Danny experienced, the Priest's sacrifice has instead rendered those perceptions even more acute. But the Priest's suffering does not end there. While both characters receive the "immaculate fix," the meaning behind this term "fix" has changed. For the addict, the term "fix" means a shot or dose of narcotics: so Danny, who has given away his shot, still receives his "fix" in the form of "vegetable serenity." The Priest, however, receives the ultimate "fix" in its full pejorative meaning: he dies. If these two tales work by contrasting the debased junky with his ultimate unselfish act, it is the Priest who appears the most transformed. Though both the Priest and Danny appear equally unsympathetic at the outset of the story, by forfeiting his life for the kid in room 18 the Priest has gone a step beyond Danny in the sacrifice he has made. Yet the invocation of the term "immaculate" points to another way in which Burroughs renders the Priest's sacrifice superior to Danny's: by drawing parallels between the Priest and Christ.

The connections forged between the Priest and Christ are both obvious and hidden. The word "Priest" in the title is charged with religious overtones, and the story takes place on Christmas Eve, the night before Christ's birthday. But it is perhaps the word "immaculate" that points most closely to the Priest as a Christ figure in the story. The term "immaculate" is often used in conjunction with "conception" to describe the miraculous birth of Christ. As Christ was born from a sexless union, both Danny and the Priest

receive their fixes without the aid of junk, and the assumption is that these "miracles" were divinely ordained. But Danny's "miracle" lacks the redemptive force that the Priest's contains. The Priest's ultimate demise links him more closely with Christ. As Jesus suffered and ultimately died on the cross for humankind's sins, so the Priest struggles to acquire the junk which he gives to the boy before his death. While the Priest's sacrifice might not save any souls beside his own, the spirit of giving one life for another is the same. Throughout the story we wonder why such a horrible junky would be called the Priest, but the end of the tale reveals the answer: while we may consider the Priest a selfish junky, in reality his deeds show that he is actually the most Christian of us all.

William S. Burroughs' portrayal of the redeemed junky forces the reader to reconsider the addict as not only a person, but a person capable of doing great things. In his 1996 novel Infinite Jest. David Foster Wallace borrows many of the conventions Burroughs established in these two stories to explore his own conception of the addict. Intertextuality is, of course, difficult to unequivocally establish. Wallace does name both the Beats and William S. Burroughs explicitly in other parts of the text, so he is at least aware of their existence. Yet when one reads the section of Infinite Jest where yrstruly, C, and Poor Tony cop heroin from Dr. Wo it is difficult to deny the similarities between this tale and Burroughs'. The rushed style, the attention paid to the details of the addict's life, the Christmas Eve setting, and above all the plot of junkies trying to hustle money to score, all point to the fact that "The Junky's Christmas" and "The 'Priest' They Called Him" both inform David Foster Wallace's piece. Such literary influence does not mean repetition, however. Though Wallace may draw on Burroughs' texts, he likewise alters and amends them, and thus the meanings his work creates remain entirely his own.

Wallace, like Burroughs, debases his junkies. Yrstruly, C, and Poor Tony are all driven by their need for junk, and will do virtually anything to get it. The beginning of the story finds them engaged in a theft, "boosting some items at a sidewalk sale" (Wallace, Infinite Jest 128). With his misspelled and ungrammatical writing the narrator, yrstruly, informs the reader that like other characters in the story he too had "petaled ass in the Columbus Squar for a time of my youth" (130). Yet shoplifting and prostitution appear minor compared with this crew's routine of violent robbery. Take, for example, yrstruly's description of one such event:

> Poor Tony ran across an old Patty citizen type of his old acquaintance from like the Cape and Poor Tony got over and pretended like he would give a blow job On The House and we got the citizen to get in his ride with us and crewed on him good and we got enough $ off the Patty type to get straightened out for true all day and crewed on him hard and C wanted we should elemonade the

> Patty's map for keeps . . . we broke the jaw for insentive not to eat no cheese and C insisted and was not 2Bdenied and took off one ear . . . and then C throws the ear away in a dumster (129).

These three junkies are parasites, feeding on the weak and relatively helpless. While this passage relates the attack on a homosexual who would supposedly be less likely to "eat cheese" to the police, other targets include a "foran slope studn type kid" (129) and "a older type individual . . . legless on shots alone at the bar" (130). Even more disturbing than the choice of victims is the violence that these junkies inflict on those unfortunate enough to cross their path. Not content with simple robbery, the crew breaks one man's jaw, cuts off his ear, and even considers killing him and taking the car to a "slope strip shop" (129) in Chinatown. Clearly Wallace takes the debasement of his junkies a step further than Burroughs. Danny and the Priest are indeed despicable characters, but the violence of yrstruly, C, and Poor Tony goes beyond the simple need for narcotics. This violence is a love of violence, and the calculating choice of victims and the intensity with which the robberies are carried out force the reader to view Wallace's crew as not simply addicts dehumanized through their addiction but as malicious threats to society. As horrible as these characters appear, however, one stands out as less of a villain than the other—yrstruly.

Yrstruly is certainly complicit in the violent behavior that he and his crew perpetrate. Yet as the first-person narrator of the tale he is also afforded more leniency.[3] The reader feels less likely to "kill the messenger for his message" since yrstruly is after all merely relating an incident in his life. Repeated spelling and grammatical mistakes reinforce the notion that yrstruly is simply a street-wise kid trying to explain his situation the best he can. Yrstruly's flair for addressing the reader "honestly" likewise buttresses this perception. Towards the beginning of the tale yrstruly admonishes his audience that "its' a never ending strugle its' a full time job to stay straight and there is no vacation for XMas at anytime. Its' a fucking bitch of a life dont' let any body get over on you diffrent" (129). Although yrstruly fails to take his own advice, this concern for our welfare elicits some sympathy in the reader. While the reader certainly recognizes yrstruly's faults, his distinct narrational style sets him apart from the other voiceless characters in the piece.

In fact, yrstruly himself is often quick to differentiate himself from the other, more unsympathetic, characters in the story. After C cuts off the ear of the "Patty citizen type," yrstruly immediately states that "so yrstrulys' like so what was the exact pernt to that like" (129). While he may participate in violence as a means to obtain junk, unlike C yrstruly sees violence as a tool, not as an end in itself. As yrstruly relates to his readers, "with Cs' involvement its' always wet work" (130), meaning that the crimes C commits always lead to violence and bloodshed. Yet yrstruly shows the most

disdain for the inhabitants of the Brighton Projects. While trying to score from his connection at the Projects, yrstruly witnesses the following scene: "one large Niger in a Patriots hat has a hart incident and downhegoes. . . and none of his *brothers* unquot gosofar to do any thing he lays there theres' animals at nite" (131). Of course the racist tone of this quote is obvious and undermines some of the sympathy that the reader might feel. But this quote also shows yrstruly's belief in the principle that "brothers" should help each other out. The drug underworld, for yrstruly, is not simply "every man for himself." There is a responsibility, at least among one's friends, to provide aid in a time of need. As the story ends, yrstruly has a chance to put this theory into practice, and as we shall see his actions towards the fallen C reveal an ambiguity that sets Wallace's work apart from Burroughs'.

While there is little doubt as to Danny and the Priest's redemptive transformations by the end of their tales, the reader has a more difficult time understanding yrstruly's actions. After obtaining junk from Dr. Wo, yrstruly, C, and Poor Tony go back to their blowergate to cook up. But yrstruly gets a feeling something is not right and admits "yrstruly I have a cold super station about Poor Tony not wining while he makes like he has to cusually piss. . . And so I admit it I yrstruly did yrstruly purplously let C tie off and boot up first" (134). Danny and the Priest give their hard-earned shots away, while yrstruly by contrast allows C to test his fears about their recently-acquired junk. Unfortunately, yrstruly's fears are justified, and C dies a short but painful death from their "laced" shots. As readers, we are forced to come to terms with yrstruly's actions. On the one hand, he has sacrificed his friend to save himself. On the other, he at least feels repentant for his actions and admits his culpability. Equally confusing, yrstruly goes on to rationalize his decision by claiming that "C had the Shivers wurst of us and cooks up the fastest and would of got it anyway" (134). Unlike Burroughs' relatively straightforward endings, Wallace creates an ending fraught with paradox. What is the reader to make of yrstruly? While his actions are certainly not praiseworthy, yrstruly's conflicting observations do demonstrate an attempt to come to terms with his actions, a fact that serves to humanize him. Yrstruly may not always act in a "morally correct" manner, but he at least realizes that a system of morality exists, and feels guilt over his inability to live by it.

Yrstruly's dubious actions are also mitigated through their contrast with Poor Tony's. Just as yrstruly's condemnation of C's violence makes him appear more sympathetic, Poor Tony's lack of concern over C's death makes yrstruly's behavior appear praiseworthy by contrast. While yrstruly is holding C's hand as he dies, Poor Tony is "stuffing the feather snake from his necks' head in Cs' mouth to shut him up" (134). After C's death, Poor Tony admits the reason for the "laced" shots was that "Susan T. Cheese helped a Worcester fag get over on Wo" (134). Laboring over his decision

whether to "elemonade Poor Tony's map for keeps for payback" (135), yrstruly finally decides to inform Dr. Wo of Poor Tony's whereabouts only after an obviously compassionless Poor Tony "wanted yrstruly I should boost him like over the edge of Cs' bodies' dumster to get back what was left of his feather stoal out of Cs' mouth" (135). Poor Tony is more concerned with his "feather stoal" than with C's death, a fact that ultimately convinces yrstruly to inform on his friend. Poor Tony's actions demonstrate that even after C's death he still thinks only of himself.

Of course yrstruly's decisions are also suspect. Although he wants to pay Poor Tony back for "how he purplously lets C shoot up first" yrstruly adds "and wouldof' let yrstruly shoot first" (135). Yrstruly wants payback for what could have happened to himself as well. And while yrstruly finally decides to tell Wo of Poor Tony's whereabouts as payback, he also hopes that this information will allow him to "get enough bags to get true straight" (135). Despite these questionable motives, contrasted with Poor Tony, yrstruly does seem to uphold his own view of remaining true to one's friends. Unlike the Brighton Projects' "brothers," yrstruly stands by his friend, both during and after his death. Yrstruly is indeed a contradiction, simultaneously vicious and compassionate, self-serving and loyal. Yet this contradiction serves to humanize yrstruly. Unlike the other characters he is at least struggling to do what is right, and is aware that his deeds don't always equal his expectations for himself. Sandwiched between the sadistic C and the remorseless Poor Tony, yrstruly stands out as the only character in Wallace's tale capable of transcending his debased condition as a junky.

Unlike Burroughs, who provides a more didactic, clear-cut story that highlights the redemption of his junkies, Wallace buries yrstruly's redemption under ambiguous emotions and decisions. The reason for this difference in approaches can be found in extra-textual sources. Consider Burroughs' essay entitled "Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness." In this 1960 essay Burroughs describes the helpless condition of the heroin addict:

> A dope fiend is a man in total need of dope. Beyond a certain frequency need knows absolutely no limit or control. In the words of total need: *'Wouldn't you?* Yes you would. You would lie, cheat, inform on your friends, steal, do *anything* to satisfy total need. . . Dope fiends are sick people who cannot act other than they do. A rabid dog cannot choose but bite (138).

Both Danny and the Priest conform to this description; they are willing to do anything to satisfy their need for junk. Yet their redemption is clearly an invalidation of this theory since a junky in "total need" would never give away his junk. Burroughs' endings, then, restore the humanity of the addict by demonstrating to the audience that, like the rest of us, junkies are capable of compassion and sacrifice. Addiction turns the addict into a slave, but that

slave has the capacity for revolt. Of course Burroughs' tales are incredibly sentimental, providing perhaps too easy a solution to the extremely difficult question of addiction. Despite their improbability, these stories nevertheless offer a novel way of viewing the addict. Society's contempt for the addict is simply a prejudice like any other, and thus the unequivocal redemption that occurs at the ends of these tales forces the reader to abandon their easy conception of the addict as either monster or object of pity.

While Burroughs' tales are meant to shock us out of our preconceptions, Wallace's piece does something more subtle: it creates an empathy that forces us to relate to the addict yrstruly. Yrstruly's confused and conflicting behavior creates a more "realistic" portrayal, insofar as "real" life is itself marked by contradiction. As Wallace himself comments in a Review of Contemporary Fiction interview, "Really good fiction could have as dark a worldview as it wished, but it'd find a way both to depict this dark world *and* to illuminate the possibilities for being alive and human in it" (131). Yrstruly, C, and Poor Tony surely inhabit a world that is dark. Yet yrstruly's ambiguous actions simultaneously "depict this dark world" while they "illuminate the possibilities for being alive and human." It is precisely because yrstruly's courageous actions stand next to his questionable motives that his moments of sympathy have such poignancy. In an even darker world than Danny's or the Priest's, yrstruly is still able to see past his horrible condition and act "human." Yrstruly gives us a more realistic portrayal, so we as readers are more easily able to identify with his redemptive moments. Like us, yrstruly is trying to find his place in the world, and while we cannot always agree with him we can at least identify him as a fellow human being engaged in a common struggle.

The difference between these stories is one of degree rather than viewpoint. Burroughs and Wallace are both engaged in an attempt to redeem the addict, to make him human again. But the distance they travel down this route differs. Burroughs takes his characters all the way: in the case of the Priest, he stops nothing short of equating his character's sacrifice with that of Christ. Wallace is more subdued. By giving us only glimpses of yrstruly's redemption, Wallace shows us a character trying to do his best to live in a world we all inhabit. And what do these works tell us about Theodora and her daughter Tamika? While nobody would dispute that Theodora needs to take better care of her daughter, Burroughs and Wallace do keep us from writing her off entirely as a "lost cause" or from looking down on her as somehow morally weaker. She is still human, still capable of feeling and, hopefully, of change. Both these writers break the stereotype of the inhuman addict, demonstrating that while some have indeed sunk low, as humans there is still hope for us all.

NOTES

[1]This unsympathetic portrait is further reinforced in a 1993 CD recording entitled Spare Ass Annie and Other Tales, where Burroughs' voice lends these lines (along with the aforementioned "whine" of Danny) a particularly irritating force denied them in print.

[2]In Burroughs' written story the boy announces that the doctors won't come because he is legally "not entitled" (30) to medical aid, a proclamation that launches Danny into a diatribe against "the bureaucrat bastards" (30) who allowed a friend of his to die of a snakebite in a Jacksonville waiting room. This declaration unites Danny and the kid against a common foe: "the system." Yet in the CD Spare Ass Annie and Other Tales, Burroughs omitted this passage, a decision that makes the ending less didactic and serves to highlight Danny's subsequent gift as based solely on charity, not on politics.

[3]Doubly so, as this is one of the few instances of first-person narration in the 1,079-page Infinite Jest, which is otherwise told through the eyes of an omniscient narrator.

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Book Review

Anya Taylor, Bacchus and Romantic England: Writers and Drink, 1780-1830. St. Martin's Press.

John W. Crowley, Drunkard's Progress: Narratives of Addiction, Despair and Recovery. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bacchus and Old King Alcohol

Marty Roth
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These two books--a literary study of the drinking habits and drink expression of the major English Romantics and a collection of Washingtonian temperance narratives--are welcome additions to a small library of books on drink, drugs, and culture.

Two excellent essays by Anya Taylor in this area should have prepared us for her careful reading of drink in the Romantic period. Although she never quite comes out and says it, she identifies this period with the emergence of addiction (as opposed to a more common view of it as a period of lull in the toxic activity of society, between the eighteenth-century gin epidemic and the later nineteenth-century epidemic of working-class drunkenness). This moment of emergence may account for the "increased self-awareness and introspection" that marks Romanticism, and she manages the correspondences among addiction, introspection, and self-fragmentation to good effect in her chapter on Charles Lamb. She succeeds in pushing several things back in time, including the first alcoholic novel: from Anne Bronte's Tenant of Wildfell Hall (1848) to Charlotte Smith's The Old Manor House (1793).

She puts Romanticism forward for pride of place in a still very sketchy history of addiction, offsetting more familiar equations of drinking culture with America (W. J. Rorabaugh, Tom Dardis, John Crowley, Nicholas Warner) and late nineteenth-century France (Doris Lanier, Barnaby Conrad), as well as reading the increasingly fragmented subjectivity of the Romantic period in terms of alcohol rather than opium (M. H. Abrams, Alethea Hayter).

Taylor offers us a wider field of writing and new textual focus-points for the period: the medical literature (Thomas Beddoes, Anthony Carlisle, Robert MacNish) and prose by Francis Place and Basil Montagu. In the case of the canonic writers, she assembles rich and various alcoholic archives. As she says, "When Keats' many references to wine, the gods of wine, and the effects

of wine are brought together . . . for the first time, the sheer number of them indicates Keats' concern with the sensations and state of drunkenness."

The most interesting part of the book is its family structure, which consists of a central cluster--William Wordsworth and his two "sons," Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Lamb--and the veiled intertextual connections that go along with that model. Wordsworth doesn't speak directly to Coleridge or Lamb but speaks through surrogates, mainly the screen image of Robert Burns. Any of them can become conduits or sounding boards for communication with the others. This makes for an intricate reading of the texts, but it could also lead to an analysis of this group of writers as a dysfunctional family system in which all of the young men are addict sons of a teetotalling and disapproving father. An associated structure is the "drinker's drunk" (most notoriously, F. Scott Fitzgerald for Ernest Hemingway): here it is Richard Savage for Samuel Johnson and Richard Brinsley Sheridan for Lord Byron and Tom Moore.

The chapter on Hartley Coleridge presents Coleridge as the first alcoholic father, competing with his child in infantilism. As the first adult child of an alcoholic, Hartley prefigures a very modern kind of addictive figure: "Coleridge's beloved first-born son was an alcoholic of the most abject kind, insisting on his own insignificance, submerging his much praised genius in imitating his elders, wandering drunk around the Lake District for days on end, homeless except for the kindness of strangers."

In the last chapter, Taylor cleverly juxtaposes men and women writers discoursing on drink, drunks and their "wives": the many women writers of the period who turned to writing to support families "abandoned by husbands whose behavior is called variously 'profligate,' 'dissipated,' and 'dissolute.'" Unlike the men, the women speak with one voice, cutting through the euphemisms of male writing and describing the bestiality which they see.

Taylor's intertextual strategy points up the notable absence of Thomas De Quincey (eliminated, no doubt, because opium is not drink, as Burns is eliminated by a too strict attention to national borders). However, De Quincey is as much a son of William as the other two, and, as Nigel Leask has brilliantly demonstrated in his British Romantic Writers of the East, deeply locked into an oedipal relationship with Coleridge. One also misses Taylor's treatment of the poetry of Burns. He hovers over the early chapters like a ghostly presence, although he may be the prototypical Romantic, "the type of the Romantic artist, in part because he was a drunk."

The writing is crisp, and the book is a pleasure to read.

Drunkard's Progress covers a much narrower body of literature: the narratives of the Washington Temperance Society, a radical organization that sprang up in Baltimore in 1840. The Society was tremendously effective in its appeal to drunks, mainly low-bottom drunks, but it had vanished from the

scene by 1845, largely, one suspects, through the extremity of its social and theological positions.

The Washingtonians contended that drunks did not need to be managed by their social or their medical "betters" ("the news from Baltimore had come to Ohio, that the drunkards had taken the cause into their own hands"), and that religion often stood in the way of alcoholic recovery. These propositions were not calculated to endear them to respectable society--the clergymen, lawyers, doctors, and businessmen currently in charge of the temperance movement and utilizing it as "a means for a declining social elite to retain its diminishing power--by making over Americans 'into a clear, sober, godly, and decorous people whose aspirations and style of living would reflect the moral leadership of New England Federalism.'"

Washingtonianism reflected the class tensions between upper-class reformers and the drunks themselves. It was the first programmatic example of a principle that had to be learned many times in the development of addiction treatment centers, that addicts respond to other addicts. The alcoholics in these narratives are melted by the kind voice of a recovering drunk, not their wives.

Secondly, Washingtonians were wary of the claims of religion; according to a member, "Now, anyone who knows anything of drunkenness, knows that most drunkards are strongly averse to religion, if not infidel at heart. They want to hear nothing about 'moral reform' and 'church societies.'"

The "heart's blood" of the Society was the confessional narrative, very like an AA story or drunkalogue. In a very real sense the Washington Society was the predecessor of AA: Bill W. was "startled, then sobered" to learn of the "astonishing parallels" between the two organizations. And these narratives reflect features of alcoholic drinking that are current today; they can still serve as a mirror for drunks, for example, Charles T. Woodman's telling account of his depressed, delusional, and defiant adolescence. John Cotton Mather's astute observations on a fellow alcoholic's behavior goes right to the heart of recovery:

> Mr. Clark is altogether too wise to learn . . . the simple lesson of teetotalism. He knows all about it . . . . He never will "become a fool that he may be wise"--not he. . . . [The squire is] wrapped up in the dignity which his station throws around him, he shuts up the avenues by which these influences can reach him. He is left therefore to fight alone with temptation.

These narratives reflect not only the truth about the alcoholic experience but its delusional reality as well. Again and again, recovering alcoholics act as if the mere signing of a pledge effected real healing magic--"If I thought!--" "Don't think anything about it. Go right up and sign, and you are safe."

While the alcoholics in these narratives strike a note of reality, the representation of their wives and children is impossibly idealized: the man is a beast, but his wife and his children are sweetly passive, perfect saints. The

alcoholic is willing to tell the darkest secrets about himself but tells us nothing about his dependents; he never acknowledges that his wife might have a dark side that is fed by his drinking. A wonderful corrective to this elision is Karen Sánchez-Eppler's critical reading of the incestuous basis of the temperance family listed in Crowley's notes.

The most famous of these temperance narratives is that of John B. Gough, which dominates the book just as Gough himself dominated the Washingtonian lecture circuit. These excerpts were a disappointment because I didn't believe Gough. There is, however, much strong, believable testimony and vigorous writing in the collection: James Gale's powerful style resembles that of another drunk, Tom Paine. Andrus V. Green was the most engaging writer, with a rough vitality and poetry in his syntax and phrasing:

> Thus my readers will see how drunkards are made. When they first begin to tipple in small drinks, or drams, then they commence where I did; then they step upon the old boat Jollification; from thence to point Just Enough; thence to Tipsy Bay; then down to Blackeye town, and off into Peelshin Alley, and to Hog Pond; stop occasionally at Hickup Tavern--then sail off down stream to Death River; and from there stop at the wharves of One Drink More; and then away off into Puke City.

NOTES AND COMMENT

Roger Forseth

William L. White's Slaying the Dragon: The History of Addiction Treatment and Recovery in America (Bloomington, IL: Chestnut Health Systems/Lighthouse Institute, 1998) is available from The Bishop of Books, 44 Eureka Ave., Wheeling, WV 26003 (304/242-2937). . . . "The Prose and Poetry of Addiction: Stigma and Symbol," a 1998 M/MLA panel coordinated by Jane Lilienfeld, included papers on Ibanez, Baudelaire, and Baldwin. Her Reading Alcoholisms: Theorizing Character and Narrative in Selected Novels of Hardy, Joyce, and Woolf (St. Martin's) appeared in May. . . . Drunkard's Progress: Narratives of Addiction, Despair, and Recovery, ed. John W. Crowley (Johns Hopkins), has been published in both hardcover and paperback; see also, Carol Mattingly, Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric (S Illinois U P 1998). . . . "There was, naturally enough, a whole job lot of 'Bad Raymond' stories (his name for himself, a name he liked), tales from the drinking days in San Francisco . . . . The old days. He enjoyed telling them on himself. But just as I never saw him go close to a drink, I never saw any of that behavior. The Raymond Carver I knew twenty years ago had inched his way out of shadows and into light, and he was as thankful, and as determined to stay in the light . . . as any convert to a feasible religion" (Richard Ford, "Good Raymond," The New Yorker 5 Oct 1998: 73). . . . British journalist Andrew Barr has just published Drink: A Social History of America (Carroll & Graf); see also Thomas R. Pegram, Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for Dry America, 1800-1933 (Ivan R. Dee 1998). . . . "For most of twenty years, I did not see [my father James Dickey], could not talk to him, could not bear to be around him. . . . He was drunk . . . for most of those twenty years. If I didn't get him on the phone before eleven in the morning, there was no point in calling at all" (Christopher Dickey, "Summer of Deliverance," The New Yorker 13 July 1990: 38). . . . "Ardent Spirits: The Early History of the American Temperance Movement," an exhibition of The Library Company of Philadelphia (1314 Locust St., Philadelphia PA 19107) will be held through November. A catalog is available from the Library. . . . Morton Hunt discusses "The Controlled-Drinking Rhubarb" in his The New Know-Nothings: The Political Foes of the Scientific Study of Human Nature (Transaction: 273-84). . . . David Musto reviewed The Fix (Simon & Schuster 1998), a study by Michael Massing of the war on drugs, in NY Times Book Review (18 Oct 1998: 12). . . . Lawrence Block's latest Matt Scudder mystery, Everybody Dies (Morrow) is out in hardcover. In addition,

Robert B. Parker's and Simon Brett's alcoholic detectives appear again in, respectively, Trouble in Paradise (Putnam) and Dead Room Farce (St. Martin's). And, in Jitter Joint (St. Martin's), Howard Swindle has his hero solve a murder while in the detox ward of a Dallas clinic. . . . "Maybe the lack of action in most authors' lives is one reason filmmakers seem to choose alcoholic writers as subjects, . . . Drinking makes for 'a much better scene--whether a cliché or not,' said [director James] Ivory" (Dinitia Smith, "Hollywood Loves Writers [If They Suffer]," NY Times 27 Sept 1998: 11). . . . "Of drinking, which eventually landed him in the hospital, [Barry Hannah] stands by his comments in an interview several years ago. 'I'm not going to come down on booze, because it's done a great deal for me, frankly,' he said. . . . 'It's like scolding an old friend now that you don't need him'" (Randy Kennedy, "Barry Hannah: Mellowed Out But Still Unbowed," NY Times 9 July 1998: A10). . . . The latest novel by Dan Wakefield to be reissued by Indiana U P is Under the Apple Tree: A Novel of the Home Front. . . . The most recent examination of Poe is Midnight Dreary: The Mysterious Death of Edgar Allan Poe. by John Evangelist Walsh (Rutgers U P 1998). . . . The panel "Technologies of Addiction in Late-Nineteenth-Century Britain," was presented at the 1998 meeting of MLA. . . . James T. Bennett and Thomas J. DiLorenze "provide an in-depth look at Prohibition 1990's-style" in The Food and Drink Police: America's Nannies, Busybodies, and Petty Tyrants (Transaction 1998). . . . "Ann Douglas is best known for Terrible Honesty. which took 15 years to write and which she said was delayed at least five years by her alcoholism. . . . 'I had to redo so much of the work I'd done,' Ms. Douglas said. She was haunted by people in the book--F. Scott Fitzgerald, Dorothy Parker, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway--whose drinking shadowed their lives" (Elisabeth Bumiller, "A Personal Take on Walking in Clinton's Shoes," NY Times 17 Oct 1998: A19). Douglas's The Feminization of American Culture (1977) has just been reissued by Noonday. . . . Ken Loach's new film, My Name Is Joe. features Peter Mullan as a recovering alcoholic. . . . "In 1920, [Dawn] Powell married Joseph Gousha . . . a lifelong alcoholic. Powell, too, drank a lot, though not to the degree her husband did: 'I never saw her drunk,' wrote a friend; 'I saw her, shall we say, enhanced?'" (Brooke Allen, Review of Tim Page, Dawn Powell: A Biography [Holt 1998], WS Journal 19 Oct 1998: A24). . . . "'I woke up in the Tombs 15 years ago with my eyes practically out of my head. . . . I had to decide if I wanted to die a junkie or get my life together'" ("Louis Delgado, 55, Playwright Who Overcame His Addiction," Obituary, NY Times 13 Dec 1998: 45). . . . David Lenson's On Drugs is now in paperback (U of Minnesota P). . . . "Le Monde says France, with two million drunks, has the most in Europe" (National Review 19 Apr: 6). . . . "Drinking was more than

an accepted vice when [Susan] Cheever was growing up in the 1950's, it was a virtue. . . . 'I loved the paraphernalia of drinking, the slippery ice trays that I was allowed to refill and the pungent olives, which were my first childhood treat, and I loved the way the adults got loose and happy and forgot that I was a child" (from Sarah Payne Stuart's review of Susan Cheever, Note Found in a Bottle: My Life as a Drinker [Simon and Schuster], NY Times Book Review 10 Jan: 11). . . . St. Martin's Press has published Martin Booth's Opium: A History (1998). . . . Irrational Fears (White Wolf 1998), a novel by William Browning Spencer, "takes an unorthodox, acerbic look at Alcoholics Anonymous and the entire 12-step movement" (blurb). . . . "Addicts used to be way cool. Now, millions of dead brain cells later, a new, negative image of addicts and addiction is emerging from pop culture itself" (Naomi Wolf, "12 Small Steps for America," George Oct 1998: 52). . . . "'The two signal characteristics associated with drinking places through the ages are fellowship and immorality. The bar as club has much in common with the church. [Both were] places of ritual attendance'" (James Hathaway, "The Evolution of Drinking Places in the Twin Cities," Diss., U of Minnesota, quoted in Chuck Haga, "Doctor of Saloons," Minneapolis Star Tribune 14 Jan: E3). . . . James Graham's "central assertion," in Vessels of Rage, Engines of Power: The Secret History of Alcoholism (Aculeus P 1994), "is that alcoholism causes egomania, displayed in such behaviors as denial, lying, overachievement, ethical deterioration, false accusations, rejection of friends, grandiosity, aggressive sexual behavior, multiple marriages, unreasonable resentments, and superficial emotions" (Booklist 15 May 1994 [Amazon. com]). The paperback title is The Secret History of Alcoholism: The Story of Famous Alcoholics and Their Destructive Behavior (Element 1996). . . . "Perhaps a course in chemical dependency might be a useful prerequisite for students who register for classes on writers such as Faulkner, Hemingway or Fitzgerald" (Frank Morral, "The Influence of Alcohol on Literature," The Carleton Voice Winter 1999: 55). . . . Grove Press has published Charles Bukowski: Locked in the Arms of a Crazy Life by Howard Sounes. . . . Michael Massing discusses the continuing methadone controversy in "Winning the Drug War Isn't So Hard After All" (NY Times Magazine 6 Sept 1998: 48-50). . . . "Drugs to get off drugs? Just imagine--a generation of Americans trading martinis for meds, swapping dependencies like baseball cards, bantering at cocktail parties in the new millennium: 'Alcohol? How 20th Century! Forget the Campari--bring me a Campral!'" (Caroline Knapp, "The Glass Half Empty," NY Times Magazine 9 May: 19). . . . "The researchers put flies inside a 4-foot glass dome--called an inebriometer--and pumped in alcohol vapor. The dome is crisscrossed with mesh landings. Usually, the flies like to stay near the top. But as they got drunk, they fell from level to level. Ordinary fruit flies take 20 minutes to hit

bottom. But the cheapdate mutants tumbled down in 15 minutes" ("Fruit Flies with Genetic Flaw Carry Clues to Mystery of Alcoholism," Minneapolis Star Tribune 12 June 1998: A10). . . . The Drug Enforcement Administration has opened The Museum on Drugs in Arlington, VA (202/307-3463). . . . Lee Stringer's Grand Central Winter (Seven Stories Press 1998) is a memoir of homelessness and addiction. . . . "The Sixties . . . mean protest, the 'youth culture,' and a new permissiveness together with a new affluence: Dionysus with a bank balance and a cause" (Roger Kimball, "What the Sixties Wrought." The New Criterion March: 14). . . . "Robert J. Lurtsema's 'Ode to A.A.,' . . . [relates] how the drunkard's foot still reaches for the railing on a bar even while he's on the wagon: 'My heart is all resigned and calm / So, likewise, is my soul, / But my habituated foot / Is quite beyond control'" (Jonathan V. Last, "Renaissance Man," The Weekly Standard 5/12 April: 39).

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