NOVEL UNDER THE INFLUENCE:
MODERNISM AND INTOXICATION
IN BAUDELAIRE, JAMES, PROUST, AND RHYS

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This dissertation examines intoxication as a recurring thematic and conceptual touchstone in the work of several late nineteenth and early twentieth century writers from France, America, and the Caribbean. It addresses these writers’ contributions to broad contemporary debates about the nature and function of aesthetics through a particular analysis of their varied reformulations of Classical and Romantic tropes in which intoxication and artistic creation or inspiration are closely associated. Descriptions of intoxication come to put pressure on any strictly conceived binary opposition of the external and the internal, and thus provide space for a reevaluation of the kind of aesthetic autonomy formulated by some Romantics as an artist’s reliance on nothing outside him- or herself in creating work. Elsewhere, these writers compare the specifically perceptual effects of intoxicating substances to poetic ways of seeing, or to the alterations of perception instigated by encounters with art, under a theory of defamiliarization widespread among modernists in Western literature. The project begins with Baudelaire’s treatment of wine, opium, and hashish throughout his work: whereas many of Baudelaire’s contemporaries conceived of intoxication and literary writing as sharing a fundamentally solipsistic hallucinatory quality, Baudelaire insists on drunkenness as an essentially poetic perceptual means of representing a shared external urban modernity. The second chapter examines intoxication in two of Henry James’s novels as well as his literary criticism, revealing a through-line of thought in which intoxication comes
to represent a kind of simplistic psychology and clichéd plotline at odds with James’s commitment to rigorous examination of the most complex aspects of his characters’ subjectivity and motivations. The next chapter tracks the term “ivresse” in Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu*, focusing especially on the stylistic shifts in the novel’s prose that accompany instances where the narrator himself becomes drunk, and suggesting the ways in which these episodes contribute to and contrast with the well-known explicit theories of art in the novel’s final volume. Finally, the fourth chapter is a reading of addiction and psychosis in Jean Rhys’s *Good Morning, Midnight*, in which psychosis and alcoholism are treated not as diagnoses of Rhys or of her heroine but as a structuring characteristic of the novel’s language and plot.
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Introduction

Distillation

"Miming the act of appearing instead of miming the appearance of characters to whom something happens, or who feel something, is the intoxication of art. The intoxication comes from suppressing the gap between will and its execution, the artist and the work, the work and its space."¹ Such is Jacques Rancière’s description, in his 2013 Aisthesis, of the aesthetics at work behind Stéphane Mallarmé’s review "Considérations sur l'art du ballet et la Loïe Fuller," which appeared in the National Observer in 1893. For Rancière, Mallarmé is not exemplifying one particular aesthetic idea or theory among many: rather Rancière situates Mallarmé in the progressive development of aesthetics as a field in the first place, as a branch of philosophy originating contemporaneously with and within Romanticism that considers a certain set of productive cultural practices to be distinct and self-contained. In that development Mallarmé idealizes dance as an artistic practice in which "the artist and the work" fuse, and in which a pure symbolism without referent manifests itself, an idealization that Rancière follows Mallarmé in qualifying as an intoxication.

It follows from Rancière’s thesis that we can only retroactively describe practices before the Romantics as "artistic," and that the practitioners themselves before the 19th century would have conceived of their work in a way fundamentally different from ours. But in establishing the autonomy of the

aesthetic, the Romantics did look to pre-modern creative works in order to justify their own productions in terms of a history and lineage. They were particularly drawn to one ancient idea, ubiquitous in their own work and in that of the later 19th century, reappearing here in Rancière’s critique as a precision of one of Mallarmé’s concepts: that art and intoxication have something to do with one another, and that the artist’s creative procedure is akin to an ecstatic intoxication which accounts for certain features of his work. For the Greeks, this intoxication fell squarely within a set of ritual practices accompanying an essentially religious ceremony. The poet’s intoxication registered his possession by a god, and the god, rather than the poet himself, was understood to be the origin of the poetry recited in a trance.

Almost as soon as poets in the late 18th and early 19th centuries appropriate this myth from the Greeks, it comes under scrutiny and is subject to revision. Even as it initially appears in line with Romantic notions of inspiration and genius, it cannot stand unmodified under the regime of industrial modernity and the development of psychiatric medicine over the 1800s. The vocabulary and certain structural elements of the myth of the "intoxication of art" persist, but they also take on new and strange significances well into the 20th century. It is the purpose of this dissertation to trace different versions of this myth as they appear in French and American fiction of this period. It is not merely the case that representations of intoxication in these works come to bear allegorical or symbolical significances with respect to aesthetics, as if descriptions of intoxication straightforwardly follow developments in aesthetic philosophy or thinking: indeed, the relationship is mutual, with descriptions of intoxication furnishing structures or conceptual apparatuses that are then incorporated into
artists’ understanding of their own work. Rather, in both fiction and criticism, intoxication takes on the quality of a site of experimentation, a question that these writers adapt to their own eclectic understandings of their work.

Before turning to the writers whom I have selected for analysis in this project, it will be helpful to give a brief survey of novelists from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe and America in whose work drinking or drug use feature prominently. In providing a taxonomy that is neither exhaustive nor rigorously categorized, I wish at once to indicate the prevalence of drinking as a cultural touchstone with many connotations during this period, and to suggest that the authors on whom I will focus in later chapters treat the topic in a way particularly suited to analysis as a proxy for debates concerning aesthetics and the place of literature.

Certainly the rapid changes surrounding the legal status of alcohol in early 20th-century America and Europe are reflected in the treatment of drinking in the so-called transatlantic modernists. Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* provides a paradigmatic example, in which American characters are abroad in Europe at least partially to avoid the consequences of Prohibition. Drinking is important to the novel’s context and to its plot, but is rarely addressed directly, in the sense that no character asks why drinking results in certain behaviors or perceptual changes. Similarly, Fitzgerald’s *Tender is the Night* takes its epigraph from Keats’ “Ode to a Nightingale,” a poem that will appear in my first chapter as emblematic of a certain Romantic wariness regarding literal or material intoxication, and Fitzgerald’s novel tracks the frankly shocking intake of alcohol among a group of expatriates; but the novel does not position intoxication with
respect to artistic creation or inspiration in any explicit way. Chronic intoxication appears in novels by European writers too, of course: one thinks, for example, of Evelyn Waugh’s 1934 *A Handful of Dust*, in which characters drink heavily, or Gide’s *Les faux-monnayeurs*, in which drunkenness serves the plot by disinhibiting certain characters and allowing romantic intrigues to move forward. It does not follow from the mere prevalence of drinking in these works, however, that they address drinking with any specificity, or ontologically. Rather, the consumption of alcohol tracks social class, or aligns thematically with an emphasis on dissipation or aimlessness in the groups of people who are described as drinking in certain coded ways.

Certain writers of the period treat intoxication from a more straightforwardly moralizing perspective, either as an evil in itself in the form of an addiction or as symbolic of a deeper or hidden moral failing, at the level of individual characters. This pattern is at its most explicit in, for example, Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, in which a man drunkenly auctions off his wife and daughter, or Zola’s *L’assommoir*, tracking the decline and death of two working-class Parisian alcoholics. We could name countless examples of novels in which a given character’s weaknesses with respect to consumer consumption are described in terms of intoxication: indeed tracing this analogy in Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* makes up a large portion of the literary analysis in Avital Ronnel’s *Crack Wars: Literature, Addiction, Mania*. In such instances intoxication points to an overpowering compulsion and again serves the novel’s plot by helping to explain decisions that otherwise appear irrational or unmotivated.

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Descriptions of the perceptual disturbances accompanying intoxication, or its pertinence to aesthetic questions, are irrelevant to such purposes and are thus lacking from these texts.

Other novels within the canons of literary modernist fiction include intoxication from a less melodramatic standpoint, and indeed in the register of comedy. Drunkenness may make a drinker more likely to laugh, and a drunk man’s childishness or lack of coordination are often funny to others. We could include in this group Jules Romains’ *Les copains*, about a group of young men who drunkenly instigate sexual and religious rebellions in several small French towns, or Jacques Moran’s strange ruminations on the efficacy of the Eucharist if one is drunk in Beckett’s *Molloy*. An examination of this dynamic could extend to Aristophanes and easily constitute an entire dissertation in itself, and so unfortunately I will not address it in much detail here. That said, Proust’s treatment of drunkenness is often funny in ways that are significant to my analysis in the third chapter.

Finally, it is important to discuss the gendered valences of intoxication among the modernists, which overlap with the categories outlined above. Certainly a whole group of novels seem to associate intoxication with a specifically masculine vital aesthetic energy. *Ulysses* stands out, in particular the final raving scenes between Bloom and Dedalus, in which the forging of a father-son bond with all the gravitas of literary history is inextricable from the pair’s drunkenness. We could also consider Malcolm Lowry’s *Under the Volcano*, Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer*, or, in a very different register, Mann’s *Death in Venice*, where Dionysian imagery and themes accompany a kind of masculine sexual awakening and dissipation. Among women writers, on the other hand,
intoxication often remains grounded in the kind of moral paradigm described above, with additional stigma and shame. Wharton’s Lily Bart in *The House of Mirth* succumbs to an opioid addiction that symbolically reinforces her decline from high society; Cather in *A Lost Lady* similarly treats addiction as symbolic of the eponymous character’s deeper sexual frustration and passivity. Intoxication appears rarely in Woolf, in when it does it is often associated with men: consider a relatively minor figure, Augustus Carmichael in *To the Lighthouse*, of whom we read, “He said nothing. He took opium.” Among women, then, Jean Rhys, the subject of my fourth chapter, represents an outlier. I will discuss the complexities of Rhys’s treatment of alcohol there, but for now it is enough to indicate her singularity in writing about women who choose to drink on their own terms, and who resist more stereotypical or allegorical narratives about women’s drinking.

As I hope that brief survey has begun to make clear, the literary works in this project are distinguished because in addition to merely describing and referring to intoxication, they concern themselves directly – whether from the narrator’s point of view or in discussions among other characters – with the nature of intoxication itself, and they suggest that theoretical and phenomenological accounts of intoxication bear on literary aesthetics. A preliminary overview will help to ground those readings.

The verb “to intoxicate” is attested in English from the 16th century, when it was adopted from Medieval Latin and French terms referring to the administration of poison. The Oxford English Dictionary distinguishes between

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that obscure usage and a still-current meaning closer to "to stupefy" or simply "to inebriate." Here the word is used to indicate incapacitation or lethargy caused by a substance rather than the fatal weaponization of a chemical. Even as early as 1605, though, "intoxicate" takes on a very different meaning: it can refer to a kind of rapturous ecstasy, an increase rather than a decrease in energy. The Oxford English Dictionary lists this usage separately too, and as a figurative one: "to stupefy or excite as with a drug or alcoholic liquor" (my emphasis).\(^4\) In these double valences (depressant/excitant, literal/figurative) the English "intoxication" parallels the French "ivresse," attested by the *Trésor de la Langue Française* in similar usages from the 12th century.\(^5\) These definitions may seem intuitively correct, but they require examination. From the word's very beginnings, we can distinguish a class of substances understood to literally cause intoxication only by reference to everyday states analogous to intoxication, referred to by the same word but caused by something other than a drug. In other words, the state of intoxication is in some sense remarkable precisely because it is frequently observed even in people we could accurately describe as sober. Hence these definitions do little to clarify what causes intoxication; furthermore they indicate a whole spectrum of intoxication's possible effects. Intoxication can manifest as a quantitative loss or gain in some unspecified psychic energy, or as any one of a number of shifts in personality, elation or stupefaction.


Perhaps it would be better momentarily to conceive of intoxication not as corresponding to any particular substance or any particular unusual state of being, but rather at its most abstract, as connoting the very capacity for sudden transformation, for not seeming like oneself in whatever way. In thus describing a passionate transport, the term intoxication, rather than simply madness or mania, emphasizes the element of externality and novelty. Even in its "figurative" uses, when we say, for example, that a man is drunk on jealousy, we mean that the jealousy does not seem proportional to a rational cause, that some element of it comes as if from outside the man himself to possess him or disproportionately occupy his thoughts and behavior. Intoxication, that is, is caught up in and puts pressure on a logic of internality and externality, and so any discussion of intoxication and classification of certain things as intoxicants entails recognizing what we consider foreign to us but capable of altering us, whether for a short time or permanently. Again, in antiquity, while intoxicated ecstasy was mediated by wine or the drugs of mystery religions, the force behind an intoxicated possession was understood to be divine: the god, rather than merely the wine itself, comes from outside to inhabit a person and change them. For the Romantics, on the other hand, the kind of externality involved in intoxication is different. Insofar as Romantic interest in intoxication is spurred by the sudden availability of new hallucinogens from abroad, Romantic accounts of intoxication often involve straightforwardly orientalizing fantasies, as if various drugs directly prompt different visions according to their cultural origins. Speaking broadly, that is, Romantic maintains a logic of spiritual or immaterial inspiration even as its writers locate the alterity encountered in intoxication in some
miraculous property of intoxicating substances themselves as proxies for an exoticized foreignness.

In my reading, the modernists modify Romanticism's accounts of intoxication in various ways not merely on principled aesthetic grounds but also due to the emerging medical and scientific conception of intoxication in the 19th century as inextricably linked to addiction, a conception reflected in De Quincey as well as in realist and naturalist addiction narratives. As far back as Galen's medical treatises we find references to overindulgence in food and wine, but in the 19th century the term "alcoholism" is coined and quickly comes to encompass a new way of thinking about drinking and drugs. The addict is on the one hand a perfect product of his society, dedicated to endless repetitive consumption. But on the other this consumption goes against the pressures of market efficiency because it renders him idle and less willing to work productively. Most importantly, the term addiction only attaches itself to certain substances: whereas today we have returned to a more or less Galenic outlook and may speak of addictions to anything pleasurable (e.g. refined sugar or pornography), throughout the initial development of a disease model of addiction, addiction is only possible with reference to substances understood to have a specifically psychotropic effect in addition to whatever more simple nutritional or painkilling pleasures they offer. What is dangerous about addiction is that on the one hand it overpowers the will at the level of perception itself, while on the other it instills a single-minded fascination with a drug.

The modernists revise the notion of the intoxicating substance's externality in the face of this isolation of its psychotropic quality, recognizing that even a foreign, external substance must correspond to something internal to
the psyche if it is to have any effect. The notion that intoxicants alter perception rather than simply dull sensation lends itself perfectly to an increased interest in the idea that art itself, rather than merely re-presenting content to the senses, enacts a formal alteration in the making of sense. It is for this reason that these writers generally do away with the distinction between literal and figurative intoxications so inherent to a Romantic model and still at work in the OED and TLF today. The "intoxication of art" is of concern not because of any question as to whether artists and writers are literally or figuratively intoxicated, but because it calls for a determination of what is internal and what is external. Whenever we encounter references to intoxication, we are necessarily in the presence of certain ideas of what autonomy might mean and whether it is possible at all in the sphere of the aesthetic.

For the writers I will be considering in this project, this simultaneous commitment to and interrogation of the autonomy of the aesthetic leads to other shared formal features and thematic concerns. First, the tendency to character typologies and categorization that had been prominent in realist fiction becomes turned back on authors themselves, and the autonomy of art manifests itself in representations of the artist him- or herself as a particular and unique "type." My first chapter tells the story of Baudelaire's encounter with and contribution to this typology of the artist. On the one hand, Baudelaire inherits from his Romantic contemporaries the idea that intoxication and artistic inspiration are linked. On the other he so alters the definition of intoxication at issue as to represent a major break with the Romantics. In Baudelaire's work I find a rejection of the aesthetics of hallucination present in the work of De Quincey, Gautier, and even Balzac. He
organizes his treatise *Les paradis artificiels* as a rejection of hashish- and opium-induced euphorias and a championing of wine-induced drunkenness: nominally this preference derives from the different pharmacological effects of these substances, but in fact Baudelaire is presenting a thesis with respect to the place of the artist in society. For Baudelaire, the artist is not one who turns inward to experience fantastical visions, but one who adjusts his own perceptive capacities in order to better observe, describe, and inhabit a genuinely new urban modernity. Poetry does not proceed directly from the occasional use of intoxicating substances as if they were technological apparatuses, but rather from a whole integrated way of life characteristic of the artist. To return to Rancière, "The intoxication comes from suppressing the gap between [...] the artist and the work." In championing wine as the symbol of such a perceptual adaptation to modernity, Baudelaire is at once breaking with his immediate precursors and maintaining or appropriating an artistic lineage that stretches back to the Dionysiac.

Henry James too writes with a particular interest in defining the artist as a kind of person, and thereby the artist's work as a unique and coherent field of activity. But whereas Baudelaire's commitment to drunkenness as an aesthetic paradigm is explicit, James only rarely and obliquely discusses the aesthetics of intoxication. In part we can account for this reticence as an attempt to avoid triteness and rid his work of clichés inherited from Romanticism. His account of his own writerly process makes use of "distillation" as a key metaphor for the relation of his art to reality, and he compares Romanticism itself to a kind of drug dependence on which would detract from his work's value. Nevertheless, my chapter uncovers a career-long ambivalence with respect to intoxication in
James's work. That ambivalence is clear as early as James's first novel *Roderick Hudson*, which features a highly significant conversation among several characters as to the suitability of drunkenness for artistic representation, and which I argue was originally conceived as a story about an artist's decline due to addiction before being diverted mid-serialization. James's most masterful approach to the problem comes in *The Ambassadors*, which is often analyzed in terms of its dramatization of the differences in European and American psychosexual morality, but rarely in terms of its hero Strether's relation to the drinking and smoking habits he encounters abroad. Strether claims not to drink, though he does, and in fact I analyze Strether's failed attempt to develop an addiction to cigarettes as a distant parody of the Romantics' infatuation with opium. James's stylistic interest in originality and novelty manifests in his negations, a casting away of what has come before: my reading reveals that intoxication underlies his formula for aesthetic activity, "doing nothing," especially in the later novels and critical prefaces.

James's concern with originality is framed in this negative way because it remains within the perspective of the artist himself. In Proust, by contrast, we find one fully developed version of a positive theory of artistic originality from the point of view of the reader or viewer of artistic products: defamiliarization, elsewhere formulated as *ostranenie*, the principle that art alters the perception of reality and renders strange or new what had been taken as already known. Proust and the Russian Formalists alike position art as autonomous by suggesting that art carries out a unique function for its viewers and readers. I read instances of drunkenness in Proust's novel as moments for experimentation where defamiliarization is concerned, particularly two scenes from the novel's
second volume in which the narrator drinks and explicitly discusses the nature of intoxication. On the one hand, drunkenness is likened to an ideal, pure defamiliarization, in which a purely formal intervention renders any object of perception newly beautiful and fascinating. On the other, drinking prompts a series of meditations on the nature of time and eternity, and even causes the narrator seriously to consider suicide. Scenes of drinking in Proust offer a heretofore-unappreciated point of intersection between the narrator’s aesthetic ideals and his embodied mortality, in one of literary modernism’s most coherently articulated accounts of itself.

The subject of my last chapter, Jean Rhys, was averse throughout her career to the explicit theorizing we find in Proust’s last volume. Nevertheless her Good Morning, Midnight indirectly offers a stark, belated confrontation with literary modernism in its depiction of one woman’s heavy drinking. I suggest that rather than offer an armchair diagnosis of Rhys or her protagonist Sasha, we read Good Morning, Midnight as formally structured at the level of its language and its plot according to patterns of intoxication and sobriety. In that reading I am indebted to the work of Rhys’s contemporary, British psychoanalyst Edward Glover, who early in his career published several groundbreaking articles interpreting drug addiction from a psychoanalytic perspective as a successful adaptation to and mediation of paranoid psychosis. By reading psychosis and drunkenness at the level of language, I reveal in Rhys’s novel a sharp commentary on the nature and limitations of first-person narration, as well as a cynical take on the possibilities of individual creative originality as valued by her contemporaries. Finally I find in both Rhys and Glover’s later work a
simultaneous admiration for and rejection of the notion of a pure aesthetic sublimation.
Bibliography


Chapter 1

Ivresse and the Modern Artist

Frederic Jameson has helpfully glossed the 19th century in Western aesthetics as a transition away from the "reproduction, for subjectivity, of an objectivity that lies outside it," to a new way of creating art intended to undermine the stability and independence from one another of both subjectivity and objectivity. Much critical attention has been paid to the way literary modernism across Europe and the Anglophone sphere manifests itself even early on as an increased attention to the materiality of artistic media, particularly language itself, in response to such a transition: formal self-referentiality and esotericism or difficulty function to indicate precisely the opacities inherent to artistic media. In this chapter I am interested in exploring a related phenomenon by asking how some modernist writers describe the process of inspiration, the origin or impetus of the work of art, in material terms. To what extent does the figuration of the artist as a type whose life is in some sense an artwork manifest itself in artists' own accounts of their origins and goals; what modifications of artists' bodies induce artistry as a way of life?

Among many touchstones of accounts of literary creation, the ancient proposition that the artist experiences a kind of intoxication at the moment of

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poetic speech or perception undergoes a particularly telling transition among modernist writers. The intoxicant is a substance incorporated not for its nutritional value but for the effects it is believed to exert on subjectivity, perception, and sensations of pleasure. It is clear that what nineteenth century authors present as accounts of subjective, first-person experiences induced by various intoxicants are inflected not merely by biochemistry or pharmacology but by investments in and intended modifications of older inherited aesthetic models; at stake in the descriptions of hallucinations or fugue states of interest here is not scientific accuracy but the construction of a theory of literature as a mode of being in the context of urban industrial modernity. Without resorting to easy periodization, this chapter will contextualize the work of Charles Baudelaire as one of the earliest and most influential thinkers of a distinctly modern aesthetics by first examining the work of several of his immediate precursors and contemporaries in Europe and the United States, before arguing for a distinction between their and Baudelaire's understandings of intoxication closely tied to the reflections on temporality and urbanity that position Baudelaire in a unique literary confrontation with what he called "modernité."

In my reading, Honoré de Balzac and Thomas de Quincey will exemplify a comparatively straightforward aesthetic theory in which the artist is understood to use intoxicants as if they were advanced technological apparatuses, available at will to produce material for poetic exposition. John Keats, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Friedrich Nietzsche, on the other hand, present a more metaphysical alternative, in which the artist's state of ecstasy in creation is analogous to but rigorously distinguished from intoxication procured by recourse to material substances. I will locate this Romantic model at work also
in the French tradition in Théophile Gautier's short stories and a psychiatric
treatise by Jacques-Joseph Moreau, likely the most direct sources for Baudelaire's
own particular works. Finally I will argue that in his later career Baudelaire
mediates these positions by at once reaffirming the necessity of artists’
engagement with the material conditions that make their work possible and
maintaining the centrality of artists’ independence and subjectivity to their work.
I read the course of Baudelaire's writings on intoxication not as progressing
towards a clear and final schematic position, but as a working-through of his
long preoccupation with a properly artistic perspective on time and history. In
Baudelaire's taxonomy of intoxicants, hashish intoxication represents a Romantic
nostalgia which fails to fully account for the historicity of the past and risks
falling into solipsism. His theories of wine intoxication, however, extend and
deepen his other late writings on the nature of modernity in their attention to the
artist's productivity and the particularities of the observational stance
necessitated by the landscape he inhabits and challenges.

Balzac, De Quincey

Honoré de Balzac had already registered the beginnings of a paradigmatic
shift with respect to intoxication in his long essay *Traité des Excitants Modernes,*
published in 1839, which begins by situating "sociétés modernes" in terms of an
unstoppable expansion in the popularity of various intoxicants:

L’absorption de cinq substances, découvertes depuis environ deux
siècles et introduites dans l’économie humaine, a pris depuis
quelques années des développements si excessifs, que les sociétés
modernes peuvent s'en trouver modifiées d'une manière inappréciable.\(^7\)

Here, in a proto-Nietzschian "history of narcotics," Balzac gestures towards society at large rather than merely the aesthetic sphere, and furthermore the five substances at issue – alcohol, sugar, tea, coffee, and tobacco – notably fail to include opium and hashish, the emblematically literary drugs of his time.\(^8\) In his chapter on coffee, however, he describes the effect of caffeine on his writing in a way of particular interest to any history of aesthetics:

*Tout s'agite : les idées s'ébranlent comme les bataillons de la grande armée sur le terrain d'une bataille, et la bataille a lieu. Les souvenirs arrivent au pas de charge, enseignes déployées ; la cavalerie légère des comparaisons se développe par un magnifique galop ; l'artillerie de la logique accourt avec son train et ses gargousses ; les traits d'esprit arrivent en tirailleurs ; les figures se dressent ; le papier se couvre d'encre.*\(^9\)

This figuration of the impetus to write as a battleground in which various "souvenirs," "comparaisons," "logique" and "traits d'esprit" compete with one another is particularly striking.

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\(^7\) The piece was originally published alongside Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du Goût*.


\(^9\) Balzac *Traité*. 
another leaves little room for the action of Balzac himself, as underlined in the reflexive formulation with which this passage concludes: Balzac does not write, but rather the paper covers itself with ink. He does not think, but rather the maneuvers of thought are already materialized as various components of a military force and behave on their own. What is remarkable here is that such an extended comparison should include "comparaison" as one of its own terms. That is, this extended metaphor refers to and includes the mechanism of its own creation, again eclipsing the element of Balzac's personal involvement. It is as if this battle scene represents a hallucination induced by caffeine rather than or in addition to simply a figurative description of caffeine's effects.

Balzac's ideal writing scenario, in which he is lost to himself and as if possessed while producing work, aligns well with his stylistic tendency to the third person and the ambitions of a certain Realism avant la lettre.  

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10 This being "lost to oneself" or depersonalization as a means of perception is also described in terms of "ivresse" near the beginning of the 1844 first-person short story "Facino Cane": "Quitter ses habitudes, devenir un autre que soi par l'ivresse des facultés morales, et jouer ce jeu à volonté, telle était ma distraction. À quoi dois-je ce don? Est-ce une seconde vue? est-ce une de ces qualités dont l'abus mènerait à la folie? Je n'ai jamais recherché les causes de cette puissance; je la possède et m'en sers, voilà tout. Sachez seulement que, dès ce temps, j'avais décomposé les éléments de cette masse hétérogène nommée le peuple, que je l'avais analysée de manière à pouvoir évaluer ses qualités bonnes ou mauvaises." Balzac, Honoré de. "Facino Cane," in Oeuvres complètes de H. de Balzac vol. X, ed. A. Houssiaux. Wikisource. 27 June 2015. But compare also the short story "Gambara," the title character of which is a musician who can only play well while drunk. If Balzac's model for his own work is that it derives from a kind of
parodic standpoint, it also shows similarities to a hallucinatory model of inspiration well-known at the notorious "Club des Haschischins," convened by Dr. Jacques-Joseph Moreau de Tours, which Balzac attended and whose other members I will discuss later. But the model is hardly unique to France: in *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, De Quincey had conceived of opium as a newer (or recently rediscovered) and particularly efficient means to the poetic end of experiencing fantastic visions:

> We hear it reported of Dryden and of Fuseli, in modern times, that they thought proper to eat raw meat for the sake of obtaining splendid dreams: how much better for such a purpose to have eaten opium, which yet I do not remember that any poet is recorded to have done, except the dramatist Shadwell; and in ancient days Homer is I think rightly reputed to have known the virtues of opium.\(^{11}\)

Here the particular efficiency of opium serves to establish De Quincey’s work as eminently modern in that it is doubly original: besides perhaps Shadwell and

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Homer, he is at once one of the first poets to take opium and one of the first to be "recorded to have done" so.\footnote{See Markus Iseli's \textit{Thomas De Quincey and the Cognitive Unconscious}, especially chapter 6 "The Brain-Mind in the Confessions, Literary Criticism, and Suspiria" for an account of De Quincey's own sources in the German tradition and in contemporary medical research. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Print.}

I wish to avoid oversimplifying the vastly complex aesthetic views and practices of Balzac and De Quincey, both of whom are quick to counsel their readers against overconsumption of their preferred drugs, but at least in these passages they share the depiction of a relationship between the artist and intoxication that we could qualify as a technological one. In Martin Heidegger's essay on modernity and technology, he argues that "The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging, which puts to nature the unreasonable demand \textit{[das Ansinnen]} that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such."\footnote{Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology," tr. William Lovitt. In \textit{Basic Writings}, ed. David Farrell Krell. New York: Harper & Row, 1977. Print. 287-317. 296.} Similarly, in these accounts, the intoxicant has been distilled from nature and is freely available at will to provide artistic content to the artist, who then reports the "splendid dreams" he has "obtain[ed]." The intoxicant stores a kind of psychical energy which manifests as a surplus of sight (in De Quincey) or language (in Balzac) on command.

Though De Quincey mentions Homer, both he and Balzac qualify this technological attitude of the artist toward the intoxicant as peculiar to the
"modern." We could contrast them against Plato's *Ion*, for example, in which wine does not cause poetry. Rather, it is only one of a series of sacred elements at issue in the function both of Homeric rhapsodes and the Dionysiac rituals to which poetic creation is likened: the onset of divine madness is involved with the administration of entheogens as only one part of a complex, divinely dictated procedure. In Andrew Ford’s reading of the *Ion* and the development of the words "poietes" (poet, "maker") and "poiema" (poem, "made thing") over the course of the fifth century BC, he writes:

> It has been suggested that 'poetry' arose when the enthusiastic concept of inspiration was waning in response to increased emphasis on the individual’s technical contributions. But Penelope Murray has noted that the concept of the frenzied, ecstatic artist is in fact not archaic but is attested only in the fifth century, and the strong opposition of inspiration and technique seems to be a Platonic idea.

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14 Compare also Werner Heisenberg’s observations on the distinction between ancient "handiwork" and modern technology with respect to pharmacology: "Chemical technology might still have been considered as the continuation of old branches of handicrafts; we have but to think of dyeing, tanning and pharmacology. But the scope of chemical technology, as it has evolved since the turn of the century, no longer permits any comparisons with earlier conditions." *The Physicist’s Conception of Nature*, tr. Arnold J. Pomerans. London: Hutchinson & Co, 1958. Print. 18. Balzac too presents the distinction between the ancient and modern in terms of its "scope."

In these terms, De Quincey and Balzac's position is resolutely post-Platonic: for them, inspiration has come to fall under the rubric of technology and ideally advances without human intervention, as the automatic production of linguistic or visual material. At the close of his essay on technology, Heidegger writes, "Once there was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful was called techne. The poiesis of the fine arts was also called techne." Heidegger evokes this archaic past, one perhaps before Plato's "strong opposition of inspiration and technique," as a key to the "decisive confrontation" with the progress of technology for which he calls in the present. For Heidegger, the anti-Platonism of the future of aesthetics would not take the form of a subsuming of inspiration under the technological, as in Balzac and De Quincey, but rather an adjustment of the essence of the technological when it encounters something "fundamentally different from it." This need for such an encounter manifests itself in these texts as the contradiction involved in describing poetic visions as if they emerge independently of any particular subjectivity while insisting on the element of subjective willfulness and instrumentality in the use of intoxicants to provoke such visions. The very loss of self necessary for poetic production is

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16 Heidegger 315.
17 317.
premised on a self-possessed decision to summon and compartmentalize poetic ecstasy at particular times.

Keats, Emerson, Nietzsche

Only two years before London Magazine published De Quincey’s account of his own hallucinations and his contemporaries’ widespread indulgence in the drug, John Keats had already offered an alternative interpretation of the poet’s relationship to intoxication. At the outset to the "Ode to a Nightingale," Keats' lyric speaker feels "as though of Hemlock [he] had drunk, or emptied some dull opiate to the drains," before longing for "a draught of vintage." In the end he does not in fact drink:

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of poesy.\(^{18}\)

The poet is already as if in a state of intoxication before his speech begins, and furthermore would prolong or intensify the state further by means of wine, but as the poem progresses poetry itself emerges as an intoxicating substance, one that both causes and constitutes the poem’s four last stanzas. Keats is intimating a poetic intoxication that does not depend on the incorporation of a material substance, or on the invocation of the divinity associated with it, but on an embodied mood or perceptual disturbance already experienced by the poet at the level of his interiority. Here intoxication is constant and perceptual rather than immediately connected to the procedure itself of writing.

When Emerson echoes Keats in his 1844 "The Poet," we find one kind of intoxication to be explicitly preferred to the other. There intoxication dependent on a drug is referred to as "animal exhilaration" or "intoxication," "quasi-mechanical substitutes for the true nectar" of "the intellect released from all service" necessary to poetry. Emerson goes on to consider such drugs’ popularity among artists: "bards love wine, mead, narcotics, coffee, tea, opium, the fumes of sandalwood and tobacco." Emerson pairs these observations with a cautionary tale, however:

A great number of such as were professionally expressers of Beauty, as painters, poets, musicians and actors, have been more than others wont to lead a life of pleasure and indulgence; all but the few who received the true nectar; and, as it was a spurious mode of attaining freedom, as it was an emancipation not into the heavens but into the freedom of baser places, they were punished for that advantage they won, by a dissipation and deterioration. But never can any advantage be taken of nature by a trick. The spirit of the world, the great calm presence of the Creator, comes not forth to the sorceries of opium or wine. The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple soul in a clean and chaste body. That is not an inspiration, which we owe to narcotics, but some counterfeit excitement and fury.\(^\text{19}\)

Here Emerson plainly situates the material intoxicant as used by the Romantics outside "nature": it is explicitly a "trick" on "nature," it is "sorcer[y]," "counterfeit," "spurious," a "quasi-mechanical substitute" the usage of which has been and will be "punished." The true poet, he writes later, should be "tipsy with water," having access to a self-generated state precisely analogous to literal or material intoxication but "clean and chaste," natural insofar as it relies on nothing external to the poet's own soul. Emerson demonstrates on a reduced scale the reasoning of the American Temperance movement that would result in the prohibition of alcohol in the early 20th century. Furthermore, besides the ostensibly religious justification for Temperance, Emerson's prognosis of "deterioration and dissipation" marks the development of a medical disease model of drug addiction in Europe. Like the Romantic, the addict relies on a notion that the

20 Indeed the year before the publication of his Essays: Second Series, in which "The Poet" appears, he had addressed the Massachusetts Temperance Society in ways which do not ultimately vouch for abstention from alcohol but nevertheless valorize a certain poet's simplicity of taste: "I notice too that it is always handsome and picturesque to see a man in the house or in the street eat fruit or bread or drink water, but to see him consume other victuals is less grateful to the eye. I notice the agreeable circumstance in the life of the poet Shelley that he was fond of all kinds of bread." Emerson, Ralph Waldo. The Later Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson vol. I. Athens, GA: UGA Press, 2001. 75.

same drug administered to the same person will produce the same effect, as if
the cumulative repetitions of past consumption did not themselves alter future
drug experiences. One cannot simply choose to be a poet based on access to
certain substances, for Emerson. Recourse to "animal intoxication" is detrimental
both to the "professional" artist's health and to the aesthetic quality of what he
creates.

Emerson and Keats exemplify a critical observation of Lukács's in The
*Theory of the Novel*:

In Romanticism, the literary nature of the *a priori* status of the soul
vis-à-vis reality becomes conscious: the self, cut off from
transcendence, recognises itself as the source of the ideal reality,

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psychiatric models of "monomania" into addiction in Europe. Finally, Avital Ronell’s
*Crack Wars: Literature, Addiction, Mania* (Lincoln, U Nebraska P 1992) considers addiction
from an ontological standpoint as well as in relation to "consumption" in Flaubert.
"[Drugs] double for the values with which they are at odds, thus haunting and
reproducing the capital market, creating visionary expansions, producing a lexicon of
body control and a private property of self – all of which awaits review [...] Drugs
thematize the dissociation of autonomy and responsibility that has marked our epoch
since Kant" (51, 59). I take Ronell's work as an exposure of the extent to which the
manifestations of legal and medical treatment of addiction to drugs serve to eclipse an
"addiction model" at work everywhere in ideal spending patterns under urban
industrial capitalism.
and, as a necessary consequence, as the only material worthy of self-realisation.23

Lukács’s description here of the "self" as the "only material worthy of self-realisation" in a Romantic mindset calls us to evaluate the materiality of selfhood. In rejecting the substratum of "reality" for their inspiration, we could say, those who fall under the rubric of what Lukács elsewhere calls "the Romanticism of disillusionment" reaffirm the hard distinction between the external world as substance and the soul as a paradoxically insubstantial "material." Furthermore, the priority of the soul over reality is specifically "literary"; literature establishes itself as a mode of being in which transcendence is not denied but relocated to a solipsistic interiority. Writing in 1920, Lukács reads Romanticism in this way precisely from the point of view of a literary modernist:

> Literary development has not yet gone beyond the novel of disillusionment, and the most recent literature reveals no possibility of creating another type that would be essentially new.24

Lukács would later read his younger self’s call for novelty and originality as its own kind of "romantic anti-capitalism," "based on a highly naïve and totally unfounded utopianism."25 Nevertheless, even if it seems to offer no positive way forward for the future of a literary aesthetic, in its very self-consciousness of loss

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24 151.

25 17; 20.
or despair this passage indicates a turning point from Romanticism to high modernism that has to be located elsewhere in European thought of its time.

On the one hand we have examined a technological attitude toward intoxication in which the intoxicant functions as a kind of Heideggerian "standing reserve" for the purposes of a aesthetic productivity; on the other we have seen a later Romantic defense of the soul’s autonomy and immateriality which appears in contrast with this technological point of view but in fact fails to undermine a mind-body dualism at its core. I wish to conclude this brief survey by suggesting that the mutual incompatibility of these two positions is exemplified in the logic according to which intoxication is simultaneously evoked and disclaimed in accounting for the essence of artistic work over the course of Friedrich Nietzsche's publishing career. Early in Nietzsche's 1872 *The Birth of Tragedy*, the Dionysiac comes opposed to the Apolline. Nietzsche characterizes this "duality" at length and grounds it physiologically.26 The Apolline corresponds to the dream; the Dionysiac, on the other hand, is most immediately understandable to us in the analogy of intoxication [Rausch]. Under the influence of the narcotic potion [den Einfluss des narkotischen Getränkes] hymned by all primitive men and peoples, or in the powerful approach of spring, joyfully penetrating the whole of nature, those Dionysiac urges are awakened, and as they grow more intense, subjectivity becomes a

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Here Nietzsche conceives of intoxication and the Dionysiac as existing in a relationship of "analogy": one is not the equivalent of the other, but we may be brought closest to an understanding of Dionysus in the abstract by way of intoxication, a bodily state. That is to say, intoxication represents the best of all possible approximations, one perceptible to us, whereas the Dionysiac itself remains isolated at a distance, only indirectly observable. The two alternative origins of intoxication and therefore the Dionysiac urge proposed in the next sentence repeat this structural paradigm: under the rubric of intoxication we must include the influences both of "narcotic potions" and of the turning of the seasons themselves. Nietzsche’s very syntax leads us from the mundane incorporation of a substance to the cosmic impersonality of a "forgetting of the self" that recalls the ideal objectivity that coffee procures for Balzac.

The inconsistency of Nietzsche’s later writings on Rausch and the transformation of the Dionysiac over the course of his career have been widely remarked, but one example from a work published after The Birth of Tragedy will serve to demonstrate the slippage involved in simultaneously naming and revoking intoxication. Here we see what Lukács presents as an awareness of a

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27 Walter Kaufman divides Nietzsche’s thought into two periods. “It has been overlooked that the Dionysus whom Nietzsche celebrated as his own god in his later writings is no longer the deity of formless frenzy whom we meet in Nietzsche’s first book. Only the name remains [...] The later Dionysus is a synthesis of the two forces which are
lack or gap in proposed aesthetic schemas, an impulse away from the hierarchy according to which an inner life takes precedence over external reality. In The Gay Science Nietzsche denounces men who are "everyday souls," "like tired mules who have been whipped too much by life." He writes:

What would men of this type know of "higher moods" if there were no intoxicants [rauscherzeugende Mittel] and idealized whips? Hence they have those who enthuse them [ihre Begeisterer] even as they have their wines. But what are their drinks and their intoxication [Trunkenheit] to me? Does he that is enthusiastic need wine? [Was braucht der Begeisterte den Wein!]

Nietzsche seems to distinguish between enthusiasm and intoxication, though the distinction does not strike us as quite satisfactory, because it is complicated once again by the divergence between a state procured through the use of a tool and one achieved by the self without recourse to the external world. The intoxicants these lesser men use bring on Rausch, but the men also have recourse to Begeisterer, means of enthusiasm; Nietzsche, par contre, achieves this enthusiasm on his own, as part of an intrinsic quality and without reaching beyond himself. Dionysus is not specifically mentioned here, though the title of the section, "Of the theater," suggests Nietzsche's observations in the Birth of Tragedy are at least not far off. This text, however, disparages the use of wine to induce intoxication, represented by Dionysus and Apollo in The Birth of Tragedy." Kaufmann, Walter. Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1950. 106.

as if some other physiological state – self-induced enthusiasm – has replaced
*Rausch* (and the "narcotic potion") as an approximation of or analogy to the god's
power with respect to art. This logic is reinforced by Nietzsche's appeal to his
own subjectivity as evidence for the existence of such a state.

We may identify here a highly developed even if inconsistent
metaphysical justification for a division I have traced to Keats between on the
one hand a philosophical kind of intoxication and on the other a physiological
one. This structure allows Nietzsche simultaneously to evoke and disclaim
intoxication as a key term in his aesthetic theory, that is, to imply that he must
initially use the term intoxication, though it is unsatisfactory, in order to gesture
towards an ineffable genuine truth analogous to it. This new truth would locate
the source of Dionysiac intoxication in the artist's own body, rather than in an
object or situation external to him. But in this respect Nietzsche's logic is flawed
insofar as the poet must locate a capacity for intoxication within himself even as
the ideal intoxication involves a complete loss of selfhood.30

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30 Heidegger insists that Nietzsche’s conception of *Rausch* as the fundamental aesthetic
state (more fundamental, that is, than the dream or the Apollonian) is ultimately not
based on a physiological model. (Heidegger, Martin. *Nietzsche: Volumes One and Two* tr.
reading of the problematically constructed division between the literal and figurative in
*The Birth of Tragedy*: "Certain formulations in *The Birth of Tragedy* remain enigmatic and
cannot be integrated within the value-pattern of the main argument. For instance: after
having been consistently distinguished from each other by a qualitative differential
system founded on the polarity between illusion and nonillusion, the Dionysian,
Apollonian, and Socratic modes are at least once, in what seems like a casual aside,
The depersonalization at issue here and exemplified by Keats as a longing for death precedes a kind of coming-to-consciousness of its own insufficiency that distinguishes literary modernism as a whole, not merely in terms of the Anglo-American sphere where "modernism" was a term adopted by the artists in question themselves but also to literary developments throughout Europe and the Americas. Frederic Jameson has argued that instances of depersonalization (his translation of the German Entpersonalisierung) characteristic of modern literary thought must not be conceptualized as something critics have noticed after the fact. Rather, "the taboo on the representation of subjectivity can now, in the area of modern art, be recognized to have itself been interiorized within the work of art."³¹ By "taboo on the representation of subjectivity," Jameson means to indicate the extent to which the modernists' notorious "inward turn" reveals itself by way of the external, a counterintuitive but "obligatory detour through the object world."³² The resulting "task" for the critic who acknowledges the modernists' own aversion to their perceived predecessors' portraying subjectivity an sich is to "insist in showing everything that is energizing and active about a depersonalizing tendency that has too often been discussed in terms of loss and incapacitation."³³ Nietzsche is not far off: "One physiological precondition is indispensable for there to be art or any sort of aesthetic action or vision:


³² 138.

³³ 132-33.
intoxication [Rausch]. Without intoxication to intensify the excitability of the whole machine, there can be no art," he writes in *Twilight of the Idols.*

Nevertheless the "excitability" that is described here comes about *ex nihilo;" intoxication" is an element at once added to the "machine" and derived from the machine itself.

**Baudelaire**

In line with Jameson's call to critical action, I propose that the work of Charles Baudelaire appropriates the myth of artistic intoxication in precisely an "energizing and active" way. Baudelaire circumvents the impasse represented by a conceptualization of inspiration that, in preserving the autonomy of the artist's subjectivity from contamination by foreign substances, reflects an investment in the autonomy and isolation of the aesthetic sphere writ large. If in De Quincey's schema the external world is available only for the purposes of exploitation or use-value, and for Emerson exteriority is largely foreclosed in favor of selfhood, Baudelaire conceives the world outside himself in terms of its own resistance to introjection even as it is in dialogue with poetic subjectivity and vision.

The prevalence of drugs and *ivresse* in Baudelaire's work is well known. Drunkenness characterizes the objects of Baudelaire's observation as well as the poet himself *qua* observer. As Walter Benjamin has observed, "Baudelaire made it his business to parry shocks, no matter where they might come from, with his spiritual and his physical self."34 In this endeavor drunkenness is of use to the poet as a kind of shield, though it does not protect from the shock itself so much

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as from the perception of somatic pain resulting from it – the space between the "spiritual self" and the "physical self" – figured as Time in the famous exhortation published in *Le Figaro* in 1864, "Enivrez-vous":

> Il faut être toujours ivre. Tout est là: c'est l'unique question. Pour ne pas sentir l'horrible fardeau du Temps, qui brise vos épaules et vous penche vers la terre, il faut vous enivrer sans trêve.

> Mais de quoi? De vin, de poésie ou de vertu, à votre guise.\(^3^5\)

It is significant that in this advice to others Baudelaire does not suggest ignoring time or mystically overcoming its influence but rather emphasizes a turn away from feeling time as a weight or burden – a "shock." Baudelaire does not valorize ivresse without qualification. In fact, Baudelaire draws distinctions on the matter of which kind of intoxication is best according to its quality, and at times these qualitative differences are described in terms of the substance that is consumed. Baudelaire is by no means consistent in his taxonomies of intoxicants: at times certain drugs are lauded which he will later contrast unfavorably with others, and at times he even seems to encourage abstinence from drugs altogether. I suggest that we read Baudelaire's career-long writings on drug use not as if they were derived from a schematic, reified system but diachronically, as a sustained meditation on the role of intoxication in the artist's work. Such a reading reveals that these texts represent Baudelaire's working-through of what would appear in his later texts as an aesthetics of "modernité."

The list "de vin, de poésie, ou de vertu," repeated once again later in "Enivrez-vous!", may seem to invite extrapolation ("à votre guise"), but there is a

reason that hashish and opium do not appear in it or indeed anywhere in *Les Fleurs du Mal*. And for all the critical work on intoxication in Baudelaire, the emphasis he nominally places on such a hierarchy of intoxicants is often overlooked. Gérald Froidevaux's article "L'ivresse comme 'chose moderne' chez Baudelaire," a study of Baudelaire's prose essay on intoxication *Les paradis artificiels*, is representative. For Froidevaux an elimination of time is indeed at issue in Baudelaire's idea of drunkenness: "La [sic] poète insiste sur la disparition de l'idée du temps dans l'ivresse." This interpretation presumes that the *ivresse* Baudelaire describes resulting from hashish and opium is essentially the same as that deriving from wine, and indeed in Froidevaux's footnotes we find the exclusion of wine made explicit: "Le vin n'occupe qu'une place marginale dans la discussion baudelairienne des paradis artificiels." While Froidevaux is correct insofar as the text titled *Les paradis artificiels* concerns itself primarily with hashish and opium, he overlooks the extent to which the *ivresse* that is theorized and ultimately decried in *Les paradis artificiels* is defined over and against wine-drunkenness as described elsewhere in Baudelaire's work and is thus entirely


38 342 n.
dependent on an element that may at first seem "marginale.""^39 Hence Froidevaux may write, accurately but insufficiently, "La drogue apparaît à Baudelaire comme un mauvais moyen pour atteindre la transcendance poétique."

"Du Vin et du Hashish" and the Club des Haschischsins

We find the beginnings of Baudelaire's interest in theorizing intoxication as an aesthetic phenomenon in his 1851 essay "Du vin et du haschisch comparés comme moyens de multiplication de l'individualité," where the question of the relationship of the artist to an intoxicating substance is already more complex than Froidevaux allows. As Teruo Inoué observes, this essay seems to have been instigated by Baudelaire's reading of Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du Goût*, in which Balzac's "Traité des excitants modernes" appears as an addendum.^40 Like Balzac, but in a departure from the Romantics cited earlier and from Froidevaux's account of ivresse in Baudelaire, already in this early essay Baudelaire avoids making a monolith of the state of intoxication, insisting that different substances operate differently and that the states they procure are dependent on context and temperament. Whereas Balzac privileges coffee’s power as an inspirational force, however, Baudelaire’s intoxicant of choice will be wine. Furthermore Baudelaire’s description of wine’s powers will specifically counter the Balzacian model in which words write themselves on the page: Baudelaire is invested in maintaining the artist’s subjectivity as a key element in the creative process even as he maintains that the subjectivity must be in some

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^39 In fact as I will demonstrate certain qualities of drunkenness here ascribed to wine will transfer to hashish in *Les paradis artificiels*.

^40 Baudelaire mentions only Brillat-Savarin explicitly, see Inoué p 7.
sense a depersonalized one. There is much to learn from Baudelaire's own account of his inspiration to write the article in question:

L'idée m'est venue de parler du vin et du hachisch dans le même article, parce qu'en effet il y a en eux quelque chose de commun: le développement poétique excessif de l'homme. [...] Mais le vin exalte la volonté, le hachisch l'annihile. Le vin est un support physique, le hachisch est une arme pour le suicide. Le vin rend bon et sociable. Le hachisch est isolant. L'un est laborieux pour ainsi dire, l'autre essentiellement paresseux. À quoi bon, en effet, travailler, labourer, écrire, fabriquer quoi que ce soit, quand on peut emporter le paradis d'un seul coup? Enfin le vin est pour le peuple qui travaille et qui mérite d'en boire. Le hachisch appartient à la classe des joies solitaires; il est fait pour les misérables oisifs. Le vin est utile, il produit des résultats fructifiants. Le hachisch est inutile et dangereux.41

Baudelaire's division of the consequences and effects of these two very different kinds of intoxication proceeds from questions of physiology to those of productivity. The "résultats fructifiants" have been either supported or undermined depending on one's drug of choice. As James Lawler has acknowledged in his *Poetry and Moral Dialectic*, "While the Baudelaire of *Les Paradis artificiels* directed a scathing attack on drugs in the name of the moral

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imperative of self-awareness, he celebrated wine for its worthy, necessary pleasures.\textsuperscript{42} This observation is indeed true of the 1860 \textit{Les paradis artificiels}, but the roots of such a division are present even in this early essay, where they are explained in more depth. The expression that hashish is "fait pour" the leisurely class is key: hashish is consumed, "annihilated" as it "annihilates" the will of its consumer, whereas wine, "pour le peuple," is as if transformed by its incorporation. If both hashish and wine prompt a "développement poétique excessif," this excess nevertheless only results in material poetry itself as something worked and produced ("labourer, écrire, fabriquer") in the case of wine. The very paradise hashish apparently offers derives not from its chemical composition but precisely from qualities connected to its status as a prized commodity availability only to the "oisifs." These drugs exist not differentially but as a dichotomy, representing two ends of a spectrum: wine inspires work, and in fact furthermore it is the people who have already worked who "mérite[nt] d'en boire"; hashish is isolating, and it is precisely those who can afford to indulge in "joies solitaires" who enjoy it.

Baudelaire refers to the members of the "Club des Haschischins" in this essay implicitly in one footnote near the end.

\textit{Il ne faut mentionner que pour mémoire la tentative faite récemment pour appliquer le hachish à la cure de la folie. Le fou qui prend du hachish contracte une folie qui chasse l'autre, et quand l'ivresse est passée, la vraie folie, qui est l'état normal du fou,}

Baudelaire's tone here is difficult to measure. This footnote immediately refers to the sentence "Le hachish est inutile et dangereux" and seems to qualify it: hashish might retain some utility in the medical pursuit of a cure for insanity. The "livre" at issue is that of Dr. Jacques-Joseph Moreau de Tours, founder of the "Club des Haschischins," 1845's *Du hachisch et de l’aliénation mentale*. But for Baudelaire Moreau does no more than offer a "tentative faite [...] pour appliquer" the drug to a good end; it is unclear whether he succeeds. What Moreau would likely call his findings or observations are here characterized in terms of a "beau système" he has "inventé," in a sentence that situates him as a schematic "philosophe" rather than a doctor. Though the language of this footnote appears deferential, as if it is incumbent upon Baudelaire to refer to another researcher in the field he's addressing, its treatment of Moreau's work is dismissive. The footnote's content is totally at odds with the sentence it follows; Baudelaire seems to allude to Moreau out of respect and scholarly rigor, but simultaneously implies that his point of view is quite different.

This footnote's description of Moreau's findings is moreover misrepresentative of Moreau's hypotheses in *Du hachisch et de l’aliénation mentale*. There Moreau is not interested in administering hashish to the mad, but in understanding madness through self-study; in fact Baudelaire's assertion would

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43 Baudelaire *Paradis* 103.
disqualify Moreau’s primary claim, since Moreau argues that the madness experienced by the rational man under the influence of hashish is the same as the madness experienced by a madman in his "état normal,” not a different madness that the originally sane and the originally mad share while under the influence of hashish.

Moreau is gesturing towards a foundational issue at the origins of psychiatry: the psychiatrist justifies the necessity of his intervention by characterizing the madman as someone essentially unaware of his own madness. So madness provides a peculiar limit case of medicine. It is usually impossible to experience madness experimentally, without going mad oneself, precisely insofar as madness must be qualified as a point of view blind to its own disorder. The doctor’s authority is consequently founded upon what Moreau calls here his "conscience de soi-même" and elsewhere his "réflexion": "ce pouvoir qu’a l’esprit

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de se replier, en quelque sorte, sur lui-même, cette espèce de miroir dans lequel il peut se contempler à volonté." Furthermore this faculty is precisely the one that the intoxicated state miraculously leaves intact. Hashish provides the psychiatrist with something like the lived experience of madness but without removing his powers of critical observation or sense of individuality. At the core of this medical capacity is the doctor’s deliberation or choice, his willfulness, in taking the drug.

Baudelaire transforms this "beau système" when he writes as if hashish brings on a particular madness before restoring whatever "état normal" existed before, be it "la vraie folie" or "la raison et la santé." Furthermore, the element of Moreau’s thinking that he discards, namely the retention of a kind of self-awareness by the sane even when partially mad under the influence of an intoxicant, is central not only to Moreau’s psychiatric goals but also to the conception of hallucinatory inspiration characterizing writings out of the "Club des Haschischins" and by extension Romanticism at large.46 Before returning to Baudelaire, I wish to take the work of Théophile Gautier as representative of the "hallucinatory style" that Baudelaire rarely explicitly denounces but against which his writing on wine sets itself. The hallucinatory poet, like Moreau, self-induces hallucination and therefore by force of will retains some sense of the hallucination’s unreality: Gautier’s visions may strike his readers as extreme or

45 32-33.

46 Indeed in Du hachisch et de l’aliénation mentale’s introductory chapter Moreau commends Gautier’s descriptions of hashish: "L’hachisch ne pouvait trouver un plus digne interprète que la poétique imagination de M. Gautier" (20).
unsettling, but their availability as poetic material is premised on the stability of the poetic subjectivity that observes them as if from a distance.

On the one hand, this stability manifests itself counterintuitively in that Gautier writes as if hashish minimizes the drug-takers own bodily particularity. That would certainly seem to be the case in the short story "Le Hachich": "Il me sembla que mon corps se dissolvait et devenait transparent."47 On the other hand, however, Gautier's descriptions refer to a different conception of the source of the hallucinations, one which ascribes significance to Gautier's own bodily presence and interiority. Thus in "Le Club des Hachichins" we read of the hallucinated "figures": "Comme si j'avais été le roi de la fête, chaque figure venait tour à tour dans le cercle lumineux dont j'occupais le centre, avec un air de componction grotesque."48 And elsewhere this bodily centrality is evoked as leading to a creative act: after listening to a concert piece, Gautier writes, "Le morceau achevé, je continuai par des improvisations intérieures [...] O Pillet! ô Vatel! un des trente opéras que je fis en dix minutes vous enricherait en six mois." The drug is at once an erasure of the self and a heightening of the self's performative powers and importance.49 As in Moreau's "beau système," the drug-taker's will is invoked when necessary but simultaneously the ecstasy of drug


intoxication retains something of the "complete forgetting of the self" characteristic of *Rausch* in Nietzsche.

This peculiar double valence is well foregrounded by a legend Gautier recounts early in "Le Club des Hachichins," one tied to the pseudo-etymology according to which "hachich" is the "racine du mot assassin." According to this legend, "il existait jadis en Orient un ordre de sectaires redoutables," hit men who carried out unquestioningly the orders of their prince, "le Vieux de la Montagne." This obedience, "une abnégation complète," was procured by the "artifice" of a "drogue merveilleuse" – hashish. He continues:

Or, la pâte verte dont le docteur venait de nous faire une distribution était précisément la même que le Vieux de la Montagne.

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50 Gautier adapts this story from a lecture given by Silvestre de Sacy at the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres titled "Mémoire sur la dynastie des Assassins et sur l’origine de leur nom," which combines linguistic analysis with the historical accounts of Marco Polo to produce the story. Gautier's version is significantly different and confers more importance on the action of the drug itself: in de Sacy's original account, for example, the "Vieux de la Montagne" has raised his followers from infancy according to a certain ideology in addition to simply subduing them by means of hashish intoxication. de Sacy, Silvestre Antoine Isaac. *Mémoire sur la dynastie des Assassins et sur l’origine de leur nom*. Moniteur no. 210, 1809. Martin-Luther-Universität Universitäts- und Landesbibliotek. 3 January 2015. See also Claude Pichois's "Introduction" to *Paradis artificiels*, p 7.
ingérait jadis à ses fanatiques sans qu’ils s’en apercussent, en leur faisant croire qu’il tenait à sa disposition le ciel de Mahomet.\textsuperscript{51}

Like Balzac and De Quincey, Gautier distinguishes between his own modern usage of an intoxicant and that of a mythical past. The "docteur" referred to here is Jacques-Joseph Moreau, and at first it might seem that Gautier situates him as a parallel figure to the "Vieux de la Montagne." Moreau does not deliver any commandments to the club members, however: they are left to their own direction, as Gautier’s subsequent wanderings through the house suggest. Furthermore, Moreau himself ingests the intoxicant that incapacitates the others. Finally and most tellingly, the difference between the ancient Oriental assassins and these modern-day connoisseurs is that the former were intoxicated "sans qu’ils s’en apercurent," believing that they have been influenced by a powerful divine force, whereas Gautier and his circle approach the question of the drug consciously, which is to say, from a standpoint qualified as a quasi-scientific curiosity. Hence on the one hand the drug’s effect is and always has been to overpower the willing ego, but on the other the particularly modern circumstances of Gautier’s ingestion of it (in what he calls “cette époque

d’agiotage et de chemins de fer” restore in some measure the subjectivity of the intoxicated person himself, in the absence of a religious leader-figure. The carrying out of another’s orders has given way to the observation of one’s own hallucinations at play; and, to take Gautier at his word, even the best operas pale in comparison to these self-induced performances, memorable only in their effect and not in their fleeting content.

Baudelaire’s theories in “Du Vin et du Haschisch” display a notable ambivalence towards these attitudes. On the one hand Baudelaire denies the artistic value of hashish while extolling that of wine precisely because wine augments the power of will available to the artist, and thus reaffirms the centrality of artistic consciousness and social engagement to productive writing. On the other, there are times at which Baudelaire seems to refuse aesthetic value to any intoxication whatsoever. On the essay’s very last page he quotes "un remarquable philosophe peu connu" at the Paris Conservatory, Auguste Barbereau, who has told him in private that "Les grands poètes, les philosophes, les prophètes" are those for whom "l'enthousiasme et la volonté suffisent" in their work. This self-reliance resonates precisely with what we find in Keats and Emerson, but would seem to contradict Baudelaire’s extolling of wine. Nevertheless the essay closes with Baudelaire’s assent: "Je pense exactement comme lui." This ambivalence is revisited in his examination of intoxication nine years later in his more extensive treatise on hashish and opium, *Les Paradis artificiels*.

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52 Gautier *Récits* 216.
This treatise is composed of two parts, the second of which is a loose summary and translation of De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. Of particular importance in assessing Baudelaire's own views, however, is the first part, *Le poème du haschisch*, in which Baudelaire's position has shifted somewhat from his earlier one in "Du Vin et du Haschisch." After a definitional description of the history and visual appearance of the drug itself (titled "Qu’est-ce que le haschisch?") Baudelaire begins with a conventional first-person account of the its physiological effects, supplemented by three anecdotal accounts presented in quotation marks as first-person narratives. Here, nine years after the publication of "Du vin et du haschisch," we find that even in discussing the ivresse associated with hashish Baudelaire's descriptions take a turn away from Gautier's. He compares a hashish high to dreaming:

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53 Claire Lyu, in her 1994 "'High' Poetics," has already performed the work of deconstructing the binary of she calls Baudelaire's voice and an "intoxicated voice." (Lyu, Claire. "'High' Poetics: Baudelaire's *Le poème du hachisch.*" *MLN* 109.4 (September 1994), 698-740. 699) As she demonstrates, qualities of intoxication infect or tarnish otherwise "sober" prose throughout the piece. Lyu fails to demonstrate that Baudelaire has a rhetorical interest in maintaining a rigid distinction between ivresse and sobriety in the first place, however, and indeed if Baudelaire's prose becomes tipsier and tipsier as the essay progresses, this progression comes not in spite of a commitment to maintaining a bar between "le poème" and "le haschisch" but rather as a demonstration of the impossibility of such a commitment.

54 Baudelaire *Paradis* 113.
L'homme a voulu rêver, le rêve gouvernera l'homme; mais ce rêve sera bien le fils de son père [...] Le cerveau et l'organisme sur lesquels opère le haschisch ne donneront que leurs phénomènes ordinaires, individuels, augmentés, il est vrai, quant au nombre et à l'énergie, mais toujours fidèles à leur origine.  

Baudelaire retains Gautier's emphasis on the element of choice or deliberation in his intoxications: "l'homme a voulu rêver, [donc] le rêve gouvernera l'homme." For Gautier, however, this choice implies merely a freedom from coercion by a separate individual's will, be it the Vieux de la Montagne or Moreau; the hashish-eater may thereby enjoy his visions assured that they are in some sense disinterested, that they are not intended to instigate action on his part that he would otherwise avoid. Baudelaire on the other hand restores responsibility for the "rêve" brought on by hashish to the dreamer. These visions are "augmentés, il est vrai," but the distortion caused by hashish is a purely formal or structural one, quantitative rather than qualitative. Ultimately its products are in fact "phénomènes ordinaires," a point reinforced by Baudelaire's physiological reduction of the drug-taker's subjectivity to the somatic elements of his "cerveau" and "organisme" (rather than, say, his soul or mind).

I wish to concentrate my reading on Baudelaire's fourth chapter, "L'homme-dieu," in which he makes a turn away from this method. Baudelaire describes this chapter in terms of a transition, beginning:

Il est temps de laisser de côté toute cette jonglerie et ces grandes marionnettes, nées de la fumée des cerveaux enfantins. N'avons-

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55 119-20.
nous pas à parler de choses plus graves: des modifications des sentiments humains et, en un mot, de la morale du haschisch?56

In fact Baudelaire has already spent a whole chapter discussing such "modifications des sentiments humains," and so we might question the novelty of what is to follow in this new portion of the text. In the next paragraph he clarifies that he will be addressing "la partie spirituelle de l’homme" rather than, as before, the "traits matériels" of "ivresse." I will return to these claims in analyzing the rest of "L’homme-dieu," but first I wish to address the even stranger first sentence of the citation above. What is the reader to make of the extravagant imagery of "jonglerie" and "marionnettes," which does not appear earlier in Le poème du haschisch? To whom do the "cerveaux enfantins" belong, if not Baudelaire himself or his anonymous interlocutors?

The terminology appears once elsewhere in Baudelaire’s work, in what is a key textual complement to Le poème du haschisch though its context is quite different: "Le Voyage," the longest and last poem in every edition of Les Fleurs du mal. In these lines, a dialogue is taking place between those who wish to go on a voyage (the poem’s first person plural "speaker") and those who have already done so and are describing the sights of their travels:

« Des costumes qui sont pour les yeux une ivresse;
Des femmes dont les dents et les ongles sont teints,
Et des jongleurs savants que le serpent caresse. »

V

Et puis, et puis encore ?

56 Baudelaire Paradis 142.
VI

« Ô cerveaux enfantins!"57

Alongside the "jongleurs," "cerveaux enfantins" is especially striking as a precursor to the Poème du haschisch – the phrase occurs nowhere else in Baudelaire's published work – but in fact "Le voyage" as a whole is concerned with ivresse and its difficulties (elsewhere humanity is said to be "ivre de son génie" and "se réfugiant dans l'opium immense!")58. In recalling "Le voyage" later, however, Baudelaire alters the logical entailment of these terms, divided in the poem by two section breaks.

"Le voyage" is concerned with the desire to travel in the context of modernity: the fantastic nature of the tales told in quotation marks does not alter the disillusionment of the returned travelers, who explain that even while traveling "Nous nous sommes souvent ennuyés, comme ici." In the context of the poem, then, the exclamation "Ô cerveaux enfantins!" demonstrates their frustration with the poem's speakers, who continue to press them for detail until in the poem's penultimate section they reach a kind of understanding:

Amer savoir, celui qu'on tire du voyage!

Le monde, monotone et petit, aujourd'hui,

Hier, demain, toujours, nous fait voir notre image:

Une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui!

Faut-il partir ? rester ? Si tu peux rester, reste ;


58 Baudelaire Fleurs 190.
One conclusion of "Le voyage," then, is that the eponymous voyage is ineffective as a means of escape – our own image, “notre image,” confronts us even abroad. Whether or not such a state of affairs has only come about recently is a question on which the poem vacillates: grammatically, "aujourd’hui" is included equally alongside "hier" and "demain," but the enjambment of its line suggests that smallness and monotony are particularly felt at the current moment. In any case the turn to the singular second person pronoun and imperative in the following couplet signifies that the poem’s speaker is addressing a current-day reader rather than the voyagers in these lines: indeed, if the logic of that couplet is that staying and leaving are essentially no different, then we may take the disappearance of quotation marks in this portion of the poem not as a leaving behind of the voyagers but rather as a merger between them and the poem’s speakers, an acknowledgment of their sameness. More importantly this poem represents as a failure a kind of geographical urge to newness, the notion that travelling to a new place might provide a genuine escape from the conditions in which its various speakers find themselves as if trapped. Mere movement, Baudelaire asserts, even to the most exotic of the world’s places, does not constitute the adjustment in perspective that would constitute a lyrical modernity. This poem and "Le poème du haschisch" have in common their concern with the very possibility of escape as a viable strategy; but whereas the escape is figured geographically in "Le voyage," in "Le poème du haschisch"
Baudelaire turns his reasoning to the infeasibility of escape figured psychically as a kind of mystical ecstasy for the purposes of artistic creation.

Such a reading helps explain the formulation with which Baudelaire returns to these questions in "Le poème du haschisch": "Il est temps de laisser de côté toute cette jonglerie et ces grandes marionnettes, nées de la fumée des cerveaux enfantins." Here the "jonglerie" is generated from the "cerveaux enfantins" rather than enumerated as a response to them, but the merger of the voyagers and their listeners that this phrasing implies has already taken place in "Le voyage." And just as in that poem a series of interpolated, "cited" texts gives way to a unified vocal perspective, in its fourth chapter Le poème du haschisch abandons its reliance on others' accounts of ivresse.

Cette fois, pour abréger ma tâche et rendre mon analyse plus claire, au lieu de rassembler des anecdotes éparcées, j'accumulerai sur un seul personnage fictif une masse d'observations. J'ai donc besoin de supposer une âme de mon choix.60

The rhetoric here would have us understand that the turn to a "personnage fictif," a "âme de mon choix," is simply a matter of convenience, though we know it must also bear some relation to Baudelaire's decision to address "la morale du haschisch" in this section. We have proceeded from an enumeration of hashish's possible effects on certain particular people to a consideration of what epitomizes the hashish-eater, nominally according to Baudelaire "pour abréger ma tâche et rendre mon analyse plus claire." This adoption of ficionality as a mode is not simply a matter of rhetorical convenience; it is necessary to an exposition of the

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60 Baudelaire Paradis 145.
properly literary and aesthetic perils of the kind of inspiration that is at issue in
the hashish-eater. And the "choix" reveals itself when Baudelaire describes it to
be far more than simply a contingent matter of expediency:

Une âme de mon choix, quelque chose d’analogue à ce que le
XVIIIe siècle appelait l’homme sensible, à ce que l’école romantique
nommait l’homme incompris [...] Je crois que j’ai rassemblé les
éléments généraux les plus communs de l’homme sensible
moderne, de ce qu’on pourrait appeler la forme banale de
l’originalité.  

In announcing that the character-type of his choice will represent not an
individual but a species of person, Baudelaire seems in line with a conventional
understanding of the nature of fictionality, especially with regard to the novel.

As Catherine Gallagher has argued concerning the development of the novel in
18th-century England, "The founding claim of the form [of the fictional novel],
therefore, was a nonreferentiality that could be seen as a greater referentiality.
What distinguished the new writers from libelers was the insistence that the
human referent of the text was a generalization about and not an extratextual,
embodied instance of a 'species.'"  

Whereas the novel accomplishes such nonreferentiality by introducing proper names for characters that are
morphophonologically similar to names common in the sociocultural contexts it
represents, Baudelaire initially avoids granting the character he will examine a

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61 Baudelaire Paradis 145-46.

name. Instead, he provides several designators, establishing a genealogy: the 18th century's "homme sensible," the Romantics' "homme incompris," are gathered together into what he will call "l'homme sensible moderne." The "originalité" of this type is thus "banale" in a simple sense: he is preceded by a long line of similar characters. But on the other hand what is at issue in the "moderne" more than in these earlier prototypes is precisely his own conscious quest for originality, here not geographic but temporal, as the desire to forget history.

This forgetfulness takes a curious form, however. Baudelaire describes the pleasure of a hashish high in terms of the hashish-eater's own contributions to his perceptions: "L'oeil intérieur transforme tout et donne à chaque chose le complément de beauté qui lui manque pour qu'elle soit vraiment digne de plaire."\(^{63}\) The power to render beautiful gives the man a heightened sense of his own importance and convinces him of his divinity with respect to others – "l'homme-dieu." Furthermore, this mechanism wherein his very thought process is more important than the content of his current percepts applies equally to his memories. Occasionally an unpleasant or embarrassing memory will intrude on his otherwise pleasant train of thoughts. "Le remords, singulier ingrédient du plaisir, est bientôt noyé dans la délicieuse contemplation du remords, dans une espèce d'analyse voluptueuse."\(^{64}\) Baudelaire ventriloquizes his character-study's thought process:

\(^{63}\) Baudelaire Paradis 148.

\(^{64}\) 152.
"Cette action ridicule, lâche ou vile, dont le souvenir m’a un moment agité, est en complète contradiction avec ma vraie nature, ma nature actuelle, et l’énergie même avec laquelle je la condamne, le soin inquisitorial avec lequel je l’analyse et je la juge, prouvent mes hautes et divines aptitudes pour la vertu." [...] Et non seulement il se condamne, mais il se glorifie.\textsuperscript{65}

Here analysis itself ("analyse voluptueuse"), a kind of filtered retelling of one's own story, functions counterintuitively not so much to recall the past but to obliterate it in the momentary inflation of the hashish-eater's conception of his "vraie nature," that is, his "nature actuelle" at the moment of his intoxication. His delusions go further, however, and he believes that his sense of superiority is unique. The hashish-eater's inner voice reports to him, "Nul ne connaît et ne pourrait comprendre tout ce que tu penses."\textsuperscript{66}

Here the necessity of Baudelaire's reliance on the model of fiction as representation of types or characters rather than individuals becomes clear. The hashish-eater's solipsism and the originality he claims as a derivative of the ineffability of his subjective experience can only be countered by insisting that the object of Baudelaire's scrutiny is no one particular man. When Baudelaire claims, "J'assiste à son raisonnement comme au jeu d’un mécanisme sous une vitre transparente," the "vitre" at issue is the lens of the construct of fictionality he has adopted.\textsuperscript{67} Such a lens is necessary to escape the structural pitfalls of

\textsuperscript{65} 154.

\textsuperscript{66} 153.

\textsuperscript{67} 154.
depicting a character who relentlessly self-analyzes: how to outthink a person whose own thinking is demonstrably trapped in a narcissistic pattern of self-rebuke. Certainly the hashish-eater experiences a kind of "depersonalization" insofar as he is able to consider the circumstances of his own formation with a certain detachment. Baudelaire advocates a different kind of depersonalization, however, in which the essential point is not whether one's past actions were morally laudable or blameworthy. As the development of his essay advocates and exemplifies, Baudelaire describes a depersonalization in which the self is rid of its particular qualities and character functions as a potentiality for personhood with a strange relationship to the restrictions of historical fact or necessity. Baudelaire's method here is genuinely modern not because it claims to represent a progression forwards from or development of the mindset it describes, but because it establishes the formal conditions for a narrative synthesis of two states which are irreconcilable within the hashish-eater's own self-conception, his ceaseless autobiographical storytelling. Whereas the fictional hashish-eater's intoxication so grounds him in the present activity of his thought that he shades over the mistakes of his sober past through an act of reinterpretation, Baudelaire's treatise allows for a juxtaposition of and thereby manifests the contrast between the hashish-eater's present euphoria and his past. This maneuver is typical of the project of Baudelaire's modernity as famously expressed in his 1863 essay "Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne":

Le passé est intéressant non-seulement par la beauté qu’ont su en extraire les artistes pour qui il était le présent, mais aussi comme passé, pour sa valeur historique. Il en est de même du présent. Le plaisir que nous retirons de la représentation du présent tient non-
seulement à la beauté dont il peut être revêtu, mais aussi à sa qualité essentielle de présent.\textsuperscript{68}

The condition of hashish \textit{ivresse} as Baudelaire formulates it in 1860 is insufficient to the aesthetic modern orientation towards temporality he would describe three years later because the self-pity or remorse hashish instigates is incompatible with the facticity of history, the "passé [...] comme passé" with its weight of "valeur historique." The resistant actuality of both past and present in this passage is described as a "qualité essentielle" supplemental to the "beauté" that is "extracted" ("extraire") from it and that covers it ("revêtu"). Hashish, which miraculously grants those who succumb to it the capacity to project beauty onto any perception or onto the process itself of perceiving, thereby elides an account of the past or the present in which both have maintained an autonomy beyond the aesthetic considerations to which they have been subjected.

Having established hashish intoxication not merely as a particular pharmacologically induced physical state but as a general orientation towards time ill-suited to the demands of modern artistry, Baudelaire closes "Le Poème du Haschisch" by asserting the relevance of this temporal paradigm to specifically literary artistic work by invoking two literary figures, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Honoré de Balzac, as emblematic of opposed orientations towards intoxicating media. As it turns out, Baudelaire's "personnage fictif" ought to

fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Le_Peintre_de_la_vie_moderne. 5 June 2016.
recall to the reader one particular instance of the eighteenth century's "homme sensible":

"Je suis le plus vertueux de tous les hommes!"

Cela ne vous fait-il pas souvenir de Jean-Jacques, qui, lui aussi, après s'être confessé à l'univers, non sans une certaine volupté, a osé pousser le même cri de triomphe (ou du moins la différence est bien petite) avec la même sincérité et la même conviction? [...] Jean-Jacques s'était enivré sans hashchisch. 69

Here the rhetoric of Baudelaire's earlier description of the object of his study as a generalization rather than an individual instance is precariously maintained by a negation and an appeal to the reader's own reference. The person at issue simultaneously is and is not Rousseau – "la différence" exists but "est bien petite."

And Baudelaire concludes this passage with a clear reassertion that his interest in hashish intoxication derives from an interest in a mindset characteristic of those particularly susceptible to hashish addiction more than from a phenomenological interest in the drug's short-term perceptual effects. "Jean-Jacques s'était enivré sans haschisch." A formulation that, in the context of Keats and Emerson's theorization of the poet who intoxicates himself with no need to turn outwards, would confirm Rousseau's status as an authentic and autonomous artist, is here delivered with precisely the opposite meaning. Even in the absence of a drug, Rousseau's orientation towards his own past and its development as narrative demonstrates a thoroughly Romantic "sincérité" at odds with the new landscape of Baudelaire's modernity.

69 Baudelaire Paradis 155.
Obviously, even granted a proper name, Rousseau serves as something of a stand-in here, and the paragraph in which he appears is cursory. Nevertheless it is quite possible in the *Confessions* to find examples of the kind of Romantic patterns of self-stylization that Baudelaire here describes. One particularly revealing instance comes precisely during a discussion of Rousseau's own attitude towards drunkenness. Near the end of Book 6, Rousseau is boarding with a M. de Mably, who grants him control of the house wine cellar after he takes a liking to a particular white wine. Rousseau steals a few bottles to drink alone in his room, after noticing which the landlord silently removes his privileges over "la direction de la cave." Even in the middle of this story, however, Rousseau demonstrates the tendency to self-absolution towards which Baudelaire gestures. Thus he writes, as if parenthetically, "Je n'ai jamais été dissolu ni crapuleux, et ne me suis enivré de ma vie."70 With somewhat more self-awareness, but still following the same pattern, he continues on the next page, describing his nostalgia while drinking in the present tense: "Je forme les plus beaux projets du monde, je brûle de les exécuter. Je quitte tout, je renonce à tout, je pars, je vole, j'arrive dans tous les mêmes transports de ma première jeunesse."71 Such a sentence, its vague gesture toward vast projects and a sincere but fruitless desire to pursue them, could indeed be taken directly from Baudelaire's caricature in *Les paradis artificiels.*

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71 340.
Balzac offers an alternative model in the concluding chapter of "Le Poème du Haschisch," "Morale," as part of an anecdote in which he refuses to accept a drug ("dawamesk," an Egyptian candy derived from hashish) that is offered him:

Balzac pensait sans doute qu’il n’est pas pour l’homme de plus grande honte ni de plus vive souffrance que l’abdication de sa volonté. Je l’ai vu une fois, dans une réunion où il était question des effets prodigieux du haschisch. [...] On lui présenta du dawamesk ; il l’examina, le flaira et le rendit sans y toucher. [...] En effet, il est difficile de se figurer le théoricien de la volonté, ce jumeau spirituel de Louis Lambert, consentant à perdre une parcelle de cette précieuse substance.\textsuperscript{72}

Clearly the key term here is "volonté," the principle of willed self-control characteristic of Balzac's own life as well as his work. It is not entirely clear, however, that Balzac's abstinence from hashish here represents an ideal artistic askesis preferable to Rousseau's unwitting indulgence in hashish-high-like thinking. Of most interest is the strange final turn of this passage in which Baudelaire emphatically qualifies the will as a substance, that is, something to be retained or lost, something that an intoxicating substance might displace or destroy piecemeal ("une parcelle"): it is necessary to read a subtle irony at work in this jarring equivalence, a commentary on what could be characterized as Balzac's own dependence or reliance on a stable model of desire and identity.

\textsuperscript{72} Baudelaire \textit{Paradis} 158, Baudelaire's emphasis.
Balzac is as if addicted to will. And indeed as we have seen, Balzac himself had theorized the effects of the substance caffeine on his own writing in terms of a kind of pure will without individual agency in which "le papier se couvre d’encre."

If Balzac here represents a privileging of will at all costs, and if Baudelaire in a reference to Louis Lambert connects this privileging to the drive and ambition characteristic of those who populate his fiction, such abstinence can be only a negation of Rousseau’s position. If Rousseau, that is, models an orientation to time in which retroactive absolution is simultaneous with recollection, in which the past loses its essentially historical quality, Balzac might well represent the equivalent of such a shortcoming with respect to the present. Balzac's characters, like the man himself, are incapable of admitting the duplicity of the present moment in which desire is fundamentally ambivalent and accompanied by apathy; "l'abdication de sa volonté" is at once a "souffrance," felt as pain in the individual, and a "honte," castigated by society at large. Baudelaire admires Balzac's avoidance of temptation, but the fear of oneself at issue in his lack of

73 Compare Graham Robb’s reading of an 1859 critical essay in which Baudelaire refers to Balzac as a "visionary": "Notons tout de suite que Balzac "visionnaire" – mot qui pour d’autres impliquait une faculté purement organique d’intuition – est un créateur et un critique, dont le talent, pour être "naïf," n’en est pas moins volontaire.” Robb cannily reads even the "visions" of Balzac, in Baudelaire's view, as nonetheless grounded in a productive or fruitful "volonté" that distinguishes him sharply from Gautier, the author who is the primary subject of the essay in which this assessment of Balzac appears.

curiosity is utterly opposed to Baudelaire's project of relentless self-scrutiny and awareness.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter has been to trace the effects of a rift or fissure in post-Enlightenment aesthetic theories of the origin of art. In the wake of secular modernity, artists continued to argue for the special place of the ecstatically inspired artist in various ways. But an examination of the particular role intoxication plays in these arguments reveals fundamental ambivalences as to the relationship between the artist as an individual, the material historical circumstances surrounding his or her life and work, and the nature of the work that is produced. The introduction of new intoxicants and the mass-production of alcohol in Europe in the 19th century entailed a revision of longstanding associations between the artist and inspiration provoked by drugs. On the one hand, curiosity about hashish and opium was prompted by their being coded as oriental, exotic, and only available to the leisure class. On the other, patterns of alcohol dependency among the urban working class threatened productivity and led to the development of a disease model of addiction in medical and psychiatric thought. Even as writers underscored the dangers of overindulgence in these substances, a secular theory arose, outlined clearly in De Quincey, in which drugs act as miraculous and quasi-mechanical gateways to obtaining poetic material. The form of this theory, in which the poet's agency in choosing to incorporate a drug is elided by the notion that drugs produce art without the intervention of the artist or the opacity of a medium, appears in Balzac, though his choice of coffee as a stimulant indicates less investment in a vague Eastern mysticism than his early English Romantic contemporaries. Somewhat later
Romantics modify this proposal, in which artistic work is essentially indistinguishable from a mass-produced commodity susceptible to technological automation. For writers like Keats and Emerson, rather, the subjectivity of the artist is foregrounded: intoxication is a state procured by the artist him or herself, without recourse to external substances, not at the moment of writing but as a more or less constant aesthetic stance characteristic of the artist as a type or personality. The function of this theory in which intoxication is mystically self-induced is to remove art from the sphere of the rote or mechanical (likened to the pattern of addiction), but in its recourse to an immaterial understanding of the psyche and high valorization of the subjective it maintains rather than undermining the hard distinction between subject and object on which the unchecked progress of modern scientific rational progress depends.

These two alternative accounts of the intoxicant in modernity are commingled and overlap, even elsewhere in the work of authors from whom I have drawn brief passages to outline them at their most schematic. Indeed even within the microcosm of French literati, Théophile Gautier and Jacques-Joseph Moreau’s works display characteristics of them in inconstant ways. Both Gautier and Moreau vacillate on the importance of the will or deliberation in distinguishing artists from laypeople and doctors from patients, and both attribute sensational and miraculous properties to drugs new to them while omitting consideration of drugs familiar in Western Europe since antiquity.

If I argue that Baudelaire offers an alternative and distinctly modern aesthetics in which intoxication plays a key role, it is not that his writings represent a progression or improvement on the authors I have just described, though he and others after him insisted on the priority of the criterion of
originality in assessing their works. Baudelaire himself writes, especially early in his career, as if on the one hand the drug acts on its own, magically, and on the other as if a genuine or authentic artist would be able to experience intoxication without a drug. Nevertheless, passages from Baudelaire's later writing on wine and hashish clearly prefigure his mature conceptions of "modernité" and the artist's place in it as a check or counterweight to post-Cartesian scientific advancement. Taking account of these passages is a way of fully appreciating the complexities of Baudelaire's vision, in which the artist's subjectivity is depersonalized even as his necessary commitment to the material conditions of his surroundings is reaffirmed.

My argument has focused primarily on the remarkable fourth chapter of Baudelaire's "Le poème du haschisch," titled "L'homme-dieu." On the one hand Baudelaire's methodological approach in this chapter is important in itself regardless of its rhetorical content. In announcing the kind of fictionality that alone permits him to accurately treat the hashish-eater, Baudelaire mingles first- and third-person descriptive techniques. The character in question is not Baudelaire himself, though Baudelaire's experience leads him to a detailed understanding of the character's own interiority; but neither is he completely removed from Baudelaire, as if Baudelaire were merely describing the motion of an object. This methodological approach represents a depersonalization, but one that does not omit the past or absolve its mistakes. The personhood of this "âme de mon choix," a type, vacillates between particularity and generality, and this vacillation operates as a corrective to a conception of temporality Baudelaire ascribes specifically to hashish intoxication. Namely, the hashish-eater manages a simultaneous acknowledgment and absolution of his past. The disappearance of
time at issue in a hashish high entrenches him in his present way of thinking, an entrenchment not unrelated to poetic vision but one that risks projecting an intoxicated mindset into the past and so disregarding the past’s historicity and value. In a final twist, Baudelaire groups Rousseau among the hashish-eaters, though Rousseau never in fact partook of hashish: the self-induced intoxication Baudelaire lauds in "Du vin et du hashish," a standby of Romantic explanations of inspiration, is inverted and becomes a liability to creative work of the kind Baudelaire envisions in his own context.

It is not enough, then, either to materially intoxicate oneself for the purpose of obtaining art or to live as if intoxicated in order to adjust one’s aesthetic perspective. The relationship between artwork and the living artist who produces it is simply more complex than either of these models allows. Baudelaire as poet of "modernité" does indeed insist on the importance of the particular sensibility necessary to the artist as type, a perceptual adaptation to far-reaching changes in the societies in which art is being produced, and this sensibility is indeed likened to an intoxicated one. Such a commitment to the external world manifests itself, however, specifically in terms of drunkenness, ivresse produced specifically by wine, at once the most ancient of modern excitants and the one best suited to the pursuit of novelty and originality that is increasingly prioritized over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe and America. I read Baudelaire’s insistence on the centrality of wine as a commitment to the resistant materiality of his surroundings and a reaffirmation that the apparently subjective effects of intoxication are determined by a shared cultural understanding as much as by individual physiology. In maintaining that "ivresse" is not a consistent and predictable state, that it may
vary based not only on the qualities of particular intoxicating substances but also on context and temperament, Baudelaire removes the intoxicant from its ultimately religious Romantic underpinnings and restores responsibility for art to the artist himself. Rather than consequently discarding intoxication as an aesthetic phenomenon entirely, however, Baudelaire's writing distinguishing hashish from wine functions as a proxy for meditations on the artist's relationship to time and to individuality.
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Chapter 2

“A Still More Critical Cigarette”: 
Reading Intoxication in Henry James

The Typical Tale

By the second volume of The Ambassadors, Lambert Strether has undergone some kind of transformation. Book Seven opens with his surprising decision to advise Chad Newsome, whose return to America he has been dispatched to secure, that he ought rather to remain in Paris; it closes on Strether and his interlocutor Maria Gostrey discussing this reversal of his course. "You're not where you were," she tells him, "You look divine!" Strether is slightly less metaphysical in his own description of the change: "I dare say in fact I'm quite fantastic, and I shouldn't be at all surprised if I were mad." But however this altered state might itself be described, for Strether, Maria, and the reader, the important unanswered question is what has brought it about in the first place. After all, as Strether explains, "I don't get drunk; I don't pursue the ladies; I don't spend money; I don't even write sonnets." In other words, his failure to succumb to what we recognize as the usual temptations that Paris has to offer legitimizes his newfound madness by obscuring its origins. Only as part of the novel's falling action in Book Twelve will Strether acknowledge that despite all his precautions, his evasion of the clichés to be found throughout his reading in

75 241.
Balzac and Hugo, his storyline has nevertheless constituted precisely what he there calls "the typical tale of Paris," at once a continuation of the tradition and a sense of belatedness with respect to it.\textsuperscript{76}

In fact critical work on \textit{The Ambassadors} has demonstrated that Strether's series of denials in Book Seven is not as self-aware as it may at first appear. The question of whether or not Strether may be said to "write sonnets" is addressed directly or otherwise by most critics interested in the quasi-literary function of Strether's fondness for Hugo and Balzac and striving, in his regular letters to Mrs. Newsome, to "tell her everything." Contemporary reviews already noticed this characteristic: in the \textit{Bookman}, Frederick Cooper described Strether as "something better, yet not much better than a hack-writer."\textsuperscript{77} So though Strether may not write lyric poetry, even he has admitted earlier in Book Seven that "he was always writing: it was a practice that continued, oddly enough, to relieve him."\textsuperscript{78} Secondly, Strether is by no means wealthy in his context, but his claim that he doesn't "spend money" overlooks what Miranda El-Rayess has recently identified in \textit{Henry James and the Culture of Consumption} as Strether's positioning squarely within a tradition of fraught American consumer spending. She identifies a "peculiarly commodifying tendency in Maria and Strether's vision," one overcome "once Strether has disentangled his values from those of both Milrose and Woollett," a reading that is of particular interest to me insofar as it

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\textsuperscript{76} 398.


\textsuperscript{78} James \textit{Ambassadors} 237.
too attempts to account for Strether's eventual sense of detachment from his Parisian surroundings.\textsuperscript{79} I hope to trace Strether's tendency to commodify art (as in his purchase of a set of Victor Hugo novels) to its origins in the distinction between encountering art "immaterially" i.e. visually and approaching it as a collector as outlined in \textit{Roderick Hudson}. Finally, the issue of Strether's pursuit of "ladies," commented on for as long as his final refusal of Maria Gostrey has perturbed his readers, takes on new significance given the queerness of the novel's undertones analyzed in, for example, Kevin Ohi's \textit{Henry James and the Queerness of Style} or Eric Haralson's \textit{Henry James and Queer Modernity}.\textsuperscript{80} Haralson's thesis that Strether's masculinity constitutes "a delicate balancing act calculated to put on trial the normative biases of American culture at the fin de siècle" is in line with my own investigation into American cultural "biases," though the objects of those biases differ.\textsuperscript{81}

So far, however, critics have failed to examine Strether's very first negation here – "I don't get drunk" – though it presents just as many complexities as the others, and even, I will argue, a necessary contrast to them. The question of what it means to "get drunk" is one that surfaces again and again in James' work and \textit{The Ambassadors} represents its final configuration, a necessary resolution before James' ambitious treatments of consciousness in \textit{The Wings of}


\textsuperscript{80} Ohi, Kevin. \textit{Henry James and the Queerness of Style}. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 2011.

the Dove and The Golden Bowl and one that presents, as I will argue, a notable contrast with the moral finitude of those works.

After all, whether or not Strether gets "drunk," he certainly drinks. Again in Book Seven, for example, he enjoys a "bottle of straw-coloured Chablis" with Madame de Vionnet, whose dress is itself "a dull wine-colour," a kind of secular eucharist they take after meeting apparently by chance in Notre Dame cathedral.82 And during his climactic afternoon journey to the countryside in Book Eleven, we are told that he has consumed one "watery bock, all pale and Parisian," "a 'bitter' before his repast," and, after encountering Chad and Madame de Vionnet in flagrante and deciding to dine with them, his share of at least two bottles of wine, for after they have finished all their courses they order "another bottle," presumably not of water.83 Most significantly, even after he has admitted his entanglement in another "typical tale of Paris" in Book Twelve, Strether does not have recourse to sonnets, ladies, or money, but rather to a certain kind of drunkenness: he spends his time "idling, lounging, smoking, sitting in the shade, drinking lemonade and consuming ices" while entertaining "fanciful visions." "He would float to [America] doubtless duly through these caverns of Kubla Khan," he muses, likening his experience to hallucinations Coleridge famously

82 James Ambassadors 213; 209.

83 385; 387; 393. Note the italics and scare quotes, as if intimating Strether's affected unfamiliarity with the names of the drinks he readily orders.
At the height of Strether's own confrontation of the clichés that have constituted his journey to Paris, one particular cliché, the opium-eating poet loafing in the street and glassily observing passers-by, has remained unscathed by Strether's rigorous self-account. After the novel's climax in book eleven, we might expect a kind of final sobriety from Strether; in fact, it is precisely the confrontation with a certain reality that such a climax consists of which will drive Strether into the dreamlike stupor that characterizes all the novel's falling action.

Though Strether recalls Coleridge here, it would be a mistake to read references to intoxication in *The Ambassadors* as straightforward screens or symbols for the Romantic. First of all, when James himself discusses the pressure towards originality he experienced in writing the novel in his 1907 *New York Edition* preface to it, he refers rather to the Realist tradition:

> There was the dreadful old tradition, one of the platitudes of the human comedy, that people’s moral scheme *does* break down in Paris; that nothing is more frequently observed; that hundreds of thousands of more or less hypocritical or more or less cynical persons annually visit the place for the sake of the probable catastrophe, and that I came late in the day to work myself up about it. [...] The revolution performed by Strether under the influence of the most interesting of great cities was to have nothing

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to do with any bêtise of the imputably 'tempted' state; he was to be thrown forward, rather, thrown quite with violence, upon his lifelong trick of intense reflexion.85

Even grammatically, the phrase "that I came late in the day to work myself up about it" is part of the same "tradition" that includes the breakdown of "people's moral scheme" in Paris associated with Balzac's "human comedy" – by the time we reach the end of the sentence, that is, the moment of the novel's being critiqued is already placed in the company of its precursors. Nevertheless here James signals what would be different about his novel: it would avoid what we could call the temptation of "temptation," the easy psychologizing of his predecessors, who motivate their characters by recourse to a kind of presumed animality – "bêtise" – lying just under the surface of any human.86 Besides Balzac, such psychologizing was a pitfall of, for example, Zola's, of whose "rank materialism" James wrote in a 1903 review of that author's work: "The coarser side of his subject, based on the community of all the instincts, was, for instance, the more practicable side, a sphere the vision of which required but the general human, scarcely more than the plain physical, initiation, and dispensed thereby, conveniently enough, with special introductions or revelations."87 Zola's choice of

85 James Ambassadors xxxvii-xxxviii.

86 Compare on "temptation" also James' judgment on Flaubert's La tentation de St. Antoine, quoted and analyzed in Paul Grimstad's "Conscience of the Atelier': Style in James's Criticism": ""M. Flaubert's strong side has not been hitherto the portrayal of resistance to temptation." The Henry James Review 35.3, 2014. 219.

"the coarser side," "all the instincts," "scarcely more than the plain physical," precludes his including in his work those "special introductions or revelations" we find everywhere even in James' early novels. His "rank materialism" is really a psychological determinism which, in the context of novel-writing, gives way to predictable plots. But, as Strether and James are infamously difficult to separate, so here Zola's own motivations and techniques for writing novels are not entirely distinct from the priorities and shortcomings of his characters in, for example, *L'Assommoir*. "[Zola's] own dose of the precious elixir had no perceptible regulating power."\(^{88}\) Zola is as if addicted to the mechanistic descriptive techniques that allow for such an output of work, the way his characters become addicted to the distillations of the infernal still that occupies that novel's eponymous bar.

Furthermore, when James explicitly considers the intersection of romance, intoxication, and his writing practices in *The American*’s 1907 preface, the logic of his figurative language prevents us from taking away any simple equivalence between the effects of Romantic writing and drugs.

What I have recognised then in "The American," much to my surprise and after long years, is that the experience here represented is the disconnected and uncontrolled experience – uncontrolled by our general sense of "the way things happen" – which romance alone more or less successfully palms off on us [...]

There is our general sense of the way things happen – it abides with us indefeasibly, as readers of fiction, from the moment we demand

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\(^{88}\) James "Zola" 199.
that our fiction shall be intelligible; and there is our particular sense of the way they don't happen, which is liable to wake up unless reflexion and criticism, in us, have been skilfully and successfully drugged. There are drugs enough, clearly – it is all a question of applying them with tact; in which case the way things don't happen may be artfully made to pass for the way things do.89

The process whereby fiction would "successfully" conform to its readers "demands" is extremely difficult to specify here. At first The American fails insofar as it represents something "uncontrolled," but in fact even an uncontrolled experienced can be as if sold to someone, though underhandedly ("palms off on us"). The goal of fiction is to maintain the "sense of the way things happen" without awakening "our particular sense of the way they don't happen" by "skilfully and successfully" drugging "reflexion and criticism, in us." The mere drug itself is not at issue, however, but rather also what matters is its application "with tact." This passage ends up suggesting a grammatical equivalence between the substantive intoxicant and the adverbial means of its application – "skilfully and successfully," "with tact," "artfully." The "drug," the content of the fiction, becomes indistinguishable from its form, the manner of its administration. As typically in James, a phrase that first emerges framed in scare quotes – "the way things happen" – is later taken up without them and granted full weight (no doubt this is one means of palming such phrases off on us). In fact however by the end of this paragraph it is clear that there is no such thing as a fiction that

purely represents "the way things happen" – rather fiction, essentially in some sense "romantic," aspires to be "intelligible" though it necessarily represents things that "don't happen."

Here as elsewhere, intoxication exists at the limit of the aesthetic. Over the course of his career, drugs and alcohol for James are related to the uncontrollably or excessively fantastic elements of literature that artistically valuable works reign in by virtue of their form or construction. The intoxicant is necessary to art, but art is always at risk of becoming merely an intoxicant, and the figure of the intoxicated man unites a successfully aesthetic type with a dejected outsider. I intend to read Lambert Strether in these terms as an experimental figure, one who, in insisting that he does not literally get drunk while nevertheless displaying so many characteristics of a drunkard, puts into question precisely what counts as art and what does not.

**Emerson, Hawthorne, and the "Proper Subject for Sculpture" in Roderick Hudson**

Strether’s attitude towards intoxication in *The Ambassadors* is prefigured by the whole plotline of James' earlier novel *Roderick Hudson* and in particular by one scene in which the influence of James' American sources, often underemphasized in critical accounts of his early work, is especially at issue. We will recall that *Roderick Hudson* is written in a third person perspective limited to Rowland Mallet, an American with impeccable taste in art but little creative talent himself. After discovering in a small American town the gifts of the novel's title character, who is an amateur sculptor, Rowland funds his apprenticeship to become an artist in Rome. Roderick's already difficult temperament and susceptibility to sensual pleasure become tragic as he develops a stubborn
infatuation for an American heiress, Christina Light, who, though receptive to his flirtation, eventually marries a European nobleman. The novel ends with Roderick’s fall to his death from a treacherous Swiss hiking trail he attempts to navigate at night during a thunderstorm in order to join Christina and her husband at their alpine resort. As with The American, in returning to his oeuvre in 1907 James was dissatisfied with some aspects of this plot. "The determinant function attributed to Christina Light," he writes, "fails to commend itself to our sense of truth and proportion." This is to say that Roderick’s single-minded pursuit of Christina is insufficiently justified; his death feels rushed; "the time-scheme of the story is quite inadequate." Perhaps James felt he had resorted to mere temptation in motivating Roderick’s actions and consequent demise. There is evidence, though, that James had not initially intended Roderick’s plotline to be so singularly determined by Christina’s influence. The progression of Christina’s character seems to have surprised him – he was so fascinated by it that she reappears à la comédie humaine as the eponymous character of The Princess Casamassima (1886) – and in 1907 he recalls that he had not planned the novel’s ending when he began writing it, as it was published serially.

90 13.
91 12.
92 Compare Rowland’s Edenic outburst to Roderick in the novel’s penultimate chapter: "I had myself in a measure launched you in the world and thrown you among temptations." James, Henry. Roderick Hudson. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1961. 387. (This is the 1875 text)
93 "The book was not finished when it had to begin appearing in monthly fragments." James Art 6.
A revisiting of *Roderick Hudson* makes clear that James may have initially intended for Roderick's death to come about as a result of a drug addiction; he at least left himself the possibility as a kind of *deus ex machina* should it become necessary as the novel's final installments approached. The foreshadowing in early chapters is even unsubtle. Roderick's father, his cousin tells Rowland, has "melted away": "This is literally true, for he drank himself to death." Roderick's mother has known a "portrait-painter at Richmond" who "used to drink raw brandy": "I promised her last night [...] that as for brandy, raw or diluted, I detested it," Roderick recounts to Rowland. Roderick's first masterpiece, one he creates in Northampton and that stirs Rowland's interest in him, is engraved "Δίψα," "thirst," and represents "a naked youth drinking from a gourd." Rowland (and Rowland only) refers to the statuette twice in the novel as the "Water-drinker," but in fact it is not entirely clear that water is the liquid at issue: Roderick insists unhelpfully that "The cup is knowledge, pleasure, experience. Anything of that kind," but never addresses the cup's contents *per se.*

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94 James *Roderick* 38.

95 48.

96 30.

97 37. Rowland refers to the statue as the "Water-drinker" here and on page 42:

"I declare," [Roderick] cried, "there's a career for a man, and I have twenty minds to embrace it on the spot – to be the typical, original, national American artist! It's inspiring!"

Rowland burst out laughing and told him that he liked his practice better than his theory, and that a saner impulse than this had inspired his little Water-drinker.
exuberant moment early during his stay in Rome he toasts his intended allegorical statue of "America" with a glass of champagne.\textsuperscript{98}

As the novel progresses we hear less and less about Roderick's disposition to addiction and more and more about his interest in Christina Light. Nevertheless certain details of his developing erotic pursuit retain features of the earlier storyline – his admiration for Christina is described in terms that recall drugs. When at one point as a result of Roderick's entreaties Christina temporarily breaks her engagement to her aristocratic fiancé, we read the following De Quincey-esque depiction of Roderick's response:

Roderick was lying on his divan in a white dressing-gown, staring up at the frescoed ceiling. The room was deliciously cool, and filled with the moist, sweet odor of the circumjacent roses and violets. All this seemed highly fantastic, and yet Rowland hardly felt surprised [...] Roderick lay motionless, except that he slightly turned his head toward his friend. He was smelling a large white rose, and he continued to present it to his nose.\textsuperscript{99}

At one party Christina's mother is described as "rosy with triumph, to say nothing of a less metaphysical cause." Arguably a "metaphysical cause" at issue later at the same party, however, when Rowland notices that Roderick too is "flushed" – "I'm intoxicated with her [Christina's] beauty!" he exclaims.\textsuperscript{100} There is even one peculiar instance where the text seems to enact formally the

\textsuperscript{98} 104.

\textsuperscript{99} 301-302.

\textsuperscript{100} 161; 163.
substitution of Christina for an intoxicating substance. In a letter written by Rowland to Roderick's relatives in America, we find an apparent *non sequitur*, complete with ellipsis: "[Roderick] came into my room last night, miserably tipsy. I assure you, it didn't amuse me..... About Miss Light it's a long story."¹⁰¹ This is the last time Roderick is reported clearly drinking. The ellipsis here would stand in for the qualities which prompt James to have recourse to Christina Light in explaining Roderick's untimely death: presumably James considered Christina a more interesting choice than drink ("it didn't amuse me") from the point of view of narrative intrigue (the "long story") as a "determinant function" of Roderick's decline. It is true that her eventual marriage in *Roderick Hudson* suggests Christina may be just as materially determined in her course of action as any inert substance; we find her revolutionized, however, in *The Princess Casamassima*, and living apart from her husband.

Immediately following this letter is a scene which, though comparatively brief, constitutes James' most extended explicit treatment of intoxication as represented in works of art anywhere in his novels. Furthermore, read with an eye to its textual sources, it stages a dialogue not only between Roderick and one of his patrons but also between aesthetic views championed by Ralph Waldo Emerson and by Nathaniel Hawthorne with regards to intoxication and inspiration. Mr. Leavenworth, an American tourist in Europe who has commissioned an allegorical statute (of "Culture" in the first edition and

¹⁰¹ 230-31.
"Intellectual Refinement" in the New York Edition) from Roderick, is visiting the young man's studio and observing the rest of his work.

[Roderick] had lately begun a representation of a lazzarone lounging in the sun; an image of serene, irresponsible, sensuous life. The real lazzarone, he had admitted, was a vile fellow; but the ideal lazzarone—and his own had been subtly idealized—was a precursor of the millennium.

Mr. Leavenworth had apparently just transferred his unhurrying gaze to the figure.

"Something in the style of the Dying Gladiator?" he sympathetically observed.

"Oh no," said Roderick seriously, "he is not dying, he is only drunk!"

"Ah, but intoxication, you know," Mr. Leavenworth rejoined, "is not a proper subject for sculpture. Sculpture should not deal with transitory attitudes."

"Lying dead drunk is not a transitory attitude! Nothing is more permanent, more sculpturesque, more monumental!"

"An entertaining paradox," said Mr. Leavenworth, "if we had time to exercise our wits upon it. I remember at Florence an intoxicated figure by Michael Angelo which seemed to me a deplorable aberration of a great mind. I myself touch liquor in no shape whatever. I have traveled through Europe on cold water. The most varied and attractive lists of wines are offered me, but I brush them aside. No cork has ever been drawn at my command!"
"The movement of drawing a cork calls into play a very pretty set of muscles," said Roderick. "I think I will make a figure in that position."

"A Bacchus, realistically treated! My dear young friend, never trifle with your lofty mission. Spotless marble should represent virtue, not vice!"  

To begin with, we read that Roderick has articulated a distinction between the "real" and the "ideal" – "he had admitted" it, presumably in an earlier unrecorded conversation with Rowland Mallet. The "serene, irresponsible, sensuous" drunkenness of the "real" lazzarone is "vile." The "ideal lazzarone" on the other hand is beatifically forward-looking, a "precursor of the millenium," and so Mr. Leavenworth is mistaken when his "unhurrying gaze" takes it as alluding backwards, as it were, to a Classical masterpiece.  

In fact Roderick's own position here constitutes an allusion, not to Classical sculpture but to Emerson's foundational essay on American artistry, "The Poet," where Emerson suggests a similar distinction between real and ideal intoxications. Whereas in my first chapter I focused on "The Poet" as a negotiation of the kinds of instrumentality and self-sufficiency proper to the poetic sphere, in the context of James's work Emerson's essay is most pertinent as a source of plot – a "typical tale" – with which James is engaged in a struggle. 

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102 232-33.

103 The statue is now referred to more commonly in English as the Dying Gaul or Dying Galatian.
The poet knows that he speaks adequately then only when he speaks somewhat wildly, or "with the flower of the mind"; not with the intellect used as an organ, but with the intellect released from all service and suffered to take its direction from its celestial life; or as the ancients were wont to express themselves, not with intellect alone but with the intellect inebriated by nectar.\textsuperscript{104}

Emerson's concern here is less with determining the nature of the "celestial life" he refers to in itself and more with relocating the source of poetic material to the interior of the artist's own body instead of some force external to him, which is why the celestial life is referred to as "its," i.e. the "intellect's" itself. He is careful to close this passage by referring to the ancient doctrine that poets are inebriated as a means of expression, that is, an approximate description not to be taken literally. Nevertheless the "nectar" at issue here has its earthly analogues: there are "coarser or finer quasi-mechanical substitutes for the true nectar," including "wine, mead, narcotics, coffee, tea, opium," and "the fumes of sandalwood and tobacco."\textsuperscript{105}

Emerson's rhetorical insistence on the distinction between the "true nectar" and its false substitutes justifies itself by an appeal to the particular danger associated with confusing the two, in a passage that could serve as a typology of Roderick's "deterioration":


\textsuperscript{105} 300.
Hence a great number of such as were professionally expressers of Beauty, as painters, poets, musicians and actors, have been more than others wont to lead a life of pleasure and indulgence; all but the few who received the true nectar; and, as it was a spurious mode of attaining freedom, as it was an emancipation not into the heavens but into the freedom of baser places, they were punished for that advantage they won, by a dissipation and deterioration. But never can any advantage be taken of nature by a trick. The spirit of the world, the great calm presence of the Creator, comes not forth to the sorceries of opium or wine. The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple soul in a clean and chaste body. That is not an inspiration, which we owe to narcotics, but some counterfeit excitement and fury.\textsuperscript{106}

A moral imperative, rather than simply concern for precision, drives Emerson's will to separate the "spirit of the world" from "sorceries." The startling logic of this passage suggests that "inspiration" and "counterfeit excitement" are so similar as to have led many "professional" artists to confuse them, and this confusion helps explain the "life of pleasure and indulgence" that so many of them fall into.

\textit{Roderick Hudson} is at once drawn to the character arc Emerson describes as typical for the artist and resistant to it. On the one hand, the novel's unwavering descriptions of Roderick's artistic talent would lead us to believe he is among the "few who received the true nectar"; on the other, the novel draws a clear causal

\textsuperscript{106} 300.
connection between his "life of pleasure and indulgence" and his death at an early age, even if the "pleasure" involved has as its object a person rather than a chemical. But *Roderick Hudson* does not consist of merely a kind of experimental demonstration or refutation of Emerson's theses. Indeed that Roderick himself should voice opinions derived from Emerson's "The Poet," as if aware himself of and in agreement with the essay that would condemn his "type" to inevitable dissolution, undermines such an allegorical interpretation – Roderick never coincides entirely either with the "professional expressers of Beauty" Emerson discusses nor with Emerson himself as writer of "The Poet." What is at stake in these shifts is that James can no longer take for granted as Emerson may the expression of "Beauty" as necessarily implicating that of a moral good. For Emerson, that is, the "counterfeit"-ness of the drinker's work seems to be a purely formal quality of it, and he does not address at all the relative morality of its contents. James is asking whether the immorality of precisely such contents might not entirely overcome the artist's ability to transform them. This question seems particularly caught up in a temporal dynamic that infuses *Roderick Hudson*: for even if sculpture is, as Leavenworth suggests, best suited to the non-transitory, the same thing could never be said of the novelistic.

If in this scene Roderick evokes, without categorically adopting or rejecting, an Emersonian position, what is the background of Leavenworth's premises? "Sculpture should not deal with transitory attitudes" recalls Lessing's position in *Laokoon* that "The single moment receives through art [here specifically visual art, e.g. painting and sculpture] an unchangeable duration; therefore it must not express anything, of which we can think only as
transitory." Furthermore Leavenworth shares his dismissive judgment of Michelangelo’s *Bacchus* with Percy Shelley in his "Remarks on some of the Statues in the Gallery of Florence": "This figure is a most revolting mistake of the spirit and meaning of Bacchus. It looks drunken." His final pronouncement, "Spotless marble should represent virtue, not vice!", is relatively banal, but in the *New York Edition* James gives more detail and roots this notion in the American politics of Temperance: "Spotless marble seems to me false to itself when it represents anything less than Conscious Temperance – 'the golden mean' in all things." In tracing Leavenworth's views back to an American politico-religious ideology, this 1907 revision also suggests a more immediate source for his views than either Lessing or Shelley, namely, Nathaniel Hawthorne.

In the opening scene of Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun* (1860), we find the Dying Gladiator similarly discussed, but in that novel, Kenyon, another American expatriate sculptor, is dissatisfied with the work precisely because he takes issue with a kind of "transitoriness" it conveys:

"I used to admire this statue exceedingly," he remarked, "but, latterly, I find myself getting weary and annoyed that the man should be such a length of time leaning on his arm in the very act of death. If he is so terribly hurt, why does he not sink down and die?

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107 And later, by contrast: "The poet is not compelled to concentrate his picture into the space of a single moment." Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Laokoon and How the Ancients Represented Death*, tr. Helen Zimmern. London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1914. 20; 22.


without further ado? Flitting moments, imminent emergencies, imperceptible intervals between two breaths, ought not to be incrusted with the eternal repose of marble; in any sculptural subject, there should be a moral standstill, since there must of necessity be a physical one.”

This statement on Kenyon’s part is meant to be understood as a caprice (“sculptors always abuse one another's works,” Hawthorne’s narrator explains – they wish to be original), but in fact it serves as a keystone to James’s later reworking of the scene. Leavenworth represents a conservative principle in two ways then: within the text itself he expresses an admiration for the old masters, and furthermore intertextually he recalls at least one of Roderick Hudson’s major influences, though he garbles Kenyon’s point. But Leavenworth’s suggestions on the one hand that the Dying Gladiator represents a masterpiece and on the other that sculpture ought not to represent the transitory or fleeting are exposed by Kenyon’s insight here as irreconcilable with one another: the Gladiator’s pose is meant to capture one instant of a process, that of "the very act of death," not a "permanent attitude." If anything Roderick’s lazzarone, as Roderick himself argues, provides a more of a "standstill": he is after all "lying dead drunk" rather than, say, in the middle of either dying or drinking.

So the lazzarone scene stages a dense conversation among some of James’ major influences early in his career, a kind of dissonant symphony without resolution. Its position within Roderick Hudson however makes clear that it is meant precisely to remain unresolved: it indicates James’ abandonment of a

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whole plotline and choice to represent something more "suitable" than "intoxication" in his case study of the artist. The question of whether or not dying is fluid or static is not merely one among many that could serve as an impetus to this aesthetic philosophizing, however: after all, it is precisely the manner and timing of Roderick’s death that is at issue.

"Nothing in it for himself": What is Strether smoking?

Death works very differently, however, in *The Ambassadors*, as a return to the "Kubla Khan" passage makes clear:

It amused him to say to himself that he might for all the world have been going to die – die resignedly; the scene was filled for him with so deep a death-bed hush, so melancholy a charm. That meant the postponement of everything else – which made so for the quiet lapse of life; and the postponement in especial of the reckoning to come – unless indeed the reckoning to come were to be one and the same thing with extinction. It faced him, the reckoning, over the shoulder of much interposing experience – which also faced him; and one would float to it doubtless duly through these caverns of Kubla Khan.\(^{111}\)

We are used to *The Ambassadors* reordering what in early James are straightforward narrative occurrences into the mere consciousness of the possibility of such occurrences: the formulation "It amused him to say to himself that he might [...] have been" is already an example of this kind of thinking before we arrive at what is being "said." The "reckoning" to come (in Woollett)

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\(^{111}\) James *Ambassadors* 414.
and the "interposing experience" are both personified as now finally facing Strether, but we have grounds to wonder whether the "floating" that characterizes him here is not, as I began this chapter by noting, the same it has ever been. That is to say, Strether would like to situate himself somehow between his "experience" and his "reckoning," outside of time. *The Ambassadors* is the only of James' text written in the so-called late style that nevertheless undermines with the structure of its plot the premises of that style: if the attention and focus that the difficulty of understanding James' late work require are an attempt at "sobering up" what he understands to have been aesthetic failures in the case of *Roderick Hudson* and *The American*, of necessitating the reader's wakefulness while maintaining proper "doses" of the romantic, nevertheless *The Ambassadors* presents an utterly self-cancelling take on the attempt to rid consciousness of its missteps by means of rigorous self-narration.

Rather than his drinking, it is Strether's smoking throughout the novel that provides a useful condensation of these premises as a parody of an addiction narrative in which Strether actively tries but fails to become addicted. Cigarettes bear a set of peculiar valences throughout *The Ambassadors*. Indulgences of Parisian decadence, they are in some sense intoxicating; but Strether's smoking fails to bring the great revelation or perceptual disturbance he seems to expect. Cigarettes appear as Strether first apprehensively waits below the balcony of Chad's apartment at the very end of Book Two:

He had struck off the fancy that it might, as a preliminary, be of service to him to be seen, by a happy accident, from the third-story windows [...] Meanwhile, however, the chance he had allowed for—the chance of being seen in time from the balcony—had
become a fact. Two or three of the windows stood open to the violet air; and, before Strether had cut the knot by crossing, a young man had come out and looked about him, had lighted a cigarette and tossed the match over, and then, resting on the rail, had given himself up to watching the life below while he smoked. His arrival contributed, in its order, to keeping Strether in position; the result of which in turn was that Strether soon felt himself noticed. The young man began to look at him as in acknowledgement of his being himself in observation [...] There was youth in that. 112

Here in the early scene what functions as an intoxicant is not smoking itself but seeing someone else smoke and consequently "giv[ing] himself up to watching." So much is clear to the reader, but James deprives Strether himself of this insight. Book Three of the novel opens on a conversation between Strether and Waymarsh, but our narrator has winkingly alerted us to a change in Strether: "The Paris evening in short was, for Strether, in the very taste of the soup, in the goodness, as he was innocently pleased to think, of the wine." 113 Such moments represent progress forward from The Sacred Fount (James' 1901 experimental failure of a first-person novel), where the narrator never steps away to dismiss his protagonist's theories in such a way; they are the fruit of James' decision to narrate Strether's story in the third person. The Ambassadors draws attention to its own derision of Strether, however, by recounting Strether's tragically identical but nevertheless somehow mistaken attitude towards himself: "'Well,' said

112 69.
113 72.
Strether almost gaily, 'I guess I don’t know anything!'” he exclaims to Waymarsh two pages into their meal together.\(^{114}\)

The next time we find Strether smoking is indeed with Waymarsh, at his second visit to Chad’s apartment, during a conversation with Miss Barrace, the novel’s pre-eminent cigarette smoker.

These things [i.e. the accoutrements of Chad’s flat] were enhanced for Miss Barrace by a succession of excellent cigarettes – acknowledged, acclaimed, as a part of the wonderful supply left behind him by Chad – in an almost equal absorption of which Strether found himself blindly, almost wildly pushing forward. He might perish by the sword as well as by famine, and he knew that his having abetted the lady by an excess that was rare with him would count for little in the sum – as Waymarsh might so easily add it up – of her licence. Waymarsh has smoked of old, smoked hugely; but Waymarsh did nothing now, and that gave him his advantage over people who took things up lightly just when others had laid them heavily down. Strether had never smoked, and he felt as if he flaunted at his friend that this had been only because of a reason. The reason, it now began to appear even to him, was that he had never had a lady to smoke with.\(^{115}\)

Smoking in this scene does more than reinforce or emphasize the erotic power dynamics at play in Waymarsh’s and Strether’s reactions to Miss Barrace, though

\(^{114}\) 73.

\(^{115}\) 80-81.
it certainly operates in that way as well. That Strether should "blindly, almost wildly" take part in Miss Barrace's "absorption" of cigarettes is excused by the syntactic reference to their belonging to Chad that interrupts this sentence: it is as if Strether himself rushes in to "acknowledge" to the reader that Chad is as if present in the cigarettes he has left behind. Strether justifies his own "abetting" of Miss Barrace's crime by reasoning that his joining her is not encouraging her to indulge any more than she already would; but this logic characteristically overlooks Strether's own complicity in his circumstances. It begins to appear "even" to Strether, after all, once he feels the urge to "flaunt" their closeness, that he is only smoking because of Miss Barrace's presence.

Strether's allusion to the prophecies of Jeremiah ("by sword or by famine") suggests that cigarettes might represent more than a mere indulgence – they are dangerous, since if they constitute "excess" they must correspond to the sword rather than the famine, though the nature of this danger is left ambiguous. James is taking advantage of the peculiarity that in Western cultures tobacco is not considered to produce alterations in perception or personality: it is a kind of borderline intoxicant without a direct distorting action upon perception but with a capacity for the regulation and timed control of pleasure and unpleasure. Here Strether's vacillations between on the one hand concern about some quality or property inherent to these cigarettes and on the other the entirety of their context allow him to overlook the consequences of either one – namely, that this experience has been prepared for by Chad for the purposes of bringing about a particular reaction on Strether's part – even though it is "acknowledged" that it is Chad who has left the cigarettes behind. It is precisely Strether's anxiety regarding the influence of a literal visible intoxicant that has left him figuratively
intoxicated – tempted, dissuaded, blinded, wild – such as he will remain throughout the novel. Thus James stages Strether in the mindset characterizing his own earlier authorship in Roderick Hudson, and his narrator as at one conscious remove from this mindset.

When Chad arrives he does not fail to compound Strether's sense that smoking grants a kind of epiphanic causal clarity, as early during one of their "recurrent talks":

He [Chad] walked up and down in front of this production [i.e. the "facts and figures" of which Strether has "put him in full possession"], sociably took Strether's arm at the points at which he stopped, surveyed it repeatedly from the right and from the left, inclined a critical head to either quarter, and, while he puffed a still more critical cigarette, animadverted to his companion on this passage and that. Strether sought relief – there were hours in which he required it – in repeating himself; it was in truth not to be blinked that Chad had a way. The main question as yet was of what it was a way to.\(^\text{116}\)

Chad and Strether are not literally walking anywhere in this passage, rather the conceit of an "inspection" of some external object serves to render Chad's means of investigating his interlocutor's information as if it were a painting or sculpture along Chad's "way." This extended figurative play already puts into question the status of the cigarette Chad is reportedly smoking, even before this cigarette is described as being "still more critical" than his "head." If Chad's smoking here is

\(^{116}\) 116, James' emphasis.
being reported like an event, when does it happen? Or is his smoking part of the series of mannerisms we hear about in reference to this imaginary flânerie, like his taking Strether’s arm, and not meant to be taken in its strictest sense as a description of a fictional event? Here cigarettes have become part of Chad’s whole demeanor, "not to be blinked"; and Strether has adopted the reaction of "repeating himself." This reaction is replaced by the end of Book Five, where we read of Strether: "He lighted in the street a cigarette, which again gave him more time. But it was already sharp for him that there was no use in time."

There Strether is in conversation with Chad again, planning his first meeting with Madame de Vionnet; but now he is smoking on his own impetus and furthermore with no question of a "lady to smoke with." Such independence accompanies a new, perhaps premature insight – "It was already sharp for him" – that his continued delays serve no purpose. Indeed by the end of the chapter plans for the meeting have been arranged even though Strether "went through no form of assent," which is to say that his refusal to answer Chad’s invitation ends up constituting an agreement to it.

The cigarette functions as a material locus of two competing or even contradictory principles, on the one hand that Strether ought to appreciate Paris on its own terms and on the other that he has come to alter it by removing Chad. The cigarette is a kind of formal protest that will cause no substantive change in what Chad has already decided to show him and when, but that nevertheless allows Strether some sense of agency – we could only describe Strether as enjoying himself throughout this scene. There is no use for time, but there is a

117 168.
use for Strether: "He was being, as he constantly though mutely expressed it, used." Here then what was visible to others in the form of a cigarette takes the form of a "mutely expressed" "reflexion" that nevertheless serves the same purpose. And Strether's letters to Mrs. Newsome are eventually no more than an extension of this talking to himself: "When he wished to help himself to believe that he was still all right he reflected—and in fact with wonder—on the unimpaired frequency of their correspondence." It is easy to miss the oddness of such phrasing as "help himself to believe" in the flow of James' prose, but such small stylistic maneuvers are essential to an understanding of the almost technological approach that Strether takes to his own consciousness, his faith in his capacity to manipulate it even without recourse to a drug that would be understood to alter his mind, as it were, automatically. Strether is mute in his expression here, but the expression is still registered by our narrator and ourselves and so it is not after all entirely unheard. But James' removal to the third person means that the mere ability to comment on or describe Strether's thought process works to distance us from it and recognize it for what it is, much as cigarettes work as an external or legible signal of the same problems for Strether's companions.

These patterns continue the next time we find Strether smoking, as he waits for the Pococks' arrival in Paris in Book Eight and reassures Waymarsh: "Strether had woven this web of cheerfulness while they waited in the court for Chad; he had sat smoking cigarettes to keep himself quiet while, caged and

118 181.

119 182.
leonine, his fellow traveller paced and turned before him.” This passage brings out even more fully a conflation of smoking and not speaking out loud. It is especially strange however in that no indication is given of what Strether wishes not to say here; the "web" of his expectations for the Pococks' visit has already been woven outside our narrator's purview. Here staying silent is in line with Strether's goal of remaining entirely unaffected by his experience in Paris. Such passivity explains how Strether can feel, at the beginning of Book Eleven, "all in harmony with the chairs and the flower-pots, the cigarettes and the starlight," smoking with Chad on the balcony in a kind of revision of the scene he first encountered at Chad's apartment. The novel's final cigarette, just before Strether's departure for America, is Chad's: "a figure whose cigarette-spark he could see leaned on the rail and looked down at him." Strether does not smoke again, as if in recognition of the independence of his delusions and intoxications, as present at the novel's close as they have ever been, from their material underpinning.

"Doing Nothing" and Advertisement

The conclusion towards which The Ambassadors is moving is quite different from that of The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl, in ways connected to the progression of Strether's pseudo-addiction here. Many readings of those two other "late phase" novels have explored what we could call underhanded motives lying behind their protagonist's final apparently passive

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120 248.
121 357.
122 423.
actions. So for example in *The Freudian Body*, Leo Bersani analyzes Maggie Verver's behavior in *The Golden Bowl* in terms of its subtle and selfish manipulations of those around her: "Maggie's strategy [...] consists essentially in bringing the novel to a halt [...] by forcing everyone else to shut up." And indeed the point is that Maggie ultimately succeeds in her goal of dividing Charlotte and the Prince while sustaining her father's nominal ignorance of their affair; her strategy necessitates silence and passivity more than outright manipulation. More recently, Slavoj Zizek has applied similar interpretative steps to the bind in which Milly Theale leaves Merton Densher and Kate Croy at the end of *The Wings of the Dove*, demonstrating that what the text presents as Milly's decision to allow her friends to marry is in fact a calculated means of separating them: "whatever Kate and Densher do, the very choice Milly's bequest confronts them with makes them guilty." Both these readings rely on what we could call a psychoanalytic perspective to the extent that their characterizations of Maggie and Milly would doubtless have shocked James; that is, whereas James presents these two women's choices as part of a vision of staggering moral sublimity and selflessness, unconsciously, we could say, each of their texts provides for a reading in which their deeply self-interested motives are rewarded by the plot (Bersani and Zizek's own analyses faced with the explicit reasoning of James' texts would constitute a kind of "reversal into its opposite" of that reasoning).

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The Golden Bowl and The Wings of the Dove both rely on a model of plot in which one character (Maggie, Milly) realizes she is being deceived; in both cases the deception involves covering over the sexual or romantic intrigue of a particular relationship (Charlotte and the Prince, Kate and Merton); and in both, rather than directly confront the parties responsible for misleading her, the heroine indirectly and elaborately demonstrates to them her consciousness of being lied to. Both adopt a passive model of behavior in which they correctly presume that their refusal to name outright the wrongdoing at issue will function effectively to stop it. Strether’s distinction in this grouping is that he learns of his deception only at the very end of his novel, and whatever the nature of his fascination with Madame de Vionnet it is incomparable to the bonds of trust at risk between Maggie and the Prince or Milly and Merton: he has no serious claim to personal betrayal by the sexual relationship he discovers. Strether may be said to bring about the dissolution of Chad and Madame de Vionnet’s affair precisely because he may or may not understand the extent of it, but as the novel progresses he begins to behave as if he did. The change in his behavior that so repels his and Maria Gostrey’s attempts at explanation – "'I don’t get drunk; I don’t pursue the ladies; I don’t spend money; I don’t even write sonnets” – remains apparently unmotivated, but it still works. Strether’s behavior, we could say, is determined by the principle that he should know and do nothing.

This is how he explains himself in a well-known passage from the beginning of Book Eight. Strether is deliberating whether or not he should take a walk by Madame de Vionnet’s house. Though she lives quite close, he has generally avoided doing so lest he should seem overeager, given their encounter "as if by chance" at Notre Dame.
He had reflected that the encounter in question [at Notre Dame] had been none of his making; clinging again intensely to the strength of his position, which was precisely that there was nothing in it for himself. From the moment he actively pursued the charming associate of his adventure, from that moment his position weakened, for he was then acting in an interested way.\textsuperscript{125}

Strether reassures himself that encountering Madame de Vionnet was "none of his making," that he has not compromised the "strength" that comes from his disinterested stance. "There was nothing in it for himself": In doing or making nothing, in getting nothing, Strether has accomplished what is required by Emerson's injunction that the poet's inspiration be "released from all service."

Strether is the ideal artist from such a point of view precisely in that he fails to create, and his willingness to bracket the financial and marital motivations that have brought him to Europe in the first place makes his "position" an eminently aesthetic one, indeed one that recalls Kant's emphasis on the disinterested quality of the satisfaction concerned in judging beauty.\textsuperscript{126}

In this orientation towards doing nothing, Strether's precursor in James's work is once again Roderick Hudson's Rowland Mallet. Returning to Rowland offers an opportunity to clarify the logic by which "doing nothing" as an aesthetic activity functions as a Jamesian screen for travel to Europe and the experience of intoxication, and will allow us to ask in The Ambassadors what it means to do something, that is, to fail from an aesthetic standpoint. Early in Roderick Hudson, Rowland smokes a cigar as he discusses his upcoming voyage to Europe with his

\textsuperscript{125} James Ambassadors 245.

cousin Cecilia. He dreams of travelling in order to purchase important works of art and donate them to American museums:

He imparted none of these visions to Cecilia, and he suddenly swept them away with the declaration that he was of course an idle useless creature and that he should probably be even more so in Europe than at home. “The only thing is,” he said, “that there I shall seem to be doing something. I shall be better beguiled, and shall be therefore, I suppose, in a better humor with life. You may say that that is just the humor a useless man should keep out of. He should cultivate humility and depression. I did a good many things when I was in Europe before, but I did not spend a winter in Rome. Every one assures me that this is a peculiar refinement of bliss; you must have noticed the almost priggish ecstasy with which those who have enjoyed it talk about it. It's evidently a sort of glorified loafing: a passive life there, thanks to the number and the quality of one’s impressions, takes on a very respectable likeness to an active pursuit. It's always lotus-eating, only you sit down at table and the lotuses are served up on rococo china.\footnote{James Roderick (Scribner) 6-7.}

It is not enough to do nothing, then, but it is necessary to do nothing while nevertheless seeming to do something. Rowland’s idleness and uselessness are out of place in America because they are obvious or undisguised; here Europe, in offering a wealth of surface-level "impressions," also offers a veneer under which Rowland’s non-activity is hidden. Rowland equates doing nothing with Homeric
lotus-eating – that is, a soporific intoxication that prevents a return home – and the European sheen of activity with a table setting. The idleness, the drug itself, remains the same; its presentation is what matters. We should recognize this formulation as the prototype of the discussion of Romanticism and Realism in the critical preface to *The American* cited above: "There are drugs enough, clearly – it is all a question of applying them with tact." Here, "with tact" functions as a screen for the earlier "in Europe."

In a later conversation with Mary Garland, a distant relation of Roderick’s, Rowland recapitulates this point but drops the reference to intoxicants:

"Don't you know how to do anything at all? Have you no profession?"

Rowland shook his head. "Absolutely none."

"What do you then do all day?"

"Nothing that would make a figure in a description. That's why, as I tell you, I'm going to Europe. There at least if I do nothing I shall see a great deal; and if I'm not a producer I shall at any rate be an observer."

The formulation "doing nothing," then, includes not only travel and intoxication, but also observation as opposed to production – "seeing" does not qualify as an activity. The grammatical logic of Strether's last sentence is overdetermined: "at least, if I do nothing, I shall see a great deal" in its immediate context seems to operate as a concession, as if really to read, "though I shall do nothing, at least I shall see a great deal." But its particular wording allows for a more rigorous
logical interpretation: "if and only if I do nothing, then I shall see a great deal." In that case, inactivity is not so much a burden as it is a necessity. Once again, however, the goal is to do nothing while seeming to do something. Seeing is not counted as an activity, but rather as the semblance of an activity that one must remain inactive to accomplish. This substitution of viewing for activity is to be found throughout *The Ambassadors*. Once Strether has joined Little Bingham in Chad’s apartment, for example, looking out from the balcony he had seen from the street, he reflects: "He had known nothing and nobody as he stood in the street; but hadn’t his view now taken a bound in the direction of every one and every thing?"

Rowland and Strether’s concern with observation in general is closely tied to their model of the proper kind of artistic viewership in particular, one in which seeing a work of art prompts not a change in behavior but only an alteration in perception. The utility of intoxication as an analogous experience to the encounter with aesthetic objects is that both are conceived as a kind of temporary and largely passive consumption. Furthermore, in both Strether and Rowland’s cases this encounter is described as effecting a purely formal change: what is being viewed remains essentially the same in its content, but intoxication, or prior exposure to great art, or its placement in Europe rather than America, has rendered the mode of its presentation different. Here we recognize one iteration of the logic of estrangement. But if estrangement and originality are most clearly at issue in the Jamesian centrality of "doing nothing," another

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principle of the high modernists, the autonomy of the aesthetic sphere, is also being considered, though more subtly.

To understand this second valence of doing nothing it is necessary to explore what it means in James to do something. Chad and Strether's strange final conversation, in which Chad announces his imminent departure to pursue the "art of advertising," meditates precisely on that question.

Advertising scientifically worked presented itself thus as the great new force. [Chad:] "It really does the thing, you know."

They were face to face under the street lamp as they had been the first night, and Strether, no doubt, looked blank. "Affects, you mean, the sale of the object advertised?"

"Yes – but affects it extraordinarily; really beyond what one had supposed. I mean of course when it's done as one makes out that, in our roaring age, it can be done. I've been finding out a little; though it doubtless doesn't amount to much more than what you originally, so awfully vividly – and all, very nearly, that first night – put before me. It's an art like another, and infinite like all the arts." He went on as if for the joke of it – almost as if his friend's face amused him. "In the hands, naturally, of a master."

Strether is horrified; he stares at Chad "as if, there on the pavement, without a pretext, he had begun to dance a fancy step." On the one hand he is reacting personally to Chad's misapprehension of the change he has undergone in Europe, that is, to the suggestion that Strether has deliberately and consistently,
"so awfully vividly," encouraged his abandonment of Madame de Vionnet. On the other, Strether seems disturbed by Chad’s idea that advertising is "an art like any other." The problem with this conflation is that advertising, as Chad puts it, "does the thing," a formulation Strether is immediately able to translate as pertaining to Chad's bottom line, the "sale of the object." "Shall you give your friend up for the money in it?" he asks, to which Chad responds, "You're not altogether – in your so great 'solemnity' – kind. Haven't I been drinking you in – showing you all I feel you're worth to me?"\(^{131}\) In the equivalency Chad establishes grammatically between "drinking [Strether] in" and "showing [him]" his "worth," he only further demonstrates his conflation of the Jamesian principled opposition between doing nothing and doing something.

Again, Strether has "done nothing" not in the sense that he has remained ignorant of the sexual dynamics between Chad and Madame de Vionnet, but in that his perfect equanimity has led to a situation in which his actual knowledge or ignorance of those dynamics is completely irrelevant to others' treatment of him. Chad's friends, with the possible exception of Little Bilham, have ascribed their own motivations and assumptions to Strether's perfectly maintained blank slate, and none more so than Chad himself. But in taking Strether's semblance of "doing something" at face value, Chad has revealed that the underpinnings of his own orientation towards his time in Paris are ultimately financial, and has given James's readers an opportunity to consider whether that means they are more or less than purely aesthetic from Strether's point of view.

\(^{131}\) 432.
The question of whether advertising constitutes "an art like another, and infinite like all the arts" is at the heart of the so-called High Modernists' self-conception of literariness, a conception towards which James begins to gesture here in his late phase. A line of European writers from Théophile Gautier to Oscar Wilde had proclaimed the autonomy of the aesthetic, art for art's sake, as if in order to distinguish sharply between art and non-art, "real life." In fact, however, as Frederic Jameson has pointed out in the work of Greenberg, Adorno, and the New Critics, "it should be obvious that this monitory differentiation is very far indeed from a separation between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic: rather it is a disjunction internal to the very sphere of the cultural itself, internal to the aesthetic in its widest sense, for high art and literature are in that sense as cultural as television, while advertising and pop culture are as aesthetic as Wallace Stevens or Joyce." Advertising here would be grouped with such phenomena as the popular novel: cultural productions designed to be easily consumed and to make money. In *The Problem with Pleasure*, Laura Frost has provided an analysis of the production of this division between high and low culture in terms of pleasure: in her reading, the reputed difficulty of modernists like Joyce and Lawrence, their resistance to easy reading or interpretation, serves as a means of distancing literary work from work designed purely to give easy pleasure. A sort of protestant moral and aesthetic value accrues to work that

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presents stylistic challenges of the kind we find everywhere in James's famously convoluted late novels.\footnote{Frost, Laura. The Problem with Pleasure: Modernism and its Discontents. New York: Columbia UP, 2013.}

The analogy that suggests itself in this cleaving within the cultural of the high from the low would liken the experience of intoxication to the consumption of low art or advertisement: a largely automatic and simple or direct access to pleasure. Frost quotes from Q. D. Leavis's discussion of "popular fiction" in Fiction and the Reading Public: "Novel-reading now is largely a drug habit."\footnote{Quoted in Frost, 101.} Reading from great, canonical work, on the other hand, entails a healthy and beneficially educational difficulty, sometimes described as a series of "shocks."

What is at issue, then, in the association we find over the course of James's career between his own aesthetics and "lotus-eating"? If Strether and Chad recapitulate a division between art and advertisement to be found elsewhere in later literary modernism, does intoxication fall on the side of art, silently defended by a character who insists that he doesn't get drunk and who fails to develop an addiction to cigarettes?

Rather than such an allegorical interpretation, in which intoxication falls on one side of an emerging high/low paradigm, in James's texts intoxication functions to indicate this emergence of the divide itself, the interstices in which the assignations of particular works to one or the other category remain undecidable and aesthetic purity is elusive or nonexistent. This interpretation helps to explain a relation to the world in which Strether's pattern is ambiguity
and negation: there is nothing in it for himself, he does nothing, he drinks but does not get drunk, he smokes but is not a smoker, he has and has not become caught up in the "typical tale" of Paris, and James has and has not produced a novel we could call original or new.

Again, in this regard Strether is unique among his compatriots in James's late fiction. The term "advertise" appears twice in chapter 30 of The Golden Bowl, for example, during a conversation in which Maggie wishes to recruit her confidante Fanny Assingham into knowing of and attempting to stop an affair between Maggie's husband, the Prince, and stepmother, Charlotte. "This renewal with an old friend of the old terms she had talked of with her father was the one opening for her spirit that wouldn't too much advertise or betray her."135 Here Maggie wishes to avoid "advertising" her strategy to her father, the Prince, or Charlotte. Later, however, when we read that Maggie is reminded of "her own constant danger of advertising subtle processes," the danger is that Fanny Assingham herself will understand too clearly the extent of Maggie's dissimulations and manipulations.136 In order to convert Fanny to her perspective, she must explain that she acts indirectly, doing something while seeming to do nothing. And indeed this is how she frames her actions to Fanny later in the same conversation.

Maggie had a silence. “I’ve made no trouble. I’ve made no scene. I’ve taken no stand. I’ve neither reproached nor accused him. You’ll say there’s a way in all that of being nasty enough.”

136 105.
“Oh!” dropped from Fanny as if she couldn’t help it.

“But I don’t think—strangely enough—that he regards me as nasty.”

[...] “You’ve everything,” said Mrs. Assingham with alacrity. Yet she remained for an instant embarrassed as to a further advance.

“Yet I don’t understand how, if you’ve done nothing—"

An impatience from Maggie had checked her. “I’ve not done absolutely ‘nothing.’”

“But what then—?”

“Well,” she went on after a minute, “he knows what I’ve done.”

Maggie’s series of denials or negations at the beginning of this citation recalls quite clearly the list of Parisian temptations to which Strether has failed to succumb at a similar juncture in *The Ambassadors*. But against Strether’s insistence that there be nothing in his behavior for himself, Maggie corrects Fanny’s characterization of her inactivity as "doing nothing." She has "not done absolutely 'nothing,'" for the Prince is in some measure aware of her activity; at the same time, she has acted indirectly enough that she can avoid accusations of having made "trouble," or "a scene." Maggie herself acknowledges that such behavior might be "nasty" in its own way, though she is convinced the Prince, who matters most, doesn't see her in that way. This passage is exemplary of Maggie’s simultaneous "advertising" of her knowledge and opinion and insistence that she knows less than she does. It is almost precisely the inverse of Strether’s stance – both in that Strether does not insist, and in that he allows

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137 117-18.
others to believe he knows more than he does. Perhaps a small moment near the novel’s end is also relevant to the distinctions between Strether and Maggie: for while Strether, all while insisting that he does not drink, nevertheless intoxicates himself in various ways, Maggie figures the affair between Charlotte and the Prince, from which she is excluded, as being one “filled to the brim with the wine of consciousness.”

138 Maggie resolutely distances herself from a kind of erotic intoxication to which Strether, all in his ignorance, nevertheless gives himself up. It is in this respect that Strether in “doing nothing” speaks most directly to a specifically aesthetic problem that preoccupied James over his whole career.

Strether’s position results from a line of images and concepts throughout James’s work relating on one level to the question of intoxication and on the other to a definitional problem of aesthetics, the origins and limits of what qualifies as art. We have seen that intoxication functions as a key analogy in James’s criticism, whether his earlier readings of Zola or the late New York edition prefaces to his revised works. There intoxication figures as necessary but insufficient to artistic creation: the intoxicant is the “sense of the way things don’t happen” that art simultaneously reveals and hides by means of its formal qualities. “There are drugs enough, clearly; it is all a question of applying them with tact.” But this theoretical, if figurative, treatment of the relation between intoxication and the aesthetic is complemented by the subtler fictional appearances of intoxicants in James’s work. *Roderick Hudson* is both James’s first novel and an extended reflection on the status of art and artists, and I have argued based on several readings that it was originally intended to follow the
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plot arc of an addiction narrative, in which Roderick would have succumbed to what Emerson had called the "dissipation and deterioration" to which artists are particularly prone. James's decision mid-serialization to emphasize the significance of Christina Light, rather than opium or another intoxicant, in Roderick's eventual death may account for his discomfort later in life as to the novel's "time-scheme," his sense that its ending is rushed or not entirely justified by what precedes it. Nevertheless remaining in the novel as if fossilized and preserved from James's change of course is a conversation in which many of James's sources are as if dramatically put in dialogue with one another, a conversation specifically concerning whether intoxication is a suitable subject for representation. This conversation, in which aesthetic ideas ranging from Lessing to Shelley to Emerson are pitted against one another, revolves around a distinction between sculpture and other arts in which sculpture is not suited to "transitory attitudes" such as drunkenness. The logical conclusion of such a dialogue is that drunkenness would be particularly suited to art forms in which time and temporality are of special importance. *Roderick Hudson* swerves away from a condemnation of intoxication as it comes to recognize that intoxication might function as a central metaphor for the proper subject of fiction, the transitory and fleeting that is, through the process of narrative, framed and contained.

Though intoxication and drinking feature elsewhere in James's work, the final and most significant iteration of their relationship to the aesthetic comes in *The Ambassadors*, a novel in which the protagonist claims not to get drunk. Rather than as an entirely negative relation to intoxication, we ought to understand this as a relation at one remove, in which the function of the intoxicant in Romantic
literature is thrown into question and revised. In fact, Strether is described as drinking the most at any point during the novel during the climactic encounter with Chad and Madame de Vionnet, a scene in which he is most starkly and openly faced with a reality he has hidden from himself until that moment. The progression of Strether's smoking constitutes a masterful parody of an opium addiction tale in which the various social valences and cues represented by cigarettes are far more engaging and relevant to a reading of Strether than either fantastical visions or the melodrama of an addiction tale. In the end, *Roderick Hudson* and *The Ambassadors* reveal the close relation between intoxication and a Jamesian aesthetic paradigm of non-productivity, in which artistic activity is at its purest when it "does nothing" but seems to do something. Such is James's perspective on a broader literary pattern of his time in which the aesthetic is conceived as isolated from other cultural activities; in *The Ambassadors* these activities are explicitly referred to as "advertising," the manipulation of visual and linguistic material for the purposes of encouraging consumption. Finally, my reading of *The Ambassadors* may hold some insight as to the novel's uniqueness in James's estimation, since when set in terms of "doing nothing" as over against "doing something" or "the thing," Strether is clearly distinct from the other protagonists of James's late fiction.
Works Cited


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Chapter 3

Drinking and Time in Proust

Dieu, touché de remords, avait fait le sommeil;

L’Homme ajouta le Vin, fils sacré du Soleil!

"L'ivresse de l'orage"

Alcohol and its effect, ivresse, occupy a complex and sometimes inconsistent position in the narrator’s descriptive vocabulary from the very beginning of A la recherche du temps perdu. Early in Combray, while the narrator Marcel reads upstairs after lunch, his grandmother has taken a walk outdoors, “réglé sur les mouvements divers qu'excitaient dans son âme l'ivresse de l'orage, la puissance de l'hygiène, la stupidité de mon éducation et la symétrie des jardins.” In fact, Marcel reports, only one thing can disturb this règlement: “si ma grand'tante lui criait : « Bathilde ! viens donc empêcher ton mari de boire du cognac ! »”¹³⁹ That is to say, only the possibility of her husband’s imminent intoxication by cognac justifies a rupture in the more figurative “ivresse” Bathilde enjoys when storms overshadow her walks. The strict principles that Bathilde represents later in Combray with respect to Marcel’s aesthetic upbringing


Note on citations: I will be citing primarily from four volumes of the Gallimard "Folio Classique" editions of Proust’s seven-volume work. For those volumes I will indicate at the first citation of each an abbreviation by which I will refer to them in footnotes in the rest of the chapter. For several citations, however, in which I will be referring to the scholarly Pléiade editions, I will provide the full citation information each time.
– that he ought only to read certain truly literary authors, that the visual works to which he is exposed be reproductions of the great masters – are foregrounded in this scene, where she rigorously values the poetic ecstasy offered by the "orage" and considers that of "cognac" not merely lesser but indeed deadly.¹⁴⁰

Thereafter the word “ivresse” is used in a multitude of contexts, in which it is sometimes more difficult to distinguish a principle underlying its many applications. Watching the clocktowers of Martinville, Marcel is “pris d’une sorte d’ivresse”; Swann experiences an “étrange ivresse” trying to interpret the sonata by Vinteuil which will captivate him throughout Un amour de Swann; in the audience at Berma’s performance of Phèdre, Marcel reports that, despite his disappointment, “je partageai avec ivresse le vin grossier de cet enthousiasme populaire.”¹⁴¹ Gilberte’s friends are described as at times existing in “cet état d’ivresse où une décision est impossible.”¹⁴² The exchange of a case of vin d’Asti with Swann prompts Marcel to reflect on his family’s means of showing gratitude.¹⁴³ Gossiping to Swann and Marcel, Princesse Mathilde recounts that the only time she met the famous writer Musset “il était ivre-mort.”¹⁴⁴ These examples from early in the novel should suffice to demonstrate the centrality of

¹⁴⁰ "Elle ne se résignait jamais à rien acheter dont on ne pût tirer un profit intellectuel, et surtout celui que nous procurent les belles choses en nous apprenant à chercher notre plaisir ailleurs que dans les satisfactions du bien-être et de la vanité."


¹⁴² JF 78.

¹⁴³ CS 22.

¹⁴⁴ JF 113.
intoxication as a touchstone for Proust’s ability to construct his fiction. At the same time they suggest the complexity of the various significations that “ivresse” takes on in the novel: being drunk can render one indecisive, or it can spur a decision to applaud for a performance one does not genuinely appreciate; those in a state of aesthetic wonder are as if drunk, but a drunk artist is a disappointment and an embarrassment. There are different degrees and sorts of ivresse, and even the adjective ivre may compound with other adjectives.

Obviously Proust is not interested in attempting a rigorous biological taxonomy of ethanol’s effects on the cerebellum. The Recherche is not an addiction narrative, though Marcel’s grandfather (and eventually Robert de Saint-Loup) are arguably addicts; nor is it an account of a series of hallucinations as in Nerval or Gautier, though the surge of visual memories spurred by a madeleine pastry in Combray I almost takes the form of a hallucination. In several instances, however, the novel’s first-person narrator himself drinks. The logic of intoxication in these episodes is not entirely independent of the instances listed above, where the word “ivre” is used in a descriptive or figurative third-person context. They are complicated, however, by the peculiar circumstance that in these moments Marcel is simultaneously intoxicated and interested in analyzing and reporting the effects of his intoxication. They present a series of moments in which Marcel’s dual status as hero and narrator, already a troubled dichotomy explicitly thematized by the text, is particularly on display. Furthermore, these moments are particularly significant insofar as the short-term perceptual disturbances brought about by alcohol are comparable to Marcel’s developing aesthetic worldview. As I will demonstrate in a reading of these scenes, alcohol comes to constitute a particularly vexed site of negotiation not only between
what is voluntary and involuntary but also between a kind of pleasure that is ultimately narcissistic and one that contributes to the productive aesthetic impulse with which *Le temps retrouvé* closes. For Proust, drunkenness is interesting precisely because he conceives of it as altering the means of perception without altering what is perceived. In this conception he follows Baudelaire, as outlined in my first chapter: an intoxicated man is not tragically subdued by a monstrous unreality, but rather intoxication, in shifting perception, might offer one means of rendering the faculty of perception itself perceptible. For Proust, art offers another, and intoxication represents a cipher for the principles of estrangement and "making new" at the heart of the aesthetic theories implicitly and explicitly at work in the *Recherche*. It is one of Marcel's first experiences being drunk that prompts a reconsideration of the importance of the content of formal estrangement, that is, the relevance of what is estranged to a consideration of estrangement as an aesthetic good. Marcel's continued drinking and theorizing of *ivresse* eventually results in an extended meditation on the relevance of time and mortality to fictional value, a meditation that is nominally concluded in *Le Temps retrouvé*.

**Euphoric Exclusion**

I am interested first of all in a scene in which the word *ivresse* significantly does not appear, though the narrator inarguably becomes drunk. At the outset of *Nom de pays: le pays*, Marcel embarks on a kind of *Bildungsroman* within the *Recherche* by travelling to the beach resort Balbec for a summer with his grandmother. This train scene is not the first time that Marcel drinks: he has already been prescribed alcohol as a medication in *Autour de Mme Swann*, where his doctor advises him to take “de la bière, du champagne, ou du cognac” when
he feels the approach of the “étouffements” to which he is frequently subject.

“Celles-ci avorteraient, disait-il, dans l’euphorie causée par l’alcool.” This prescription does not go unchallenged by Marcel’s grandmother “qui me voyait déjà mourant alcoolique,” presumably due to her particular sensitivity to the dangers of cognac.\(^{145}\) But though Marcel has already taken small doses of alcohol, the scene on the train is the first time that the narrator reports experiencing an effect of alcohol extending beyond its justification as a pain relieving medicine – one recognizable as ivresse even in the absence of that particular term, and even though Marcel continues to think of the alcohol as a kind of medical precaution.\(^{146}\)

In fact, however, Marcel’s drinking is not so much precautionary as reactive, a direct response to his separation from his mother. She has taken care to ensure that she will leave the station before the train departs “pour m’éviter la cruauté de ce genre d’adieux,” since in last-minute goodbyes “une separation apparaît brusquement impossible à souffrir.”\(^{147}\) She tries to distract Marcel, who

\(^{145}\) JF 67.

\(^{146}\) In L’univers médical de Proust, Serge Béhar only briefly discusses the role of alcohol in Marcel’s health, and there to suggest not that Marcel’s drinking is a sign of debility but on the contrary that his capacity to drink is evidence that his health "semble à toute épreuve" (Paris: Gallimard, 1970. 187.). For a more scientific and historical point of view on medical discourse in the Recherche, see L.E. Böttiger’s "Remembrance of Disease Lifelong: Marcel Proust and Medicine," where Marcel’s physician’s advice on alcohol is characterized as a "prescription of a dubious nature" (British Medical Journal [Clinical Research Edition] 287.6406 (1983). 1691).

\(^{147}\) JF 217.
consequently pays only closer attention to her, until the moment of departure itself is “missed” by the text in a paragraph break and the reader is taken instead straight to Marcel’s contemplation of his doctor’s advice:

C’est le cœur serré que je la regardais comme si elle était déjà séparée de moi, sous ce chapeau de paille rond qu’elle avait acheté pour la campagne, dans une robe légère qu’elle avait mise à cause de cette longue course par la pleine chaleur, et qui la faisaient autre, appartenant déjà à la villa de « Montretout » où je ne la verrais pas. Pour éviter les crises de suffocation que me donnerait le voyage, le médecin m’avait conseillé de prendre au moment du départ un peu trop de bière ou de cognac, afin d’être dans un état qu’il appelait «euphorie», où le système nerveux est momentanément moins vulnérable. J’étais encore incertain si je le ferais, mais je voulais au moins que ma grand-mère reconnût qu’au cas où je m’y déciderais, j’aurais pour moi le droit et la sagesse.148

Marcel’s anxiety about his mother’s impending departure renders him incapable of viewing her as anything but already gone though she is still present: even concentrating vividly on details of her dress, he only reads signs of her intention to leave for the country and the necessities of the “longue course” she is about to undertake to “Montretout” (a tragically ironic “nom de pays” since it will not show Marcel that which he would most like to retain in his vision). She is rendered “autre” by Marcel’s anticipation of their separation, but also by the motivation for her attempts to distract him. This motivation is described both in

148 JF 219-20.
terms of her wishing to avoid "cruauté" and in aesthetic terms, as an attempt to avoid a tired cliché: "ce genre d'adieux." The fact that the departure itself is not described should not be read as an indication of his mother’s success in distracting Marcel but on the contrary as an indication of the unspeakable trauma that moment causes and the necessity for a palliative or restorative apparatus it prompts.

Marcel's uncertainty as to whether he will follow his doctor's instructions echoes his grandmother's apprehensions from "Combray"; clearly his anxiety at the close of this paragraph derives more from his concern for her perspective than his own. This complexity introduces an irresolvable ambiguity into Marcel's intentions: is he drinking in order to head off his "suffocations," or is he drinking in order to demonstrate to his grandmother that he has the authority to decide whether or not to drink? Even he seems to recognize that the latter plays a disproportionate role in his eventual decision:

J'en parlais comme si mon hésitation ne portait que sur l'endroit où je boirais de l'alcool, buffet ou wagon-bar. Mais aussitôt, à l'air de blâme que prit le visage de ma grand-mère et de ne pas même vouloir s'arrêter à cette idée: "Comment," m'écriai-je, me résolvant soudain à cette action d'aller boire, dont l'exécution devenait nécessaire à prouver ma liberté puisque son annonce verbale n'avait pu passer sans protestation, "comment, tu sais combien je suis malade, tu sais ce que le médecin m'a dit, et voilà le conseil que tu me donnes!"149

149 JF 220.
Marcel's grandstanding here does not preclude particular sensitivity to what his grandmother says and even the way in which she looks at him. "L'air de blâme que prit [son] visage," a fleeting and presumably even involuntary facial expression, becomes a "protestation" in his reading and a "conseil." Marcel fails to consider that he has provoked this response by the disingenuousness of his thinking out loud, or that what he admits is his own "hésitation" plays a rôle in his frustration. Indeed the pattern to begin noticing in this scene is that Marcel fails to acknowledge his own participation in and influence on the interpersonal interactions he reports, as if he is capable of recognizing others' inner unspoken thoughts but others do not have a similar capacity with respect to him. We could say that an immature Marcel lacks a certain kind of "self-awareness" here, but that term is insufficient insofar as the self is here constituted by the perspective of another person. A sentence originally included immediately before this passage but which Proust eventually omitted further describes the complexities of this dynamic:

Et m'apercevant seulement alors, tant le chagrin de quitter Maman avait absorbé mon attention, que la crise que je redoutais était déjà amorcée, le remords physiologique d'avoir trompé ma grand-mère par un air de bonne santé apparent me poussa à meplaindre, à confesser par de signes extérieurs le mal que j'éprouvais et que j'avais omis de manifester.\footnote{\textit{cited in Proust, Marcel. A la recherche du temps perdu} II, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard, 1987. 1344.}
Marcel pretends that the "chagrin de quitter Maman" has distracted him from his "crise" rather than directly caused it. Without speculating as to the reasons why Proust decided to omit this passage we may remark both the confusion it exhibits between the somatic and the psychic and the bizarreness of its logic. Marcel experiences a disconnect between the extent of the "mal que j’éprouvais" and the "signes extérieurs" which would demonstrate this pain to his grandmother. It is however unclear whether the problem arises because Marcel himself has failed to notice his own bodily pain due to a separate trauma, the "chagrin de quitter Maman," or whether the pain itself is not in question but only Marcel's external manifestation of it. Strangest of all is Marcel's assertion that he feels a "remords physiologique d'avoir trompé ma grand-mère," that he has failed in a kind of duty to manifest his own pain and perceives the guilt of such a failure physiologically. Marcel questions whether or not he can feel pain at all unless it is recognized by another person; in this deleted portion of the text, he contrives his decision to drink as a concession to his grandmother's will, a way of overcoming the "remords" he would feel upon lying to her, and a way precisely of demonstrating his pain externally rather than attempting to mitigate or heal it.

Whatever the multiple valences of Marcel's motivation may be, whereas the doctor has suggested somewhat puzzlingly that he drink “un peu trop,” he eventually reports having drunk “beaucoup trop,” as part of the first phenomenological evocation of ivresse in the novel:

Quand j’eus expliqué mon malaise à ma grand-mère, elle eut un air si désolé, si bon, en répondant: "Mais alors, va vite chercher de la bière ou une liqueur, si cela doit te faire du bien" que je me jetai sur elle et la couvris de baisers. Et si j’allai cependant boire beaucoup
trop dans le bar du train, ce fut parce que je sentais que sans cela j’aurais un accès trop violent et que c’est encore ce qui la peinerait le plus. Quand, à la première station, je remontai dans notre wagon, je dis à ma grand-mère combien j’étais heureux d’aller à Balbec, que je sentais que tout s’arrangerait bien, qu’au fond je m’habituerais vite à être loin de maman, que ce train était agréable, l’homme du bar et les employés si charmants que j’aurais voulu refaire souvent ce trajet pour avoir la possibilité de les revoir. Ma grand-mère cependant ne paraissait pas éprouver la même joie que moi de toutes ces bonnes nouvelles. Elle me répondit en évitant de me regarder: "Tu devrais peut-être essayer de dormir un peu" [...] Mais quand ma grand-mère croyait que j’avais les yeux fermés, je la voyais par moments sous son voile à gros pois jeter un regard sur moi puis le retirer, puis recommencer, comme quelqu’un qui cherche à s’efforcer, pour s’y habituer, à un exercice qui lui est pénible.151

As in the omitted sentence above, Marcel here can only drink once he goes so far as to interpret it as a gesture of good will towards his grandmother rather than precisely a contravening of her wishes: he even couches the verb "boire" in a sort of pseudo-hypothetical construction ("et si j’allai cependant boire...") the second portion of which is also conjugated in the passé simple ("ce fut parce que...") and is dependant on "ce qui la peinerait." The "bonnes nouvelles" Marcel delivers on his return to the bar car on the one hand imply that his drink has had precisely

151 JF 220-21.
the desired effect: "tout s’arrangerait bien." On the other they are themselves
"beaucoup trop": his unwonted sociability with the bartender and waiters has
continued in his chattiness with his grandmother, and his very self-assuredness
casts his announcements of his lack of anxiety in doubt. She is obviously not
taken in; neither is the reader, whence this scene's comic effect. However Marcel
himself understands his new confidence, it is telling that Bathilde’s furtive
"regard," risked only when she believes Marcel will not notice it, does not bother
him as it did before, and his former concern for "ce qui la peinerait" does not
prompt him to respond to her "exercise...pénible." In outsourcing, if you will, his
anxiety regarding his drinking onto his grandmother, Marcel has enjoyed it
without hesitation and with the desired effect. Further, this kind of projection is
significant not only within the emotional context of the scene but at the level of
narrative: it allows the reader to skirt the focalization of Marcel's own
consciousness, aligning the reader's perspective not only with Marcel-as-
narrator's retroactive self-deprecating tone but also his grandmother's
observational stance.

The Dantesque pseudosimile which closes this citation is particularly
worthy of attention; the introduction of a "quelqu’un" distances the experience
described from Bathilde alone and evokes Marcel's point of view as well.152
Marcel's drinking has served as a means to the end of his habituation (Marcel: "je
m'habituerais vite"/Bathilde: "pour s'y habituer") to being separate from his
mother despite his pain. That he should close his list of "bonnes nouvelles" with a

wish to make the same journey over again ("refaire souvent ce trajet") signifies as
much. By the end of this scene, that is, Bathilde’s disapproval, her lack of "joie,"
has as much to do with Marcel’s drinking per se than with the necessary
independence it has allowed him to demonstrate. We are meant to understand
that Bathilde would prefer here that Marcel be capable of experiencing the kind
of "euphorie" he requires without resort to the base materiality of whichever
alcohol he has in the end chosen.

In discussing Marcel’s "peculiar vulnerability," Leo Bersani has written,
"When he is placed in a setting for which he is not prepared, which he has not
been able to represent to himself in advance, his resistance to the world
disintegrates." He goes on,

Somewhere beyond his personal experience an exotically
mysterious life is being lived. For the child, this life consists of his
mother’s pleasures when she is away from him; as his intellectual
life develops, a new but parallel vocabulary takes form, and
somewhere hidden in nature or art is the truth or reality that will
bring him definitive answers about life. But the yearning toward
this unknown life or these unknown truths is experienced, to a
large extent, as an extremely painful exclusion. 153

Here Bersani is discussing the better-known scene of Marcel’s "exclusion" from
his mother’s life in "Combray I." The emotion glossed here is a "yearning" for
"answers" that is "painful" but that is directed towards the "mysterious"

"pleasures" Marcel fantasizes in the experience of his mother when he is not present. As we have seen in the more dramatic separation from his mother that takes place at the outset of *Nom de pays: le pays*, what Bersani glosses as a mere "development" of Marcel's "intellectual life" does not simply occur on its own; indeed Marcel's fragility is such that the painful "exclusion" to which Bersani refers would overwhelm him in the absence of any factors that would mitigate it. Marcel is in need of a temporary stay against the confusion of his pain, one that would allow him to experience it as pleasure or at least somehow ignore its command over his perception until he is able to restore his belief in the "truth or reality" to which it might lead. Such a tool would offer some resistance against his automatic response, his "attempt to reduce the other reality to a reflection of himself," as Bersani elsewhere characterizes Marcel's thought-patterns.¹⁵⁴

So the narrator's drunkenness in this scene initially offers a chance for reflection on and control over the dynamics of his growing sense of separation from his (grand)mother and others in general. As Bersani suggests, these dynamics are closely related to what will develop into Marcel's sense that "nature or art" holds some ultimate truth that would if not heal then at least justify his "painful exclusion" or render it meaningful. The next stage of Marcel's drunkenness showcases this development. His attention turns to a separate but related effect of the alcohol he has consumed, one relating to the quality and nature of his perceptions:

> Alors je lui parlais [i.e. à Bathilde], mais cela ne semblait pas lui être agréable. Et à moi pourtant ma propre voix me donnait du plaisir,

¹⁵⁴ 28.
et de même les mouvements les plus insensibles, les plus intérieurs de mon corps. Aussi je tâchais de les faire durer, je laissais chacune de mes inflexions s’attarder longtemps aux mots, je sentais chacun de mes regards se trouver bien là où il s’était posé et y rester au-delà du temps habituel. "Alors, repose-toi, me dit ma grand-mère. Si tu ne peux pas dormir, lis quelque chose." Et elle me passa un volume de Mme de Sévigné que j’ouvris [...] Ne bougeant pas volontiers ma tête en ce moment et éprouvant un grand plaisir à garder une position une fois que je l’avais prise, je restai à tenir le volume de Mme de Sévigné sans l’ouvrir.  

The logic of Marcel’s descriptions becomes garbled here. It is unclear, for instance, whether he has in fact opened the book his grandmother offers him; regardless, he is uninterested in it. He is similarly uninterested in Bathilde’s contributions to their conversation, since the pleasure he takes in it derives rather from his hearing his own voice. And this pleasure, though it originates in stillness and interiority, is nevertheless so stimulating as to preclude sleep. Marcel remains conscious but inactive. He is somehow able to feel even "les plus insensibles" of his sensations; Marcel the hero’s attempts to make these sensations "durer" seems to transfer to the style of Marcel the narrator, which begins to repeat words and takes on a paratactic quality, as if each phrase is merely a reiteration of the one before. Perhaps the strangest description in this passage is "Je sentais chacun de mes regards se trouver bien là où il s’était posé," in which Marcel seems to be observing the independent agency of his own sense.

155 JF 221.
of sight; the convolution and redundancy of what his sight is described as doing presents its own difficulties. That his vision should remain "au-delà du temps habituel" resonates with the appearances of the verb "s'habiter" noted earlier and bears a double valence: Marcel experiences stasis itself as a kind of novelty, and his vision is "au-delà du temps habituel" both in the sense that it remains fixed and in the sense that he is unused to it.

Rather than contemplate Mme de Sévigné, Marcel prefers to focus his attention on a particular blue window shade:

Je n’abaissai pas sur lui [le volume de Sévigné] mon regard qui n’avait devant lui que le store bleu de la fenêtre. Mais contempler ce store me paraissait admirable et je n’eusse pas pris la peine de répondre à qui eût voulu me détourner de ma contemplation. La couleur bleue du store me semblait non peut-être par sa beauté mais par sa vivacité intense, effacer à tel point toutes les couleurs qui avaient été devant mes yeux depuis le jour de ma naissance jusqu’au moment où j’avais fini d’avaler ma boisson et où elle avait commencé de faire son effet, qu’à côté de ce bleu du store, elles étaient pour moi aussi ternes, aussi nulles, que peut l’être rétrospectivement l’obscurité où ils ont vécu pour les aveugles-nés qu’on opère sur le tard et qui voient enfin les couleurs.\footnote{221}

Marcel’s fascination with the dressing of a window rather than the landscape beyond it is a kind of recapitulation of or metaphor for his interiorized pleasure faced with the possibility of speaking to his grandmother or reading one of her
books. Here as earlier in this scene the words "sembler" and "paraître" are paramount: they signal that Marcel the narrator retroactively recognizes a distortion or superficiality in his hero's thinking. Earlier they related to his observations of his grandmother ("cela ne semblait pas lui être agréable"), whereas here they intervene in descriptions of his sense of wonder and beauty ("contempler ce store me paraissait admirable," "la couleur bleue du store me semblait [...] effacer"). But in this passage for the first time they are causally connected to his drinking: though the words "ivre" and "ivresse" do not appear, Marcel recognizes as if in passing that the strange alterations we have witnessed in his behavior derive from the alcohol's "effet." The comedy of this scene, which has before derived from Marcel's apparent ignorance of this effect, now shifts: what is funny now is rather that the source of the fascination it provokes is so otherwise mundane. Obviously what causes Marcel's wonderment is not in fact, as he seems to believe, the blueness of the window shade itself, but rather the very distortion of perception that filters anything he might happen to see, the mode of vision rather than its content. This distinction is at issue when the narrator claims tentatively that the window shade's color is remarkable "non peut-être par sa beauté mais par sa vivacité intense," some dynamic quality of its presentation rather than its inherent beauty. It is also clearly present in the stunning analogy which closes this citation, in which Marcel likens his experience not, for example, to that of someone observing a new color for the first time, but rather to that of someone who has never experienced color at all suddenly developing, through a medical intervention, the capacity to see.
Eventually the consequences of Marcel’s overdose of alcohol begin to wear off, as he himself recognizes, though first he passes quickly through their various stages as if in reverse order:

Un vieil employé vint nous demander nos billets. Les reflets argentés qu’avaient les boutons en métal de sa tunique ne laissèrent pas de me charmer. Je voulus lui demander de s’asseoir à côté de nous. Mais il passa dans un autre wagon, et je songeai avec nostalgie à la vie des cheminots, lesquels, passant tout leur temps en chemin de fer, ne devaient guère manquer un seul jour de voir ce vieil employé. Le plaisir que j’éprouvais à regarder le store bleu et à sentir que ma bouche était à demi ouverte commença enfin à diminuer. Je devins plus mobile; je remuai un peu; j’ouvris le volume que ma grand-mère m’avait tendu et je pus fixer mon attention sur les pages que je choisis çà et là.157

The ”charm” of the shiny buttons on this ticket-taker’s jacket recalls Marcel’s captivation by the vivid blueness of the windowshade. His ”nostalgie” for the working-class life of commuters and friendliness toward the old man recall his behavior in the bar car before that. This chiastic structure returns him to a kind of normalcy in which he is able to pay attention to Mme de Sévigné.

In this scene we have witnessed Marcel’s exposure to an experience that complicates the theories of habit and novelty put forward in Du côté de chez Swann. He is separated from his mother, travelling to a place he does not know; he has disappointed his grandmother, and his perception is distorted.

157 JF 221.
Nevertheless the "euphorie" his doctor has encouraged in him allows a temporary release from the anguish that even merely the lack of his usual goodnight kiss causes him. This scene represents one of a series of "euphories" Marcel will experience over the course of the novel, and is thus particularly notable for the comedic half-awareness he presents in it. On the one hand, Marcel knows that his sensations are the "effet" of a "boisson." On the other, he is genuinely surprised by them, as if seeing for the first time. And though drinking "un peu trop" has caused a temporary retreat within himself, he eventually regains his ability to interact with others while simultaneously staving off his fearful and obsessive concern with the pleasures his mother may be experiencing somewhere without him.

The visual effect of intoxication, emphasizing the intrapersonal and perceptual consequences of Marcel's drinking, has consequences not only for the novel's treatment of habit but also for our understanding of the aesthetic theory at work throughout the *Recherche* and made most explicit in its final volume. This scene at once manifests and qualifies a theory of defamiliarization characteristic of the modernist project and formulated by the Russian Formalists.\(^{158}\) This theory relies on the relative distinction between form and content insofar as it posits that artistic works re-present content by innovating the formal manner in which it is perceived, and thereby function to refresh perception of what lies outside the artwork, the content's real referent. The scene we have just read in Proust

suggests exactly this formulation. Alcohol offers a pure psychic alteration in perception itself such that anything in the field of vision captivates and fascinates. For Marcel in the moment there would seem to be some inherent value in this visual reset: in wiping out his sense of any color he has ever seen before, the blueness of the window shade gives him the thrilling experience of seeing the world for the first time. The humor and deprecation that the novel’s retrospective narrative point of view provides, however, undermines precisely the notion that this perceptual revelation is valuable in and of itself. What strikes us as funny in Marcel’s arbitrary fascination with the blue window shade should also appear as a cautionary tale: defamiliarization taken as a pure good can result in the kind of laughably simple insights Marcel reports here. He will never return to the image of the blue window shade, as he does with the hawthorn flowers of Combray or any one of a number of other vital images that echo through the entire architecture of the Recherche as a whole; even as he implies that he is in some sense observing colors for the first time in this moment, he forgets it almost immediately. Though defamiliarization is a powerful paradigm and one that this scene begins to theorize, we are called to question its inherent value. Perhaps there are different kinds of defamiliarization, some more important or valuable than others; perhaps the value of defamiliarization depends at least in part on the nature of the object being defamiliarized.

"Ivre-mort": Drinking and Death at Rivebelle

Many of Marcel’s later experiences drinking continue the line of development begun on the train ride to Balbec. Once Marcel is able to anticipate drink’s effects, however, once he feels the capacity to manipulate them for his own purposes, his understanding of intoxication shifts categorically, and he
begins to use and try to explain the word "ivresse" for the first time. Before proceeding to the account of intoxication that will close *A l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, it is worth remarking that this Proustian distinction between initial experiences of intoxication and those that come after resonates with a later phenomenological thought experiment proposed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his 1945 *Phénoménologie de la perception*. There Merleau-Ponty is discussing the notion that other people’s minds are unknowable, a philosophical commonplace. Merleau-Ponty writes:

> Si le philosophe se donne à lui-même des hallucinations par le moyen d’une piqûre de mescaline, ou bien il cède à la poussée hallucinatoire, et alors il vivra l’hallucination, il ne la connaîtra pas, ou bien il garde quelque chose de son pouvoir réflexif et l’on pourra toujours récuser son témoignage, qui n’est pas celui d’un hallucinant "engagé" dans l’hallucination. Il n’y a donc pas de privilège de la connaissance de soi et autrui ne m’est pas plus impénétrable que moi-même.\textsuperscript{159}

The startling conclusion Merleau-Ponty draws from his example deserves further explanation. The problem seems to be that of a philosopher who wishes to experience a mescaline hallucination for himself as a kind of experiment. If, having induced the hallucination himself, he nevertheless succumbs to it in believing it to be real, he thus can claim to have authentically hallucinated; but in that case his account loses its value as a properly philosophical or scientific one insofar as he can only give it after the fact and already at one remove from the

lived experience of the hallucination. If, on the other hand, he is able to recognize simultaneously with the hallucination that it is unreal or imagined, its qualification as a hallucination at all is suspect. The problem derives from framing the question of hallucination in terms of authenticity or belief in the first place: as Merleau-Ponty writes elsewhere, "Quand l'halluciné dit qu'il voit et qu'il entend, il ne faut pas le croire, puisqu'il dit aussi le contraire, mais il faut le comprendre." Comprehending rather than believing should be the analytic paradigm with respect to hallucination, and the question of "belief" can only be posed if we presume an ideal of privileged self-awareness that is either present or absent in a way that is legible to others. Another way of framing this would be to say that we ought to take the testimony of the "halluciné" not as a descriptive reference to a shared objective reality but as a simultaneous acknowledgment and denial of an event of uncertain significance.

Marcel's first experience being drunk on the train to Balbec parallels Merleau-Ponty's first alternative, in which the philosopher "vivra l'hallucination." After all, in the first instance Marcel as hero seems unaware that his behavior is determined by his drinking until the effects begin to diminish. On the other hand, however, the tone and even the syntax of the passage reminds the reader that Marcel as narrator is framing the episode in terms of his earlier drunkenness. In other words, the passage is always already fictional and retroactive and there is no question of whether Marcel authentically "cède à la poussée hallucinatoire," even as there is something unique about this first and most naïve ivresse for which the novel’s narrator does not have adequate

160 388, my emphasis.
terminology. Both Proust and Merleau-Ponty emphasize the implications of this complicated structure of awareness for undermining the distinction between the self and others: to recapitulate Merleau-Ponty’s point with a visual metaphor, others are not transparent to us, but after all we are not transparent to ourselves. The fictional context of Proust’s version, however, enacts the mediation by language the importance of which Merleau-Ponty can only express by recourse to a legal metaphor in which testimony must be interpreted as straightforwardly true for the purposes of evidence or false in the sense of deliberately misleading and therefore to be excluded. The whole of the emotional dynamic between the narrator and his grandmother works through similar questions regarding the legibility of others’ intentions, but in a fictional register.

A division within the self is more obvious in Merleau-Ponty’s second option, where the philosopher “garde quelque chose de son pouvoir réflexif” even as he hallucinates. It is this "pouvoir réflexif" that characterizes Marcel's encounters with alcohol later in volume two and throughout the rest of the *Recherche*, in which the problem of the content of defamiliarization or estrangement as it relates to aesthetic work returns to focus. Bookending the "résumé" of *Nom de pays: le pays* found at the end of the volume are on the one hand the scene on the train, summarized as "Euphorie de l'alcool," at the beginning, and near the end "Dîners à Rivebelle. Oubli de l’oeuvre à produire. L’harmonie des tables astrales. Euphorie due à l’alcool et à la musique."¹⁶¹ This brief description already indicates the extent to which Marcel’s encounters with alcohol are closely associated with the work of art he is already preparing to

¹⁶¹ *JF* 567.
create. He continues to remain scrupulously careful regarding his "hygiène," but not as before with an eye to the "crises de suffocation" he fears suffering upon leaving his mother. Inspired by the writer Bergotte, he is now concerned rather with his ability to write the great work, "une étude critique ou un roman," he feels destined to accomplish but strangely unable to begin.162

Ma grand-mère apaisait mes doutes en me disant que je travaillerais bien et avec joie si je me portais bien. Et, notre médecin ayant trouvé plus prudent de m'avertir des graves risques auxquels pouvait m'exposer mon état de santé, et m'ayant tracé toutes les précautions d'hygiène à suivre pour éviter un accident, je subordonnais tous les plaisirs au but, que je jugeais infiniment plus important qu'eux, de devenir assez fort pour réaliser l'oeuvre que je portais peut-être en moi, j'exerçais sur moi-même depuis que j'étais à Balbec un contrôle minutieux et constant. On n'aurait pu me faire toucher à la tasse de café qui m'eût privé du sommeil de la nuit.163

Here unlike before Marcel's grandmother and his doctor are in concert in advising him to maintain the purity of his body in order to become stronger, "plus fort." The two appearances of the verb "porter" in this passage are particularly revealing of that logic, connecting explicitly as they do Marcel's own body to the great work he will write: "si je me portais bien," in a reflexive construction, "[je pourrais] réaliser l'oeuvre que je portais peut-être en moi." Marcel's hesitation ("peut-être") as to whether or not "l'oeuvre" is in fact to be

162 JF 374.

163 JF 374.
found "en moi" refers to the necessary uncertainty regarding his future career as a novelist that the Recherche must maintain until its dénouement. Here it may also be read as indicating, however, a certain ambivalence with regards to the proposed model of creation, one likened to pregnancy, which recalls, for instance, the episode in Du côté de chez Swann in which Marcel compares his writing of the brief description of Combray’s clocktowers to a hen's laying an egg. Paul Ricoeur has written that at certain moments in the Recherche "l’œuvre d’art, considérée dans son origine, n’est pas le produit de l’artisan de mots: elle nous préexiste; elle est seulement à découvrir; à ce niveau, créer c'est traduire." The "peut-être" in this instance, then, foregrounds the extent to which this model that the novel-to-come is something like a ready-made object that simply requires the proper circumstances for its "delivery" is insufficient to the labor of artistic production and will require modification before Marcel’s vocation is finally revealed to him in volume seven.

This concern for his health is not destined to last, however, as Marcel relaxes his hygienic standards "à cause de l’excitation d’un plaisir nouveau," namely, the spectacle and society of the neighboring coastal resort Rivebelle, to which he is accompanied by Robert de Saint-Loup. As we know, coffee and alcohol both render Marcel unable to sleep. Nevertheless:

164 "Quand [...] j’eus fini de l’écrire, je me trouvai si heureux, je sentais qu’elle m’avait si parfaitement débarrassé de ces clochers et de ce qu’ils cachaient derrière eux, que, comme si j’avais été moi-même une poule et si je venais de pondre un œuf, je me mis à chanter à tue-tête." CS 180.

La dose de bière, à plus forte raison de champagne, qu’à Balbec je n’aurais pas voulu atteindre en une semaine, alors pourtant qu’à ma conscience calme et lucide la saveur de ces breuvages représentait un plaisir clairement appréciable mais aisément sacrifié, je l’absorbais en une heure en y ajoutant quelques gouttes de porto, trop distrait pour pouvoir les goûter.

Marcel’s use of the term "dose" to register his continued sense that alcohol represents a medication merely underlines how far from his doctor’s advice he has strayed; likewise, he distances himself from the action of drinking with the bizarre, clinical verbs "atteindre" and "absorber" instead of "prendre" or "boire." In Balbec, his "conscience calme et lucide" allows him to sacrifice the "plaisir" of drinking to excess. This logic implies that the very setting of Rivebelle has already disturbed his mind in a way likened to the drinks that he will only thereby be prompted to enjoy all the more: drinking is a continuation of a shock or estrangement already prompted by a change in location. In Balbec, Marcel tells us, the "plaisir" he sacrifices is the drinks’ "saveur," their taste or flavor ("clairement appréciable"). It would follow that this aspect of their consumption is what he enjoys when he allows himself to do so. But by the end of Marcel’s list of the evening’s initial drinks, he is precisely "trop distrait pour pouvoir les goûter." As before Marcel’s drinking exceeds the amount required for his health, here the pleasure involved in drinking exceeds the element of the drinks’ taste.

166 JF 375.
He will later clarify this excess, using the same strange non-conditional if/then construction that appeared in the train scene and that renders the agency involved in the decision to drink somewhat opaque:

J'entendais le grondement de mes nerfs dans lesquels il y avait du bien-être, indépendant des objets extérieurs qui peuvent en donner et que le moindre déplacement que j'occasionnais à mon corps, à mon attention, suffisait à me faire éprouver, comme à un oeil fermé une légère compression donne la sensation de la couleur. J'avais déjà bu beaucoup de porto, et si je demandais à en prendre encore, c'était moins en vue du bien-être que les verres nouveaux m'apporteraient que par l'effet du bien-être produit par les verres précédents.167

This "bien-être," then, is an effect of drinking that differs from the pleasure of the drinks' taste not in degree but in kind (registered in terms of place – the taste would presumably be felt at the lips rather than heard in the nerves ("j'entendais le grondement de mes nerfs"). The simile with which this passage describes Marcel's sensations in terms of visual effects picks up his thinking from the earlier scene of "euphorie" on the train but with significant differences. There, Marcel compared himself to a blind person seeing color for the first time. Here, "le moindre déplacement" either of Marcel's body or his attention causes him to feel the "bien-être" he is describing, but "comme à un oeil fermé une légère compression donne la sensation de la couleur." No longer is there a question of legitimate vision or sight being restored: the eye at issue is simply closed in on

167 JF 376-77.
itself, and a light touch from outside causes "la sensation de la couleur" but not the perception of color itself. Here the effect is a kind of trick or misfire of the bodily system: a revelation of a new capacity, perhaps, but one without any utility in the sense of a relation to the outside world. The color perceived is not even properly speaking a hallucination, as it bears no form, but is simply the sensation of light in darkness; it does relate to an external stimulus, but this stimulus is touch that is being as if synesthetically translated into a visual reaction. Finally, the flawed logic of Marcel's final statement here, according to which he presumes that the "bien-être" he feels will accumulate in a direct proportion to the amount he drinks, begins to demonstrate a pattern of ivresse he did not encounter on his train ride to Balbec. The problem is not merely that Marcel fails to appreciate the medical consequences of having drunk more than "un peu trop," but much more radical: the confusion he exhibits between the relation of the past to the future here is the beginning of a profound alteration in his very sense of temporality. Indeed time itself is the object of estrangement in this passage, made new and unfamiliar in ways directly pertinent to Marcel's sense of his vocation as an artist.

The repeated insistence on a visual paradigm of estrangement, in which Marcel's experience is likened to that of a blind man or simply a man with his eyes closed, as well as this new focus on estrangement's perceptual effects on the flow of time, represent a significant revision of a moment in which drunkenness, blindness, and chronology are similarly associated in Jean Santeuil, the early posthumously-published proto-text of the Recherche. Near the very beginning of that work, we find an extremely long sentence, devoted to the aesthetic
experiences of a novelist referred to as "B" but taking a general and
universalizing tone:

A vrai dire, dans ces moments de profonde illumination où l'esprit
descend au fond de toutes les choses, [...] où voir tomber du ciel un
rayon de soleil [...] suffit à lui donner sans fatigue cette ivresse que
les autres hommes ne cherchent dans les poisons que pour l'expier
dans les souffrances, ivresse non plus stérile qui ne sert qu'à voir
pour une heure les mêmes choses d'une manière agréable, mais qui
fait voir autre chose qui subsistera, l'image dissipée, certes, le poète
est reconnaissant à toutes les choses qui lui ont alors prêté leur
appui, leur charme [...]168

This passage prefigures the later meditations on ivresse to be found in the
Recherche, but here the authoritative narrator adopts a rigorous distinction that in
Proust's later work will be relegated to individual characters. For example, the
distinction between the use of "poisons" and a more ideal aesthetic "ivresse"
would seem an ancestor of the point of view expressed by Bathilde in the
Recherche. In Jean Santeuil, a drunkenness which merely defamiliarizes for "une
heure," in which one sees "les mêmes choses" but in a different way, is qualified
as "stérile"; the ideal drunkenness is one in which one sees different things
entirely, "autre chose qui subsistera." Even just in this passage the logic is
somewhat muddled, since it is in seeing other things that the poet is prompted to
recognize "toutes les choses" that surrounded him before. In the Recherche, these

168 Proust, Marcel. Jean Santeuil prédédé de Les Plaisirs et les jours, ed. Pierre Clarac and
morally inflected categories of *ivresse* are present in Bathilde's point of view; the narrator of the *Recherche*, on the other hand, at one remove from his grandmother, seems less inclined to valorize the permanence of something that will subsist, or to entertain the possibility of a "profonde illumination" that will explain all things. To see the same things in a different way is not sterile but is in fact, as we have seen, a necessary if insufficient explanatory principle behind Marcel's legitimate aesthetic vocation in the *Recherche*. To the extent that the episode with the blue window shade reads as self-mocking, the implied caveat is not that Marcel has yet to experience a true drunkenness something like a religious revelation of an "autre chose qui subsistera." Rather, the point is that Marcel's experience of defamiliarization is insufficient to an aesthetic goal until even more attention is paid to the same worldly things, "les mêmes choses," that were at issue in the first place.

Returning to the text of the *Recherche*, then, we can read Marcel's drunkenness at Rivebelle as concerned with unsettling the reader's usual understanding of the difference between what is temporary and what is permanent. This particular estrangement reaches its peak after Robert de Saint-Loup leaves for a nearby casino with his friends and kindly delivers a staggering Marcel to a taxi to be taken back to Balbec. Marcel instructs the chauffeur to drive as quickly as possible, regardless of the possibility of danger; and this instance of extremely drunk, (almost) solitary travel prompts a series of meditations:

> Pas plus que ce n'est le désir de devenir célèbre, mais l'habitude d'etre laborieux qui nous permet de produire une œuvre, ce n'est l'allégresse du moment présent, mais les sages réflexions du passé, qui nous aident à préserver le futur. Or, si déjà, en arrivant à
Rivebelle, j’avais jeté loin de moi ces béquilles du raisonnement, du
contrôle de soi-même qui aident notre infirmité à suivre le droit
chemin, et me trouvais en proie à une sorte d’ataxie morale, l’alcool,
en tendant exceptionnellement mes nerfs, avait donné aux minutes
actuelles une qualité, un charme qui n’avaient pas eu pour effet de
me rendre plus apte ni même plus résolu à les défendre; car en me
les faisant préférer mille fois au reste de ma vie, mon exaltation les
en isolait; j’étais enfermé dans le présent, comme les héros, comme
les ivrognes; momentanément éclipsé, mon passé ne projetait plus
devant moi cette ombre de lui-même que nous appelons notre
avenir; plaçant le but de ma vie, non plus dans la réalisation des
rêves de ce passé, mais dans la félicité de la minute présente, je ne
voyais pas plus loin qu’elle. De sorte que par une contradiction qui
n’était qu’apparente, c’est au moment où j’éprouvais un plaisir
exceptionnel, où je sentais que ma vie pouvait être heureuse, où elle
aurait dû avoir à mes yeux plus de prix, c’est à ce moment que,
délivré des soucis qu’elle avait pu m’inspirer jusque-là, je la livrais
sans hésitation au hasard d’un accident.\textsuperscript{169}

This passage begins with a kind of epic aorist statement of fact written in the
present tense and in the form of an analogy, one that suggests a parallel between
the conditions necessary to produce a work of art ("produire un œuvre") and the
kind of relationship to time necessary to preserve the future ("préserver le
futur"). This relationship is counterintuitive, however: here, "le désir de devenir

\textsuperscript{169} JF 380.
célebre," with its emphasis on an imagined future state, occupies the same analogical position as "l'allégresse du moment present," the kind of sensation Marcel will go on to describe precisely as a disregard for the future. Likewise, "l'habitude d'être laborieux," a characteristic implying an ongoing or iterative series of actions in the present, is implicitly compared to "les sages réflexions du passé," a phrase that evokes a fixed set of guidelines inherited from history. The rest of this citation must be parsed with this initial set of equivalences in mind if its description of what appears to be a sudden suicidal urge is to be understood in the context of Marcel's eventual aesthetic vocation.

The next sentence distinguishes between Marcel's state upon his arrival at Rivebelle, "déjà [...] en proie à une sorte d'ataxie morale," and the one he finds himself in later, prompted specifically by "l'alcool." Even before he drinks, we read, "j'avais jeté loin de moi ces béquilles du raisonnement, du contrôle de soi-même qui aident notre infirmité à suivre le droit chemin." This metaphor returns to the present tense ("qui aident"), suggesting the universality of its application. Here what has elsewhere been presented as an illness specific to Marcel, his "neurasthénie" or "crises de suffocation," is rendered in terms of "notre infirmité," an existential disability against which reason and self-control themselves act as crutches. But as inessential prostheses, these crutches may be discarded; and indeed the benefits of their use are not entirely clear, given that the goal they further, "suivre le droit chemin," is signaled as a suspect cliché by its placement of the adjective before the noun. Having discarded these tools, then, Marcel finds that alcohol does not so much replace them or indeed worsen his momentary condition so much as make it bearable on its own terms, by a kind of "charme" that is not merely pleasurable but alters his sense of time. The minutes he passes
while drunk are categorically preferable to any he has ever experienced before – "mon exaltation les en isolait" – but simultaneously, and strangely, he has no desire to prolong them, because, momentarily unaware not only of the future but of futurity itself, he is removed from considerations of time's extension at all.\(^{170}\)

This "allégresse du moment présent" has already been likened not to the working habits of a productive writer but "le désir de devenir célèbre." This idea comes to fruition in the pair of similes that follow it: "J'étais enfermé dans le présent, comme les héros, comme les ivrognes." Marcel here articulates an

\(^{170}\) This passage originally read as follows: "en proie à une sorte d'ataxie morale, ne sachant pas ce que je faisais, ce que je voulais, et comme s'il n'y avait pas eu de veille et s'il ne devait pas y avoir de lendemain (de même qu'autrefois aux goûters de Gilberte, éclairs au chocolat sur éclairs au chocolat), carafes de bière sur carafes de bière" (qtd in Proust, Marcel. *A la recherche du temps perdu* II, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard, 1987. 1427). The final version is obviously more sophisticated. The recollection of Gilberte that is offered here connects this episode to an earlier one. In *Autour de Mme Swann*, Marcel describes his experience of eating cakes and taking tea in Gilberte's pseudo-salon, offering a similar constellation of illness due to caffeine and poor judgment with regard to time: "Les gâteaux que je prenais sans m'en apercevoir, il viendrait un moment où il faudrait les digérer. Mais il était encore lointain. En attendant, Gilberte me faisait "mon thé." J'en buvais indéfiniment, alors qu'une seule tasse m'empêchait de dormir pour vingt-quatre heures. Aussi ma mère avait-elle l'habitude de dire: "C'est ennuyeux, cet enfant ne peut aller chez les Swann sans rentrer malade." Mais savais-je seulement quand j'étais chez les Swann que c'était du thé que je buvais? L'eussé-je su que j'en eusse pris tout de même, car en admettant que j'eusse recouvré un instant le discernement du présent, cela ne m'eût pas rendu le souvenir du passé et la prévision de l'avenir" (*JF* 77-78).
apparent distinction between the desire to become a great novelist and the desire to exist as such a novel’s protagonist, its "héro": the hero, like the drunkard, acts with a kind of perfect spontaneity and without regard for his safety (his health) that is unsuitable to the necessities of the writer or narrator who recounts his story. He echoes a premise of Nietzsche’s in describing the drunken, Dionysiac man in the very first chapter of *The Birth of Tragedy*: "Unter dem Zauber des Dionysischen [...] der Mensch ist nicht mehr Künstler, er ist Kunstwerk geworden" ("Under the charm of the Dionysiac [...] man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art"). But the story of the *Recherche* is precisely that of the unification of a hero with a novelist. That Marcel should be able to approach this distinction between his dreams of becoming a writer and his occasional sense that he is in fact a character in a novel so early in the *Recherche* may come as a surprise, since when it reappears in volume seven as part of the revelation of Marcel’s "vocation," he pretends never to have considered it before: "Une nouvelle lumière se fit en moi. Et je compris que tous ces matériaux de l’œuvre littéraire, c’était ma vie passée." So on the one hand this period of drunkenness is an instance of what Marcel elsewhere has describes as "l'extra-temporalité" of the work of art, prefigured by moments of involuntary memory the secret of which apparently remains hidden until the "matinée chez les Guermantes." On

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173 For Marcel’s discussion of the "extra-temporel," being "en dehors du temps," see TR 178.
the other, the frank self-awareness this passage demonstrates is unique. If moments of involuntary memory necessarily rely on material objects, a premise iterated again and again, here the "bien-être" Marcel emphasizes is, even though prompted by an external substance, "indépendant des objets extérieurs." If, as Paul Ricoeur has suggested, we may read the "décision d’écrire" in volume seven of the *Recherche* as a final resolution of a "dualité" that has existed before then, it deserves noting that this resolution is at least foreshadowed if not already accomplished here near the end of *A l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*. Here the narrator offers a kind of wink to the reader, who knows that Marcel is not like "un héros," he is precisely the hero protagonist of the work at hand. At its most extreme, this logic would suggest that the state of drunkenness is analogous to the state Marcel finds himself in throughout the text of the *Recherche* before he becomes conscious of his own status as his work's main character at its conclusion: "enfermé dans le présent," not yet able to recapture the past that has been lost, but as if condemned to live in the moment.

The final sentence in this passage accomplishes grammatically the kind of "être enfermé dans le présent" that its content has described. "Par une contradiction qui n’était qu’apparente, c’est au moment où j’éprouvais un plaisir exceptionnel, où je sentais que ma vie pouvait être heureuse, où elle aurait dû avoir à mes yeux plus de prix, c’est à ce moment que, délivré des soucis qu’elle avait pu m’inspirer jusque-là, je la livrais sans hésitation au hasard d’un accident." The "c’est," repeated as if for emphasis in this sentence, should by all accounts be "c’était," given that all the other verbs are in the imperfect – the

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174 Ricoeur 271-72.
moment that is being indicated is everywhere else described as having already happened.\textsuperscript{175} The disarray of these tenses is only explicable by recourse to Marcel-as-narrator, who is pronouncing these verbs in the present tense. Such present-tense intrusions into the past tense of the text are by no means uncommon, but elsewhere, as even earlier in this passage, they are logically or rhetorically distinguished from the events that are being recounted because the present is iterative (a kind of epic preterite) rather than connected to a particular "moment." This sentence, on the other hand, conflates them. We must read it as implying that the "contradiction qui n'était qu'apparente" at the time of Marcel's drunkenness is being resolved at the time of the novel's writing. Gérard Genette has argued that the Recherche follows an age-old conceit of the novel according to which the duration of the writing or narrating itself that has resulted in the work of art is reduced to nothing or to a point: "One of the fictions of literary narrating – perhaps the most powerful one, because it passes unnoticed, so to speak – is that the narrating involves an instantaneous action, without a temporal dimension."\textsuperscript{176} This is to say that traditionally within the world of the novel no labor that takes any time has gone into its production as an object – another

\textsuperscript{175} Montcrieff, for example, translates "c'est" as "it was" in both instances, a decision unchanged by either Kilmartin or Enright in their revisions.

\textsuperscript{176} Genette, Gérard. \textit{Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method}, tr. Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1980. Print. 222. \textit{Tristram Shandy} is the only exception to this rule Genette lists; at the other extreme he mentions Flaubert, who, as we know, "needed almost five years to write \textit{Madame Bovary}." But the point is that even the fictional narrator of \textit{Tristram} acknowledges within the boundaries of his fiction the time he has "taken" to recount it, regardless of how long Defoe took to write it.
aspect of the work's special "extra-temporality." Here, however, it fails spectacularly to "pass unnoticed": as part of a meditation on the "laborieux," the *Recherche* at once invokes its narrator and undermines the synchronicity he elsewhere maintains. It is as if Marcel-the-narrator is pointing at the page on which he is writing: "C'est à ce moment que..."

Even some of Marcel's reactions to alcohol not only during this restaurant scene at Rivebelle but also the earlier scene on the train indicate a concern with the fictions of labor and the labor of fiction. Marcel's drinking prompts not only, as we have pointed out, certain distortions in his perception and his sense of time, but also, in both examples, a sort of sympathy with working-class people that is comically undercut by his absurd idealization of their lives. His unwonted and temporary friendliness with the barmen and ticket-taker ("vieil employé") on the train, and then the waiters at Rivebelle (he feels like "le frère momentané des garçons qui allaient nous servir"), his imagining their lives with "nostalgie" as simple and pastoral, wishing to engage with them but only for a few moments and as a customer: all are in line with this scene, in which, after all, he proclaims himself alone but in fact disregards not only his own safety but that of the taxi-driver when he demands to be driven as quickly as possible on a dark and treacherous road.\(^{177}\) Such naïvité begins to dissipate, if it never disappears entirely, as volume two comes to a close. And indeed, in the context of art in particular, soon after this scene the novel shifts in its treatment of artists as characters from the model of the always-already-completed novels of Bergotte to the working studio of Elstir and his half- or uncompleted paintings. This aspect

\(^{177}\) *JF* 375, my emphasis.
of Elstir’s significance to Marcel’s understanding of his eventual artistry is emphasized in the first glimpse Marcel has of him in his element: "Au moment où j’entrai, le créateur était en train d’achever, avec le pinceau qu’il tenait dans sa main, la forme du soleil à son coucher."178

Even before this telling encounter with Elstir, however, Marcel recognizes that the effects of his episode at Rivebelle will last longer than those of his time on the train, enduring beyond his hangover:

Ce n’est pas assez dire que j’avais rejoint le calme et la santé, car c’était plus qu’une simple distance qui les avait la veille séparés de moi, j’avais eu toute la nuit à lutter contre un flot contraire, et puis je ne me retrouvais pas seulement auprès d’eux, ils étaient rentrés en moi. A des points précis et encore un peu douloureux de ma tête vide et qui serait un jour brisée, laissant mes idées s’échapper à jamais, celles-ci avaient une fois encore repris leur place, et retrouvé cette existence dont hélas! justqu’ici elles n’avaient pas su profiter.179

This dense and spatially figurative passage seems to indicate that whereas before Marcel had conceived of "le calme et la santé" as bulwarks separate from himself and to which he is bound to remain close, in the aftermath of his experiences at Rivebelle he rather understands them as entities to be incorporated. We could extrapolate this logic to a system of magical thinking according to which the taking in of alcohol results in their temporary expulsion, and the subsiding of ivresse allows for their "re-entry" ("rentrés en moi"). At stake in this distinction is

178 JF 398, my emphasis.

179 JF 386-87.
the question of "une simple distance," the idea that Marcel's drunkenness has removed him from his health not in terms of degree but of kind: "santé" has taken on an entirely new meaning in relation to "un flot contraire" he has newly recognized in struggling against it. Obviously this "flot" represents death, which, given his indifference to his safety the night before, Marcel has only escaped by chance. A newly-acquired appreciation for death characterizes the morbid second sentence of this passage, which mimics the logic of incorporation and absence suggested in the first. As part of his recovery, Marcel's "ideas" ("idées") are imagined as having taken up their proper place again in his head. But their temporary expulsion or absence has revealed the possibility of a permanent one: the syntax is somewhat convoluted, and the phrase "ma tête vide et qui serait un jour brisée, laissant mes idées s'échapper à jamais" comes before what is apparently the main idea of the sentence, the announcement of Marcel's restoration to his former way of thinking. It is as if the qualifications attached to Marcel's head have intruded in the sentence, just as his "calme," "santé," and "idées" are described as having done in his head itself. Finally we read the declaration that these "idées" have heretofore, "hélas!," failed to include an awareness of the significance or worth of their own existence, but that in the light of day Marcel appreciates them in an entirely new way. Marcel the hero, "enfermé dans le présent" and obsessed his ambitions to writerly fame, has come to understand the time that artistic labor both requires and obscures in its final products, an appreciation inflected by a sudden and dramatic apprehension of his own mortality.
"Une valeur d'éternité": Rivebelle in *Le Côté de Guermantes* and *Le Temps retrouvé*

This central element in Proust's aesthetic vocabulary – the artistic significance of death – is hardly self-evident and deserves precise investigation. Here the relationship of death and art comes into question because of a confusion regarding Marcel's own status as the hero or protagonist of his writing. In terms of narratological structure, both the train scene that begins *Nom de pays: le pays* and the scene at Rivebelle that ends it have treated the perceptual alterations associated with drunkenness as opportunities to interrogate and undermine the narratological distinction between Marcel the hero and Marcel the narrator; in terms of their relevance to the plot, both scenes have addressed Marcel's development by returning to defamiliarization as a necessary but insufficient element of aesthetic production, one that must be supplemented by an appreciation of mortality. Before turning to the final iteration of this constellation of ideas in *Le Temps retrouvé*, I wish to analyze one more passage, worth consideration because it explicitly revisits the scene at Rivebelle. Here in *Le Côté de Guermantes*, dining with Robert de Saint-Loup and his mistress, Marcel is prompted by a glass of champagne to offer a third visually-inflected metaphor for the intoxicated self:

À force de boire du champagne avec eux, je commençai à éprouver un peu de l'ivresse que je ressentais à Rivebelle, probablement pas tout à fait la même. Non seulement chaque genre d'ivresse, de celle que donne le soleil ou le voyage à celle que donne la fatigue ou le vin, mais chaque degré d'ivresse, et qui devrait porter une « cote » différente comme celles qui indiquent les fonds dans la mer, met à
nu en nous, exactement à la profondeur où il se trouve, un homme spécial. Le cabinet où se trouvait Saint-Loup était petit, mais la glace unique qui le décorait était de telle sorte qu’elle semblait en réfléchir une trentaine d’autres, le long d’une perspective infinie ; et l’ampoule électrique placée au sommet du cadre devait le soir, quand elle était allumée, suivie de la procession d’une trentaine de reflets pareils à elle-même, donner au buveur même solitaire l’idée que l’espace autour de lui se multipliait en même temps que ses sensations exaltées par l’ivresse et qu’enfermé seul dans ce petit réduit, il régnait pourtant sur quelque chose de bien plus étendu, en sa courbe indéfinie et lumineuse, qu’une allée du « Jardin de Paris ». Or, étant alors à ce moment-là ce buveur, tout d’un coup, le cherchant dans la glace, je l’aperçus, hideux, inconnu, qui me regardait. La joie de l’ivresse était plus forte que le dégoût ; par gaîté ou bravade, je lui souris et en même temps il me souriait. Et je me sentais tellement sous l’empire éphémère et puissant de la minute où les sensations sont si fortes que je ne sais si ma seule tristesse ne fut pas de penser que, le moi affreux que je venais d’apercevoir, c’était peut-être son dernier jour et que je ne rencontrerai plus jamais cet étranger dans le cours de ma vie.  

In certain respects, this scene merely recapitulates the two earlier instances of drinking, but on the other hand it complicates matters by seeming to take a strong stance against any ideal or unified theory of ivresse at all. In the first few

sentences this stance manifests itself in explicit confusion between the categories of degree and of kind. Marcel reports "je commençai à éprouver un peu de l’ivresse que je ressentais à Rivebelle," a phrasing which would imply that his drunkenness on this occasion is a lesser degree of what he felt at Rivebelle, but then immediately qualifies himself, "probablement pas tout à fait la même." The "probablement" leaves room for hedging, but this qualification removes us from the scale model of degree to a different model of different types of drunkenness. Ultimately Marcel describes a combination of these ways of thinking: there are different kinds of ivresse depending on its cause (e.g. "le soleil," "le voyage," "le fatigue," "le vin") as well as different degrees. The two images that follow to explain or illustrate this multiplicity of ivresses correspond to this confusion of degree and kind. The first, that of a depth gauge on a ship, likens different intoxicating experiences to different psychological or interior depths, and thereby again situates various intoxications as differing by degree. The second, the mise en abyme effect produced by the bar mirror, shifts from degree to kind, in that each of the drinker’s reflections, while visually similar to all the others, represents a unique and distinct whole. This mingling of the categories of degree and kind with respect to ivresse leads directly to a similar confusion with respect to Marcel’s identity, a particle/wave duality of the ego, if you will. Marcel imagines a hypothetical, fictional drinker’s reaction to the mirror, before recognizing that he himself is such a drinker: "étant alors à ce moment-là ce buveur, tout d’un coup, le cherchant dans la glace, je l’aperçus." The temporality of the moments that follow, in which Marcel and his reflection smile simultaneously but also in response to one another, is obfuscated and paradoxical, drawing attention to the distinction between the temporalities of
vision and of narration. This self-division is accented even further by the intrusion of the qualification "je ne sais si ma seule tristesse ne fut pas...", a reminder of the distance between Marcel the hero and Marcel the narrator, who gestures here toward the uncertainty of his recollection.

This meditation on the uncertainty of continuity when it comes to identity is particularly well-suited to its immediate context. Earlier in this scene, Marcel has recognized Robert de Saint-Loup’s mistress Rachel from his acquaintance with her during her time working as a prostitute, and later, after a visit to the theater, he will witness Robert’s aggression towards a man who has been his lover: we are in the midst of several especially prominent changes in our sense of certain characters’ identities. Similarly, ivresse loses some of its conceptual unity and is divided into countless distinct sensations and revelations; as a corollary, Marcel sees laid out the division of his own personality into many distinct selves. Furthermore, this division has consequences for the suicidal indifference towards death Marcel expresses at Rivebelle. Here, in expressing the loss of a particular self at a particular moment as a kind of death – it is perhaps Marcel’s drunken reflection’s "dernier jour" – Marcel does feel a kind of "tristesse" even as on the other hand the prevailing sense here is "la joie de l'ivresse." Whereas in Rivebelle the effects of Marcel's drunkenness express themselves in terms of a single, continuous identity the health of which Marcel either zealously protects or carelessly disregards, here with Saint-Loup "l'ivresse" may potentially adopt as many valences as there are distinct selves within Marcel, the "death" of any one of which is an everyday occurrence. The barroom mirror functions together with Marcel's champagne as a purely formal defamiliarization, but they defamiliarize the continuity of personal identity. Marcel’s attitude challenges the omnipotence
of death not in a spirit of youthful defiance or recklessness as at Rivebelle, but by recasting death as a mundane and constant event. This acceptance, a kind of de-idealization, also governs the list Marcel provides of intoxicants: the sun, travel, fatigue, and wine are listed as equivalents. In Bathilde’s terms, the "ivresse de l’orage" is neither more nor less than that of cognac, but strictly speaking simply different. It is impossible not to hear in Marcel’s description here the echoes of Baudelaire’s list in “Enivrez-vous!”, and, like Baudelaire, Proust has as if cut the Gordian knot of the division between sobriety and intoxication by merely declining to address “ivresse” as a monolithic state.

How does this series of reflections on drunkenness inform the final volume’s extended theoretical treatment of the novel as a genre? Once again, in Le temps retrouvé the constellation of drunkenness and mortality appears, alongside extended aesthetic considerations and with specific references to Marcel’s experience at Rivebelle. After the well-known series of realizations Marcel undergoes at a party hosted by the Guermantes, he determines that he must commit himself to the great work he has envisioned, only to begin to worry that he will die before its completion:

Oui, à cette œuvre, cette idée du Temps que je venais de former disait qu’il était temps de me mettre. Il était grand temps; mais, et cela justifiait l’anxiété qui s’était emparée de moi dès mon entrée dans le salon, quand les visages grimés m’avaient donné la notion du temps perdu, était-il temps encore et même étais-je encore en état?181

181 TR 340.
The very proliferation of the term "temps" and its being rendered allegorical as "Temps" convey the sense of urgency that has suddenly overwhelmed Marcel. We are far from his grandmother's assurances in the novel's second volume, discussed above: "je travaillerais bien et avec joie si je me portais bien." The priority has shifted from the relative state of Marcel's health to the imperative of the writing he must undertake: his health only enters the equation insofar as it may represent, in death, an absolute temporal limit to his capacity to write. That is, the quality of the writing itself no longer depends solely on whether Marcel is in his best physical state, but only on whether he is still alive at all. Before, Marcel could procrastinate in his writing ambitions by holding out for an ideal of bodily health, an ideal the attainment of which would be signaled by the disappearance of the body's sensations entirely. Furthermore, this procrastination is only possible as long as Marcel's bodily existence is conceived of as categorically separated from the final artistic work he will produce. Here, however, the possibility of his own death spurs rather than paralyzing Marcel's decision to produce work, that is, his particular embodiment and his capacity to create art are understood as intimately bound to one another.

Marcel himself refers to his experience at Rivebelle as a touchstone for this reconsideration of the relationship between an artist's life and his work; here again ivresse appears as a conceptual key to a particular understanding of an artist's health and mortality with respect to his art that Marcel subsumes into the final version of his aesthetics we find in *Le temps retrouvé*:

Je me rappelais que souvent déjà dans ma vie, il m'était arrivé dans des moments d'excitation intellectuelle où qu'elle circonstance avait suspendu chez moi toute activité physique, par exemple
quand je quittais en voiture, à demi gris, le restaurant de Rivebelle pour aller à quelque casino voisin, de sentir très nettement en moi l’objet present de ma pensée, et de comprendre qu’il dépendait d’un hasard, non seulement que cet objet n’y fût pas encore entré, mais qu’il fût avec mon corps même anéanti. Je m’en souciais peu alors. Mon allégresse n’était pas prudente, pas inquiète. Que cette joie fût dans une seconde et entrât dans le néant, peu m’importait. Il n’en était plus de même maintenant ; c’est que le bonheur que j’éprouvais ne tenait pas d’une tension purement subjective des nerfs qui nous isole du passé, mais, au contraire, d’un élargissement de mon esprit en qui se reformait, s’actualisait le passé, et me donnait, mais hélas ! momentanément, une valeur d’éternité.¹⁸²

Marcel’s drunkenness at Rivebelle is treated as if it were just one example among many such "moments d’excitation intellectuelle," but it is clearly paramount to the theories presented here. The logic of the passage is otherwise confused, however, in such a way as to conflate instantaneity with eternity, rendering the two indistinguishable. One of the characteristic shifts in thinking that accompanies drunkenness is that Marcel feels the object of his thought present in himself ("de sentir très nettement en moi l’object present de ma pensée"), even as he simultaneously understands that it is only a matter of chance ("il dépendait d’un hasard") that he and the object continue to exist and are not annihilated ("anéanti"). Even if the object of Marcel’s thought does endure, the joy accompanying this sensation disappears "dans une seconde." But this concern

¹⁸² TR 341.
with the object of Marcel's thought is then retroactively qualified as a "tension purement subjective." This purely subjective psychic state is contrasted against Marcel's fully-realized aesthetic stance, which we would consequently expect to exceed the purely subjective. But in fact Marcel's new insight merely accompanies an expansion of himself: "un élargissement de mon esprit." The final sentence of this passage makes explicit these temporal contradictions: the expansion of Marcel's self gives him "hélas! momentanément, une valeur d'éternité."

Clearly what is most at issue in the difference between the pleasure Marcel feels in the seventh volume of the Recherche and the drunkenness of Rivebelle has less to do with its inconstancy or permanence and more to do with the orientation towards the past which it provokes. The Rivebelle episode has come to symbolize Marcel's first confrontation with his own mortality, an intermediate stage in his development as an artist. But that confrontation further depends on his sensation of being isolated from the past. The necessary next step is that Marcel connects the precariousness of his continued health to his sense that the past is being continually re-formed or actualized in him ("mon esprit en qui se reformait, s'actualisait le passé"). And indeed this passage itself provides a perfect example of such continual modification of the past: the reader will recognize the disparities between the description of Rivebelle given here, in which Marcel, "à demi gris," leaves one casino for another, and those given in volume two, where Marcel is too drunk to walk and must be sent immediately home. The paragraph does not merely outline or theorize this process but itself re-forms the past of the novel's own text.
On the one hand, intoxication may be interpreted like any other element of the plot of Proust’s work: in the well-known terms of Deleuze’s classic study *Proust et les signes*, it is one among many signs to which shifting significances accrue as the novel and its hero’s epistemological apprenticeship progress. In the instances I have examined above, however, intoxication becomes an implicit site for the negotiation of competing aesthetic possibilities. I do not mean to suggest anything so simple as an allegorical reading in which various characters or stages in the text represent virtues or unique and totalizing philosophical systems. Nevertheless Bathilde’s stance, which rigorously distinguishes between moral registers of different intoxicating experiences, clearly reflects one motif of a pre-Baudelairean literary landscape traces of which are also to be found in *Jean Santeuil*. On the one hand, Proust’s narrator echoes Baudelaire in calling this hierarchy into question and in insisting on the value of "intoxication" as a perceptual paradigm closely analogous to the aesthetic mode of estrangement or defamiliarization, in which a purely formal alteration re-presents identical contents in a significantly different way. On the other, the tenor and context of scenes of drinking in the *Recherche* make clear the limitations of such a purely formal approach. Eventually these interconnected scenes provide a kind of contrapuntal sequence underlying the more explicitly connected instances of involuntary memory beginning with the madeleine scene. Both involve a condensation of time, a "valeur d’éternité" within the mundane and temporary. But in the case of ivresse, questions of mortality and the consequences of an artist’s embodiment are more central and pressing. Marcel comes to discard the notion that the state of his health is a barrier to his artistic work: rather, his experiences of pain and pleasure are necessary to his harnessing the eminently
artistic capacity to "actualize the past." The moment at Rivebelle in which the ecstasy of Marcel's intoxication causes him to momentarily disregard his own wellbeing initiates an ongoing confrontation with his mortality, a suicidal limit-case "ivresse" that comes to be represented by the synecdoche "Rivebelle" in later instances of drinking and of aesthetic theorization. The most important of these reappearances comes in volume seven, where the memento mori of Rivebelle serves as a key to the urgency of Marcel's sudden inspiration to write. Marcel wishes to write a novel in order to recover the lost time of his past; but as a reading of his intoxications reveals, his masterpiece also serves as a buttress against the future time he will inevitably lose to death.


Chapter Four

*Good Morning, Midnight* and the Voice of Psychosis

The first three chapters of this dissertation have in common that the authors they study situate themselves as both novelists and theorists; they consider there to be a difference between making art and defining more abstractly what art is or should be, and consider themselves as writing in both registers separately. It is a peculiarity of modernism that it situates itself as one period in a lineage the very existence and autonomy of which it is also the first to recognize or institute. Jean Rhys, the subject of this final chapter, is different in this regard: she does not attempt to offer theories but rather art itself, though as we will see the character of the "artist" in *Good Morning, Midnight* offers some ideas of what a "Rhysian aesthetics" might look like if it were addressed head-on. Thus it will not be possible to examine, as I have occasionally in the first three chapters, moments where Rhys explicitly compares artistic inspiration, or the perceptual alterations that art is supposed to bring about, to intoxication. Rather, I will be reading instances of intoxication within the plot of her novel *Good Morning, Midnight* as structurally fundamental to the novel's narratology and innovative prose style. I will be establishing a dialogue between Rhys's novel and several writings on intoxication, addiction, and paranoid psychosis by British psychoanalyst Edward Glover, whose work offers a similarly oblique approach to the question of aesthetics in terms of sublimation. If Baudelaire, James, and Proust reclaim a myth of intoxication as a *perceptual* and ultimately *visual*
paradigm analogous to the goals of their literary aesthetics, Rhys's novel insists on a specifically linguistic aspect of intoxication: drunkenness structures Good Morning, Midnight at the level of its narrative voice.

The Diagnostic Tendency

One feature that the vast majority of scholarly and critical works on Jean Rhys's fiction have in common is their tendency to ascribe, even in passing or with great apparent reservation, psychoanalytic or psychiatric diagnoses of mental difficulties or personality disorders either to Rhys herself or to her protagonists. In his critical preface to her first publication, The Left Bank, Ford Madox Ford already characterized her typical heroine as "the underdog," which is suggestive if not quite medical in its approach. Since then this diagnostic tendency has only become more pronounced. As recently as 2005 Anne Simpson, a practicing psychoanalyst, has given a reading of Rhys's characters as case studies of various nameable mental illnesses in her Territories of the Psyche: The Fiction of Jean Rhys. Even for example Maren Linett, who takes care to distance herself from the model of biographical or pseudo-physiological criticism, writing "[Rhys'] fragmentary style is, in my view, strategic and mimetic rather than symptomatic," nevertheless also cautions us that unless we "[read] Rhys's fragments in terms of the psychic processes they represent" we are liable to "miss symptoms of what we would now call posttraumatic stress disorder" in her

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184 New York: Palgrave Macmillan
characters.\textsuperscript{185} Besides PTSD, we find paranoia, melancholia, depression, and other terms in this literature.\textsuperscript{186}

If our primary interest in Rhys’s novels derived from a medical or historical interest in their value as primary source documentations of patients’ experiences, these critiques would offer some insight. The sheer range of medical classifications that have been mentioned even in this short survey, however, suggests that the sense of a general mental abnormality we seem to find in reading Rhys’ work is more important than the particulars of any one figure’s symptomatic behavior. Furthermore, it is surprising that in assessing the psychic stability of Rhys or her characters so little attention has been paid to Rhys’s own interests in the burgeoning field of psychiatry and psychoanalysis; if she depicts victims of various psychological troubles, it is not unconsciously done. On this front a letter she wrote in 1936 deserves special scrutiny. Only after publishing \textit{Voyage in the Dark}, a semiautobiographical work about a girl who immigrates to England to work as a chorus girl from the Caribbean where she has grown up, was Rhys able to travel to her homeland of Dominica for the first time since her childhood. During a brief stay in New York on her return to Europe, she

\textsuperscript{185} Linett, Maren. "’New Words, New Everything’: Fragmentation and Trauma in Jean Rhys.” \textit{Twentieth Century Literature} 51.4, 2005. 427-466. JSTOR. 459; 438.

\textsuperscript{186} E.g. Kristin Czarnecki’s 2009 article ”’Yes, It Can Be Sad, the Sun in the Afternoon’: Kristevan Depression in Jean Rhys’s \textit{Good Morning, Midnight}.” \textit{Journal of Modern Literature} 32.3, 63-82. ”We see Sasha’s silences and expressiveness, her self-destructiveness and moments of hope not as irrational vacillations but as symptoms of Kristevan depression" (64).
describes experiencing something like a psychotic episode, for which this letter offers a kind of explanation and apology to her host.

It was stupid of me to go off the deep end. (I should have waited till I got home like all nice people do!) But honestly I was feeling damned awful that evening – and I still think there was a lot of antagonism flying around [...] 

I agree that my defence apparatus (is that right) is very groggy, in a bad state. It wants a stiff tot of rum. If a psychoanalyst can help I ought to rush to one. For as a well trained social animal I'm certainly not the goods.

But

I do not agree that there's nothing to defend myself against – I do not agree that my way of looking at life and human beings is distorted. I think that the desire to be cruel and to hurt (with words because any other way might be dangerous to ourself) is part of human nature. Parties are battles (most parties), a conversation is a duel (often). Everybody's trying to hurt first, to get in the dig that will make him or her feel superior, feel triumph.

I admit that the properly adapted human being enjoys the battle, I even admit that it can all be done charminngly wittily and with an air (though I don't think anglo saxons shine at that). It can also be without significance.

But I do not admit that because I am badly adapted to these encounters I'm therefore a mental deformity [...]
Well lady there you are – you’ll have to imagine the rest. I’m getting tired. The I in above paragraph was impersonal – will now return to the personal, the all important I. Me. I. I. I.

Except that – as regards persecution maniacs (this is one of my pet subjects) persecution maniacs (so called) always have been and usually still are, the victims of persecution.187

The "persecution mania" to which Rhys alludes as one of her "pet subjects" is the English translation of the French "délire de persécution," outlined by Charles Lasègue and Gaëtan Gatian de Clérambault, now grouped as a paranoid psychosis.188 It is unclear what sources Rhys relies on for her amateur interests here, since she alludes to psychoanalysis but "persecution mania" is not a term Freud uses.189 On the one hand her autoanalysis is tongue-in-cheek, deliberately jumbled ("(is that right)’’); on the other, her suggestion that her "defence

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188 See for instance the American Journal of Insanity’s 1895 translation of a series of lectures by French psychiatrist Valentin Magnan, where under "délires chroniques" the subtype "persecutées–persécuteurs" is translated as "persecution maniac." Vol. 52. Utica State Hospital Press. Google Books. 195.

189 In fact the corresponding German term "Verfolgungswahn" does appear once in Freud’s work: in lecture 26 of the Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, "The Libido Theory and Narcissism," where it is presented as one example of contemporary psychiatry’s insufficiencies with respect to diagnosis and as part of a discussion of Freud’s suggestion that paranoia and dementia praecox be grouped under the more general term "paraphrenia" (a suggestion he later gave up). Gesammelte Werke XI p 439.
apparatus" is in need of a "stiff tot of rum" could serve as a counterpoint to the opening of Freud’s own 1924 article on "The Economic Problem in Masochism": "If physical pain and feelings of distress can cease to be signals of danger and be ends in themselves, the pleasure-principle is paralysed, the watchman of our mental life is to all intents and purposes himself drugged and asleep."¹⁹⁰ Freud here is similarly lax with his terminological specificity, the "watchman" being as standard a metapsychological reference as Rhys's "defence apparatus," but whereas he suggests that a narcotic might inhibit whatever agency is being discussed, Rhys suggests rum might rather stimulate it. This letter represents precisely the irreducible difficulty of naming patterns of disorder in Rhys’s work: if we take Rhys at her word here, she herself vacillated between debilitating episodes of mental irregularity and a kind of manic fascination with precisely this kind of altered perception, at once victim and persecutor, passive in the grips of a disease but from a lucid intellectual perspective perfectly aware of and intrigued by it. She does not hesitate to think of herself as a test case or object of experimentation.

These difficulties are at their most compounded in Good Morning, Midnight, written during the period immediately after this letter was sent. Sasha Jansen, the protagonist of that novel, late in the text even echoes Rhys’s letter in

wondering whether "psychoanalysis might help" her.\textsuperscript{191} "The odd and interesting thing is that Sasha is both an entirely unreliable narrator (in reading the world through her drunken paranoia) and one whom the reader can trust to see herself with brutal clarity," Elaine Savory has written it in the \textit{Cambridge Introduction to Jean Rhys}.\textsuperscript{192} In \textit{Good Morning, Midnight}, then, the critic is faced with even more complexity than in Rhys’s other novels, a \textit{mise en abyme} of self-awareness in which Rhys, at one remove, depicts a character who tracks her own insanity and attempts to study it (if not quite to heal herself). Such an approach already undermines what we could call the diagnostic tendency in work on Rhys.\textsuperscript{193} But

\textsuperscript{191} Rhys, Jean. \textit{Good Morning, Midnight}. New York: Norton, 1986. 168. (Hereafter GMM)

\textsuperscript{192} New York: Cambridge UP, 2009. Print. 70.

\textsuperscript{193} Compare a passage from the introduction to Freud’s study of Dr. Schreber in which Freud suggests that this strange self-awareness in fact uniquely qualifies "paranoia" as a diagnosis that can be applied to a text rather than a patient: "The psychoanalytic investigation of paranoia would be altogether impossible if the patients themselves did not possess the peculiarity of betraying (in a distorted form, it is true) precisely those things which other neurotics keep hidden as a secret. Since paranoiacs cannot be compelled to overcome their internal resistances, and since in any case they only say what they choose to say [\textit{und ohnedies nur sagen, was sie sagen wollen}], it follows that this is precisely a disorder in which a written report or a printed case history can take the place of personal acquaintance with the patient" (\textit{Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)}. in \textit{The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XII (1911-1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works}, edited and translated by James Strachey.)
Furthermore, the novel itself provides as it were a cautionary tale against such reading in the form of one of Sasha’s recollected anecdotes.

This happened in London, and the kitten belonged to the couple in the flat above – a German hairdresser and his English wife. The kitten had an inferiority complex and persecution mania and nostalgie de la boue and all the rest. You could see it in her eyes, her terrible eyes, that knew her fate. She was very thin, scraggy and hunted, with those eyes that knew her fate. Well, all the male cats in the neighborhood were on her like one o’clock. She got a sore on her neck, and the sore on her neck got worse. "Disgusting," said the German hairdresser’s English wife. "She ought to be put away, that cat." Then the kitten, feeling what was in the wind, came down into my room. She crouched against the wall, staring at me with those terrible eyes and with that big sore on the back of her neck. She wouldn’t eat, she snarled at caresses. She just crouched in the corner of the room, staring at me. After a bit of this I couldn’t stand it any longer and I shooed her out. Very reluctantly she went at first, with those eyes still staring at me. And then like an arrow through the door and down the stairs. I thought about her all the rest of that day and in the evening I said: "I chased that unfortunate kitten out of my room. I’m worried about her. Is she all right?" "Oh,

haven't you heard?” they said. "She got run over. Mrs Greiner was going to take her to the chemist's to be put away, and she ran right out into the street.”

This passage exemplifies Rhys's style in Good Morning, Midnight in its resistance to straightforward interpretation. On the one hand Sasha clearly feels a deep affinity for the cat and even something maternal, as she refers to it as a "kitten" throughout and tries to feed it. The kitten's asocial temperament reflects something of Sasha's as well. On the other, this symbolism is strangely undercut by the humorous and even absurd extent of Sasha's personification of the animal. There is, for example, the unsubtle suggestion that the cat's "sore" represents a venereal disease contracted as a result of its promiscuity. Most important, of course, is the series of Sasha's throwaway remarks concerning the cats' psychiatric difficulties. They are offered without comment, as if assuredly ("inferiority complex and persecution mania and nostalgie de la boue"); at the same time they suggest flippancy and dismissal ("all the rest"). If this brief memory resists being read as a straightforward allegory, it nevertheless so ambivalently represents the impulse to identify the kitten's abnormalities in such a way as should give readers of Midnight pause before adopting the same strategy with regard to Rhys.

This strategy has been employed not only with respect to the diagnoses already listed but also the prevalence of alcohol in Rhys's works, which is such

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194 Rhys GMM 54-55.

195 Sasha herself later notes a resemblance: "In the glass just now my eyes were like that kitten's eyes" (56).
that most critics comment on it at least in passing. The approach here is not quite diagnostic, however; alcoholism is never quite understood in the same way as melancholy or neurosis. Again, Savory’s *Cambridge Introduction* is representative. "Rhys so often makes alcohol a crucial factor in her novels: it is part violation of the normative codes of expectation for women, part a way to express the repressed inner core of her characters’ emotional lives, liberated if distorted by the drug, and part story of the prevalence of drink in the cultural spaces Rhys wrote about, as well as in her own life."

Here Savory considers Rhys’ work as a whole and recognizes alcohol as "crucial" while nevertheless subdividing it into various apparently otherwise unrelated functions, including that of something like Barthes’ *effet de réel*, simply an expression of historical fact or observation. She follows a scholarly tradition concerning Rhys’s work that recognizes and tends to comment in passing on the prevalence of alcohol in her plots and descriptions but fails to address the full implications of the unified rôle Rhys assigned alcohol in her work and in *Good Morning, Midnight* most of all.

There are two exceptions to this pattern, articles which set out to synthesize alcohol’s associations over the course of Rhys’s career. The first, George Wedge’s 1998 "Alcoholism as Symptom: The Life and Work of Jean Rhys," considers the extent to which Rhys’s "writing to understand herself through the medium of fiction was therapeutic" vis-à-vis her own alcoholism and what Wedge diagnoses as her lifelong affliction, Borderline Personality

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Disorder. The only text he interprets in any detail as part of his project is the short story "Let Them Call it Jazz," but he offers in passing the startling observation that fully 54% of pages in the Harper and Row edition of Good Morning, Midnight contain references to "alcohol, drinks, or drinking." The second, Jane Nardin’s "As Soon As I Sober Up I Start Again": Alcohol and the Will in Jean Rhys’s Pre-War Novels," contextualizes Rhys’s drinking in terms of psychiatric and legal developments in the early 20th century surrounding the classification of alcoholism and its punitive consequences. As she indicates, in England in particular drinking was considered more dangerous among women than among men: something like 80 percent of those convicted under the ostensibly gender-neutral Habitual Drunkards Act of 1898 were in fact "women charged with child neglect." Her argument as a whole is as follows:

These texts take issue with the dominant early-twentieth-century view of alcoholism as a 'volitional monomania' characterized by a failure of the will. In doing so, they adumbrate ideas that do not appear in the alcoholism literatures of the social sciences and humanities until later in the century. Anticipating the claim of recent feminists that women’s addictions can be seen as symptoms of patriarchal oppression or as protests against it, these novels suggest that women

\[197\text{ in Dionysos: Journal of Literature and Addiction 8.1 (U Wisconsin Superior, 1998) 23-33.}\]

\[198\text{ Wedge 28. This is the highest percentage for any of Rhys's novels. The percentage for the pre-war novels (i.e. excluding Wide Sargasso Sea) as a whole is 42%.}\]

\[199\text{ Papers on Language and Literature 42.1 (2006). JSTOR. 49.}\]
drinkers might choose addiction and refuse a recovery that would only return them to the predicament against which they were protesting in the first place.\textsuperscript{200}

Nardin’s thesis that women in Rhys’s early novels may be read to "choose addiction" is extremely evocative and resonates with the sense of futility and frustrated repetition many readers of Rhys’s early work encounter. Rhys’s protagonists are certainly skeptical towards the benefit of apparent cures that are offered them. Nardin's is a difficult position to take, however, with respect to the "will" of her title: what appears from one perspective as a "failure" of the will, in Nardin's logic, may be understood from another as its exercise, if for an unexpected or apparently unintelligible purpose. But those who would diagnose Rhys's women as monomaniacs would surely not disagree with this assessment. Unless Rhys’s protagonists consciously conceive of their drinking as a kind of structural protest, unless they undertake it with Nardin's points in mind, they must indeed be read as drinking mindlessly or compulsively as a disease model of addiction requires and institutes. If Nardin’s goal is to restore some kind of agency to Rhys’s characters, she can only do so by admitting that agency to be nihilistic and spiteful: the woman would rather self-destruct than continue to live under oppression, but do so slowly and with great relish rather than quickly by suicide.

Indeed this is something like how Sasha frames her behavior, in the passage from which Nardin’s article takes its title, but with key elements that Nardin overlooks:

\textsuperscript{200} 46.
"Why didn’t you drown yourself,” the old devil said, "in the Seine?"
In the Seine, I ask you – but that was just what he said. A very proper sentiment – but what a way to put it! Talk about being melodramatic! [...] Everything in their whole bloody world is a cliché. Everything is born out of a cliché, rests on a cliché, survives by a cliché. [...] It was then that I had the bright idea of drinking myself to death [...] Drink, drink, drink.... As soon as I sober up I start again. I have to force it down sometimes.201

If Nardin is correct that Good Morning, Midnight is unique among Rhys’s works insofar as "Sasha Jansen knows she has a drinking problem" (unlike e.g. Anna Morgan of Voyage in the Dark) and in it "'Addiction' and 'voluntarism' [...] are most closely aligned with one another," she nevertheless fails to address the peculiar fact that Sasha describes her own drinking (and slow self-poisoning) not as a conscious act of protest but as an alternative to "melodrama" or the "cliché."202 This decision may seem irrational or involuntary, but it follows logically if Sasha is already thinking of herself as someone others are constantly attempting to observe, interpret, or read in the way they would a stage production. Here Sasha’s drinking is a way precisely of maintaining her own illegibility in the eyes of figures – real or hallucinated, given that the "old devil" here, who seems to represent someone Sasha remembers, remains nevertheless otherwise unnamed – who would attempt to understand or explain her. And in

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201 41-43.

202 Nardin 64; 68.
evading a plotline she considers expected, in privileging originality as a criterion of worth, Sasha enunciates a principle of literary modernism's engagement with a tradition it at once creates by defining and renounces.

Indeed Good Morning, Midnight and Sasha's interior monologue that constitutes it refer more explicitly to canonical Western literature than any of Rhys' other novels. It is her only allusive title, from a poem by Emily Dickinson the first two stanzas of which serve as the novel's epigraph. In her "Good Morning, Midnight; Good Night, Modernism," Judith Kegan Gardiner lists "Ulysses," "Keats, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Wilde, Anatole France, Colette, and perhaps Virginia Woolf" among Sasha's references. At other moments Sasha recalls a line of Racine, as well as Bizet's incidental music to Alphone Daudet's play L'Arlésienne, and notices a Times Literary Supplement. She quotes, perhaps facetiously as the novel is apparently Rhys's invention, from "The Autobiography of a Mare – one of [her] favorite books." In some of her most comic moments, Sasha herself even considers putting pen to paper: to write a "monograph on lavabos," a play called "What's-her-name And Her Boys or It Was All Due To An Old Fur Coat," and a novel called "Just a Cérébrale or You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming." So though Rhys is generally uninterested in abstract or theoretical considerations of literature as such, these self-aware and ultimately bathetic moments indicate that Good Morning, Midnight represents a kind of slanted

204 Rhys GMM 80; 91; 38.
205 GMM 43.s
206 GMM 11; 184; 161.
literary manifesto. Sasha’s uniqueness among Rhys's protagonists offers further evidence that Good Morning, Midnight is a categorically different kind of novel from Rhys’s earlier pre-war works, which are more or less straightforward romans à clef: Postures, generally understood as the story of Rhys’s relationship to Ford Madox Ford, After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie, that of her first love Lancey Smith, and Voyage in the Dark, mentioned above, a largely autobiographical account of a girl who comes to England and works as a chorus girl after growing up in the West Indies. Good Morning, Midnight is of course ultimately no less reliant than these other novels on autobiographical material, but the convolution of its narratological layout and attention to language as a medium sets it apart. Elaine Savory writes that Sasha "is Rhys's only intellectual, writerly protagonist." Good Morning, Midnight withholds general descriptors of Sasha’s background, such as her class status, nationality, and race. But, although or perhaps because she designs her time as a flâneuse to avoid places associated with her former life in Paris, Sasha continually re-experiences or hallucinates particular moments of her past during her wandering; she fails again and again to "make it new."

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207 The trajectory outlined here naturally culminates in Wide Sargasso Sea, published 28 years after Good Morning, Midnight and, as a rewriting of Jane Eyre, in an even more direct dialogue with canonicity and having adopted a particularly distinct notion of "originality."

208 Savory 68.
Intervention: On Edward Glover

The purpose of the rest of this chapter will be to read Sasha's paranoia as well as her frequent (perhaps constant) alcoholic intoxication not as diagnoses presuming an abnormal individual subjectivity at work behind them but rather as formal features of the narration in *Good Morning, Midnight*. But if, as I am suggesting, paranoia, addiction, and aesthetics are necessarily bound to one another in the landscape of this novel, it will be useful before returning to Rhys to examine one of her contemporary's formulations of that same triad. Like Rhys, Edward Glover lived and wrote in England in the 1930s, but as a psychoanalyst rather than as a novelist. Nevertheless his article "On the Aetiology of Drug Addiction" offers much in dialogue with *Good Morning, Midnight*. Without suggesting that Rhys and Glover had read one another, I want to bring attention to certain parallels and divergences in their views, and in so doing remove

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209 So for example, one early feminist approach to Rhys has already, following the pattern of diagnostic criticism, accounted for much of Rhys's protagonists' behavior as "schizophrenic" (she understands there to be a single "recurrent heroine") (Abel, Elizabeth. "Women and Schizophrenia: The Fiction of Jean Rhys," *Contemporary Literature* 20.2 [1979] 155-77, JSTOR). Abel's approach can be distinguished from mine by the schizophrenic symptomatology she identifies at the very beginning of her article: "impoverished affect, apathy, obsessive thought and behavior coupled with the inability to take real initiative, a sense of the unreality of the world and self, and a feeling of detachment from the body" (156). This list is hardly inaccurata. As far as paranoia is concerned, however, my reading will be focused largely on discrepancies of narrative voice, particularly the phenomenon of the intrusion of apparently foreign voices in the monologue and oddities in grammar and punctuation.
myself from any monolithic idea of a "psychoanalytic aesthetics," since, as I will demonstrate, Glover’s views as expressed in this article and elsewhere in his work complicate his relationship to the most traditional understanding of Freud’s views on the status of art (sublimation) as well as that of psychoanalysis itself as a discipline.

Glover would go on during and after World War II to attain some repute in England for his writings on *War, Sadism, and Pacifism*, the title of his last collection of essays, and his work on criminology. Within psychoanalytic history he represents a major voice of dissent against the rising popularity of Melanie Klein’s school of analysis; eventually his disagreements with her and her students resulted in his resignation from the British Psychoanalytic Society in 1944, and his publication a year later of an extended treatise contrasting Klein and Freud, "An Examination of the Klein System of Child Psychology." His early career, on the other hand, demonstrates a breadth of interests, including research on tuberculosis, criminal psychology, and an abiding concern with the distinction between properly psychoanalytic and merely psychotherapeutic approaches to mental health. He addressed this last distinction in an extremely important 1931 article called "The Therapeutic Effect of Inexact Interpretation: A Contribution to the Theory of Suggestion," to which I will return.

Glover was also publishing on drug addiction during this period: in 1928 he had participated in a sort of round-table on alcoholism hosted by the Royal Society of Medicine, contributing a specifically psychoanalytic point of view.

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among those proffered by other psychologists and psychiatrists, and he would go on to present on "Drug-Ritual and Addiction" before the Royal Institute of Anthropology in March of 1932. But this series of lectures and papers does not represent merely one among other tangential pursuits of a young researcher who would go on to make his name in the very different but politically pressing subfield of the psychoanalysis of war. In fact Glover’s early thinking on the specific problem of drug addiction was to provide the foundations for his theoretical definitions of psychoanalysis in general.

"On the Aetiology of Drug Addiction" cites and responds to several earlier psychoanalytic investigations into the problem of addiction, though Glover distinguishes both his methodological approach and his final stance from theirs. Indeed the particular circumstances of addiction had been central to psychoanalytic thought since its inception in the correspondence between Freud and Fliess. It is well known that Freud’s theories of dream interpretation emerged after he had struggled with something of an addiction to cocaine himself; having missed the opportunity to exploit cocaine’s properties as a local surgical anaesthetic was a longstanding regret.211 One critic has ludicrously suggested that Freud’s theories of the unconscious may be understood as

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hallucinatory products of his cocaine usage.\textsuperscript{212} In an 1896 letter to Fliess, Freud writes "I have always conceived of the processes in anxiety neuroses, as in the neuroses in general, as an intoxication."\textsuperscript{213} The first and most significant \textit{published} psychoanalytic interpretation of addiction, however, was Karl Abraham's 1908 paper "The Psychological Relations between Sexuality and Alcoholism," a text which had exercised a wide-ranging and perhaps regrettable influence. Abraham takes as his starting point the observation that "men are more prone to indulgence in alcohol than women."\textsuperscript{214} The paper purports, then, to draw metapsychological conclusions as to the significance of alcohol consumption based on a pre-given understanding of "the psychosexual constitution of women."\textsuperscript{215} Abraham's initial citation of Freud's \textit{Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality} and deference to a Freudian model of "an original condition of bisexuality" quickly fall away (summarizing Freud's account of adolescence, for example, Abraham claims simply, "The libido is now directed towards the opposite sex").\textsuperscript{216} A paper which begins by claiming to account for alcoholism based on sexual difference in fact posits a decidedly non-Freudian gender

\textsuperscript{212} This is Elizabeth Thornton, in \textit{Freud and Cocaine: The Freudian Fallacy}. See also Anna Alexander's "Freud's Pharmacy: Cocaine and the Corporeal Unconscious" in \textit{High Culture: Reflections on Addiction and Modernity} for a more sympathetic analysis.


\textsuperscript{215} 8.

\textsuperscript{216} 2-3.
determinism by reference to alcoholism. For Abraham, a man drinks because
drink removes his inhibitions and thereby "stimulates the 'complex' of
masculinity" (a terminological maneuver reminiscent of Jung); women, who rely
on the inhibitions inherent to such a complex to attract men, have less incentive
to drink. It is worth noting as a metapsychological counterpoint that under an
economic model of the libido, the logic according to which the inhibitions alcohol
breaks down in women are more strongly reinforced than in men would imply
that women are more susceptible to alcoholism, given the greater pleasure-yield
available to them through such disinhibition.217

Despite these inconsistencies the paper was widely influential – after its
initial publication in the Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft in 1908, the International
Journal of Psycho-Analysis reprinted it in 1926 "because of its historical
importance."218 Freud himself picks up on and extends Abraham's observations
concerning "the well-known jealousy of drunkards, which reaches the point of
delusion" in the 1911 Schreber case history, in which he also writes, matter-of-
factly and without further comment, "We know that drink removes inhibitions
and undoes the work of sublimation."219 In "On the Aetiology of Drug-
Addiction," rather than critique Abraham's internal logic, Glover addresses
Abraham and those who follow in his line of thinking for their failing to take into

217 Abraham does write "The activity in the female sexual instinct is less," a quantitative
argument (reading "activity" in a broad sense) (8). But this is merely another example of
his inconsistencies on the point of originary bisexuality.

218 Abraham 2.

219 Abraham 9; Freud, Sigmund. Three Case Histories, ed. Philip Rieff. New York:
account the later development of Freud's ideas on sadism in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). Abraham and those who approach addiction similarly to him lay emphasis, in Glover's summary, "on the fixation of libido at oral or anal levels, on the comparative weakness of adult heterosexual interest, the importance of unconscious homosexuality, the significance of alcohol and other drugs as symbols of the procreative power of the male (father, God), the secondary breakdown of sublimation, and the symbolic castration represented first by impotence and later by physical and mental deterioration." Their explanations, that is, come in terms of libidinal drives rather than the death drive: "Even in this short summary the bias of libidinal interest is unmistakable." From Glover's standpoint, we could say, these writers are disproportionately informed by the libido-heavy and comparatively early text *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905).

This imbalance is closely tied, however, to a trend in psychoanalytic thought extending beyond the realm of drug-addiction or even the relative importance of the death drive, one that recurs as an object of critique over and over in Glover's work and which will be relevant to his late theories of sublimation and its "undoing." He states it early in the "Aetiology of Drug-Addiction" paper as follows:

The approach to drug-addiction was (and still is) profoundly influenced by the concept of *regression*. The opposite view of a *progression* in psychopathological states has never been exploited to

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the same extent. The idea of progression implies that psycho-pathological states are exaggerations of 'normal' *stages in the mastering of anxiety* and can be arranged in a rough order of precedence. It is, of course, implicit in Freud’s original pronouncement regarding paranoid states: namely, that the symptom is in part an attempt at restitution, i.e. an advance from the unconscious situation it covers. Not only does it restore some link with reality, however inadequate, it performs also a protective function. The protective and restitutive aspects of other psycho-pathological states have not been given the same attention [...] Drug-addiction is frequently a successful manoeuvre. The point is of considerable therapeutic interest.\(^{221}\)

This passage is striking in the elasticity it allows for in the diagnosis of a "manoeuvre" on the patient's part: the "psycho-pathology" of addiction (and other neuroses) is measurable by the extent to which it represents a "successful manoeuvre" rather than as a structural defect in the patient's ego. A paper presuming to treat "aetiology" has here declared that it will do so not temporally in the typical psychoanalytic sense, that is, in an attempt to bring to consciousness the traumatic childhood memory or danger-situation to blame for automatic and "regressive" behavior. For Glover, the patient is not re-enacting a maladaptive response; rather the symptom, in this case drug intoxication, represents a "protective" *advance* on an earlier state of affairs which is itself aetiological more importantly in a causal sense than in a chronological or

\(^{221}\) 299-300, Glover’s emphasis.
developmental one. Glover is thus himself advancing beyond the observations he had made in 1928 as part of a "Discussion on the Aetiology of Alcoholism" with other physicians, a talk in which he reviews other psychoanalyst's take on alcoholism and relies heavily on an explanation of regressive oral-anal sadism and castration anxiety. Glover bases his re-orientation from regression to progression on a remark of Freud's concerning paranoia, that the system represented by delusional thinking is only the visible and communicable attempt to compensate for a break from reality occurring earlier in the patient's life. In the Schreber case history, Freud writes, "The delusional formation, which we take to be the pathological product, is in reality an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction. Such a reconstruction after the catastrophe is successful to a greater or lesser extent, but never wholly so." For his own part Glover suggests that other psychopathological states than psychosis, among them drug addiction, might be approached similarly to psychosis; as his article continues, however, it becomes clear that the relation of addiction and psychosis is more than contingent, because of the capacity addiction has to "restore some link with reality" that psychosis has loosened.

Now, the relationship between psychosis and reality is famously difficult to elucidate. Here Glover is referring to Freud's own conceptualization of both neurosis and psychosis as involving a "loss of reality" (Realitätsverlust). I'd like to provisionally adopt a refinement of this definition offered by Jacques Lacan in his seminar on psychosis, a definition that I believe Glover anticipates. As Lacan reminds his students, it is not straightforwardly the case that even a non-

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222 Freud SE XII 71.
psychotic or normal subject maintains contact with reality at all times: "You are surrounded by all sorts of realities about which you are in no doubt, some of which are particularly threatening, but you don't take them fully seriously [...] You maintain yourselves in an average, basic state of blissful uncertainty." And indeed it is not uncommon for a psychotic subject to admit that his hallucinations are only perceptible to him, that is, that they are in a sense unreal: "Yes, all right, so I was the only one who heard it, then." What, then, is the difference between a normal and psychotic subjectivity? "Contrary to the normal subject for whom reality is always in the right place, the psychotic is certain of something [...] Reality is not at issue for him, certainty is." The "loss of reality" characteristic of psychotic anxiety thus has less to do with the problem of misperception and more to do with a way of relating to the external world in which all observable and interpretable phenomena bear on the subject individually and nothing is accountable for by reference to chance or coincidence.

A brief anecdote from Good Morning, Midnight is illustrative of this distinction between reality and certainty. Sasha is recalling drinking with her lover and a few of their acquaintances:

I stopped listening to them, but when the absinthe went really to my head I thought I was shouting to them to shut up. I even heard

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224 75.
my voice saying: 'Shut up; I hate you.' But really I didn't say anything.  

Here absinthe, the intoxicant most famously associated with Parisian literary circles of the late nineteenth century, simultaneously prompts an auditory hallucination and allows Sasha to maintain a certain distance from that hallucination. This effect is further underscored at the level of style by the repetition of the adverb "really," once as an intensifier qualifying a threshold of intoxication and then to distinguish between what Sasha hears enunciated by her own voice and what others are able to perceive. Sasha is certain that she has heard herself speak, but in the next moment is capable on her own of admitting that "really" no one else heard her.  

We can say that drugs, like paranoid fantasy, function as Glover's "successful manoeuvre" when they establish a kind of rhythm concerning certainty in the patient's life. He writes, "Drug-addiction might be considered an improvement on paranoia: the paranoidal element is limited to the drug-substance which is then used as a therapeutic agent to deal with intrapsychic conflict of a melancholic pattern. In the sense of localizing paranoid anxiety and enabling external adaptation to proceed, this may be one of the specific functions of drug-addiction." At the crux of Glover’s paper is the unrecognized structural homology between chronic intoxication and the fantastical world-systems which permit the paranoiac’s life to continue: the intoxicant, figured as a means of "localizing" paranoid symptoms and "enabling external adaptation to proceed,”

\[225\] Rhys GMM 122.

\[226\] Glover "Aetiology" 230-31, my emphasis.
becomes indistinguishable from the "delusional formation" that Freud characterizes as at once a more or less "successful" spontaneous "reconstruction" of order.

Glover's use of the verb "localize" is striking for two reasons. First, the word is used in a temporal sense: certain phases when paranoid anxiety is allowed free reign must be allowed for, in order that at other times a patient's "adaptation" may be permitted "to proceed." More strangely, Glover does not clarify how the intoxicant relates to such localizations. One intuitive reading of this passage would conclude that periods of acute intoxication correspond to periods of the free reign of paranoid anxiety, whereas those of sobriety would correspond to a more stable "localized" relation to the external world. Glover does not require this arrangement to be the case, however. He even goes on to complicate matters such that exactly the opposite scenario might hold true: the addict might well behave with paranoid certainty while sober, in which case drunkenness would represent a capacity to confront the unstable and unpredictable more characteristic of a non-psychotic relation to the world. As he writes, "We find that patients at different times regard the same drug as 'good' as well as 'bad.'" Furthermore, "In some noxious addictions the sedative and restorative effects are a prominent feature. On the other hand, in a great majority of 'benign' addictions, the restorative and life-giving properties of the substance are clearly manifest."227 This is to suggest that the division of time offered by the "localizations" of a drug-addiction depends not on a pure or binary distinction between sobriety and intoxication, psychosis and adaptation, as mental states,

227 Glover "Aetiology" 321.
but rather on an understanding of these two categories as fluctuations in the structure of experience. The nature of the intoxicant and its effects is less determined by its chemical makeup or psychopharmacological action and more dependent on the functional or regulatory capacity it provides to either stifle or stimulate paranoia.

Glover’s 1932 paper thus represents a genuinely original approach to the problem of drug addiction, though it is worth noting that it reflects the influence of Freud’s then-latest work, *Civilization and its Discontents*, as well as the more explicitly acknowledged Schreber case history. In chapter two of *Civilization* Freud discusses intoxication as one among several "methods of averting suffering," the "crudest," it is true, but also "most effective" and otherwise structurally identical to those satisfactions which "seem 'finer and higher,'" such as "an artist’s joy in creating" and "a scientist’s in solving problems." Freud allows that intoxicants carry a risk of "danger," but this risk is characterized in terms of "the useless waste of a large quota of energy which might have been employed for the improvement of the human lot" rather than the enslavement of an individual's ego to compulsive consumption. More importantly, Freud treats

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228 Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its Discontents*, tr. James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1961. 27-30. The rest of this paragraph deserves citation for its admission of incompleteness and invitation to others to continue the scientific investigation of intoxicants: "I do not think that anyone completely understands [intoxication’s] mechanism, but it is a fact that there are foreign substances which, when present in the blood or tissues, directly cause us pleasurable sensations; and they also so alter the conditions governing our sensibility that we become incapable of receiving unpleasurable impulses. The two effects not only occur simultaneously, but seem to be
the intoxicant as a tool developed as a reaction to the increasing repression required by civilization’s progression or expansion rather than as a chronologically primitive or regressive phenomenon. Glover thus reformulates at the level of the individual what Freud had proposed at the level of society. If Robert Frost, in "The Figure a Poem Makes," defines poetry as a "momentary stay against confusion," Glover’s theory, incorporating Freud, is that addiction to an intoxicant functions quite differently: as a "momentary stay," but against the overwhelming certainty or order that convinces paranoiacs of the special relevance of all events to themselves.229

intimately bound up with each other. But there must be substances in the chemistry of our own bodies which have similar effects, for we know at least one pathological state, mania, in which a condition similar to intoxication arises without the administration of any intoxicating drug. Besides this, our normal mental life exhibits oscillations between a comparatively easy liberation of pleasure and a comparatively difficult one, parallel with which there goes a diminished or an increased receptivity to unpleasure. It is greatly to be regretted that this toxic side of mental processes has so far escaped scientific examination. The service rendered by intoxicating media in the struggle for happiness and in keeping misery at a distance is so highly prized as a benefit that individuals and peoples alike have given them an established place in the economics of their libido. We owe to such media not merely the immediate yield of pleasure, but also a greatly desired degree of independence from the external world.”

229 In the full citation from Frost, he writes that a poem "ends in a clarification of life – not necessarily a great clarification, such as sects and cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against confusion." We could think of the paranoiac as a cult of one, but again, Glover’s argument is that addiction mediates the formation of an all-
Rereading Rhys

Glover’s psychoanalytic take on the role of addiction in psychosis becomes relevant to a reading of Rhys once we understand that Rhys’s work is not merely concerned with a depiction of a mental illness, but offers a reflection on the aesthetics and poetics of first-person narration as informed by a certain high modernist emphasis on individual creativity and skill. First-person narration and psychosis have in common, after all, the pattern that in both, all events or observations are interpretable as symbolically revelatory of the narrator’s coherent personhood. Sasha herself is concerned with tracking the effect of alcohol on her perceptive capacity and ability to interact with others, as if reading herself; I wish to emphasize, however, the ways in which the novel signals this effect to its readers without Sasha’s necessarily being aware of it, interrogating and undermining, as it were, the limitations of its focalization as a first-person narration. Drinking is associated with certain distortions of the narrative voice from the very first page:

The place to have my drink in after dinner. . . . Wait, I must be careful about that. These things are very important.

Last night, for instance. Last night was a catastrophe. . . . The woman at the next table started talking to me – a dark, thin woman of about forty, very well made-up. She had the score of a song with encompassing worldview characteristic of delusional thinking. Frost, Robert. Complete Poems of Robert Frost. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961. vi.
her and she had been humming it under her breath, tapping the accompaniment with her fingers.

"I like that song."

"Ah, yes, but it's a sad song, Gloomy Sunday." She giggled. "A little sad."230

After a friend of this woman's buys Sasha a drink, Sasha begins to cry and excuses herself to a restroom: "It was something I remembered," she tries to explain.231 The first peculiar feature of the style to note here is the imperative "Wait," as if Sasha is addressing an interlocutor. The second, more subtle oddity in narration is Sasha's following her claim that "The woman at the next table started talking to me" with a scene that demonstrates the opposite: Sasha is clearly the first to speak, as a response to the woman's humming and tapping, though her speech is isolated and unidentified as hers in the text.232 Sasha has unwittingly ascribed one of her own actions to someone else, albeit someone whose description approximates what Sasha tells us of her own appearance. Memory and hallucination begin to blur in this recollection, evidently only one day after the events described took place and the first of many. Sasha is not here an "unreliable narrator" in the sense of Genette's "paralipsis"; if anything she tells

230 GMM 9-10.

231 10.

232 Later in Good Morning, Midnight the name "Gloomy Sunday" will reappear, but as if automatically, in French and without any explicit reference to this scene: "Tomorrow's Sunday – a difficult day anywhere. Sombre dimanche. . . ." (Rhys 16)
us too much in giving us two incompatible versions of the same story. Rather Good Morning, Midnight has signaled that its reader ought to be wary when assigning speech to any one character, especially when Sasha is reporting speech indirectly. Sasha's apostrophe and projection here are at once rhetorical distortions of her narrative voice and suggestions of a paranoia that infects the text itself of the novel rather than merely Sasha's perspective as an abnormal, defective, or diseased victim of mental illness.

Two pages later, Sasha recounts her decision to return to Paris from England with similar bizarre discrepancies, this time concerning the verb "to look":

I lie awake, thinking about it [the "catastrophe"], and about the money Sidonie lent me and the way she said: "I can't bear to see you like this." Half-shutting her eyes and smiling the smile which means: "She's getting to look old. She drinks."

"We've known each other too long, Sasha," she said, "to stand on ceremony with each other."

I had just come in from my little health-stroll round Mecklenburgh Square and along the Gray's Inn Road. I had looked at this, I had looked at that, I had looked at the people passing in the street and

233 "the omission of some important action or thought of the focal hero, which neither the hero nor the narrator can be ignorant of but which the narrator chooses to conceal from the reader" (my emphasis; Genette, Gérard. Narrative Discourses: An Essay in Method, tr. Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1980. 196.)
at a shop-window full of artificial limbs. I came in to somebody who said: "I can't bear to see you looking like this."

"Like what?" I said.

"I think you need a change. Why don't you go back to Paris for a bit? . . ."²³⁴

In this passage, quite important as it represents the proper beginning of the voyage to Paris that serves as the major plotline of Good Morning, Midnight, we again have two versions of the same statement, with slight discrepancies between them. In the first, a woman named "Sidonie" tells Sasha "I can't bear to see you like this" (this seeing takes place suggestively while she is "half-shutting her eyes").²³⁵ In the second, she has lost her proper name and become "somebody." She has also integrated the verb "to look" into her statement, which has become "I can't bear to see you looking like this"; in the earlier version, Sasha reads an implicit and silent "She's beginning to look old" into her smile. It is as if the intervening window-shopping narration has interfered with the memory of what is presumably the same instance of speech. Even if the change is subtle, it is revealing inasmuch as it contests the boundary of the quotation mark: the difference between what Sidonie has said out loud and what Sasha has imputed to her disappears. The play on the transitive and intransitive meanings of "to look" also draws attention to the quandary of Sasha's agency in this passage. Though Sasha remains the grammatical subject in both usages, in one she is

²³⁴ Rhys 11.

²³⁵ "Sidonie" was Colette's first name – see Judith Gardiner (244) for a discussion of this allusion in the context of Colette’s wider influence on Rhys's work.
observing others whereas in the other she is in fact the one being watched. As it appears in the second iteration of Sidonie's statement, it could mean either: Sidonie may well intend to indicate that Sasha's wandering and staring at others, "looking," is disturbing on its own, regardless of Sasha's personal appearance, how she "looks." Sasha herself seems confused: "Like what?" Again, the problem is not that Sasha has withheld anything from us but rather that, in attempting to repeat herself, she has provided an overdetermined past, one in which her own actions and opinions are inextricable from those of others. Furthermore she has overlooked the discrepancy and seems unaware of it: she is not correcting herself here and indeed in the novel at large she hardly ever questions her own recollections.236

Sasha may seem as fragile or unstable to us as she does to Sidonie, and indeed throughout Good Morning, Midnight she voices her desire for a more ordered way of life:

This is going to be a quiet, sane fortnight. Not too much drinking, avoidance of certain cafés, of certain streets, of certain spots, and everything will go off beautifully.

The thing is to have a programme, not to leave anything to chance – no gaps. No trailing around aimlessly with cheap gramophone records starting up in your head, no "Here this happened, here that

236 When she does, it is regarding details: on the next page, for example, she wonders half-heartedly "Was it in 1923 or 1924 that we lived round the corner, in the Rue Victor-Cousin? [...] Was is in 1926 or 1927?" But she vividly remembers the address and, for instance, an "imitation astrakhan coat" her lover had bought her (12).
happened." Above all, no crying in public, no crying at all if I can help it.

Thinking all this, I pass the exact place for my after-dinner drink. It's a café on the Avenue de l'Observatoire, which always seems to be empty. I remember it like this before.²³⁷

Here as elsewhere, Sasha immediately contradicts herself, ruminating on her wish to avoid locations she remembers before choosing to have a drink at a café she remembers. This inconsistency reveals a structural weakness in Sasha's "programme": it is a negative one, conceived of as a series of things not to do (drink, go certain places). In order not to encounter certain "spots" in the external world, Sasha must actively maintain a kind of internal or potential mental map of them. She will not "trail[...] around aimlessly," she says, but in fact she is precisely aimless in the sense that her wandering is guided not so much by an aim or goal as by a pre-emptive negative fear of encountering something she recognizes. Novelty is an end unto itself, but on the other hand she must "not [...] leave anything to chance." Even before Sasha has decided on the empty café for her drink, her thinking undermines itself; the drink and its accoutrements function as an external, material confirmation of the contradiction that has already taken place internally in the logic of Sasha's motivations.

So at first glance drinking is as regimented a part of Sasha's "programme" as any other activity. Nevertheless, as in this scene where the decision to drink interrupts or overrides her determination to stay away from places she knows from "before," drinking undermines Sasha's "quiet, sane fortnight" precisely by

²³⁷ Rhys 15.
allowing for unplanned "chance" occurrences and the resurgence of associations. After this particular Pernod, for example, Sasha recalls a series of jobs she has held, one of which, a tour guide position, is of particular interest because of a scene she describes involving alcohol and coffee. Here she has taken her clients to a restaurant in the Place de la Madeleine:

They are enormously rich, these two, the mother and the daughter. Both are very rich and very sad. Neither can imagine what it is like to be happy or even to be gay, neither the mother nor the daughter.

In the restaurant the waiter suggests pancakes with rum sauce for dessert. They are strict teetotallers, but they lap up the rum sauce. I've never seen anybody's mood change so quickly as the mother's did, after they had had two helpings of it.

"What delicious sauce!" They have a third helping. Their eyes are swimming. The daughter's eyes say "Certainly, certainly"; the mother's eyes say "Perhaps, perhaps. . . ."

"It is strange how sad it can be – sunlight in the afternoon, don't you think?"

"Yes," I say, "it can be sad."

But the softened mood doesn't last.

She has coffee and a glass of water and is herself again.\(^{238}\)

For someone who pays such attention to her own alcohol intake, Sasha very rarely observes others' drinking and subsequent behavior. Like Sasha, the

\(^{238}\) Rhys GMM 30-31.
"mother" here grows depressed after drinking but recovers after a coffee. But this scene has begun with Sasha's recognition that even before drinking the mother and daughter are "very sad"; indeed "neither can imagine what it is like to be happy." The rum sauce has "softened" their "mood," but has not in fact altered their emotions so much as simply revealed what underlay them already. This important distinction suggests that it is precisely the pair's sobriety that numbs or distances them from what Sasha considers their authentic melancholy, at least in the mother's case: the daughter seems to maintain her composure even after imbibing ("certainly, certainly"). This scene thus provides a necessary counterpoint to the notion that Sasha's drinking is straightforwardly and causally related to her emotional state; it is not at all clear that a sober Sasha would feel differently. Indeed, Glover might suggest that these tourists are as if addicted to their sobriety, scrupulously avoiding a certain substance by a kind of magical thinking according to which this substance might instigate *ex nihilo* an otherwise nonexistent depression. In thus privileging alcohol, they overlook the substantiality of the money they spend as a means of isolating (Glover might say "localizing") their unhappiness.

That in the world not only of Sasha's appraisal but also of Rhys's *oeuvre* these women may be simultaneously rich and unhappy deserves further comment. Sasha is obviously not wealthy, but her relative financial security and independence is unique among Rhys's protagonists: she has a weekly salary and is clearly not expected to pay back the additional money that funds her time in Paris. Over the course of *Good Morning, Midnight*, we witness her purchase
clothes and eat out for every meal.\textsuperscript{239} It is as if Rhys willfully divests her readers of Sasha's relative poverty or wealth as an explanatory factor in her dissatisfaction: she is not as rich as she could be (at one point she visits a different, nicer hotel than her own, eventually deciding not to move), but she is not starving and, of particular significance, not compelled into the company of any man for material support, as Julia Martin in \textit{After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie} or Anna Morgan in \textit{Voyage in the Dark}. If Sasha is thus protected from outright starvation, the financial limbo she finds herself in also wards off those who might wish to take advantage of her: she is "invulnerable," as she puts it, to those who are "out for money."\textsuperscript{240} The sources of Sasha's regular income, the "old devil" and Sidonie, are mentioned but left vague. Similarly, we do not know where Sasha herself comes from. When she is confronted by the hotel patron for having left her passport number off her room registration, she puts him off:

\begin{quote}
What's wrong with the fiche? I've filled it up all right, haven't I? Name So-and-so, nationality So-and-so. . . . Nationality – that's what has puzzled him. I ought to have put nationality by marriage. I tell him I will have the passport in the afternoon and he gives my hat a gloomy, disapproving look. I don't blame him. It shouts "Anglaise," my hat.\textsuperscript{241}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{239} Sasha will later recall a time when she was not so well off: "The patronne didn't like us to eat in our room. Just once in a while she didn't mind, but when people eat in their room every night, it means they really have no money at all" (130).

\textsuperscript{240} Rhys \textit{GMM} 76.

\textsuperscript{241} Rhys \textit{GMM} 14-15.
Here Rhys deftly signals at once that Sasha appears English to others and that in fact she is not (in another example of Sasha's strange ascriptions of speech, here to an object).242 She may have origins in the West Indies, as do the heroines of *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie* and *Voyage in the Dark*; the evidence for this is ambiguous, however, and comes during a scene when what she calls "Martinique music" plays on a gramophone and Sasha experiences either a memory or a hallucination of being somewhere tropical ("I am lying in a hammock looking up into the branches of a tree. The sound of the sea advances and retreats...").243 We must read Sasha as foreign not in that she lives away from any particular homeland but in an existential sense, and as impoverished not in that she lacks for money but in that the value of money itself fluctuates so wildly over the course of *Good Morning, Midnight* that it provides none of the independence or satisfaction that Rhys's earlier protagonists would imagine it to.

This pattern is particularly brought out during Sasha's visit to a painter's studio, the episode which makes up Part Two of *Good Morning, Midnight*. The scene reads as a revision of "Tea with an Artist," the eighth short story in Rhys's 1927 collection *The Left Bank*, which is worth a preliminary analysis. That story follows an unnamed female narrator visiting the studio of "Verhausen," a painter she becomes intrigued by after watching him "drinking rapidly one glass of beer after another, smoking a long, curved pipe, and beaming contentedly on the

242 Also another example of Rhys's particularly sophisticated attention to language in *Good Morning, Midnight* is the reappearance of the adjective "gloomy" here as describing a disapproving stare, the word's etymological sense.

243 92.
world" in a Latin Quarter café. Such contentment is somewhat illusory. A friend recounts the tribulations of the man's youthful marriage: he had "evolved the idea that it was sacrilege to sell them [his pictures]," whereas his wife "wanted lots of money and so on," and thus sold some of his paintings without his permission, after which he "cried like a baby" and "she left him." Since Verhausen will not exhibit his work, our heroine must visit him at his apartment, where he resides with a woman "he had picked up in some awful brothel in Antwerp."

There, witnessing what she calls his "perverted form of miserliness," she views several of his "impressionist" works before finding her favorite, what she brands "Great art!" It is a portrait:

A girl seated on a sofa in a room with many mirrors held a glass of green liqueur. Dark-eyed, heavy-faced, with big, sturdy peasant’s limbs, she was entirely destitute of lightness or grace.

But all the poisonous charm of the life beyond the pale was in her pose, and in her smouldering eyes — all its deadly bitterness and fatigue in her fixed smile.

Verhausen's current lover, Marthe, returns from having shopped for groceries, and after he confirms that he refuses to sell his paintings, the narrator leaves. The very brief story's dénouement occurs as she reveals in her parting meditations that the portrait is in fact of Marthe as a younger girl:

Without the flame his genius had seen in her and had fixed for ever, she was heavy, placid and uninteresting — at any rate to me [...] And then I remembered the way in which she had touched his cheek with her big hands. There was in that movement knowledge,
and a certain sureness: as it were the ghost of a time when her
business in life had been the consoling of men.\textsuperscript{244}

The story is at once fascinated by and cynical towards what we could call
Verhausen's refusal to acknowledge the materiality or substantiality of his work,
its susceptibility to market forces, a deliberate ignorance only sustainable in the
company of women who behave more pragmatically. Marthe's past as a
prostitute (her "business in life") lingers on as a willingness to indulge
Verhausen's idealism. Further, this idealism is associated with Verhausen's
drinking, which continues, and Marthe's, preserved as her figuration in the pose
of the emblematic Impressionist absinthe-drinker during her pre-"ghost" life.\textsuperscript{245}

The division between the two is sharply gendered, and it seems not totally
irresponsible to speculate that this condemnation of a certain masculine
aesthetics reflects the tenor of Rhys's interactions with Ford Maddox Ford.

As rewritten in \textit{Good Morning, Midnight}, the story is less conducive to
interpretation as a \textit{roman à clef}. Here the painter is named Serge, and Sasha is
brought to visit him by a Russian named Delmar she has encountered by chance
in the street in Part One. Before viewing his work, Sasha begins inexplicably to
cry.

\begin{quote}
I have an irresistible longing for a long, strong drink to make me
forget that once again I have given damnable human beings the
right to pity me and laugh at me.
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{245} As painted by Manet, Degas, and Picasso, among others.
I say in a loud, aggressive voice: "Go out and get a bottle of brandy," take money out of my bag and offer it to him.

This is where he starts getting hold of me, Serge. He doesn't accept the money or refuse it – he ignores it. He blots out what I have said and the way I said it. He ignores it as if it had never been, and I know that, for him, it has never been.246

Serge's response to the matter of finance here is more complex than Verhausen's precisely because he does not deny or reject Sasha's money, here deftly equated with her drinking, so much as foreclose it entirely. Sasha ends up resisting what she has described as "irresistible." This "getting hold of" Sasha continues as Serge tells a story about a destitute woman he remembers from a time when he lived in London:

"I said to her: 'What's the matter?' She only went on crying. 'Well,' I thought, 'it's nothing to do with me.' I shut the door firmly. But still I could hear her. I opened the door again and I asked her: 'What is it? Can I do anything for you?' She said: 'I want a drink.'"

"Exactly like me," I say. "I cried, and I asked for a drink." He certainly likes speechifying, this peintre. Is he getting at me?

"No, no," he says. "Not like you at all."

Here Serge discourages Sasha's tendency to identify with or project onto others; as we have seen, this pattern of behavior is counterintuitively not so much indicative of genuine sympathy as it is of a paranoid mindset according to which all other people are particularly relevant to one's own concerns. By identifying

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246 Rhys GMM 94.
what Sasha is not, Serge allows her to appreciate the story of this woman's drinking on its own terms. Still, Serge is indeed "getting at" Sasha: "She was drunk too, but that wasn't why she was crying," he explains. 247

Unlike Verhausen, Serge is willing to sell his paintings, but the transaction is tortuous:

[Sasha:] "I want very much to buy one of your pictures – this one."

It is an old Jew with a red nose, playing the banjo.

"The price of that is six hundred francs," he says. "If you think it's too much we'll arrange some other price."

All his charm and ease of manner have gone. He looks anxious and surly. I say awkwardly: "I don't think it at all too much. But I haven't got the money. . . ."

Before I can get any further he bursts into a shout of laughter.

"What did I tell you?" he says to Delmar.

"But have it, take it, all the same. I like you. I'll give it you as a present."

"No, no. All I meant was that I can't pay you now."

"Oh, that's all right. You can send me the money from London. I'll tell you what you can do for me – you can find some other idiots who'll buy my pictures."

When he says this, he smiles at me gently, so disarmingly. The touch of the human hand. . . . I'd forgotten what it was like, the touch of the human hand.
"I’m serious. I mean that. Take the picture and send me the money when you can."248

Sasha’s sense that she is behaving "awkwardly" infuses the whole scene. Serge will announce a price, but he immediately suggests it is negotiable, as if bargaining with himself; his hasty interruption of Sasha, laughter, and smiling all indicate that he is at once relieved and disappointed to be able to offer the painting for free as a gift rather than in exchange. His aside to Delmar suggests he has even expected to do so all along. Sasha does take the painting and offers to meet Serge later the same evening to give him the money, but he does not appear; Delmar arrives instead as an intermediary, and Sasha gives the money to him. On her return to her hotel, she begins to reinterpret this series of interactions:

When I am back in my room I start worrying about him [Delmar] and the money he has spent on me. And then I think: "I bet he’ll get his percentage on that six hundred francs. Or perhaps he won’t hand the money over at all."

This idea makes me laugh the whole time I am undressing.249

Here Sasha’s purchase is refigured as an encounter with a prostitute, with Delmar acting as a (perhaps unscrupulous) pimp. Though later a note from Serge confirms that Delmar has in fact "hand[ed] over" the money, the difficulty of the exchange has left Sasha disillusioned: "God, this is awful!"250 Part Two ends by

248 100.

249 104.

250 102.
following Sasha’s most extreme bender of the novel – a rough count would include three Pernods, an entire bottle of Bordeaux, and a whisky – leading to Part Three, in which she finally allows herself to recall a series of vivid scenes of her former life in Paris with her lover Enno.

The differences between this episode and "Tea with an Artist" are instructive. If the short story indicates that an aesthetic worldview that fails to take into account the status of art as a commodity is ultimately untenable, the novel displays in painstaking detail the difficult realities of art's circulation in a market. The narrator of "Tea with an Artist" is ambivalent regarding Verhausen's reliance on his wife's economy, which is likened to her career as a prostitute; Sasha's purchase of Serge's painting, however, merely transforms the artist himself into a prostitute, with Sasha complicit as a john. If "Tea with an Artist" casts doubt on a certain bohemian orthodoxy, "l'art pour l'art," Good Morning, Midnight's Sasha is just as skeptical towards the alternative. A brief exchange between Sasha and a man who has hired her to tutor in English neatly suggests her half-acceptance of a kind of pure aesthetics:

[The student:] "I think Oscar Wilde is the greatest of English writers. Do you agree?"

"Well. . . ."

"Ah, you do not agree."

"But I do like him. I think he is very – sympathique." 251

Finally, the role of alcohol shifts notably between the first and second iterations of the story of a visit to an artist's studio. In the first, not only Verhausen's own

251 131-32.
drinking but his representation of drinking correspond to clichés of the bohemian artist; in the second, it is Sasha, the artist's patron, whose aggressive compulsion to drink the artist in fact dissuades. Serge has lost all of Verhausen's detached gaiety, but his art is no less effective for it. It is rather the reaction of others to his work that must, with great effort, be modified.

The fourth and final part of *Good Morning, Midnight* left Rhys herself unsatisfied, according to her letters, where she claims to have written it while drunk. It follows an increasingly bitter series of interactions between Sasha and René, a man whom like Delmar she has encountered at random in a bar but whose erotic interest in her is more manifest. She becomes convinced that he is after her money and refers to him regularly as "the gigolo," a suspicion that remains unverified and that he denies; nevertheless he tells Sasha he has met a very wealthy American woman and implies he will be joining her on a trip to London, where Sasha will be returning the next day. And as the novel continues it becomes clear that the "American" in question may in fact be Sasha herself:

[René:] "When I've paid for this lot of drinks I shan't have much money left."

"What, haven't you got any money out of your American?"

"Oh no, not yet, not yet. When I ask her for something it'll be something. But one mustn't do that too quickly, of course. She must be ready. . . . She's nearly ready. I think perhaps tomorrow she'll be ready."
He looks straight into my eyes all the time he is talking, with that air of someone defying you.²⁵²

Here the ambiguity of the word "defy" seems to convey an ambiguity in René’s "look": for Sasha, it takes on the meaning "to resist boldly or openly, to set at nought," as if René's American might supplant her; for René, it means "to challenge to do (what the challenger maintains cannot be done)," in this case for Sasha to accuse him of having fabricated his new lover.²⁵³ Indeed Sasha imagines the American might be a fiction: "I don't believe in his American – he’s probably invented her. And yet something must have happened to make him feel so pleased with himself and so sure of himself. Also he seems certain that he will be in London in a few days."²⁵⁴ Strangely, however, for someone with a tendency to read herself into situations extraneous to her, Sasha never considers that she and the American might be one and the same, and that René expects her to invite him on her voyage home. One tragedy of her relationship with René is that here, where Sasha's typical paranoid jealousy and projections might in fact render an accurate judgment, they fail to do so. It is as if she has poorly timed her relative sobriety: "This is just the interval where a drink makes you look nice, before it makes you look awful."²⁵⁵

Most readers understand that Good Morning, Midnight ends darkly. René forces himself on Sasha, after which she offers him the remainder of her money;

²⁵² 155.


²⁵⁴ 156.

²⁵⁵ 170.
once he leaves, she welcomes the embrace of the man renting the room next to hers, whose advances she has before rejected. What I have tracked as her paranoia reaches its full expression in a complete division between Sasha herself and the voice in her head.

I cry in the way that hurts right down, that hurts your heart and your stomach. Who is this crying? The same one who laughed on the landing, kissed him and was happy. This is me, this is myself, who is crying. The other – how do I know who the other is? She isn't me.

Her voice in my head: "Well, well, well, just think of that now. What an amusing ten days! Positively packed with thrills [...] You've had dinner with a beautiful young man and he kissed you and you've paid a thousand francs for it. Dirt cheap at the price, especially with the exchange the way it is. Don't forget the exchange, dearie – but of course you wouldn't, would you?"

This passage seems to represent a psychotic break; the sarcasm and disdain of the voice in Sasha's head is rendered more bitingly than anywhere earlier in the text. On the other hand, however, Sasha's directly acknowledging the separation of agencies in her mind represents a kind of control over it. It would be wrong to say that here Sasha succumbs to a diagnosis of psychosis; rather, narration of the condition here instigates a kind of control over psychotic speech. In describing or rendering this foreign voice using quotation marks, it is as if Sasha brackets it. Moreover, the voice’s cynicism is in the end ungrounded: true, Sasha cannot
forget "the exchange," but when she checks her coat pockets she finds that René has taken no money at all.

[The voice:] "Well! What a compliment! Who’d have thought it?"

"I knew," I say, "I knew. That's why I cried."  

Strangely, establishing a conversation with the voice in her head, which is to say, narrating it, works to heal both Sasha and the narrative insofar as it is how Rhys chooses to end the novel. This conversation seems even to acknowledge that neither of these two agencies has complete access to the truth: one "knew" something of which the other was ignorant. "I know quite well that all this is hallucination," she even explains. Furthermore she knows how to rid herself of it: "I have another drink. Damned voice in my head, I'll stop you talking. . . ."  

Psychotic Materiality

The year before his article on the etiology of drug-addiction, Edward Glover had published "The Therapeutic Effect of Inexact Interpretation: A Contribution to the Theory of Suggestion" in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. Ostensibly concerned with the "periodic searching of heart" Glover believes necessary to the continued argument for the special place of psychoanalysis among psycho-therapeutic medical treatments, the paper offers a negative definitional theory of psychoanalytic practice inextricable from Glover's theories of addiction and intoxication as well as of sublimation. In short, Glover proposes that non-psychoanalytic therapeutic techniques function as intoxicants to an addict, and that, as a corollary, the uniqueness of a psychoanalytic cure

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257 186.

258 187.
derives from its immaterial basis in a willingness "to deal with mind through mind."^259

This article justifies itself as one installment in what Glover calls the "periodic searching of heart" required by psychoanalysis if it is to maintain its claim to uniqueness as its theories and those of its rival institutions develop. How ought a psychoanalyst explain the apparently successful treatment of a neurotic patient by what Glover calls a "suggestionist," that is to say, a doctor who practices psychoanalysis improperly or not at all? The same question could be asked of early psychoanalysts who treated patients with apparent success though before the development of such key concepts as the death drive and primary narcissism. A "reconsideration of the current theory of suggestion" is called for, but a simple answer will not do:

One is tempted to short-circuit the process by stating outright that whatever psychotherapeutic process is not purely analytical must, in the long run, have something in common with the processes of symptom formation.^260

Here is an "outright" expression of the idea that the development of an illness, that is, the further formation of symptoms, might in fact have an observable beneficial or healing effect. Glover disqualifies the idea as a reductive or hasty "tempt[ation]," but does not claim it is inaccurate; indeed it is a through-line of

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^260 Glover "Inexact" 404.
his thinking and will reappear as his thesis that the addict’s compromise with psychosis is really an advance on it that exploits the distinction between sobriety and intoxication as a symptom in order to temporally restrict paranoia. Glover’s point is reliant on his thesis that the "purely analytical" "process" would represent a categorically different treatment, one in which symptoms do not accrue but are rather shed.

Ultimately the distinction between pseudo-analytic or "suggestive" and genuinely analytic work derives from a difference in the model of mind employed by the two. "Psycho-analysts have shown over and over again that, given the slightest relaxation of mental vigilance, the mind is openly spoken of as a bodily organ": the suggestionist is he who falls into this trap, conceives of the mind as a "substance," and in so doing revives "a more primitive 'concrete' ideology such as is to be studied in the animistic systems of primitives, the delusional systems of paranoiacs and (given analytical investigation) the transference systems of neurotics."261 Ultimately this less advanced understanding of the mind as a "bodily organ" leads the suggestionist to "base his suggestive interferences on a system of 'friendly paranoia.'"262 Glover’s language regarding the pharmacology of such a system is at times hard to parse, and seems to switch between literal and figurative descriptions: the suggestionist uses a "suggestive opiate for guilt," "cathartic drugs or gentle laxatives," "friendly

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261 Furthermore, "Ernest Jones has pointed out the relation of this to psycho-analytic ideas concerning the significance of alcohol" (though Glover's citation here in fact leads to Jones's comments on Karl Abraham). Glover "Inexact" 408–409.

262 410.
tonics," and thereby functions "without bringing the mind into the matter at all," a phrase we could rearrange as "by bringing matter into the mind." 263 Glover has created a structural model in which psychoanalytic treatment is all the purer the less it relies on a materialist conception of the psyche. The psychoanalyst’s speech is rarified into something less than a sound wave; the suggestionist's, on the other hand, is incorporated into the patient's body, and is thereby no better than a drug or indeed another symptom.

Though Glover wrote prolifically on psychoanalytic technique in its own right, I am more interested in the ways his negative isolation of psychoanalysis in this article and "On the Aetiology of Drug Addiction" functions to draw out similarities among non-psychoanalytic approaches to the cure, the most striking of which is their reliance on a material substrate to effect healing. In a later work he returns to the question of what psychoanalysis is not, in a polemic against the psychological system of Carl Jung. Freud or Jung (1950) takes aim at several aspects of Jung's work, notably his alliance with German National Socialism, but reserves particular disdain for Jungian analysis for its last chapter on the topic of sublimation, "Art." Already in the book's "Introductory" chapter Glover indicates that aesthetic work will take a special place in his considerations with a critique of what he calls surrealist writers' "impression that [...] they can either directly express unconscious content or quicken the creative process," since as he points out even "the most distorted products of schizophrenic imagination include elaborate contributions from the pre-conscious system of the mind [... and] where

263 409-410.
the schizophrenic fails it is not likely the artist will succeed."264 The unconscious is always filtered. This comparison between works of art and psychopathological "products" made in Glover's introduction comes to fruition in the chapter on "Art," and does so by drawing on a structural distinction we have seen from earlier in his career:

To say that the work of art is a *ding an sich*, a thing in its own right, means no more than that it is a specific and characteristic mode of instinctual expression, a characteristic end-product [...] Some obsessional neuroses, for example, illustrate the operation of advanced artistic techniques. And there are no doubt many art products which bear the hallmark of neurotic and other varieties of pathological mechanism. There is however one essential difference between the pure work of art and the neurosis. The neurosis is the result of a *regression* of libido leading to the *breakdown* of a repression system which is *already* faulty, hence the emergence of compromises between the repressed and the repressing forces. It is also an unconscious instrument of self-punishment. Whatever its original unconscious aim, the work of art represents a *forward* urge of the libido seeking to maintain its hold on the world of objects. Its instinctual compromises are not the result of a pathological breakdown of the repression system. Rather it acts as an auxiliary

device to maintain the efficiency of repression. It is in the truest sense a sublimation.  

This passage displays ambivalence as to the status of works of art. Such a work is at once a "mode" and a "product"; it is compared to "neurosis" itself, a disease, rather than to any particular symptom or expression of such an illness. Glover's vocabulary, rich in descriptors of pathology, lacks a diagnostic term to describe the condition of being an artist. As a result, he leaves unclear the material status of the ding an sich the artist creates, though he refers to it as a "device" and allows that its purpose is expressly to further the participation of the "libido" in the "world of objects."

Most interestingly, the regression/progression binary that Glover had, in "On the Aetiology of Drug-Addiction," relied on to distinguish a certain early style of psychoanalytic therapy from his own, here reappears as the key factor distinguishing pathology from "the pure work of art." What Glover has in several texts characterized as effective but ultimately non-psychoanalytic means of treatment – "a system of 'friendly paranoia,'" for example, and "benign addictions" themselves – fall on the side of progression, an interpretative principle Glover had set out in his earlier work to restore to his readings of Freud. As in "On the Aetiology of Drug-Addiction," Glover's tendency to apophatic definitions of genuine psychoanalysis here aligns a progressive reconstruction of a relationship to the world that has been threatened or indeed destroyed outright with paranoia, addiction, and sublimation, the "pure work of art". The paranoiac's world-system provides a temporal structure for this

265 185, Glover's emphasis.
progression, an "auxiliary device" akin to an intoxicant or a sublimating "mode of instinctual expression."

What does it mean to read *Good Morning, Midnight* not as a catalogue of behavioral symptoms referring to a curable pathological disorder, but rather as a novel in which the language and plot are organized according to an addiction that overlays and mediates a psychotic structure? I do not mean to suggest a hermeneutic approach in which we may divide the novel into periods of psychosis and those of managed uncertainty, tracking instances of drinking and specific grammatical or syntactical indicators of relative sobriety or intoxication. Much less do I wish to interpret the novel's plot as one of palliative resolution: if there is a kind of development in *Good Morning, Midnight*, it is not one from sickness to health. Rather the novel follows the dissolution of an unstable and nominally first-person voice into its constituent parts, the assignment of distinct punctuation and narrative bracketing to distinct agencies or voices within the monologue of Sasha's visit to Paris. For all the grim tragedy of the novel's conclusion, Sasha has in the end accomplished what can only be understood as a re-interpretation of her relation to the world, one in which regression to obsessively re-living her past time in Paris gives way to a progression and acceptance of an uncertain future. Furthermore, this re-interpretation at the level of the personal or individual is bound up with an aesthetic shift, in which Sasha's continual citation of canonical literary and visual art gives way to a frank and painful encounter with the realities of artwork's status as a marketable commodity.
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Conclusion

What results from reading in Arthur Rimbaud’s 1873 directive to originality and newness – “Il faut être absolument moderne!” – a profound echo of Baudelaire’s earlier poetic command, “Il faut être toujours ivre”? This project began from the observation that, called to define the particularity of literature even as they wish to innovate and refresh literary forms, certain Western writers during the late 19th and early 20th century turn to intoxication as a conceptual paradigm, invoking its ancient associations with literary inspiration even as they treat it as a model for perceptual renewal and aesthetic openness to experimentation. On the one hand, in part as a result of an influx into Europe of new and stronger drugs, by the middle of the 19th century legal and medical thinkers were beginning to develop a disease model of addiction. In this model, certain substances, classified as intoxicants, were understood to overpower the will and compel repeated consumption more than others. At the same time and consequently, many writers loosely within the Romantic tradition began to diverge in defining the role of intoxication in artistic creation: for some, the hallucinations caused by drugs constituted poetic material. Many, however, insisted that artistic modes of perception were somehow analogous to intoxication even as they were to be rigorously distinguished from experiences of material or literal intoxication by a substance. In my reading, Baudelaire’s work negotiates these parallel trends. His late work, especially Les paradis artificiels, reaffirms his

poetry’s commitment to depicting the realities of urban modernity in part through an extended meditation on the nature of wine intoxication. Baudelaire cuts the Gordian knot, as it were, of the Romantic conflict between literal and figurative intoxication: he insists that intoxication does not represent a monolithic experience, but that, properly understood, one kind of intoxication offers the artist a paradigmatically modern perceptual means of “representing the present.”

If Baudelaire thus approaches intoxication as a quality or position of the artist as a subject, we could say that Henry James is more properly concerned with the place of intoxication as represented within the work of art. Indeed, I make the case that his early serialized novel *Roderick Hudson* was initially intended as a kind of tragic *Künstlerroman* governed by the title character’s alcoholism, and that we can read an in-text deliberation over the propriety of representing a drunkard in sculpture as indicative of the motivations that went into James’s eventual swerve away from what he had come to consider an uninteresting plot device. *The Ambassadors* revisits these preoccupations much later in James’s career. Lambert Strether undergoes a mysterious change halfway through the novel, and longs for a material explanation for it: poetry, sex, drink. He tries and fails to develop an addiction to cigarettes, overwhelmed by the complex communicative valences smoking comes to represent for him in Paris. Nevertheless, I read Strether’s delusions and his behavior after the novel’s dénouement as indicative of his success in “doing nothing,” a recurrent Jamesian formula for moral and aesthetic inaction inflected by metaphors of intoxication.

Proust’s treatment of intoxication in *A la recherche du temps perdu* is inflected by the novel’s first-person point of view. Whereas James represents
artistic talent from outside, as it were, Proust’s novel is the story of the
development of an artist from within. I read instances of the narrator’s
intoxication by alcohol in Proust’s novel as stages in the development of a model
of defamiliarization or estrangement proposed by many thinkers in the early 20th
century. This “intoxication plot” parallels the better-known series of involuntary
memories that lead to the fully explicit aesthetic theories of the novel’s final
volume. But unlike the hallucinatory and metaphysical tenor of the narrator’s
experiences of involuntary memory, scenes of drunkenness adopt a subtle and
comedic approach to questions at once mundane and fundamental: of what
importance is an artist’s physical well-being? Can a novel account in its own text
for the time the author took to produce it? These questions are all the more
evocative given the circumstances of the novel’s partially posthumous
publication.

Finally, Jean Rhys’s *Good Morning, Midnight* provides another first-person
text, but from a point of view of near-constant intoxication. On the one hand, I
attempt to read the novel without ascribing to Rhys herself or to any character
any particular diagnosis; on the other, it is inarguable that the novel’s prose is
inflected at the level of language by a psychotic structure. In that reading, the
work of Edward Glover provides a helpful framework for understanding a
fundamentally complementary relationship between repeated intoxication and
psychosis. Sasha’s drinking, and the accompanying distortions of the novel’s
prose at the level of style and syntax, “localizes” her psychosis as absolute
certainty, and provides the novel’s plot with a rhythm and momentum that it
would otherwise lack. Rhys is less concerned with explicit aesthetic theorizing
than her peers in this dissertation, though the novel’s many sly literary
references do suggest a certain cynicism towards the notion of aesthetic originality. Nevertheless, in her close attention to details of language, Rhys’s work offers a unique take on intoxication as an aesthetic paradigm.

These chapters are not intended to imply any grand historical narrative regarding literary modernism. What brings the works together is an emphasis on and interrogation of the nature of the subjectivity at work in creating and understanding art. Intoxication becomes a touchstone for these writers not merely because they themselves all encountered intoxicants, but because of their shared aversion to any simplistic or mechanistic account either of art’s complete autonomy in itself or absolute dependence on its circumstances. In examining and defining the nature of intoxication, these writers display and work through paradigms of artistic creation. In insisting that intoxication does not magically provide hallucinatory visions, but refreshes perception of the world as it is, Baudelaire and Proust experiment with a model of estrangement and artistic responsibility. In avoiding an “addiction narrative” he views as unoriginal early in his career, James makes room for the parody of addiction we find in The Ambassadors, as part of a commitment to aesthetic and ethical rigor that refuses an easy deterministic psychology of temptation. In mediating psychosis and addiction in the prose of Good Morning, Midnight, Rhys at once innovates and questions the value of innovation.

A more thorough study of these patterns could include many other works. Paul Valéry’s L’âme et la danse, for example, takes the form of a Socratic dialogue discussing “l’ivresse due à nos actes,” and Marguerite Duras’s relatively late
(1958) *Moderato cantabile* would provide a fascinating counterpart to Rhys’s take on feminine drunkenness. In a dissertation preoccupied with Americans travelling to Europe, Graham Greene’s *The Power and the Glory*, a Britishman’s novel about an alcoholic priest in Mexico, would also constitute an interesting contrast. Beyond the narrow scope of fiction written in French and English, Italo Svevo’s *La coscienza di Zeno*, concerning an analysand’s attempt to quit smoking cigarettes, would complement my analysis of smoking in *The Ambassadors*. And outside the bounds of prose, a reading of Apollinaire’s *Alcools* would offer some insight into one lyrical and imagistic account of the place of intoxication in literary writing.

I suspect, however, that expanding the scope of the project forward in time would prove difficult. Intoxication and drug use are of great thematic interest to so-called post-modern writers, of course: in the generation immediately after the war, one thinks of Kerouac and Burroughs among the Beats, Aldous Huxley’s *The Doors of Perception*, or Henri Michaux’s *Misérable Miracle: La Mescaline*, to name just a few. Those works have in common a kind of resuscitation of the hallucinatory model of inspiration represented in my first chapter by, for example, Théophile Gautier. If postmodernism is characterized by an abandonment of metanarratives, however, then it does not make sense to look in these writers for insights into even an attempt at forging a unifying theory of literary aesthetics, whether in reference to intoxication or otherwise.267 And today, in any case, the moral and political valences of intoxication are drastically

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different from a hundred years ago. American prohibition of alcohol failed in the 1930s, but the prohibition of certain other substances at that time has come to contribute perhaps more directly than any other cause to the urgent moral disaster that is mass incarceration.\textsuperscript{268} The disease model of addiction has become so diffuse as to incorporate sugar and pornography among “intoxicants”; at the same time, the mass-scale prescription of antidepressants and other psychotropic drugs is increasingly alarming and has contributed to the so-called opioid crisis. In other words, given the proclamations of the death of the author, on the one hand, and the connotative valences of intoxication in our time, on the other, there is little room for the kinds of probing analyses the perceptual disturbances that so richly fascinate Baudelaire, James, Proust, and Rhys.

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