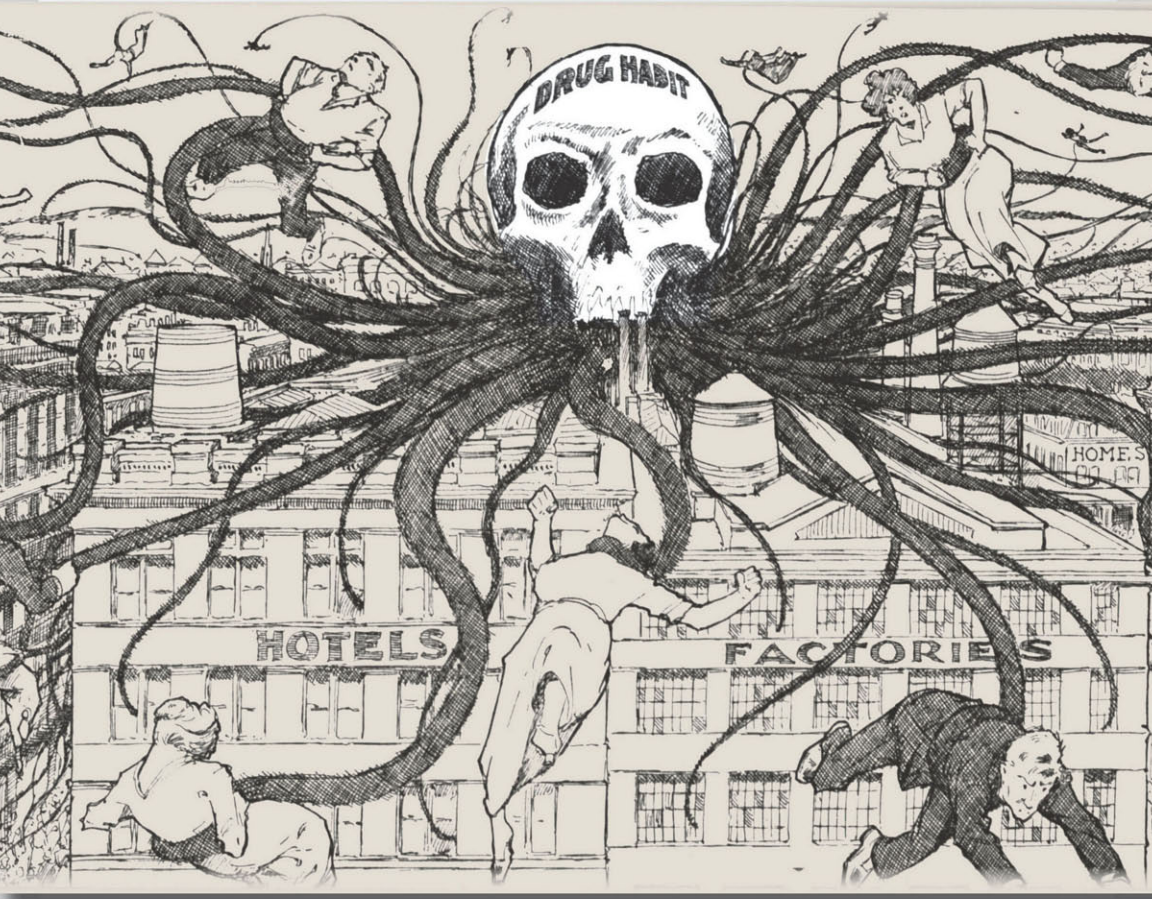
THE AMERICAN PIPE DREAM



Performance of Drug Addiction, 1890-1940

MAX SHULMAN

THE AMERICAN PIPE DREAM

STUDIES IN THEATRE HISTORY AND CULTURE

HEATHER S. NATHANS,

series editor

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BY MAX SHULMAN

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To David Spector,
you are missed

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INTRODUCTION THE GATEWAY

In his 2014 book *High Price*, neuropharmacologist Dr. Carl Hart declares that "most of what we think we know about drugs, addiction, and choice is wrong."[1] With the United States nearly three decades into a devastating opioid crisis, his assertion is sobering. And yet, Hart's claim is not surprising if one considers the state of things. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in 2019 that 252 people died every day in the US from opioid overdoses.[2] Relapse rates for addicts who seek treatment are between 40 and 60 percent, with an absence of any definitive science regarding why certain people become addicted to narcotics.[3] Law enforcement statistics are similarly staggering, with a recent *New York Times* article noting that "an American [is] arrested for drug possession every 25 seconds."[4] To wit, the draconian sentencing policies forged during the now fifty-year-old War on Drugs have done little to stem drug use, but have driven the rate of incarceration in the US beyond that of any country in the world.[5] These interrelated issues signal consequent truths: the medical, legislative, and enforcement practices that make up US drug policy are neither a successful safeguard nor a deterrent for the nation's population. What could explain such dire circumstances other than Hart's claim of a comprehensive lack of knowledge?

A reckoning would include the modifying of diagnostics, a revolution in treatment, and the transformation of US drug policy. The first step, however, requires a change in the general perception of addiction, which is beset by inaccuracies and fuels so much of this devastation. The nation must begin to consider that which has seemed unthinkable, casting off standard assumptions of the axiomatic evil of certain substances, of the fatalism of the "addictive personality," and

of the inherent vice of drug users. Hart himself experienced such an awakening through his research. Wondering at the apparent "normalcy" of the drug users that he meets during his laboratory experiments, he confronts his own expectations:

> Not one of them crawled on the floor, picking up random white particles and trying to smoke them. Not one was ranting or raving. No one was begging for more, either—and absolutely none of the cocaine users I studied ever became violent. I was getting similar results with methamphetamine users. They too defied stereotypes.[6]

Like many, Hart locates the source of flawed assumptions about drug users in popular culture—specifically performance. For him, it was a spate of films from the early 1990s, including *New Jack City*, *Jungle Fever*, and *Boyz N the Hood*, and some of the gangsta rap of the period. These supplied images of crack-cocaine users as poor, urban African Americans who were animalistic in their cravings. Scholars from a range of disciplines have similarly problematized these portrayals. In her influential book *The New Jim Crow* (2010), Michelle Alexander marks perceptions of gangsta rap as one of the most crucial influences on the formation of racially biased drug laws that presently plague the nation.[7]

However, what many do not realize is that the films and songs that Hart and Alexander hold responsible did not originate the images they employ. Rather, these commonplace portrayals are the result of long-standing and equally inaccurate antecedents refitted for the cultural moment. Attempts to debunk conventional images of addicts in popular culture date back at least to the 1930s. Researchers argued that sunken eyes, prostration, and muscle twitches, so typical even today in portrayals of the addict, were not a sign of narcotic dependency.[8] Early drug researcher Maurice Seevers drummed up the standard misconception of the drug user in 1939:

> To the average medical layman lacking firsthand experience with addiction, the term "drug addict" may conjure a mental image of a sallow-skinned, hollow-eyed Oriental, who in his

> utter depravity is clutching with bony, long-nailed fingers at the throat of a young girl or suckling babe.[9]

Like the portrayals that misled Hart, Seevers imagines the addict as racially different, grotesque, and menacing. As this signals, modern-day perceptions of addiction and of the drug addict (which are related but distinct cultural phenomena) emerge from a lengthy and complex history of accumulation and revision. This piecemeal fabrication occurred most significantly among interconnected forms of popular entertainment through evolving performance practices, iconographies, and narratives. It is this history that *The American Pipe Dream* takes as its subject.

This study traces the representational history of the drug addict in US performance from the character's earliest appearance in the 1890s to the beginning of the Second World War. Within this period, the nation faced a number of drug scares related to the opium smoking of Chinese immigrants, the cocaine use of working-class bachelors, the morphine addiction of the idle upper classes, the inebriety of the flappers, and the marijuana use of African Americans and Latin Americans. Craig Reinarman argues that all drug scares are the result of "media magnification" or "routinization of caricature" in which mass media engages in a process of "rhetorically re-crafting worst cases into typical cases and the episodic into the epidemic."[10] As a result, most drug scares "are relatively autonomous from whatever drug-related problems exist or are said to exist."[11] *The American Pipe Dream* reveals the central role that the theatre and performance have played in this process of magnification and routinization. Every drug scare that the US has experienced has had a corresponding stage life, with the addict proving a significant character across popular entertainment forms throughout the Progressive Era, the Jazz Age, and the Great Depression. I argue that these portrayals made strategic interventions in larger medical, social, and cultural histories, and that understanding the history of the performance of addiction will shed significant light on our larger national experience of addiction. This study proposes a performance genealogy for the American addict. As Jonathan Arac urges, such a genealogy "aims to excavate the past that is necessary to

account for how we got here and the past that is useful for conceiving alternatives to our present condition."[12] Jacques Derrida concurs, "the archive should *call into question* the coming of the future."[13]

Casting a wide historical net, *The American Pipe Dream* considers performances in venues ranging from Broadway to vaudeville to nightclubs, and in a range of genres from sensational melodrama to the experimental aesthetics of the Little Theatre movement. Though primarily concerned with live performance as the most significant contributor to the perception of the drug user during the first half of the twentieth century, this book takes as secondary concerns film and popular culture forms such as dime novels, cartoons, and popular reportage. Investigating this broad swath of representational history has revealed a massive archive of relatively unknown evidence, one that eschews much of the traditional canon of US drama. I have identified nearly 160 plays, 20 vaudeville and nightclub acts, and 60 films dealing specifically with drug use and addiction that played to US audiences during the fifty-year span covered in this study. Analysis throughout this work focuses on the extant texts of these plays and performances, as well as critical and audience responses. This cache of archival evidence reveals the surprisingly diverse characterization of the addict during this extended period and the many strands of influence that contribute to this diversity.

Performance is an effective lens through which to trace this cultural history of addiction for a number of reasons. As the breadth of the archival material hints, the addict was a regular if not overwhelming presence in popular entertainment and performance forms throughout the period. There were far more portrayals of addicts in plays, skits, songs, and early films than in traditional literary forms. The stage addict became the primary way in which the US public learned about addiction and drug use. As the addict was an inevitably dangerous or unsettling character, the conventional separation between character and audience that the proscenium or bandstand supplied, as well as the assurance that the addict on stage was a facsimile, provided a safe and exciting environment to view that which was typically hidden from sight. Live performance provided a form of slumming—

a voyeuristic practice discussed throughout this study that couples access with security.

Under these conditions, performance lent itself to the extreme emotional and physical episodes that drug use supposedly wrought. Actors' physicalizations often took on spectacular dimensions, and decades of reviews that savor descriptions of the contortions and vocalizations of actors in performance attest to the appetite for such portrayals. The spectacularization of the intemperate body could simultaneously entertain through virtuosity or grotesqueness while communicating the standard anti-drug message of most performance narratives. Such sensational performances, as Amy Hughes has argued, are effective delivery systems having the "potential to destabilize, complicate, or sustain sedimented ideological beliefs."[14] This study endorses the idea that, more than fulfilling the accepted Aristotelian narratives of the addict's fall, performance provided a scenario in which the body of the performer could create the cultural trope of addiction in the moment. Through an archive of performances ranging from cabaret to theatrical realism, I attempt to highlight and explore the invention of the addict by way of gestures, looks, moods, and actions.

Addiction is a particularly fascinating subject to study during this period because its place in the public consciousness was decidedly unfixed. Though it was certainly a negative label, people perceived the implications, causes, and outcomes of addiction differently. In general, etiologies of addiction divide into "disease" and "vice" models, designating addiction as a medical or moral issue and providing addicts with the opposing subject positions of patient or sinner. One designation merits medical treatment; the other, incarceration. As limiting as these categories are and as much as reformers and legislators worked to keep them distinct, the line between them is highly porous. The disease model of addiction in the US dates back to the 1878 translation of Eduard Levinstein's *Die Morphiumsucht* (1878) as *The Morbid Craving for Morphia*. Levinstein's work provided the medical foundations for a range of theories that developed over time, variously linking addiction to genetic inheritance, the existence of narcotic pathogens, psychological dysfunction, and environment stimuli.

And yet, Lawrence Driscoll notes that drug addiction's medicalization, which was "meant to be above morality, sanctioned by science and medical fact," could not "avoid redeploying a whole host of values and morals."[15] Then and now, addiction maintains the taint of moral corruption; the disease never exists without attendant accusations of vice. Regardless of a drug's addictive powers, the user's strength of will and quality of character always factor into the equation. Susan Zieger describes this as a compression of "conceptual and emotional histories" that yokes the addict with charges of self-destructiveness and immorality even while positioning them as the victim of narcotic enslavement.[16]

Complicating this already unclear ontology is the fact that addiction is egalitarian in the way that it affects an individual regardless of who they are and where they are from. This trait is one of the most troubling as there seems to be little defense against the condition—one's upbringing, background, education, are ineffective buffers. However, popular performances created lines of causality between the addict and addiction. This impulse to clarify *how* and *why* a particular person becomes an addict makes performance an effective medium for documenting the perception of addiction in the US. Representational practice relies upon social and cultural biases related to race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and age in order to position addict characters as worthy of sympathy or derision. The result, as historian David Courtwright asserts, is that "what we think about addiction very much depends on who is addicted."[17] Performances across different forms and media fit the unwieldy condition of addiction into preconceived moral narratives that were more tolerable to a majority white, middle-class audience. This highly political exercise creates oppressive tropes and stereotypes that coerce addiction into the framework of a society in which hierarchies of identity matter profoundly. The real-life price of this coercion is the vilification, abandonment, and incarceration of certain drug addicts across the last century.

Recognizing this problematic state of affairs, my examination builds on the work of sociologists such as Kai Erikson who, through an "interactionist" model, recognize "deviancy" as a constructed social category.[18] As Peter Conrad and Joseph W. Schneider note, moral des-

ignations of behavior are "socially constructed and relative to actors, contexts, and historical time."[19] Derrida notes specifically that "with drug addiction, the concept of drugs supposes an instituted and institutional definition: a history is required, and a culture, conventions, evaluations, norms, and entire network of intertwined discourses, a rhetoric, whether explicit or elliptical."[20] This web of legislative histories, medical discourses, reform doctrines, class value systems, iconography, and conventions of popular culture cumulatively determines the expectations of why a person does drugs or the effect of those drugs on a person. Performance, in particular, becomes a site where these intertwined histories and discourses reveal themselves and their implications through acts of embodiment, repetition, reception, and critique. Analysis throughout *The American Pipe Dream* attempts to detail the reciprocal process by which the constituents of this network influenced and were influenced by each other as part of a process that shaped the mythos of addiction in the American imaginary.

Employing this process, throughout this study I draw attention to moments in which popular performance introduces new etiologies and new nuances in the vocabulary of addiction, as well as the sources and effects of those changes. Through these multiple avenues of influence and exchange, performances of addiction in the US between 1890 and 1940 associate the stage addict with a range of evolving signifiers including nonwhite racial identities, nonnormative sexual identities, corrupted gender norms, underworld and criminal inclinations, brutish frontierism, and (contradictorily) genius. This panoply of characteristics remains constantly in flux, and portrayals often register multiple traits simultaneously. However, nearly any iteration asserts that the addict is degraded, deteriorated, and atavistic. From this position, the addict functions as a dramatic device that tests the imagined limits of forgiveness, sympathy, tolerance, and redemption. Clarifying these limits through dramatization demarcates natural and artificial states of being as well as normal and abnormal desires, typically in support of bourgeois and patriarchal values. As Susan Sontag argues, "The disease itself becomes a metaphor" for larger social, psychological, and philosophical states of being.[21] While my work examines assumptions regarding why people become addicts, I remain more concerned with the

formulation of expectations regarding addiction and how those expectations helped formulate cultural norms of acceptance, morality, and self.

The substantial archive of drug-related performances that I unearthed in my research illuminates the addict's particular resonance at the turn of the twentieth century. The rise of the middle class and of the industrial economy established a set of principles in the US mainstream to which addiction was decidedly antithetical. The Progressive Era (a period, for this study, between 1890 and 1920) placed a premium on self-discipline, moral restraint, productivity, and self-determination.[22] This was the time in which the working and middle classes idealized the paradigm of the "self-made man." The addict, significantly, represented the *unmaking* of an individual through the sapping of self-control and the relinquishing of autonomy in favor of chemical enslavement. Timothy Hickman notes that "[n]arcotic addiction thus embodied the otherwise abstract threat that stalked the autonomous individual in a new interdependent, modern society."[23] The increase in the number of addicts in the country (or the *perception* of this increase) seemed to confirm the *fin de siècle* concerns that Western civilization was declining through the influence of urban environments and industrialization. Pseudo-medical theories such as Max Nordau's "degeneration" and George Beard's "neurasthenia" argued that modernity was depleting the life-force of society's most valuable members. Nordau and Beard considered social ills such as miscegenation, queerness, nonnormative gender behaviors, and drug addiction as the results of modernization. Eugenic theories were highly popular among certain scientists, politicians, and reform figures in the US during the 1910s and 1920s. Eugenics generally satisfied a similar impulse of stigmatizing certain "undesirables" in society. As Frank Dikötter puts it, "Eugenics gave scientific authority to social fears and moral panics, [and] lent respectability to racial doctrines [. . .]."[24] Such theories of social devolution were helped along by America's "Third Great Awakening" and a vivified temperance movement. In this context, drug addiction assumed a unique place in the American mind where the threat to the individual always meant the threat to the body politic. Thus, my title, *The American Pipe Dream*, works on multiple

levels. It references the artificiality of the way in which the nation has projected, portrayed, and imagined the addict. It also highlights the way in which addiction can and has undermined and interfered with the nation's image of itself. In its indiscriminate targeting of victims, addiction challenged the notion of American exceptionalism as well as the entrenched hierarchies of Eurocentric and patriarchal hegemonies. It rendered the standard safeguards of science, morality, moderation, and self-determination insufficient against the corrupting nature of the modern world.

HISTORY OF US DRUG USE

Prior to the 1890s, white, upper-class women represented the dominant drug user in the US. These women were primarily iatrogenic addicts, meaning that they came to their dependence by way of medical professionals. Doctors prescribed opiates and other intoxicating nostrums to women for reasons varying from hysteria to pregnancy, a practice that often resulted in addiction. Though the belief that narcotic dependence results directly in physical deterioration persists even today, researchers have known since the 1930s that prolonged opiate use has little effect on internal tissue.[25] Therefore, with the basic luxuries afforded these women, they could maintain healthy and long lives, fulfilling their domestic and social duties as long as their local physicians kept them regularly supplied with opium tincture, opium pills, or morphine. Attracting little public attention, this community of addicts remained silently tucked away as family secrets.

The very notion of a national "drug problem" emerged as a response to a different community of drug users. During the Civil War, the Union army consumed nearly 10,000,000 opium pills and over 2,814,000 ounces of opium powders and tinctures.[26] Soon after the war, new medical technologies made the hypodermic needle widely available to the country. Many who suffered injuries on the battlefield sought relief in morphine and fell into addiction. By the 1870s, the colorful terms *morphinist*, *morphinomanic*, *opium slave*, and *opium eater* were replaced by the medically sanctioned and comprehensive label of *addict*.

This shift did not produce immediate changes in policy or regulation. Narcotics still had an air of the quotidian as cocaine, heroin, chloral hydrates, and opium in various forms were legal and easily accessible for medical needs. Consumers used drugstore nostrums laced with narcotics to treat everything from colicky babies to cancer.[27] But, by the turn of the century, drug use emerged as a part of the diverse leisure activities in the country. The new jobs and shorter workday hours provided by industrialization created the opportunity for a slew of recreations. The "Age of the Bachelor" saw expansive new entertainments in urban centers catering to a generation of young, unmarried men with middle- and working-class occupations who had money to spare and no families to impede their pleasure seeking. Working-class women, who were more and more eschewing the traditions of Victorian family for the independence provided by a personal income, joined in these pastimes as well. Kathy Peiss cites a working woman of the period, who notes, "The shorter work day brought me my first idea of there being such a thing as pleasure. [. . .] Before this time it was just sleep and eat and hurry off to work."[28] Recreational drug use appeared on that list of new "pleasures" and became a fundamental aspect of the new urban social behaviors. In brothels, pool halls, dance halls, sporting arenas, and theatres, many young men and women sampled their first sniff of cocaine or heroin, or received their first invitation to an opium den.[29] The last decade of the nineteenth century witnessed the shifts from upper-class housewives consuming prescribed narcotics and nostrums to middle- and lower-class men and women indulging in opium, morphine, cocaine, and heroin as part of social interactions. Out of this grew a new population of addicts and new subcultures centered on those addictions.

With these changes came social reform efforts, the growth of anti-drug rhetoric, and new legislative policies. Drug addiction became a standard topic in newspapers and in speeches at reform rallies. Organizations charged with curbing prostitution such as New York's Committee of Fifteen and John D. Rockefeller's Bureau of Social Hygiene turned their attention to drug abuse and the part it played in the sex trade.[30] Grossly erroneous information about the number of addicts in the nation intensified concerns. In 1910, reformer Hamilton Wright

claimed that importation of opium (in all forms) had increased by 351 percent in fifty years and that the addict population had increased 133 percent.[31] In 1911, a *New York Times* article entitled "Uncle Sam Is the Worst Drug Fiend in the World" promoted the same inaccuracies.[32] In 1918, the US Bureau of Internal Revenue officially estimated that the country was home to 1,500,000 addicts.[33] Courtwright counters these claims, estimating that there were never more than 313,000 addicts in the country before 1914 and that drug use was decreasing nationwide at the time that Wright issued his warnings.[34] However, the hysteria instigated by reports helped push through new laws like the Smoking Opium Exclusion Act of 1909 and the Harrison Act of 1914 that shaped US drug policy for decades to come.

As this history signals, inaccuracies, anxieties, and ambiguities riddled the perception of addiction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—much as they do today. As the popularity of certain drugs came and went, attitudes and anxieties simply transferred to the new substance of choice. Emblematic of this, the term *dope*, originally signifying the treacle-like substance that opium smokers put in their pipes, became an overarching term for any illicit substance from cocaine to heroin. One drug scare overtook another, often reinscribing some combination of claims made about the former population of drug users onto the next. This recycling inured the population to the plight of addiction and left addicts trapped in a broad category awash with misrepresentations compiled from bygone characterizations. This process of reinscription and revision persists today. Grounded in demonization and inaccuracies, some of the stereotypes that flourished in the fifty years covered in this study remain as hindrances to contemporary attempts to stem the nation's present drug crisis.

PICKING THE POISON

Today, the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* identifies a range of "substance use disorders" and "substance-induced disorders," each with related criteria that are used to determine a person's potentially harmful dependence on a substance. These criteria measure the "pathological patterns of behaviors," resultant mental disorders, the potential social/

occupational impairments, the buildup of tolerance, and the intensity of withdrawal.[35] Complex diagnostic tables measure the severity of a drug's negative effects on a person's life, and these diagnostics change regularly with new studies. However, official distinctions between drug use, abuse, dependence, and addiction do not apply to the history of popular representation. Plays and performances conflate all drug use under the label of addiction: to do drugs is to be an addict. For popular portrayals to make room for a distinction between drug user and drug addict would undermine the hegemonic anti-drug messaging of the first half of the twentieth century. The notion that one can use narcotics for pleasure without suffering degradation refutes the very concept of the "drug menace" that relies, much like the temperance doctrine of the nineteenth century, on the idea that a single slip can lead to an endless fall. Because of this, this study does not attempt a distinction when identifying apposite plays and performances. I qualify plays that depict drug use or drug users as potentially part of this representational history, regardless of whether the users qualify as "addicts."

It seems appropriate to clarify the relationship between the performance of drug use and performers who use drugs. Long accused of profligacy, actors were suspected of being dope fiends long before they ever played dope fiends. Ten years before the first addict character made the boards, an 1883 piece of slumming reportage by the journalist Allen S. Williams entitled *The Demon of the Orient and His Satellite Fiends of the Joints: Our Opium Smokers as They Are in Tartar Hells and American Paradises* dedicates an entire chapter to "Victims in the Dramatic Arts." Williams notes that the thespian had a certain weakness for "going low" and that the opium dens hosted "legions of fiends [. . .] largely recruited from the ranks of the dramatic profession," although he does not name names.[36] And yet, I have found no evidence of an addict actor playing an addict role in the period covered in this study.[37] This is a marked difference from the history of temperance plays in which, as Hughes has highlighted, reformed alcoholics playing drunkards on stage was a significant draw.[38]

As this signals, scholarship concerning temperance dramas (of which there is much) does not automatically apply to plays about drug

addiction. Meredith Conti explains that "the mid-century stage drunkard and the late-century stage addict shared more surface similarities than compositional anatomy."[39] Both temperance dramas and drug plays typically follow an Aristotelian narrative of the tragic fall. A flaw in a character's will or spirit is exploited by an antagonist who tempts the hero to drink or drug. In temperance dramas, these downward spirals often culminate in scenes in which a character enacts a bout of the *delirium tremens*, shaking and raving as they hallucinate. Such a scene made *The Drunkard* (1844) one of the nation's most popular dramas for decades. On a few occasions drug users rave in a similar fashion. However, while temperance plays typically adhere to one of three fates for the drunkard—madness, death (often by suicide), or rehabilitation—addicts are rarely offered any denouement other than death. Those addicts who survive are the anomalies. Embedded in this historical precedent is the perception from the period that alcoholics could reform, while drug addicts were lost forever. A *Chicago Daily Tribune* article from 1906 declares the common sentiment: "A man may drink whisky and retain some of his moral if not his physical stamina; he may even smoke cigarets to excess and retain something of the qualities that once made him a man; but he cannot use 'dope' without soon losing every vestige of moral and physical fitness."[40] Though modern institutions of recovery define alcoholism as an addiction, there has historically been a division between those addicted to the legal, social lubricant of alcohol (consumed in public) and the controlled substances that people smoke, snort, or shoot (often solitarily). Then and now, people perceive drug addiction as more sinister.

These differences manifest the disparity in the political energies driving the two genres historically. Temperance plays like *The Drunkard* (1844), *Little Katy, or Hot Corn* (1853), and *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* (1854) were powerful weapons in the arsenal of nineteenth-century temperance workers from the Washingtonians and the Women's Christian Temperance Union to the Prohibition Party and the Anti-Saloon League. P. T. Barnum famously turned his American Museum into a shrine of temperance activity for performances of *The Drunkard*, lining the walls with Bible verses and allowing audience members to sign the temperance pledge before exiting the

theatre's lobby. None of this extratheatrical activity was ever part of the presentation of a drug play. There was no pledge forswearing opium smoking or cocaine use. While the authors and actors in temperance dramas were often deeply dedicated to prohibition, those who wrote drug plays rarely had political or reform affiliations. Save for a few reform-minded writers (discussed in chapter 2 of this work), authors of drug plays exploit drug use for its dramatic potential, rather than asserting the need for direct political action. Tantalization rather than temperance was the dominant aesthetic.

The attempts to regulate narcotics never cultivated the same kind of passionate response that the temperance movement roused in the country's citizens. As John Frick notes, "No single issue—not even the abolition of slavery—had a greater capacity for arousing the American passion than did the cause of temperance."[41] There was no counterpart in the fight for narcotic legislation to Carry Nation and the members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union smashing bottles in local saloons. Nor were there ever large-scale organizations comparable to the Prohibition Party that made the regulation of narcotics their central platform. When the Anti-Saloon League succeeded in passing the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919, it was a national affair. Those who passed the Harrison Act in 1914 that regulated distribution of narcotics across the country also framed it as protecting the public health, but they negotiated the law quietly among particular agents in the halls of power.[42] Though it might seem natural that reformers who fought alcohol consumption would welcome the additional target of drug addiction, the overlap simply did not exist on a broad institutional level. These differences hint at the vastly different political and social contexts that contribute to the history of addiction on stage.

Other parameters of this study also need clarification. Beginning with the stage addict's first appearance, the endpoint of this study marks two events that are of consequence, one regarding the history of drug use in the country and the other regarding the history of theatre. With US involvement in World War II in 1941, illicit drug use in the country nearly ceased.[43] The war disrupted international smuggling routes, leading the majority of the addict population to dry out or seek cures. Historians have noted that maintaining an addiction at

this time would have been almost impossible for anyone not in the medical field. After the war, addict identity shifted in the country, consisting of, as Nancy Campbell notes, "mainly heroin users, younger, poorer, increasingly African American, and more commonly involved in minor, nonviolent criminal offenses."[44] The theatrical and filmic representations shifted with this new addict. Though prewar representations influenced these later portrayals, the social circumstances surrounding addiction changed dramatically. Courtwright in his work on addiction and Chad Heap in his work on slumming both use the same historical endpoint for their studies.

Eugene O'Neill finished his play *Long Day's Journey into Night* the same year that the US entered the war. Today, O'Neill's character Mary Tyrone remains one of the best-known examples of an addict represented in performance. To many, the history of addiction on stage begins with Mary. Thus, my placement of the play in the epilogue is entirely the point. Rather than a teleology in my argument, I turn to *Long Day's Journey* to explore the anomalousness of O'Neill's work in the history of addiction on stage. Though O'Neill makes use of familiar legacies of iatrogenic addicts, he does so in order to explore and express his unique existential outlook. I turn my attention to the work at this study's conclusion in order to explore how scholars might reimagine its place in performance history and to consider how this reshuffling opens new avenues of potential exploration, both historical and contemporary.

THE BUST

By 1920, Andrew Woollcott of the *New York Times* could bemoan the drug addict's ubiquity on stage, remarking cynically that the dope fiend had become "an essential figure in all modern melodramas."[45] Yet there is hardly any prior scholarship dedicated to portrayals of drug use. Conti's book, *Playing Sick: Performances of Illness in the Age of Victorian Medicine* (2019), offers two chapters on performances of addiction that look specifically at the characters of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Despite her work's excellence, its specificity leaves much more of the story to be told. Besides Conti's book, hardly any research has mentioned a drug addict character on the US

stage before 1930, and even then, no single study has been dedicated to tracking the history of the characterization throughout any time period. Media scholars Kevin Brownlow and Michael Starks have examined addiction in film, and they recognize the racial prejudices and problematic moral absolutes that surround the filmic representation of addiction. However, they have not tracked this filmic history to its theatrical roots.

It may be that the stage addict has been hiding in plain sight. As mentioned, drug addiction has been effectively overshadowed by the wealth of scholarship on the alcohol temperance movement's relation to the theatre. And though the performance of addiction intersects with performance conventions connected to drunkenness, madness, and illness, it stands alone in terms of timeline, gestural repertoire, narrative structure, and implication. This history has escaped not only theatre scholars, but also those writing general histories of drug use and addiction in the US. Historians such as Caroline Jean Acker, Diana Ahmad, Courtwright, and David Musto have offered comprehensive histories of addiction through examinations of legislative and medical developments. But they do not consider the importance that entertainment has had in shaping the perception of the addict over time. I am eager for this study to work in collaboration with and as a complement to their work on the history of addiction in the US.

When scholars do consider addiction's relationship to the arts, they typically direct their attention to the study of literature. Authors, specifically Thomas De Quincey, Samuel Coleridge, and Charles Baudelaire, have attracted volumes of contemplation. Two particular works of literary scholarship influence my analysis profoundly: Zieger's *Inventing the Addict*, which examines the portrayals of addiction in nineteenth-century US and British literature, and Alina Clej's *A Genealogy of the Modern Self*, which examines De Quincey's influence on literary modernism through his famous autobiographical works *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821) and *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845). I see my work as corresponding closely with these literary examinations as I borrow from them a number of hermeneutic paradigms including a method for exploring the connections between addiction and queerness.

Though distinct in its focus, this project relates to a number of studies that examine the representations of identities and communities that, like the addict, stand outside of dominant culture. Theatre historians have produced scholarship on the portrayal of queerness, Blackness, immigrant and ethnic identities, sex workers, and disability during the period covered in this study. This signals the wellspring of interest in how performance has shaped the nation's image of the marginalized. The addict intersects with these lines of study as addiction often exists not as a medical condition but an identity; the condition becomes a singular, defining subject position through the standard use of the term "addicts" as opposed to "addicted people." Indeed, in her commentary on addiction, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick locates the end of the nineteenth century as a moment when "what had been a question of acts crystallized into a question of identities."[46] Therefore, I am indebted to a long list of scholars for their work on a range of theatrical and popular culture representations of difference, including Rosemarie K. Bank, Robin Bernstein, George Chauncey, Rick DesRochers, Harley Erdman, Sabine Haenni, Amy Hughes, Matthew Frye Jacobson, Katie Johnson, Esther Lee Kim, Eric Lott, Sean Metzger, Laurence Senelick, Shane Vogel, and J. Chris Westgate. I aim to converse with these authors from diverse disciplines while exploring an uncharted tract in the historical landscape that they have all helped map. By rectifying the gap in the historical record, I hope to provide a foundation for the consideration of the addict in numerous iterations, serving both as an argument for the inclusion of the stage addict as a significant figure in performance history and as a springboard for future research.

Across the five decades covered in this study, the performance of addiction follows a tortuous path through a number of overlapping genres, characterizations, and conventions. For the most part, I do not follow a chronology, as chapters are divided along thematic and generic lines, with significant overlap in the years they cover. I organized this work as a response to the historical evidence and the accretion of character traits, narrative shifts, and social meanings that have defined addiction throughout the period. Whereas certain chapters examine numerous plays or performances, others opt to investigate a

single play, person, or character as a definitive case study. Each chapter offers a different way of theorizing the performance of addiction: as a manifestation of racial prejudice, as the refuse of modernity's advancements, as the embodiment of criminal impulses, as a comic salve for anxieties related to national expansion, as an expression of ontological otherness, as an unstable source for inspiration, and as a metonym for existential pain. The absence of a single methodology is intentional. As Robert Mighall argues, "Novelists, scientists, criminologists, and even polemicists have different professional and epistemological agendas and obligations. To subsume all utterances produced at a given time into a monolithic cultural 'context' suppresses these important differences."[47] As I attempt to integrate a range of disciplinary discourses, I take this to signal the impossibility of a single, holistic methodology in relation to such a broad topic. By varying my approach, I hope to make room for the numerous systems of knowledge that inform the invention of the addict in the years this study covers.

What follows are six chapters: "Den Dramas," "Dope Doctors," "Criminal Addictions," "The Comic Dope Fiend," "Jive," and "Opiated Genius." Each sets out what I believe is a necessary examination of a particular strain of stage-addict anatomy or of the conception of addiction as a theatrical device. I close each chapter with a look forward, suggesting the way that particular strains of performance or conceptualizations of addiction resonate over time. The connections that I draw between a chapter's historical examples and more contemporary portrayals are meant to highlight echoes and resonances across popular perceptions of addiction, rather than create direct lineages. They are suggestions of potential connections and dotted lines that indicate how indebted our present moment is to these past iterations. By ending each chapter with a look forward, I leave the epilogue free to engage with the one example of addiction in the theatre that a reader likely assumes this book would address. I also offer a general summation regarding a potential path forward as the recognition of reoccurring tropes and patterns of addict representation should open possibilities for scholars to apply the heuristic approach that this study constitutes. The hope is to urge the dissection and rejection

of potentially harmful epistemes built on an extensive history of bias and misinformation.

Taken all together, *The American Pipe Dream* uses the theatre and popular performance as a gauge and record of this nation's impression of and tolerance for the addict. Its goal is to reveal the prejudices and inaccuracies that undergird the illusions regarding addiction that have influenced US policy and perception over the last 150 years. The stakes are high, as unearthing this multifarious history reveals the extent to which it has infiltrated so many aspects of US thinking and behavior—fundamentally shaping the contemporary discourse. My hope for this volume is that it will clarify the realities of the condition for scholars, policy makers, and those who have experienced addiction, with the goal of engendering more effective treatment, education, and policy. I aim to do so without losing sight of the very real damage that drug addiction has wrought on individuals, families, communities, and the nation.

1

DEN DRAMAS

Smoking opium is no simple task. To begin with, turning bulging poppy blossoms into the tacky substance that smokers put in their pipes requires a long process of simmering, reducing, skimming, and aging. Smoking the putty-like product necessitates sundry tools, cumulatively referred to as a "lay out," including a hollow cylindrical pipe, detachable bowl, steel needle, damper, scraper, scissors, sponge, and peanut oil lamp. Save for the most practiced smokers, those who partake also rely on a "cook" to roll the processed opium into a "pill" and clean the pipe. The cook manipulates the putty, burns it, pierces it, and stokes the pipe by smoking it before placing it in the hands of the reclining smoker. The whole endeavor is intricate, ritualistic, and strangely intimate. During the Progressive Era, there was a fascination with this secret practice. Periodicals printed detailed images of the tools required, reportage explained the method, and the theatre presented the entire smoking process for viewer's fascination if not edification.

Various supposed evils came with smoking opium. In an 1882 treatise, Henry Hubbell Kane articulates commonly held beliefs:

> The practice is filthy and disgusting; is a reef that is bound to sink morality; is a curse to the parent, the child, and the government; is a fertile cause of crime, lying, in-sanity, debt, and suicide; is a poison to hope and ambition; a sunderer of family ties; a breeder of sensuality and, finally, impotence; a destroyer of bodily and mental function; and a thing to be viewed with abhorence [*sic*] by every honest man and virtuous woman.[1]

Kane alleges moral lapse, family dysfunction, and both libidinousness and impotence, as well as the potential for madness. Use of laudanum, morphine, and cocaine supposedly had similar effects; however, it was the circumstances surrounding the act of smoking opium that captured the nation's imagination and made the fear of addiction to opium smoking the first major drug scare in the country's history. In the seminal study of early drug use in the United States, *The Opium Problem* (1928), authors Charles E. Terry and Mildred Pellens explain, "As so frequently happens in social reform, it required this more spectacular method of opium use, the character of the places in which it

was smoked, chiefly in Chinatown, and the associated social evils, to awaken public and official interest."[2] As they suggest, opium smoking garnered so much attention because it involved not simply an alien vice, but an alien people, in an alien setting.

A necessary addendum to Terry and Pellens's assertion is that public response was most intense when the smokers were white. As Chinese immigrants had introduced opium smoking to North America in the mid-nineteenth century, the general public initially considered it an unseemly practice limited to that foreign population. It was legal but unsavory, and typical responses were to ignore or deride the practice. But reports that an increasing number of whites, particularly in the West, had taken up the pipe began appearing in the 1880s. Writers like Kane postulated that the habit began among a class of underworld gamblers, frontiersmen, and prostitutes but quickly pullulated across the country, spreading East like a disease.[3] Because Chinese immigrants were the dominant owners and operators of opium dens, smoking opium meant that whites had to cross into the physically demarcated areas of Chinatowns and commingle with foreign bodies in dens. Dr. W. S. Whitwell expressed his distaste regarding such mixing in his article on the opium habit from 1887, describing what he saw as the troubling way bodies of different races, nationalities, and genders lay "cheek by cheek, jowl by jowl."[4]

Throughout the Progressive Era, US entertainment forms portray the act of opium smoking as inseparable from this experience of racial mixing. They were intertwined cultural bugaboos. The perceived threat posed by the presence of the racial "other" enhanced the perceived threat of the drug to the individual white body. Intensifying concerns over these inappropriate cultural exchanges in opium dens was the rise of the "white slave panic," which promoted the idea that Chinese men (along with Jewish and Southern European immigrants) were kidnapping white women and forcing them to marry, turn tricks, or join harems. In the case of Chinese captors specifically, there was a prevalent belief that they drugged their female victims as a way to disarm them. This association of the Chinese immigrant with opium smoking represents the most profound linking of a people and a substance in the first half of the twentieth century. Popular perception

envisioned the malevolent character of the drug and the imagined viciousness of the Chinese immigrant as overlapping and interlaced, each manifesting aspects of the other.

As a result of this mounting anxiety among white Americans, a specific genre of melodrama manifesting these concerns appeared on stages in the 1890s.[5] I refer to these plays as "opium den dramas." Plays such as R. N. Stephen's *The White Rat* (1895), Joseph Jarrow's *The Queen of Chinatown* (1899), and Billy Getthore's *Slaves of the Opium Ring* (1908) proliferated primarily between 1895 and 1910, appearing in affordable "ten, twent', thirt'" theatres across the country that catered to a primarily working- and middle-class audience. Though falling out of style in the 1910s, plays of this genre reappear with significant popularity on Broadway in the 1920s in more refined versions such as *The Shanghai Gesture* (1926) and *The Squealer* (1928).[6] The lull in popularity in the second decade of the twentieth century is likely due to the nationwide closing of opium dens as a result of federal legislation in 1909 that outlawed the smokable-opium trade. The return of the plays in the 1920s is a testament to the post–World War I xenophobia that put anti-Chinese sentiment back into the US mainstream and the return of opium smoking as a popular leisure activity among flappers.[7] In all, I have counted at least thirty works appearing between 1890 and 1930 that qualify as belonging to this subgenre of the opium den drama.

Plots of the plays typically feature the capture of white women by Chinese immigrants and the attempts to rescue those women from opium dens by middle-class heroes. Within the melodramatic framework, addiction to opium smoking comes to represent the sexual domination and corruption of the white body by the Chinese immigrant. In the spirit of Max Nordau's then popular theory of large-scale "degeneration" of the white race, the penetration of opium smoke into the white body metaphorically signals racial devolution and internal degradation. Undermining the protective power of the will, opium smoking rendered white women impure and white men sapped of their virility, while it also destabilized foundational norms of sexuality, gender, class, and race in the smoker. Portrayals of the opium trade convert degenerative pathology into economic and political terms,

with the nation standing in for the Anglo body. Plays repeatedly urge that the economic empowerment of the Chinese immigrant posed significant danger to the country's sovereignty. Enhancing and informing these concerns was the nation's first venture into imperialism with the annexing of the Philippines in 1898 and the expanded interactions with Asia that this initiated.

Tracing the origination of the den conventions in drama reveals that the genre culls certain aspects from nineteenth-century literary works, primarily produced in the UK. Works by Thomas De Quincey, Charles Dickens, Bram Stoker, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle fed some early conceptualizations of opium addiction in the US. For instance, John Seed and Christopher Fraying have both argued that Dickens's descriptions of an opium den in his unfinished *Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870)—details he gleaned while on slumming tours of London's Shadwell district—were foundational to den iconography on both sides of the Atlantic.[8] However, influence extends little beyond this. Marek Kohn has clarified that the UK, and London specifically, did not have an urban drug culture that could be compared to that of the US until the mid-1910s.[9] The result is that, while US stages were flush with urban drug addicts and opium dens beginning in the 1890s, the British stage featured addicts only occasionally and never produced a specified genre of drug plays such as the opium den dramas. Essentially, the den drama was almost entirely an American-made dramatic form.

Representations of lowly den habitués spiked in popularity in the UK only after the First World War, when awareness of recreational drug use centered around music halls, theatres, cafés, and nightclubs became common. At this point, British theatre and literature joined American entertainment in featuring related characterizations of addicts and an interest in the den space, as well as similar embedded concerns regarding immigration and racial mixing. This reveals the breadth of the West's anxieties about growing globalization through colonization and expanding trade. The representations featured on both sides of the Atlantic attest to a shared late-Victorian, colonial viewpoint founded in Edward Said's concept of Orientalism as well as a kindred reform spirit regarding temperance and self-control as

national interests. This transatlantic connection extended to the two nations' medical establishments as they shared disciplinary knowledge not only about addiction, but about race and ethnicity through the fields of genetics and eugenics. This international or, as Joseph Roach would phrase it, "circum-Atlantic" exchange of performance tropes and narratives occurred primarily after the US had already established its performance traditions and national attitudes toward recreational drug use. However, works such as *Broken Blossoms* (1919) and *The Shanghai Gesture* (1926), both discussed in this chapter, demonstrate those later exchanges, and specifically the way the US entertainment industries amalgamated British settings and narratives into the established conventions related to drug performances.

Opium den dramas are not defined merely as plays featuring scenes set in opium dens or depicting the smoking of opium. Rather, they engage with the larger sociocultural and political factors linked to opium smoking as a practice and the den as a space. Scholars have interpreted these plays variously as loaded cultural artifacts, with J. Chris Westgate categorizing them as "slum plays" and Katie Johnson as "white slavery plays." Westgate's categorization highlights the ways in which the primarily middle- and working-class audiences engaged with these performances. He envisions them, as do I, as sites of class formation where audiences established an unified identity by viewing "slum life" and contrasting "themselves, morally and materially, with what they found there."[10] My hope is to demonstrate how drug use is actually central to the process of identity formation that Westgate outlines. Johnson's categorization focuses on one of the cultural circumstances to which the plays relate, specifically the "white slave panic" (though I do include some plays that do not feature the endangerment of white women). I do not reject other designations; rather I hope to show how focusing on drug use enhances many of the interpretive claims made by these scholars. What I suggest is that the dangers posed by opium smoking serve as the central dramatic engine for these plays.

The growing popularity of these narratives was the result of the growing Chinese population in the US. Beginning in the 1850s, Chinese immigrants arrived to join the rush for gold in California. By 1870, there were 63,000 Chinese in the US, 77 percent of them in

California, but by 1880 the population grew to 105,465 and began to spread to other urban centers.[11] Between 1880 and 1910, the numbers of Chinese people in Chicago went from 171 to 1,778. In New York City during the same period the population rose from 731 to 3,476.[12] These immigrants faced xenophobia, racism, and violence, most extremely in the form of lynchings and mob attacks throughout the nineteenth century. As Beth Lew-Williams describes it, "Popular thought of the day held that the Chinese race was inferior to the white race in most ways, but not all. The Chinese were heathen and servile, but also dangerously industrious, cunning and resilient [. . .]. Assumed to be permanently loyal to China, the Chinese appeared racially incapable of becoming American."[13] Like immigrants and refugees of today, the Chinese were accused of stealing jobs, undermining national values, and polluting the gene pool.

Early attempts to legislate opium smoking indicate the interweaving of drug use and fears of racial mixing. San Francisco passed the nation's first anti-opium legislation in 1875, and the city's police chief Phillip Crowley observed candidly that "the laws were invented to prosecute Chinese proprietors of commercial dens that attracted white clientele, particularly young women."[14] Historian William White notes that the ordinances regarding opium smoking were part of a larger context of "nativism, immigration, racism, and social and class conflict," all related to "the delusion that opium was being used as a political weapon to weaken America as the prelude to Chinese invasion of the United States."[15] Such hyperbole was common when it came to Western convictions about the Orient. Popular media as well as reform rhetoric fueled a process by which negative characteristics attached to the Chinese (here, opium smoking and opium addiction) metastasized into the fear of systematic attacks that could cause national degradation and destruction. These exaggerations, which cumulatively constituted the myth of the "yellow peril," were frequently the basis for policy and legislative decisions.[16]

Opium den dramas balance the promotion of these concerns over Chinese immigrants with an audience's desire for adventure. In doing so, the plays mirror the slumming experience as clarified by Chad Heap in that they "actively created the very balance of pleasure and

danger that, in alternate guises of benevolent reform and amusement seeking [slumming], both pretended to rectify and exploit."[17] The result was a kind of negation that Benedict Giamo calls "mystification." In his work *On the Bowery: Confronting Homelessness in American Society*, Giamo describes the capacity of the late-nineteenth-century populace to rationalize the impoverishment it saw in US cities. He explains that the nation's public was able to obfuscate the conditions and causes of poverty through their very attempts to examine them. He elaborates that the result of such investigation "was not a penetration of mystery, but rather the reinstatement of its mystifying presence and the elevation of poverty to urban spectacle. The secret was kept intact, as were the dominant cultural values of the era, through the exercise of a mode of detection characterized by grand social deception."[18]

In the opium den dramas, addiction undergoes a similar process of mystification, one that elevates drug use to "urban spectacle." The plays were not formal undertakings of inquiry into the evolving concepts of addiction. They broadcasted muddled beliefs inserted into a melodramatic contrivance operating in concurrence with a dominant Christian morality. That is, these plays evaded the complexities and unsettling truths of addiction, drug use, poverty, immigration, and cross-cultural conflict by sacrificing social discourse for the sake of digestible narratives of poetic justice and a clear anti-Chinese prejudice. Reviews rarely discuss the politics or engage with the social intricacies of scenarios portrayed on stage, consistently deferring to a celebration of the spectacle and the particulars of the "Celestial environments" depicted.[19] In doing so, the opium den drama reduces the social and biological phenomenon of addiction—insurmountable and terrifying—to moral individualism and racial inferiority. The result of these efforts is that the representation of drug addiction in den plays could be thrilling, but primarily functions to establish and reinforce dominant, patriarchal norms regarding drugs and race. Opium den dramas most profoundly express these ideological underpinnings in their dramatization of the charged space of the opium den itself.

DEN TOPOGRAPHY

An 1881 etching from *Harper's Weekly* that could be a tableau from an opium den drama captures the dynamics of the den as they existed in the US cultural imagination. Entitled "American Opium-Smoking—Interior of a New York Opium Den," it shows a dark and windowless room, tightly packed with prostrate smokers lying on wooden bunks and thin bamboo mats. Of the eight smokers in the image, all are white men, save for a single white woman in the foreground, who lies in the arms of another smoker. The room is filled with heavy smoke, seeming to weight the figures into place and distort the space around them. The only person standing in the room is a Chinese man, the proprietor of the den, holding a tray with smoking accoutrements. He towers over the smokers as his eyes scan like a warden surveying inmates. The smokers are docile and vulnerable. The Chinese man, in traditional silk blouse and queue, is menacing. His instrument of control is the opium he brings them.

As this image signals, the dens were more than just a place to smoke opium. Images like figure 1 created a mix of dread, titillation, and alienness that turned the den into what David Brody calls a "phantasmatic site, a place where Western imagination continued to envision exoticism and peculiarity."[20] Audience appetite for a peek into these mysterious spaces is clear. Reviewers often spend ample time discussing the authenticity of the den sets, and advertisements for the plays often tout the realism of the set designs.[21] In the plays, the Chinese villains hide their hostages in the dens, which served as command centers for illegal activity. Chinatowns were supposedly impossible to navigate for any Westerner who was not initiated. Popular literature, such as the weekly graphic magazine *Secret Service* about two New York City detectives, imagined the area as a connected maze of secret passages with the dens as the hubs.[22] In Billy Getthore's play *Slaves of the Opium Ring*, the sinister Hop Lee attempts to blow up a house to destroy the stolen maps of his secret Chinatown tunnels. Theatre makers exploited the haunted-house aspect of the dens, enhancing the spectacular elements in their plays. Hidden trap doors lead to subterranean chambers that contain vicious or exotic animals. Advertisements for *The Queen of Chinatown* make much of a stunt in

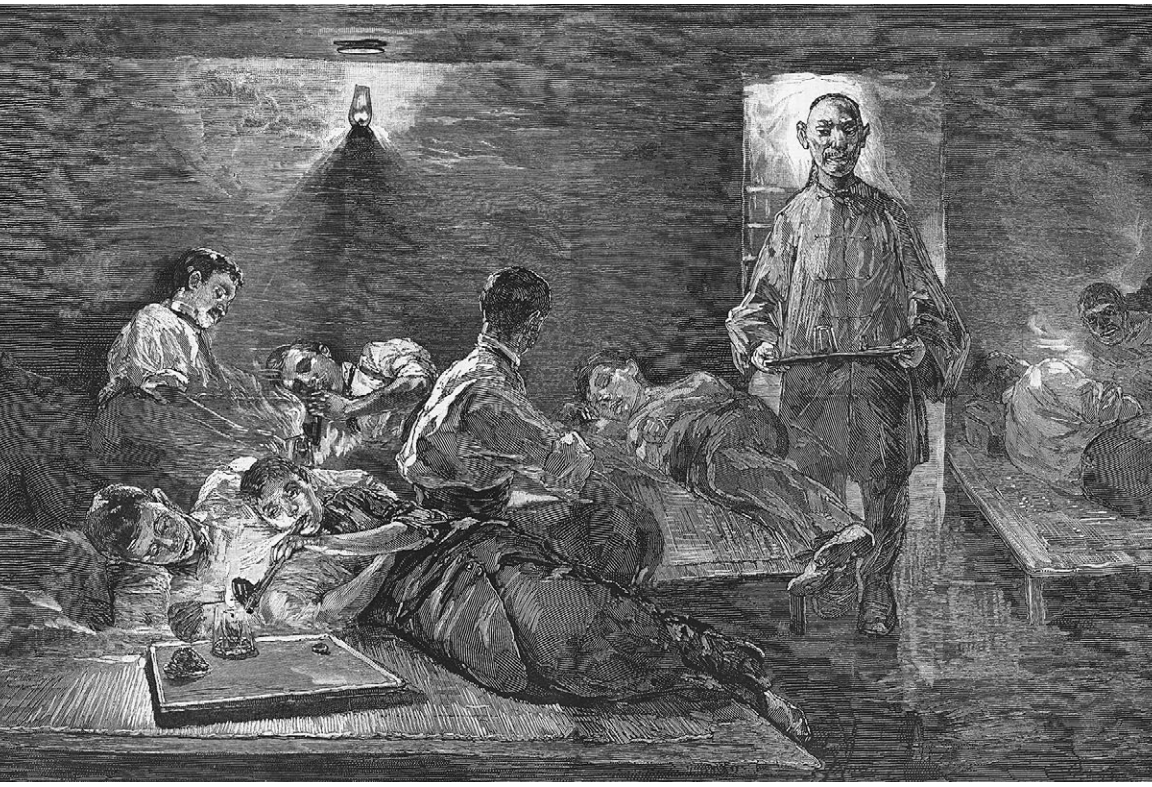


FIGURE 1. J. W. Alexander, "American Opium-Smoking—Interior of a New York Opium Den," *Harper's Weekly*, October 8, 1881. Author's collection.

which the hero falls through two sets of trap doors to land in a rat pit. Similarly, Theodore Kremer's *The Bowery after Dark* (1900) features a snake pit kept conveniently under the floor of the opium den. These sensational stunts were the specialty of the "ten, twent', thirt'" houses. The unpredictability of the physical space of the den imbued scenes with the promise of infinite dangers and excitement.

At the same time, the den activated what Edward Said has clarified as an Orientalist conception of Asia as a place of "untiring sexuality, unlimited desires, [and] deep generative energies."[23] Working from Said, Seed notes, "the Victorian opium den was transformed into a broader space for the interplay of sexuality, Empire and drugs," one that heightened "anxieties surrounding inter-racial sex."[24] The dark-

ened stage space of the den, adorned with Chinese tapestries, burning incense, and curtained beds that concealed any number of smokers, instills the space with the carnality typically conferred upon the Asian continent. Simply the presence of white females in the environment activated a special terror for a standard white, middle-class audience. By secluding the captured girl in the den, the Chinese male—played in yellowface with mincing physicality by a white actor—intimates the potential usurpation of white male sexual privilege.

Opium den dramas unanimously end with the rescue of the female victim, reuniting her with her lover, husband, father, or brother as a reassertion not just of white male dominance, but of US cultural authority. The opium den operated as an extension of the physical continent of Asia, where foreign hierarchies were in effect. The assumption was that the Chinese immigrants remained loyal to the traditions of their home country. The introduction of terms such as "coolie" and "highbinder" to English vernacular signals an awareness that the Chinese caste system persisted on US shores. The den became a site of insurgency against the dominant Anglo culture where the inhabitants enforced the supposedly dark and superstitious practices of the Chinese homeland. Enacting these alien traditions on stage was part of the spectacle for the audience. Perhaps the most grotesque example of the imposition of imagined foreign barbarism is the scene in *The Bowery after Dark* in which the evil Twang Lee nails the hands of a Chinese woman to a wall as punishment for disobedience. The infiltration of the den by the white heroes at the play's conclusion was a corrective act of reclamation. Appropriately, when breaching the walls of the den in *Slaves of the Opium Ring*, the stage directions designate that the victors break through waving the "Stars and Stripes."

In this way, the staging of the opium den in these works follows Edward Ziter's understanding of representations of the Orient in British dramas of the same period. The spatial formations on stage communicate "power structures and their supporting ideology" in which "the space itself is dramatized."[25] The detailed re-creations of the dens channel a desire to not just understand but correct the ideological deviations from US structures of patriarchy, white racial purity, and white supremacy. The opium den dramas were a kind of

epistemological colonization aimed at regulating all things Oriental. Chinatowns in the US specifically represented what Ruth Mayer calls a "sensory overload [. . .] beyond the bounds of an intelligible identity and coherent self [in their] lack of order."[26] According to both Mayer and Sabine Haenni, the desire to control these foreign spaces is the reason for the proliferation of Chinatown settings in films of the period. Dens proliferated on stage for the same reason. Theatre makers capitalized on the fascination with these spaces while playing out a fantasy of control over them and their inhabitants.

THE PHALLACY OF THE PIPE

John Jones warned in his 1700 tract *The Mysteries of Opium Reveal'd* [*sic*] that opium could cause "a great promptitude of venery, erections, [. . .] venereal dreams, nocturnal pollutions," and even "venereal fury."[27] In the 1880s, H. H. Kane and Dr. Alonzo Calkins both reported that opium caused insatiable sexual desire, enhanced orgasms, and indifference to respectable bonds of wedlock.[28] Reports that early opium smokers in the US were prostitutes and their johns seemed to confirm the relationship between the pipe and promiscuity. Opium den dramas employ this association with a decidedly Orientalist slant, portraying the pipe as a manifestation of Chinese sexual energies.

Joseph Jarrow's *The Queen of Chinatown* was one of the most popular early opium den dramas. It toured widely to New York, Boston, Hartford, Washington, and San Francisco between 1899 and 1902. In the play, a naval lieutenant, Harry Hildreth, battles the Chinese merchant Hop Lee and his compatriot Dan Driscoll in order to save his sister, Mary. Driscoll and Lee have kidnapped Mary and are holding her captive in the back-alley dens of New York City's Chinatown. Driscoll, who is white, is one of many "traitors-to-the-race" characters that appear in opium den dramas. Plays often depict these characters as more villainous than the Chinese gangsters with whom they work. Their teaming up with the Chinese immigrant represents a profound moral corruptness and a form of high treason against US cultural, economic, and racial interests. The titular "Queen of Chinatown" is the fallen aristocrat Beezie Garrity, who is Driscoll's lover and helps him capture young white women, whom he then sells as slaves to

Chinese men. Driscoll controls Beezie through her opium addiction, withholding the drug if she does not obey. Beezie acknowledges that her addiction will lead to her death, noting, "I smoke $1.25 worth every day of my life. They give me three years."[29] The idea that opium addiction was a death sentence is common throughout the opium den dramas and popular literature of the time.[30] Jarrow uses the notion as a way to pattern Beezie after the melodramatic trope of the fallen woman who redeems herself just before she dies, which Beezie does through a final act that saves Mary.

Beezie acquired her opium habit during a slumming expedition to Chinatown, an activity associated with her upper-class origins. She explains that it began with "a trial of the pipe for sport. I became fascinated; came again and again. Gradually, I lost lover, friends, family, all. Society turned its back upon me and now I have no other world."[31] Reformers and newspaper reports often warned that slumming tours could lead to this kind of decline. Courtwright explains that these stories were particularly associated with "wealthy neurotics who had nothing better to do than dabble in dangerous vices."[32] Beezie was played by Mary Jeffreys-Lewis, a British-born actress popular as an ingénue throughout the 1870s. Playing Beezie in her mid-forties, she was well suited to the part of a once-stunning, society woman who had lost her sheen.

Though Beezie's tragic fall from aristocrat to hustler is front and center in the play, the well-behaved daughters of the middle class were in no less danger. Those who were too prudent to go slumming could just as likely fall into a snare through good deeds. Driscoll kidnaps Mary while she is doing missionary work in Chinatown, attempting to counsel and convert the Chinese immigrants. The "missionary-turned-dope-fiend" became somewhat of a trope in the period, modeled after real people such as the Sunday school teacher Elsie Sigel, whose murder in 1909 was widely publicized. Reports were that the killer was one of Elsie's Chinese students with whom she had become romantically involved.[33] By featuring both high-born Beezie and middle-class Mary, Jarrow asserts that any interaction with the Chinese immigrant poses a threat to young white women.

Driscoll forces Beezie to lure Harry's fiancée, Frances, and her

friends to Chinatown. She brings them to an opium den, where she tempts them to smoke. The stage directions detail that the den consists of two separate floors. Beezie leads the three women, members of a local parish, into the lower apartment. There, they witness Mercides, a white woman, smoke opium. Beezie informs them that "women cannot wear stays, my dear, when they indulge in this vice," and invites them to change into silken smoking robes.[34] This explicit linkage of undress with the act of smoking enhances the sexually charged nature of the act. Occupied by women clad in revealing robes that released the female form from the restrictive corsets of the late-Victorian era, the den begins to resemble a harem. The fact that the smoker must recline, grasping a phallic pipe, only heightens the erotic inference. The image of the recumbent young woman in varying stages of undress with an opium pipe in her hand was so prevalent that it qualified as a Progressive Era obsession. It appeared on theatrical posters, on dime novel covers, and as accompaniment for reportage. Under the guise of social commentary, the print media indulged the reader's fantasies. The *National Police Gazette* published salacious accounts of opium dens along with images. An article from 1880 idles over the "well-moulded leg" of a female den habitué, detailing the "raving shape of a woman's limb, exposed from the rounding knee downward, the swelling calf gently tapering to a narrow ankle embroidered with hose of the most delicate flesh color, fastened with a pair of silk garters [. . .]."[35] The stage brought to life this kind of pornographic literary slumming, putting audience members in close proximity to the deviant behavior and the lewdness it supposedly occasioned.

Fittingly, Jarrow fills his den with women, as Beezie tells her tour group of women slummers that "in every room in this house women are hitting the pipe."[36] Advertisements for the play picture the two-story den with white women strewn about on almost every flat surface. The group of women that Beezie leads around creates the impression of sisterly experimentation that borders on the Sapphic. But, as they leave the room, a silent Chinese den worker called Sam threatens this illusion of safety by lifting Mercides off the couch and placing her in a curtained bunk, reiterating the dominant male "other" that governs the space. In nearly all of the opium den dramas, the quiet and menac-

ing presence of Chinese men undercuts any sexual titillation provided by the den space. A *Boston Globe* article lists among the cast of the 1901 production four Chinese character names that are not part of the original "cast of characters" in the script. Each of these characters (Ching Loo, Yen Ling, Lee Down Hing, and Lee Quow) are listed in the article as played "By Himself" or "By Herself," or as "The Real Thing." As no character named "Sam" is listed for this production, it is likely that one of these Chinese actors filled the role, rather than the typical white actor in yellowface.[37] This made the physical, cross-racial interaction between the Chinese actor and the actress playing Mercides (Gertie Marr) real as opposed to an artificial likeness. The use of actual Chinese actors to play supernumeraries in these plays was not entirely unusual—*King of the Opium Ring* advertised this use of Chinese actors as a testament to authenticity—but it also potentially added to the moments of menace.[38]

At the same time as Beezie entertains the ladies, Hop Lee attempts to drug Mary in the upstairs apartment.

> LEE: You no likee smoke, you no likee Hop; you no likee Chinatown. Velly hard to please. (*Picking up pipe*)
> MARY: Please don't make me use that, it makes me so ill.
> LEE: You like him velly much after while, then you like Hop.
> MARY: I won't touch that vile thing again. Oh, restore me to my family—my brother—
> LEE: Ah! You ready smoke now. Smoke. Smoke—quick—Swallow smoke. You smoke velly bad; next pill you smoke, or (*flourishing bastinado. Pause.*) Me heapee likee you.[39]

Jarrow creates a meaningful juxtaposition by linking the two scenes in succession and having Mercides continue to smoke on the bottom floor while Mary is tortured above. What Mercides does for pleasure and the women on the slumming tour indulge in for a thrill, Lee uses as a tool to ransack white female virtue. Tellingly, Lee designates the pipe and the opium in it as male with his line "You like *him* velly much after while." The action in the upstairs apartment becomes a metaphoric act of rape as Lee forces the foreign agent into the body of the young girl. Westgate similarly notes that "Jarrow equates the

forcible intrusion of drugs with the peril of white slavery."[40] In this arrangement, becoming an opium addict means the submission to Chinese desire and the metaphoric acceptance of sexual intercourse with a foreign body. Like all the maidens in the opium den dramas, Mary is rescued before the figurative penetration is actualized.

Significantly, the scene puts the opium smoke that Mary ingests and the blows she receives from Hop Lee's bastinado on equal footing. Both are tools of persuasion that Lee uses to corrupt his female victim. Lee's curious line "Me heapee likee you" while wielding a weapon invests Chinese male sexuality with an inherent violence. Nayan Shah argues that contradictory discourses dominated late-nineteenth century depictions of Chinese sexuality and gender. Performance and print portrayed Chinese men as effeminate in traditional silken robes, with braided queues and long fingernails. At the same time, these same media depicted Chinese as savage and lecherous, expressing a hedonism that was counter to the masculine restraint expected of republican citizenship in the US.[41] Hop Lee's sexual violence and his use of a stupefying agent manifests not only these stereotypes of prurient sexuality, but the essence of the "yellow peril" in the potential contamination of the Anglo gene pool through his rape of Mary. The play reifies Sean Metzger's assertion that Chinese sexuality posed a significant threat "as a locus of social and psychological disorder that may require containment and expulsion" through anti-immigration legislation.[42] In viewing *The Queen of Chinatown*, as with so many opium den dramas, audiences took part in the repetitive assertion of the need to avoid, regulate, and punish Chinese otherness.

Correspondingly, stage portrayals of characters like Hop Lee were, as James S. Moy puts it, "little more than an assemblage of fetishized fragments, comprising the most obvious aspects of difference."[43] The performance of these caricatures by white actors in yellowface (larger roles were never played by Chinese actors) only enhanced the inhumanness of the characterizations. These disparaging fabrications "eventually replaced all other notions of Chineseness" for US audiences, cementing beliefs that the Chinese were inherently different, unassimilable, and dangerous.[44] In her work *Staging Whiteness*, Mary Brewer outlines how such ethnic performances were part of theatre's

complicity in the "constructions of race," namely, the legitimation of "those identities racialized as 'other'" in order to fortify white identity.[45] As Westgate notes, the opium den dramas helped in "constructing models of ethical behavior towards immigrants, which rationalized hostility and cruelty."[46] The perceived relation between the Chinese and the foreign opium substance was a multivalent metaphor for this insidiousness that had to be suppressed.

Even when representations depict the spiritual superiority of the Orient, Chinese sexuality still appears as irrevocably nonnormative. In his film *Broken Blossoms* from 1919, D. W. Griffith attempted to depict pure love between two different races, partially in the hopes of counteracting accusations of racism that followed his *Birth of a Nation* four years earlier. Among other things, Griffith received criticism for his depiction of Black sexuality as brutish and violent. *Broken Blossoms* is an adaptation of a Thomas Burke story called "The Chink and the Child" from his collection *Limehouse Nights* (1916). The film follows the relationship between a Chinese immigrant, known only as "Yellowman," and a waifish street urchin called "Girl," played by Lillian Gish. The film stars Richard Barthelmess as Yellowman, played with squinted eyes and effeminate physicality. Though problematic by today's standards, Barthelmess's performance and Griffith's treatment of the Chinese figure is a good deal more sympathetic and humanizing than most films of the period.

As a way to assert the purity of the relationship between Yellowman and the Girl, Griffith opens the film in an opium den where Yellowman has gone to escape his loneliness. Griffith envisions the den as a location of pervasive racial interbreeding between white women and men of different races. The scene begins with a title card labeling the location a "scarlet house" and opens with a shot of a white woman in stoned silence next to a swarthy man in a turban and another woman in hushed conversation with a figure in blackface. An uncomfortably long shot at the end of the scene shows a young white woman leaning across a low table, perilously close to a kiss with a Chinese man. Griffith creates an orgiastic scene that manifests the fear of interbreeding and the power of Oriental seduction, all facilitated by opium intoxication.

Susan Koshy argues that "[a]lthough Griffith's Chinatown is geographically located in London, it is discursively located in the US."[47] It was a fairly seamless transition, as public perception of the Orient differed slightly. In this, Burke's *Limehouse Nights* was an ideal text for such circum-Atlantic transmission. The difference was that the US assumed a more stringent position regarding the immigrant population, essentially rendering Chinese immigrants wholly unassimilable and providing no tolerance for the enculturation of Asian society. Therefore, it is not surprising that Griffith ensures that the romance between Yellowman and the prepubescent Girl remains unconsummated. After the two hide away in Yellowman's rooms above his curio shop, he dresses the Girl in the silken robes (like those donned by the women in Jarrow's opium den). Still clutching a child's doll, Gish portrays only innocent interest in Yellowman, while he struggles with his urges. Barry Keith Grant notes that the scene invites "fetishistic scopophilia" by placing her as the potential victim of the Yellowman's lust.[48] Griffith wrings suspense from watching Yellowman watch the Girl, dragging out the possibility that he will take advantage of her. It is only when he falls to his knees and presses her robe to his mouth that the audience can rest assured that he will not violate the sanctity of white girlhood. It is at that moment that the film veers officially away from the white slave narrative to express "the holiest of affections," as the title cards calls it.

Griffith asserts that a nonthreatening Oriental sexuality is one necessarily devoid of physicality. He uses the den as his reference point for the height of corruption, thereby overwhelming and mystifying any potential nuanced social meaning for the sake of racial terror and voyeuristic titillation. By creating a contrast between the degradation caused by drug use in the den and Yellowman's "pure" love, Griffith offers a single Chinese character greater dignity, but at the price of his masculine potency.

STONING THE "NATIVE" SONS

Billy Getthore's 1908 *Slaves of the Opium Ring* also appeared under the titles *The Opium Smugglers of 'Frisco* and *The Crimes of a Beautiful Opium Fiend*. The play departs from a number of the standard con-

ventions found in the earlier den dramas. Most prominently, the central addict is male. Jack is a feeble young man from a good family who has fallen in with a rough crowd. The capture-and-rescue narrative remains, however, as a Chinese gangster named Lee Bock Dong has taken Jack's sister, Kate, captive. Dong holds Kate as security because he believes that Jack knows too much about his opium-smuggling operations. Perhaps appropriately, Getthore's male addict appears with one of the only female versions of a traitor-to-the-race character, the vampish Belle Carter.[49] Belle is known as the "Empress of Chinatown," but she is not an addict like Beezie, nor is she a concubine to Dong, who "has a dozen wives and is the richest Chinaman in Frisco."[50] Belle fulfills Jennifer Hedgecock's description of the "femme fatale" as a woman that challenges "bourgeois ideology" of domesticity and patriarchal hierarchy.[51] Belle is Dong's partner in the smuggling operation, but her dominance over Dong and his Chinese henchmen represents an appropriation of phallocentric authority. The perceived effeminacy of the Chinese men who surround Belle enhances this reversal. Belle subsumes the male prerogative that is denied the queered Chinese immigrants, while also manifesting their perceived viciousness.

Instead of the menacing "Chinee" pressing the pipe upon the innocent girl, the play depicts Belle and a team of silent Chinese women who serve the opium den seductively plying Jack with the drug. The young man suffers emasculation rather than any sexual stimulation from the opium he smokes at their hands. Getthore notes in his stage directions that the den girls are to be "in deep shadows . . . only their faces are lighted by the crown of burning punks which is arranged in their heads [*sic*]."[52] In this particular scene, Belle appears wearing a "white lace house gown, negligee, bare neck and shoulders, hair down."[53] This exotic vision of a band of crowned Asian harpies and their white female leader presents a formidable threat to masculinity.

The central concern in plays in which white femininity comes under threat by Chinese aggressors is the mongrelization of the white race. However, in Getthore's work, the threat posed to white masculinity by addiction implies a more intense version of social devolution. Jack's drug dependence endangers the natural order of things that would seem incontrovertible in any other context. In a disintegration of

essential structures, Belle almost talks Jack into killing his own sister and her lover while he is under the influence.

> BELLE: I am going to rob you of your senses. . . . You may not shoot Martin just yet, but you will when this opium paralizes [*sic*] your senses of right and wrong.
> JACK: Stop Belle, my God, my head is reeling, my throat burns for a draw of the drug like the throat of a drunkard for the last cup. Pray for me Kate. Pray, my sister. God help me; I am lost. Stop, Belle, stop; In Heaven's name I beg you to stop; stop or give it to me; Give me the pipe.[54]

The sororicide does not occur, but the scene establishes the drastic breakdown in the social order that drug use poses. Addiction could turn young men from protectors of the meek into assailants.

Jack is an example of how the male addict embodies a number of late-nineteenth-century concerns expressed primarily through the social sciences. Nordau's pseudo-anthropological work *Entartung* or *Degeneration* was translated into English in 1895 and came to dominate thinking in the era. "Degeneration" as a term stood in for all types of deviancy including criminality, homosexuality, prostitution, and decadence. Nordau additionally suggests that degenerates were especially susceptible to narcotic stimulation and vulnerable to addiction. Scientists of the period such as J. E. Chamberlain and E. Ray Lankester believed that devolution could occur through a process of "cultural drift." Essentially, the spread of the unfit members of the race could cause general atrophy. Lankester specifically marked as unfit the people that flourished in London's underworld, a population that included Chinese immigrants and opium addicts.[55] Smoking opium, as an ingestion of an Oriental product, was an almost supernaturally potent way to engender such racial degeneration. Charles Dickens offers a fantastical version of this in his *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, imagining the potential transformative effects of the drug to turn one race into another. Stumbling from his bunk in a London opium den, Dickens's John Jasper observes that the den's hostess, a white woman, "has opium-smoked herself into the strange likeness of the Chinaman."[56] Similar examples of the pipe's transformative power

appear in literary works by Willa Cather and Frank Norris in the US, all published between 1890 and 1900.[57]

Upon Jack's first entrance, the loutish sailor Big Tim asks him, "Have you got enough hop under you skin to keep yer nerves steady?"[58] Jack's addiction is not simply a character trait; rather, it is the result of his suffering from the pathological condition that George Beard famously labeled "neurasthenia," which was loosely defined as extreme pathological nervousness, a condition closely related to Nordau's "degeneration." In the preface to his 1881 work *American Nervousness*, Beard gives prominence to the growing drug problem in the country as a sign of neurasthenia's spread. The symptoms of the disease included "susceptibility to stimulants and narcotics and various drugs, and consequent necessity of temperance."[59] Beard argued that neurasthenia resulted from the modern world's growing industrialization and mechanization. These circumstances created a new clerical class of workers and relegated them to a stationary life at desks. There was worry that men and women suffered debilitating illness as a result of an overwhelming urban environment and a stifling disconnect with the natural world. This could lead to effeminized men and masculine women, reversals that the characters of Jack and Belle make explicit. Though Belle's appearance is unique as a female drug pusher in the period, Jack is by no means an anomaly, as the history of the representation of addiction on stage is filled with portrayals of the addict as a neurasthenic young man. Standard gestural repertoires included a limp physicality that could erupt into spastic thrashings, what Laurence Senelick has called the "sulphurous element" of the characterization in his description of another neurasthenic, Chekhov's Konstantin Treplev.[60] Indeed, at the time, the neurasthenic youth was a "line of business" in the theatre that also included characters like Oswald in Ibsen's *Ghosts*. This created an easily recognizable and transferrable trope when it came to the young, male addict.

Following Beard's conception of the neurasthenic, Jack needs opium as a leveling agent to balance the deficiencies of systematic perturbation. His addiction is a symptom, rather than a disease itself. The fundamental cause of his intemperance was neither vice nor inheritance, but Jack's inability to keep pace with the modern world.

Framed within the etiologies of nervousness, Getthore's portrayal obscured legitimate investigations of drug use as a social ill for the sake of vilifying individual frailty of constitution. In the age in which the notion of the "self-made man" came to prominence, Beard's concept of nervousness pathologized weakness of character. His diagnosis, along with the theories of Nordau and Lankester, legitimized prescriptive normality and morality through the sciences. The den plays were part of a systematized dissemination of the norms and values that were deemed essential for Anglo-American survival.

In one of the rare examples of an opium-smoking addict's survival and redemption, Jack ends the play cured. He accomplishes this only after he kills Belle, a symbolic reassertion of his masculine will that signifies his triumph over addiction. Admittedly, *Slaves of the Opium Ring* had a less significant stage life than *Queen of Chinatown*, receiving short runs in Chicago, Washington, and Boston. Written almost ten years after Jarrow's play, Getthore's drama was one of the last of the full-length opium den dramas that maintained the standard structure of the captured girl, middle-class hero, and traitor-to-the-race character.

FROM YEN TO YUAN

Arguing in favor of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, politician Thomas H. Brents stressed that limiting Chinese presence in the country would help eradicate the "loathsome dens reeking of lust, crime, and pestilence [. . .] debasing the morals of our youth."[61] Brents was not alone in his belief that fewer Chinese in the country would mean fewer dens. However, after the law's passing, the importation of smokable opium to the US nearly doubled from 487,050 pounds in the 1870s to 859,889 pounds a decade later. This trend continued, reaching its peak of nearly 1.5 million pounds in the first decade of the twentieth century.[62] These numbers cover only the legally imported opium at a time when smuggling was rampant. As imports increased, so did profits, and with Chinese immigrants still the dominant figures in the traffic of nonmedical opium, there were concerns about their economic empowerment at the expense of American souls that were lost through addiction. The common concern was that the Chinese

were "achieving the American dream too quickly" while also filling the coffers of China with the money they shipped back.[63] Nearly all opium den dramas make the economics of the opium trade an essential part of their message. The Chinese gangsters in the plays wield tremendous wealth by way of their drug dealing, and their riches become an additional weapon used to skirt traditional systems of law enforcement and to victimize the people around them.

The emergence of US imperialism at the close of the nineteenth century intensified the cultural politics related to the opium trade and concerns over race and racial purity. With the end of the Spanish-American War, the 1898 Treaty of Paris ceded ownership of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to the US. President William McKinley and his successor Theodore Roosevelt sought to compete with major European powers by using the Philippines as a gateway to trade with Asia. They promoted the move not only as an opening of the massive Chinese market for US producers, but, jingoistically, as a continuation of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. As then-senatorial candidate Albert Beveridge put it, the country was simply following in its forefathers' footsteps by pitching "the tents of liberty farther westward, farther southward—we only continue the march of the flag."[64] Backed in newspapers published by William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, McKinley stressed the civilizing influence that the US could have on the Filipino people, taking up what Rudyard Kipling deemed "the white man's burden" to tame the island inhabitants that the poet described as "half-devil and half-child."[65]

Though many in the US opposed this shift to imperialism, a belief that Eastern societies sought world domination intensified the desire to have fortified positions in Asia. Though the notion of an Oriental "horde" bent on the demolition of the West has a long and hard-to-trace history, the specific term "yellow peril" is accredited to German kaiser Wilhelm II. In 1895, he commissioned a painting of a dream and sent reproductions to heads of nations, including McKinley. Entitled the *Die Gelbe Gefahr* or "The Yellow Peril," the painting shows the archangel Michael gathering the European nations, represented by female warriors, in order to battle the encroaching East, which appears in the distance as the Buddha riding a dragon. Wilhelm urged

the European nations to band together in defense of Western civilization. In the UK, the intellectual underpinnings of the "yellow peril" included Charles H. Pearson's 1893 work *National Life and Character*, which argued that the darker races, led by the industrious Asians, would inevitably challenge white rule. At the same time, US historian Brooks Adams urged that American imperialism was the only way to curb the inevitable rise of the Orient.[66] President Roosevelt vigorously endorsed Adams's ideas. Across these rhetorical, political, and popular discourses that focused on the struggle against Eastern empowerment, the opium trade was consistently an issue.

The same year that the Treaty of Paris became effective, the Philippine president Emilio Aguinaldo began a war of independence against the new colonizers. US and British troops eventually quelled the rebellion through drastic and violent means, but the armed conflict signaled for many that the US had entered into a dangerous moral position with its embrace of imperialism. This was also the year that Charles Blaney and Charles Taylor debuted their opium den drama *King of the Opium Ring*. Set in San Francisco, the play goes to great lengths to achieve realism in its depiction of the city and its status as the gate to the Pacific trade routes. This was likely a draw for its audiences in New York, Boston, Chicago, and Atlanta.[67] The opening scene of the play takes place on a wharf, and the script details the Golden Gate Bridge as visible in the distance along with "a revenue cutter at anchor. Three-masted merchantmen in tow of tug outward bound. Small sails etc. Practical Revenue cutter to pull on. . . . A piling stringer, piece of wharf, Barrels, Bales, [freight] trucks [*sic*]."[68] Crowded with symbols of trade and travel, the mise-en-scène indicates the importance of international commerce to the drama.

Tinkering with the standard tropes of the genre, the traitor-to-the-race figure in Taylor and Blaney's play is the drama's central character. George Macey is the white "king of the opium ring," who has gained tremendous wealth with the help of his Chinese accomplice, Wah Sing, by smuggling opium and other contraband goods from China. On the run from authorities, Macey and his girlfriend, Georgette, arrive at Sing's underground opium den. Georgette is a woman of low beginnings who has fallen for Macey's wealth and his promise of the high

life. Once she finds herself in the den, surrounded by Chinese gangsters, she denounces the drug trade as a betrayal of American ideals:

> This is a disgrace to civilization, and to think my education, my jewels, my very clothes were bought by the money these poor wretches squander in vice. Oh George, how low I've fallen. . . . And I've sacrificed, for what? Harsh words, association with low people, yes even thieves, for you are robbing the United States Government.[69]

Georgette frames the material gain from drug pushing as un-American and counter to the ideals of honest work as a way to access the "American dream." Blaney and Taylor pull attention away from the individual degradation of the addict, instead urging reflection on the economic and political aspects of the opium trade. Their assertion is that those US citizens who do business with the Chinese are in conflict with the nation's interests.

In this same scene, Sing claims the title of "King of the Opium Ring" from Macey. Sing declares to Macey, "Your power is on the wane. I let you wield the scepter, for it flattered your vanity. Now you must bear the odium of your crime. I am your serf no longer. Today I am the power. You see the water that has passed the mill."[70] Verifying anxieties over the expanding trade with China, the play urges that the Chinese will refuse a subordinate or restrained position. *King of the Opium Ring* joins popular culture throughout the period in portraying the Chinese as naturally power-hungry and sinister. The play serves as a warning that the business-driven colonial expansion underway could lead to the eventual subjection of the US.

Rebutting President McKinley's call for the "benevolent assimilation" of Filipinos, Sing's own assimilation makes him more dangerous than his "uncivilized" brethren. Deviating from the menacing "Chinee" that is typical in these plays, Sing is completely acculturated. He is well-educated, speaks without accent, and dresses in Western-style clothes. The fact that a white actor, M. J. Jordan, played Sing in a suit (and without the trappings of the traditional stage Chinee such as a long queue) might have signaled a flexibility of racial identity and the capacity for the Chinese to successfully adopt Western semblance and

comportment. However, this fluidity of identity was not the point, as Sing's embodiment of Western refinement means he still posed a threat to Georgette, though a different one than that posed by the Chinese aggressors in *Queen of Chinatown* or *Slaves of the Opium Ring*. Standing over her incapacitated body, Sing claims to reign in the baser nature that is supposedly part of his racial makeup. He elects not to take advantage of her, asserting, "I break the laws made by civilized man, but I will not break the laws of their God."[71] His acceptance of Western culture might soften the violence of his advances, but his desire for a white woman is actually part of his assimilation. In soliloquy, he explains, "I could easily purchase for my wife the costliest Belle of the Orient, yet I would pay double her value could I call that American beauty mine. Yet, I am ONLY a Chinaman, and should be devoid of all sentiment. So much for education. It has robbed me of peace of mind."[72] Sing naturally seeks to cap his achievement of "civilization" with the status symbol of a white woman. Thus, the play links the fraught possibilities of economic success and assimilation of the Chinese immigrant with the standard bugbear of miscegenation, one the inevitable result of the other.

King of the Opium Ring is explicit in its challenge to the beneficence of colonization, warning against economic entanglement with the Orient. Like every other opium den drama that appeared in the decades bracketing the turn of the century, the play takes for granted the viciousness and duplicity of the Chinese immigrant and the threat that the opium trade posed to US autonomy. While the US went on to expand its trade routes to China through the Philippines, its domestic policies at the turn of the century sought to drastically limit Chinese presence as a way to quell Asian influence. After extending the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act with the Geary Act of 1892, the US renewed the statute again in 1902 and then made its regulations permanent in 1904.[73] As Erika Lee notes, "By the early twentieth century, the United States had set the terms and logic of the Asian 'immigration problem' that nearly every country in the Western Hemisphere—from Canada to Argentina—adopted or adapted to."[74] Opium den dramas were one of many forms of popular culture that helped justify the legal push to manifest xenophobia as national policy. These plays are

evidence of early conceptions of the drug trade that concern not just the individual, familial, or medical issues but also are microcosms of larger nation and global political issues. The opium trade and the opium-smoking addict were part of the discourses that determined the economic, moral, and social stakes of US policies surrounding colonial expansion and immigration as well as drug regulation at the turn of the twentieth century.

THE DEN RELAPSE

In 1909, the US government passed the Smoking Opium Exclusion Act, which outlawed the importation and distribution of opium in the smokable form. This shuttered most dens in the country and ended the popularity of the opium den drama. However, concerns over the "yellow peril" did not subside in the following decade. Sax Rohmer's serialized Fu Manchu stories about a Chinese mastermind working for world domination were wildly popular decades after their launch in 1913, and they contained many of the racist conventions found in the den plays. In the theatre, Chinese villains frequently appeared in Broadway thrillers of the 1910s and 1920s. Films of the 1930s like *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*, *The General Died at Dawn*, and *Shanghai Express* all featured warlords and chinoiserie (though set in China rather than the US), but few of these stage and screen portrayals involved drug use.

With a resurgence of anti-Chinese sentiment after World War I and the renewed popularity of opium smoking primarily among a more well-heeled party set, the drug and its attendant narratives reappear in popular culture. The anxiety over miscegenation between whites and Chinese remained, though with the loosened mores around sex. As a result, plays of the 1920s push aspects of racial mixing far beyond anything that would have been admissible at the turn of the century. Appearing on Broadway, these plays move out of the back-alley dens, instead taking place in opulent pleasure palaces. Designed for a more refined audience than the "ten, twent', thirt'" theatres, these later opium den dramas still use atmosphere as a way to signal and enable lasciviousness, but it is less about slumming and more about Orientalist fantasies of inexhaustible sumptuousness.

John Colton's *The Shanghai Gesture* from 1926 was the follow-up to his successful play *Rain* (1922). The latter was an adaptation of a Somerset Maugham story about a missionary who falls for a prostitute. *The Shanghai Gesture*, which ran for 200 performances, similarly plumbs the risqué. The play takes place in the opulent Shanghai brothel of Mother Goddam, a Chinese madam of impressive political clout.[75] Mother Goddam has invited a number of powerful European businessmen and politicos to her Chinese New Year celebration. Included in the party is Sir Guy Charteris, a British executive of high repute. Also present at the brothel that evening is the Japanese Prince Oshima and his love interest, the impetuous and well-named Poppy.

Goddam reveals in sensational style that Charteris was her lover twenty years ago. Not only did he jilt her after promising marriage, but he robbed her, sold her into the sex trade, and went off to marry an English woman. Goddam has arranged the entire evening so that she can enact her long-awaited revenge. In a convoluted twist, Goddam and Charteris's wife both bore daughters at the same time, though the wife died in childbirth. In a desperate state, the young Goddam switched the babies to ensure that her own daughter was raised in luxury, while she raised the other daughter in penury, keeping her in the confines of Shanghai's "Blood Town" slum. The revelation devastates Charteris. However, Goddam realizes that the daughter that she left to be raised as a lady is the profligate Poppy, who has been debasing herself with outrageous behavior, alcohol, and opium while at the brothel. Though Goddam hopes to reconcile with her daughter, Poppy is so infuriating that Goddam throws her from a high balcony. Goddam is left to mourn in a denouement that Brooks Atkinson describes as bringing "the curtain down to a threnody of sobs and lamentations."[76] Similar plotlines appear in a number of other narratives concerning addiction. In the silent film *West of Zanzibar* (1928) starring Lon Chaney, a man realizes that the young girl he has turned into a dope fiend in order to enact revenge on an adulterous wife is, in fact, his own daughter.

Earlier den plays stopped short of depicting the consummation of interracial relationships, signaling it only through metaphors of forced drug abuse. But *The Shanghai Gesture* puts miscegenation front and center in the character of Poppy and her seemingly inborn cor-

ruptness. Witnessing Poppy's impropriety, Goddam declares, "She is like leprosy—like some foul disease—some unclean animal."[77] Poppy's consumption is ravenous, as she not only drinks alcohol and smokes opium, but is a self-declared nymphomaniac with inexhaustible sexual appetites. Her comportment, though, is more the spoiled child than the hardened criminal.

POPPY: [*Screaming.*] I want a pipe—I tell you! [*Stamps her foot.*] I will have a pipe.
OSHIMA: A pipe will make you go to sleep—I don't want you to go to sleep. . . .
POPPY: Pipe never makes me go to sleep—makes me wilder, you'll see. . . .

She declares with pride that she "Love[s] everything—wine—men—drugs! Oh, I am a bad one . . . Yes, I'm a bad one! That's what I want to be!—Want to live my life like a man!"[78] This gender reversal or usurpation is one of libidinal aggression and voracious consumption.

Some reviewers interpreted Poppy as a "flapper carried to her extreme limits," the embodiment of the Jazz Age's self-destructive decadence.[79] However, Colton's script is far more specific in its explanation of Poppy's appetites. Colton makes it clear that it is her "half caste" status—her Asian mother and British father—that makes her so imbalanced. The impossibility of successful interbreeding is explicitly at the heart of the play. It is not simply Asian-ness that imbues Poppy with destructive appetites. Goddam, who brags about her purebred Manchurian ancestry, is not naturally debauched as an Asian woman. Serving as Colton's mouthpiece, Goddam swears, "Feye!—Manchu and English—they do not mix! In one body—four things fight—two minds—two souls—I knew it was the law! But I would not have it so!—I thought my hands the law! But I would not have it so!"[80] To her, Poppy's drug use and heightened sexuality result from an inherent lack of harmony; a concern over impurities in a person's bloodline that register the popular eugenics theories of the interwar period. The actress who played Poppy, Mary Duncan, had dark features, a prominent nose, and a small mouth that suited her for ethnic roles (she played Zeleekha, the Iraqi harem girl, in John Francis Dillon's

lost 1930 film *Kismet*). Her ethnic ambiguity was important to Poppy's characterization as she could appear white with hints of ethnic difference that would not draw attention until the revelation of her mixed background in the third act.

A *New York Times* review of the touring production notes that while alive, the actress that played Poppy wore a skimpy and revealing dress, but after her death, she is covered with a white shawl, "symbolical of innocence."[81] Considering the way the play derides Poppy's mixed blood, this staging suggests that her end was not her own fault, but the inevitable result of her parents' sins. As eugenics was essentially a "'modern' way of talking about social problems in biologizing terms," *The Shanghai Gesture* expresses the familiar fears of degeneration that drove earlier plays to rail against miscegenation, but through a demonstrative empiricism.[82] Poppy's addictions come from her adulterated genetic makeup as per biological law. Following eugenic theories, an upper-class upbringing was no remedy for tainted genetics. The idea had resonance even after eugenics lost its legitimacy as a science in the face of intense criticism in the 1930s: Josef von Sternberg turned the sordid plot into a successful film in 1941. In the film, Gene Tierney plays a sanitized version of Poppy, who is addicted to alcohol and gambling. The film excises her penchant for opium for the sake of decency, but her mixed blood remains indefensible.

From the earliest iterations of the opium den drama to Colton's boffo turn on Broadway in the 1920s, this strain of melodrama helped formulate the place of the Chinese immigrant in the American imagination. Appearing for over thirty-five years in theatres across the country, the opium den drama used the language of addiction to express fears over the infiltration and empowerment of Chinese bodies in the US. Within these narratives, opium is a weaponized tool of domination. Performances dramatize the practice of opium smoking and its related commerce not for the sake of cultural, social, or medical investigation, but as a manifestation of the "yellow peril" in its sexual, racial, and political suppositions. As argued by scholars such as Urmila Seshagiri, John Kuo Wei Tchen, Dylan Yeats, and Karen Shimakawa, similar narratives founded upon these same troubling suppositions survive in the twenty-first century.[83] Portrayals of Asians

and Asian Americans on the US stage and screen still tend to rely upon stereotypes of avarice, savagery, and sexual perversity. At the same time, representational practice profoundly fetishizes the Asian body in forms not far removed from the onstage brothel of Mother Goddam, which featured Asian courtesans in bamboo cages. The inexhaustible sensuousness of the Orient remains a troubling and tantalizing stigma within the Western imagination.

Established in the opium den dramas, the linkage of addiction to concerns of sterility and racial degeneration appears in many theatrical representations of drug use. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century and beyond, there are endless reiterations of the notion that the white race faces eradication by way of the drug menace. Today, concepts such as Nordau's degeneration or eugenics theory no longer dominate popular thought—save perhaps for the most extreme philosophies of white nationalism—and yet modern portrayals of drug addiction and the drug trade continue to link immigrants, foreigners, and racial minorities to particular substances. This is especially the case in films about South Americans and drug cartels. So too with the imagined links between Blackness and drug use. Similar to the opium den dramas, modern portrayals signal that using particular substances can mean taking on the stereotypes assigned to the marginalized communities with which the drug is associated. It can also mean submission to or castration by those racial others when the user is white. Just as there was little concern regarding the negative effects of opium smoking on the Chinese immigrant with whom it was connected, the use of drugs by marginalized communities appears natural in much of today's entertainment. The result is that the loss of nonwhite bodies to addiction seems inevitable and not worthy of lament. These similarities across time indicate the prolonged development of standard perceptions of addiction as orchestrated in accordance with the social and racial hierarchies of white supremacy.

2

DOPE DOCTORS

In September 2019, a federal court found the owners of Purdue Pharma, one of the largest pharmaceutical manufacturers in the world, legally accountable for America's opioid crisis. The lawsuit, filed by Ohio's attorney general, sought $3 billion in damages, arguing that Purdue had purposely misled doctors and distributors about the addictive effects of their blockbuster painkiller, OxyContin.[1] The Sackler family, who owns Purdue, swiftly dismantled the company and filed for bankruptcy. The groundbreaking Ohio suit prompted nearly 2,000 additional filings, both individual and class-action, against Purdue and the Sackler family. In the end, the Sacklers settled them all with a single offer of nearly $12 billion, pleading guilty to charges that they had impeded the US Drug Enforcement Administration's efforts to combat the addiction crisis.[2] With this legal precedent, similar lawsuits followed, and in 2021 a group of companies including drug distributors McKesson, AmerisourceBergen, and Cardinal Health and drug maker Johnson & Johnson agreed to a $26 billion settlement with states for their part in the opioid crisis through their distribution of powerful analgesics, including Vicodin, Suboxone, Percocet, and fentanyl.[3] The indictment of Purdue is remarkable in that, decades into a crisis that has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people from overdoses, attention has turned away from the evils of the black market to pursue a reckoning with the corporate institutions of pharmaceutical production. These efforts not only charge Big Pharma's leadership with intentional malfeasance but assert the existence of a systematized and deliberate process by which drug makers got the nation hooked on prescription pills. Allegations expand beyond producers to include advertisers, dispensers, and prescribers of those narcotics, all contributing to what Representative Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania called a "clear and present danger [. . .] to our national security and public health."[4]

There has not been such widespread scrutiny of medical institutions in the US since the turn of the twentieth century. At that time also, the medical authority's relationship to the pharmacopeia prompted skepticism and ire. An 1893 newspaper headline, "Doctors Are Largely Responsible for Drunkenness and the Opium Habit," reflected a commonly held belief, adding the subheading "Alcohol and Opiates Are

Too Frequently and Carelessly Prescribed by Medical Men."[5] Historians of addiction such as Courtwright and Acker have asserted the veracity of such claims.[6] At the time, doctors prescribed narcotics such as morphine, laudanum, cocaine, and chloral hydrates for a wide range of complaints from diarrhea to asthma; doctors recommended opiates in particular to treat menstrual cramps and sleeplessness and even as a cure for alcoholism. Like today, the misapplication of these substances often led to dependence and addiction, and the vast majority of drug addicts in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century came to their dependence by way of a medical professional.[7] During the Progressive Era, only members of the middle and upper classes could maintain a doctor's services, which meant that this population of iatrogenic addicts was made up of those from the supposedly protected classes. These were not the gangland characters and Chinese immigrants of dime novels and opium den dramas. This presented a unique dilemma as it was far harder to explain away how people of respectable social standing were falling into addiction.

These concerns prompted a surprising development: the arrival of the doctor as a dramatic figure on the US stage was intimately tied to the arrival of the addict. In the first decades of the twentieth century, plays featuring the two characters became common. Here, I discuss William Douglas Caddell's *The Opium Eater* (1909), Joseph Medill Patterson's *Dope* (1909), Walter Montague's *The Hop Head* (1912), and Joseph Graham's *The Needle* (1915). These works confront a fascinating catch-22: while doctors were indicted as the source of addiction, the nation also turned to them for a cure. Typically, these plays dramatize the fallibility of the doctor, often relating a negative image of the profession. This imputation extends beyond physicians to include pharmacists and drug producers, signaling a general inculpation of the Progressive Era medical establishment. These challenges to the doctor's authority, efficacy, and abilities bear a striking resemblance to those oppositions leveled at our medical institutions today over the same failures. Both then and now, there is lack of confidence associated with the institutions that typically serve as the foundations for our notions of health, normality, and "clean" living.

The medical (rather than criminal) context in which these plays

place addiction sheds light on the pharmacopeia's fraught place in modern society. As Hickman suggests, "rather than fulfilling optimistic predictions of a world made better by science," narcotics were a product of modern medical technology that "turned its human subjects into the slave of their own discoveries."[8] This portrayal unraveled standard narratives of national, and more broadly human, progress by holding scientific innovation potentially accountable for the dissipation and degeneration of the nation's citizens. The addict was, in a sense, the refuse and repercussion of modernity's greatest advancements. As a result, though these plays explore etiologies of inheritance, environment, and corrupted gender norms as potential contributors to addictive behavior, they all return to the question of whether modern science could cure the very illness for which it might be responsible.

Prior to this intensified attention, the doctor was similar to the addict in having little stage time. Certainly, Molière offered a stinging lampoon of the medical professional in *L'Amour médecin* (1665), but the typical portrayal of the doctor prior to the Progressive Era is far more anodyne. In European problem plays throughout the nineteenth century, doctors served as the trusted *raisonneur*, offering advice and serving as a moral authority.[9] In US popular theatre, the doctor was a peripheral character, typically appearing in deathbed scenes. At the turn of the century, European playwrights such as Eugène Brieux dramatized the doctor's position as a way to investigate pressing social issues. Brieux's *L'Évasion* (1896) and *Les Avariés* (1901) were novel for the time in that they center on doctors: the former satirizes a physician's belief in the doctrine of heredity, while the latter shows a doctor's struggle to regulate venereal disease.[10] Similarly, George Bernard Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1909) critiques the problematic economics of the medical profession that forces doctors to consider the price of saving a person's life. These *fin de siècle* works introduced the doctor as a figure with dramatic potential, rather than simply a comic buffoon, peripheral official, or author's mouthpiece.

A few examples may have helped set the stage for the entanglement of the doctor and the dope addict. Works such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), and H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) not only

made the mad scientist a recognizable character in popular literature but instituted a concern regarding the doctor's ability to create monsters. As the twentieth century began, eugenic theory confirmed the possibility of orchestrating human development, and the intervention of medical knowledge in the development of humankind was newly considered "an *applied* science."[11] However, this also raised the stakes regarding the dangers of malpractice and the power of the pharmacopeia. US popular culture refitted the narrative of the mad scientist misusing medical knowledge in the act of creation to be in line with a less fanciful, if not more desperate, social problem.

The new scrutiny of the doctor came at an interesting moment in the history of the US medical establishment. During the Progressive Era, doctors undertook an intensive campaign to install themselves as respected authorities in the country and keepers of the public health. These efforts were a reaction to a nineteenth-century penchant for deregulation and distrust of the medical profession. Early on, agrarian traditions of home treatment dominated, and doctoring was done within the family. The Jacksonian Era saw the abandonment of licensing standards for doctors in most states.[12] Robert Wiebe argues that even approaching the turn of the century, "the so-called professions meant little as long as anyone with a bag of pills and a bottle of syrup could pass for a doctor."[13] Lack of regulation led to a glut of medical schools and doctors, with little consistency in their quality.[14] Without standardized qualifications for the profession, being a doctor had the guarantee of neither social esteem nor financial security. Regular accusations that doctors were themselves addicts intensified the distrust people had of the profession.[15] The American Medical Association officially incorporated in 1897, orchestrating attempts to clean up the doctor's image and normalize professional standards. Hickman notes that only after 1900 did medical professionals begin to distinguish "themselves as the locus of scientific knowledge and authority" in the country.[16] However, these same efforts created additional accusations that doctors were social climbers who wanted to lord their educations over the general populace.

Recognition that the doctors had failed to guard against the addictive power of the pharmacopeia generated new efforts in the first

decades of the twentieth century to regulate narcotics through legislative means. The plays discussed in this chapter are primarily part of the lead-up to the 1914 passing of the Harrison Act. Under this law, the federal government interceded to limit the prescribing practices of physicians and the distribution practices of pharmacists. This was the most sweeping narcotics reform bill in the nation's history, and it set the tone for the next century of drug policy. As Zieger puts it, at this point "the history of addiction really becomes the history of drug control."[17] Legislators sought to stem addiction through the regulation of the doctor rather than the addict. This course of action had significant repercussions. Much like today's practice of using a synthetic opiate such as methadone to wean addicts off of narcotics, doctors in 1900 followed a course of reduction as a standard treatment for substance dependence. However, the Harrison Act prohibited doctors from knowingly prescribing narcotics to an addicted patient. Without a standard treatment available, addicts were forced to support their habit through the black market. The inadvertent effect of the Harrison Act was the criminalization of addiction. The Supreme Court further solidified this consequence of the legislation in the 1919 decision of *Webb v. United States*, which officially enforced the most severe interpretation of the Harrison Act. It essentially rendered doctors unable to treat addiction as a disease, thereby leaving the addict to the criminal justice system without the possibility of palliative relief. Courtwright calls the 1919 decision the starting point of the "classic era of narcotic control" in the country, a period that he marks as ending with the introduction of methadone as a treatment option in 1964.[18] The stage history, manifesting the debate over the physician and, after the Harrison Act, the depiction of the criminal addict, is a clear indicator of these cultural shifts.

SELF-SERVING SAWBONES

William Douglas Caddell's *The Opium Eater* (1909) is one of the earliest plays to dramatize the link between addicts and physicians. In it, Caddell questions the addict's right to medical treatment while demonstrating the doctor's inability to serve as adjudicator of such debates. The play concerns Dr. Lentzen, who has a reputation for

serving the underprivileged members of Chicago's slums, including thieves and prostitutes. A former college friend named Phillip arrives seeking treatment for a debilitating opium addiction that has rendered him almost unrecognizable. His arrival introduces conflicts. Lentzen wants to help Phillip, but he is in love with Phillip's wife, Amelia, and imagines that Phillip's passing would allow them to be together. Additionally, Phillip has been unfaithful to Amelia, obliging Lentzen to ask whether it is moral to save an immoral man. The play dramatizes the destructive capacity of addiction, as well as the morally precarious behavior of a physician when his personal life becomes a factor in his professional decisions.[19]

Lentzen acknowledges that there is an established medical treatment for addiction. Influenced by Levinstein as well as Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch, North American and British physicians envisioned addiction along the lines of an illness that a doctor could treat through prescribed courses. At the time, available "antitoxic" treatments such as Narcosan supposedly helped with withdrawal, but their administration may have caused more than a few deaths.[20] And yet, in the play, Lentzen discusses Phillip's dependence as a character flaw that must be overcome through the exercise of will, rather than an independent disease that he can suppress through treatment. As this signals, medical explanations for addiction did not wholly remove the taint of moral weakness from the drug user, and the theatre did little to remedy this entanglement. Popular imagination always assumed that the addict's individual temperament and integrity influenced the efficacy of medical treatment. For example, Lentzen recounts a story of Phillip's iron determination as a young man that helped him win a famous football game in his college days. The doctor first urges his friend that "by bracing yourself as you often did on the gridiron when the day seemed hopeless to us, you can, with my aid, begin a forward march."[21] Lentzen's focus on self-control is decidedly gendered in its implications, and the loss of restraint that defined addiction indicated loss of manhood. The doctor philosophizes that "the true strength of a man is unknown until the weakest link in his character is tested; after that he is either more or less of a man."[22] *The Hop Head* and *The Needle*, discussed later in this chapter, more fully realize this polar-

ization of robust masculinity and addiction. Those plays pathologize effeminacy as a cause of addiction, while Caddell primarily conceives of drug dependence as a test of one's conviction.

The fall of men like Phillip—straight, white, and upper-class—was meant to signal a tragic loss of potential, if not the endangering of the nation's future. As Phillip says of his own infirmity, "I see the scion of culture and respectability slink off to his death-hole; I see him shoveled away like a leprous thing."[23] Here, Caddell links addiction with the fears of white racial degeneration à la Nordau. As a symptom of this, *The Opium Eater* joins nearly every play that concerns drug addiction throughout the Progressive Era in the conspicuous absence of children (Phillip and Amelia are childless). The addict's sterility, a result of chemical castration, is another way in which the addict represents the era's larger existential fears regarding racial suicide.

As an extension of these fears, Lentzen phrases his ethical reckoning related to addiction in the language of eugenics and social health. The second half of the play primarily dramatizes the doctor's struggle over whether to save Phillip. Reading aloud from a small volume in his office, Lentzen considers,

> If society reserves the right to execute the morally unfit, surely the physically unfit should also be exterminated. The progress of the strong ought not to be retarded by the parasitical embrace of the weak. When a man has become an impediment and a burden to others, without hope of ever being able to lift his baneful dependency, would his demise not be an act of charity toward him, and an act of justice toward those whom his infirmities enslave? Science has long advocated the painless removal of incurable invalids; sentiment decrees that these human ulsers [*sic*] must fester in the public sight, to the [. . .] dispair [*sic*] of their supporters, till nature exacts her fee.[24]

The text, which is not from a confirmed source, conveys the sentiments of the eugenics theories of the day—promoting the engineered survival of the dominant race through regulation of the gene pool. Though typically associated with a discriminatory devaluing of nonwhites, eugenics often targeted "not racial outsiders, but marginalized

insiders whose very existence threatened national and class ideals."[25] The addict was special in that the deficiency did not express itself in any visible manifestation like the markers of race, ethnicity, or deformity. It was up to medical professionals to manage addicts and ensure the safety of the general population.

However, it is Lentzen's love for Amelia rather than his social conscience that drives his actions. In this, Caddell portrays the premier theories of the day motivating and justifying immoral self-interest. Lentzen begins to slowly administer untraceable amounts of narcotic to Phillip in order to, as the doctor describes it, "unleash his morbid cravings."[26] Phillip eventually dies in a hallucinatory fit similar to the *delirium tremens* of alcohol-temperance plays. Caddell may have lifted the plot point from Owen Davis's 1906 play *At the World's Mercy*, in which a doctor stealthily drives his brother to addiction in order to steal his wife. Lentzen is not punished formally for his misdeed, but he is denied Amelia's love. The absence of repercussions holds the addict's life cheaply as something tragic, though inevitably doomed. The play's central conceit is the dangerous leverage that a doctor maintains over a patient due to his authoritative position and knowledge of human pathology.

This concern regarding the physician also lent itself to more hyperbolic scenarios. Another of Owen Davis's crime thrillers, *Drugged* (1914), centers on the maniacal Dr. Malone who "plays on the weakness of hysterical women and nerve broken men" by tempting them with narcotics.[27] Malone terrorizes a respectable middle-class family by getting them addicted to cocaine and codeine. He similarly controls a gang of thugs that do his criminal bidding. There is little social commentary in the work beyond what one reviewer described as "a hackneyed warning against the evils of the drug habit."[28] Davis, who claimed to have written 150 melodramas, recognized the utility of a completely immoral physician for his sensational style.

Elsewhere, the legacy of mad scientists is more pronounced. As eugenics eclipsed Nordau's degeneration as the primary episteme associated with inheritance, there was an amplified awareness that science had the potential (and perhaps the responsibility) to master genetics. As noted, popular representations played with the potential misuse of

these imagined powers, a plotline that was especially effective within the genre of horror. George Hobart and John Willard's 1920 *The Blue Flame* features a godless scientist who brings his dead fiancée back to life, only to see her become a sexual deviant and drug addict due to the loss of her soul. Here, the unethical application of scientific advancement leads to drug addiction, which had become the most immediate and recognized theatrical signifier of devolution. These ethical concerns over doctor empowerment reach their zenith in the 1942 film noir *Bowery at Midnight*. In it, Bela Lugosi plays a psychotic criminal, and Lew Kelly plays a drug-addicted doctor in his employ. Discussed in the fourth chapter of this study, Lew Kelly originally made his mark as a vaudevillian playing a comic version of an opium-smoking professor. In this later film, Kelly's character uses his skill as a physician to bring Lugosi's victims back to life as mindless zombies. By the start of the Second World War, medical professionals enjoyed stability in their respected status, and only a wild-eyed drug fiend could abuse his medical knowledge in such a way. Kelly's deranged necromancy conjures Drs. Moreau and Frankenstein, asserting both the productive and problematic power of the pharmacopeia. These plays and films not only signal the impulse to portray the doctor as dangerous but indicate how drug addiction became a primary way to levy that indictment.

DOCTOR DAD AND HIS DOPER SONS

Surprisingly similar to each other in form and content, Walter Montague's *The Hop Head* (1912) and Joseph Graham's *The Needle* (1915) are both one-act plays that feature unsympathetic portrayals of doctors with drug-addicted sons. Montague's piece ends with the addict's suicide at the urging of his own father, while Graham's concludes with the assumption that the youth will find a cure. These seemingly contradictory conclusions enact concordant accusations that doctors are inefficient as fathers, lack human compassion, and are limited in their ability to remedy addiction. Here, the doctor characters are not creating addicts through failed treatment, but their relationships to addicts serve as an indication of their personal failures and the limits of their powers to treat the sick.

Montague, who wrote a host of melodramas about the low and vulgar, sets his play in the rich home of Dr. and Mrs. Charlton.[29] It is the twenty-third birthday of their long absent son, Jack, a cocaine addict. While Mrs. Charlton (the rare mother in these plays) pines for her son, the doctor finds relief in the fact that Jack "cannot live much longer."[30] When Jack returns, "pale and emaciated," wracked with cravings, he holds his father responsible for his addiction, portraying himself as a victim of the doctor's professional ambitions.[31] "Yes, had you done a father's duty—this curse would never have fallen on me. But money was everything to you you [*sic*] were busy getting it."[32] Montague is sure to substantiate Jack's claim. In the play's opening, Charlton apologizes to his wife for his constant absence due to work and for the fact that his concern for his patients outweighs his worry for his son. The failure of doctors to nurture their children properly because of their ambition is a common theme of the period. D. W. Griffith portrays a similar situation in his film *For His Son* of the same year. In it, a financially ambitious doctor creates a cocaine-laced soft drink to which his son becomes addicted and from which the boy eventually perishes. The lost film *The Drug Terror* (1914) also featured a physician who breaks newly passed drug laws and ends up with a drug-addled daughter.[33] In each there is a form of poetic justice aimed at those who misuse their position for the sake of social ascension. Charlton is not the villain of *The Hop Head*, though his failure as a father, his rough treatment of Jack, and his absolutist reckoning provoke questions regarding the doctor's significant moral authority and the fallibility of his position.

Under the influence of cocaine, Jack is a scattered young man, expostulating without provocation about the world, the evils of money, and the sanctity of his dreams. His ramblings hint at an imminent break with sanity, brought on by drug abuse, similar to the hallucinatory jabbering of Phillip's final monologue in Caddell's play. In Montague's configuration, addiction marks the limits of medical knowledge, as Charlton cannot save his own son. Instead, the doctor convinces Jack that he has two options: take his own life or end up "a living casket for a dead brain."[34] Charlton's contention that his son is doomed to insanity anticipates the dominant thinking of the 1920s, a period in which the influential psychiatrist Lawrence Kolb dissem-

inated the idea that addicts were untreatable psychotics. Charlton provides Jack with a syringe filled with enough cocaine to end his life, and the young man exits misquoting Hamlet: "to bed—to sleep—perhaps to dream."[35] His body is shortly heard hitting the floor offstage.

Charlton implores Jack to end his own life as a responsibility to national manhood. The doctor places addiction in direct opposition to masculinity, urging his son, "If you had one spark of manhood in you—you would make an end of it yourself."[36] He further defines masculinity as "the quality that bore your ancestors through the Revolutionary war of 1812 [*sic*]. The manhood that sustained your grandfather through the four long years from 61 to 64, the soul of a real man—who with his back against the wall plays the game."[37] Zieger has argued that late-Victorian novels consistently projected addiction as having a queering effect that robbed men of their masculinity.[38] The first novel published in the US to feature a drug addict, E. P. Roe's *Without a Home* (1881), is about a heroic Civil War veteran who falls into morphine dependence. Describing the terror of the character's growing addiction, Roe laments that "every moment with more terrible distinctness revealed to him the truth that he had lost his manhood."[39]

Montague's play, like *Without a Home*, promotes the reinforcement of antebellum norms of masculinity as a potential remedy for addiction. Charlton outlines a manhood that existed prior to the decadence of an urban existence that cut people off from the natural world, relegated them to sedentary desk jobs, and allowed vice to flourish on every corner—the same conditions that Beard believed spawned the outbreak of neurasthenia. It is worth noting that the addict sons in both *The Hop Head* and *The Needle* qualify as neurasthenic. However, in Charlton's estimation, the addict can only reclaim his manhood by ending his life, an example of eugenics pressed to its drastic and paradoxical conclusion. The play is an example of society's inability to imagine a place for the addict and the inadmissibility of even the reformed drug user for integration to the general population.

Similar to Jack in Montague's play, the son in Graham's *The Needle* has succumbed to drugs due to a lack of paternal involvement and the negative influence of urban surroundings. Graham describes Bob

Vernoy as "a boy of about twenty-two. After the death of his mother, left pretty much to his own care, he has fallen victim to his chosen environment—he is addicted to morphine."[40] Dr. Vernoy is convinced that Bob is "bad all the way through," but both Bob and his sister Edna claim that their father's neglect has caused Bob's turn from the light. Bob claims, "It's all your fault—I'm this way on account of you—All you could see were your books and your medicines? You didn't give a damn what we did so long as we didn't bother you. [. . .] And I wouldn't be like this if you'd have paid more attention to me and less attention to your women patients."[41] Accusations of lechery against his father accentuate fears regarding a doctor's access to female patients, their secrets, and their bodies. At play is the notion that an incomplete family unit (dead mother, distracted and potentially philandering father) retards the development of good sons. Like *The Hop Head*, *The Needle* portrays the doctor as educated but inept and overly ambitious, dispelling any insistence that a medical education corresponded with heightened integrity.

To stop her father from beating Bob, Edna shoots the doctor when he is offstage. Bob then goes into a fury when Edna denies him drugs, and he calls the police on her. At the final moment, Bob takes the blame for the shooting, reclaiming some semblance of manhood. The play concludes with the revelation that the bullet only grazed Vernoy, and Bob is taken to jail with a kindly reassurance from the police inspector that "we'll straighten this out."[42] Far less extreme than *The Hop Head* in its conclusion, Graham's play nevertheless has a more damning view of the physician as a sneering and physically abusive tyrant.

The glimmer of hope for Bob at the conclusion asserts a belief in the possibility of salvation for the addict, available through the wonders of medicine. Dr. Vernoy claims that he has "cured every drug fiend under my care, that wished to be cured." In his son's case, Vernoy asserts that he had "freed [Bob's] body from every craving for the drug," but the habit had returned due to the weakness of his son's will.[43] Peter Clark MacFarlane's reform-minded collection of short stories *Those Who Have Come Back* (1914) features one about a broken-down addict who returns from death's grip through medical treatment, but

the story accentuates that the addict had to be *willing* to give up the drug.[44] This formulation casts addiction and the addict as separate problems. Addiction was a disease that science could cure; the addict was a flawed individual who had to be cured from within. To Graham and MacFarlane, modern medicine could only accomplish wonders for those properly formed individuals who were deserving of its progresses. The play documents the incorporation of the sciences into the reform ideologies that preached autonomous citizenship and moral orthodoxy. In many ways, addiction was the perfect vehicle for this message, as it straddles morality and medicine, existing simultaneously as a vice and a disease.

REFORMING RX

The most direct appeal for narcotic reform to appear on stage in the first decades of the twentieth century focused more on institutional corruption than on doctors' misdeeds or the pathology of substance abuse. Joseph Medill Patterson was the highly connected and socially progressive heir to the family that owned the *Chicago Tribune*. He went on to found New York's *Daily News*, serve as Chicago's commissioner of public works, and write the novel *A Little Brother of the Rich*, which critiqued the degraded morals of the upper class and their exploitation of the poor. In 1909, Patterson penned *Dope*, which became the trademark of actor Herman Lieb, who toured the socially motivated playlet in vaudeville circuits for over 15 years, often as a headliner.[45] Lieb eventually acquired the rights from Patterson and extended the life of the work in two forms: first as a film in 1914 and again as a full-length play in 1926. Both efforts met with minimal success. However, in its original form, the nationally toured skit manifests the ideological trappings that fueled the drug reforms enacted in the 1910s, including the Harrison Act. Patterson's focus is on the economy based around narcotics that victimizes the less fortunate for the benefit of the rich and powerful.

Patterson sets his scene in a dilapidated pharmacy in Chicago's rundown Eighteenth Ward. The pharmacist and owner, August Kalthoff, makes his money selling morphine and cocaine to the residents of the nearby tenements. His customers include prostitutes and local youth.

The piece opens with a friendly police officer soliciting a bribe from Kalthoff, which he supplies matter-of-factly. Soon after, Kalthoff is caught in a sting operation when he sells "flake"—which is a 15 percent cocaine compound—to a thirteen-year-old messenger boy. The youth's profession is significant as it was widely held that tenement youth made small incomes running errands for local prostitutes.[46] Flake is an example of a tenuously legal narcotic dilution that pharmacists could make on their own and sell without a prescription. Samuel Hopkins Adams attacked such concoctions in a series of damning articles entitled "The Great American Fraud" in *Collier's Weekly* in 1905. In the articles, Adams reveals that the large patent medicine industry was misleading consumers by knowingly offering products that were ineffective, dangerous, and addictive. He asserts that drug producers were well aware of the recreational use of their nostrums and that the industry fueled these addictions because "[m]aking cocain [*sic*] fiends is another profitable enterprise."[47] Adams's exposé had significant effect, prompting the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, which severely regulated the patent medicine industry. The law required ingredient lists, the legitimization of claims regarding a medicine's effectiveness, and the removal of dangerous additives. However, as Patterson's 1909 play clearly urges, loopholes still needed closing.

Orchestrating the sting on Kalthoff's shop are Miss Courtenay, who is the secretary of the "Society for the Prevention of Juvenile Crime," and her fiancé, Arthur Robeson. Courtenay and Robeson are both well-heeled social reformers from uptown. These kinds of citizen's arrests were not unusual. An article from the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1908 reports on the sting operations of pharmacists carried out by Miss Ethel Wigley and Charles B. Whilden, who was the secretary of the State Board of Pharmacy.[48] Patterson may have drawn directly from these reports.

Full of spirited righteousness, Robeson denounces Kalthoff as they await the arrival of the police:

> Assassination is your means of livelihood. Death your accessory, murder your trade, the destruction of souls your business. [. . .] Of all the crawling things on this God's footstool, none crawls

> lower or more abject than you, who have smilingly plunged the souls of little children into the abyss of everlasting horror for the sake of a few filthy dollars.[49]

Kalthoff's reaction to this vilification is one of smug amusement. He proceeds to reveal that Robeson's family owns the pharmaceutical company that supplies him with cocaine. In the spirit of Adams, Kalthoff makes it clear that the pharmaceutical industry is well aware of how he dispenses its products, noting: "Robeson & Robeson know that neither August Kalthoff nor any other druggist has a legitimate demand for 60 or 40 or 30 or even 1 ounce of cocaine a week. Half an ounce would cover our legitimate needs for a month and you people know that, then why do you sell to us?"[50] More than that, Kalthoff announces that Miss Courtenay's family owns the building that houses the pharmacy and the local tenements. Their high rents keep the local prostitutes in penury and force Kalthoff to seek illicit income. Robbed of their righteous position and reduced to beneficiaries of the pharmacist's malfeasance, the reformers call off the police and slink back uptown. Kalthoff leaves them by asserting the intimacy of their connection: "You see, none of us can afford to squeal on the others, for this is the firm of Courtenay, Kalthoff and Robeson, dealers in dope—and Jerry the Copper that you sent for and then sent off again is our silent partner."[51]

Patterson portrays the drug industry as stretching far beyond the pharmacists and addicts to include a network of corrupt beneficiaries. Its web links the respected members of the upper echelon to the likes of Kalthoff and his prostitute customers. Playing to working- and middle-class audiences in variety houses across the country, *Dope* ridiculed the wealthy reformer as a pedantic busybody and urged the need for larger, systematic reform. The play communicates the lack of uniformity among Progressive Era reform movements, but it also represents a more specific shift in reform ethos from "moral suasion" to that of "coercive action."

Borrowing definitions from Joseph Gusfield and John Frick, moral suasion was the tool of activists who felt they shared in a brotherhood of reason and emotion with those they believed needed reformation.

Courtenay and Robeson display a paternalistic desire to extend a hand to the downtrodden. They are guided by a belief in the redemption of debased populations through the espousal of evangelical moralism. This approach focused on the sin of the individual and the need for guidance. Coercive action, on the other hand, reflects the reformer's growing feeling of alienation from those who need help. It prompts a call for large-scale legislative reform that could deliver the greatest "amount of force (especially legal force)" which reformers "can mobilize to ensure victory" over anyone affiliated with the industries that provide temptation.[52] Patterson uses Kalthoff, Robeson, and Courtenay to preach the need for such dismantling of institutions that create a debased lower class. Just as the temperance movement turned from individual teetotaling to national prohibition in the mid-nineteenth century, the narcotic reform efforts began to focus on institutional changes rather than individuals' addiction at the start of the twentieth. The shift in the dominant ethos of reform prompted the Foster Bill of 1910, which failed. But three years later, a watered-down version succeeded as the Harrison Act, a law that—in the spirit of Patterson's coercive action—brought about systematic reform of the narcotic supply chain.[53] As discussed in this chapter's opening, the nation has echoed this move a century later with a shift in attention from black markets to Big Pharma beneficiaries.

MODERN MALPRACTICE

Works by Caddell, Montague, Graham, and Patterson reveal the overlap of medical science, reform movements, and popular culture. They also evince the way that the social imperatives and evangelism of the Progressive Era developed in hand with the burgeoning sciences of the modern age. Commenting on this linkage of social precepts, medical sciences, and legislation, Peter Conrad and Joseph Schneider argue that "in modern industrial society, only law and medicine have the legitimacy to construct and promote deviance categories with wide-ranging application."[54] As a premier demonstration of this claim's veracity, the Harrison Act, in its legislation of the medical community, solidified the addict as deviant by legally revoking the title of "patient." The pages of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reflect

the bitter response of doctors who thought the law an "incumbrance." And yet, removing the addict from medical jurisdiction freed doctors to better serve ideologies of Progressive Era reform.[55] As Rebecca Stott claims, there was a general effort "to enforce prescriptive normality and morality by the scientific demarcation of behavioural characteristics considered challenging to the *status quo*."[56] Vice reformers required the drawing of strict lines of legitimate and illegitimate behaviors, and doctors became *the* respectable authority on these designations. To do so, physicians had to be free from widespread accusations of quackery.

Derrida expands on the sentiments of Stott, Conrad, and Schneider, urging that laws such as the Harrison Act that legislate the use of the pharmacopeia have extraordinary connotations. He claims,

> By means of this law, at once supplementary and fundamental, these institutions protect the very possibility of the law in general, for by prohibiting drugs we assure the integrity and responsibility of the legal subject, of the citizens and so forth. There can be no law without the conscious, vigilant, and normal subject, master of his or her intentions and desires. This interdiction and this law are thus not just artifacts like any other: they are the very condition of possibility of a respect for the law in general in our society.[57]

A drugged population cannot serve as a reliable polis united under a set of laws. To regulate the dispersal and use of narcotics is literally to ensure that a citizenry can follow any and all other laws. The theatre may be only peripheral to this effort, but popular stage portrayals of doctors and addicts positioned both figures as in need of reform for the sake of national self-preservation.

Today, stage and screen portrayals of doctors characterize them as competent individuals working assiduously for the common good. This depiction came to prominence with Sidney Kingsley's Pulitzer Prize–winning drama *Men in White* from 1933.[58] This work generated the archetypal scenario that television programs such as *ER*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *Chicago Hope* recycle endlessly. However, this characterization may shift as doctors are newly under fire for their contribution to the opioid crisis. Once again, there are questions regarding

doctors' fallibility and the troubling economics of their occupation. The US finds itself facing the same paradoxical scenario that it did a century ago, holding doctors responsible for both the creation and cure of an addiction epidemic. Headlines that would have been familiar during the Progressive Era, accusing doctors of corruption or deriding the patent medicine industry for their claims that they can cure addiction, are common again.[59] Films appearing at the time of this writing, including *Body Brokers* and *Dopesick*, dramatizing the relationship between the institutions of medicine, pharmaceuticals, health insurance, and drug addiction, point to the resurgence of this past trend. The difference is that, today, the numbers of addicts and drug-related deaths dwarf anything the nation faced at the turn of the twentieth century. The fall of the Sackler family and the size of their recent settlement signals the magnitude of the problem. As a recent article from the *Atlantic* reports, though our nation's doctors share fault in in this epidemic, they "had been influenced by pain specialists who said it was the humane thing to do, encouraged by insurance companies that said it was the most cost-effective thing to do, and cajoled by drug companies that said it was a safe thing to do."[60] As the nation turns attention once more to regulating the medical authority, which today is endlessly multilayered and complex, there is a danger of losing sight of the collateral damage that such efforts once caused. I might ask, can regulation and representation of our institutions of medicine avoid further criminalizing and abandoning the populations that most require their care? Can the victimization of the drug user through the censure of drug producers create enough sympathy to remove the taint of a weak will? Can portrayals of addicts formulate narratives that reveal the pipeline of addiction but eschew the compulsion to create independent lines of causality around concepts of will, integrity, and normalcy?

3

CRIMINAL ADDICTIONS

The dominant characterization of the drug user in the first half of the twentieth century is that of the criminal addict. Representations are overwhelmingly founded on the assumption that the drug trade is not only a criminal enterprise, but that drug users have felonious tendencies. Writing in 1924, Sidney Brewster, warden of city prisons in New York, expressed the enduring popular belief: "The man who uses heroin is a potential murderer, the same as the cocaine user. He loses all consciousness and moral responsibility."[1] Framed this way, drugs were not part of criminal activity, but the cause of crime. Even before the Harrison Act officially criminalized addiction, public perception was that the loss of self-control that defined addiction easily expanded to a rejection of the entire social contract. Enhancing this was the long-standing impression—reflected in iconography that anthropomorphized drug substances as devils, demons, and predatory animals—that narcotic substances had wills of their own that could disrupt the moral compass and impel corrupt behavior. This vision of narcotics as agents of illegality is as common today as it was a hundred years ago.

The theatre reflects and reifies this common conceptualization of addiction in a host of plays that are diverse in dramaturgy and aesthetic but share the foundational assumption that drug addicts commit crimes. Dramas that I examine here belong to two distinct chronological periods. The first is from 1909 to 1919, marking the run-up to the passing of the Harrison Act in 1914 and then its intensification with the 1919 Supreme Court decision *Webb v. United States*. The second period extends from 1920 through the 1930s. Though the first ten-year period was crucial for the formation of US drug policy, the plays that appear were less often concerned with influencing legislation and more interested in displaying the individual degradation of the addict. Unlike the propagandistic dramas that focused on miscegenation or on dope doctors and the supply chain, works such as Clyde Fitch's *The City* (1909), Alexandre Bisson's *Madame X* (1909), and Pendleton King's *Cocaine* (1916) feature the dope fiend for dramatic intrigue rather than political points. These plays follow trends set in motion by the growing popularity of the "problem play," which sought to display the reality of social ills. The subsequent normaliza-

tion of drawing-room sets and centralizing of domestic relationships spawned an increased interest in verisimilitude in the early twentieth century. Reviews from the period that newly scrutinize actors' portrayals of addiction and the numerous interviews with those same actors that plumb their process signal this new desire for authenticity. Cumulatively, these plays, reviews, and interviews established a new standardized performance language for the embodied experience of addiction. Essentially, between 1909 and 1920, plays and films that accepted addiction as a criminal signifier formulated the internal condition as outwardly performative, codifying the gestural vocabulary of addiction.

To explore this formulation, I begin this chapter by highlighting two performances that established the conventions for performing addiction on the US stage. Tully Marshall in Clyde Fitch's *The City* and Dorothy Donnelly in Alexandre Bisson's *Madame X* were the two most celebrated performances of drug addicts in the country in the first decade of the twentieth century. Whereas reviews passed over the opium-smoking addicts in the den plays, Marshall's and Donnelly's depictions of the wretchedness of the addicted body were central draws. These two actors offered what become standardized performance practices for male and female stage addicts. Significantly, violence and crime appear as symptoms of drug addiction in both works. Beyond those dramas, the performances I examine in this chapter either exemplify the influence of Marshall's and Donnelly's characterizations on other genres or are examples of unusual deviations from those models.

The shift in dramaturgy that begins in 1920 is a result of the reification of the Harrison Act in 1919, the passing of alcohol prohibition a year later, and the growth of organized crime around black markets. An editorial cartoon from the *New York Herald* published in January 1919 humorously declares this ushering in of the drug habit as a new dramatic concern. As a reptilian "Demon Rum" slinks offstage in manacles, the far more terrible "Drug Habit" enters stage left, carrying a fez and wearing a gentleman's smoking robe (figure 2). Reflecting the change in public discourse, the three-eyed horror effectively takes center stage. Rhetoric regarding narcotics escalates in its hyperbole and severity throughout the 1920s and reaches a peak in the 1930s with the

FIGURE 2. W. A. Rogers, "New Morality Play Exit Demon Rum," ***New York Herald*****, January 23, 1919, 15. Cabinet of American Illustration, Library of Congress.**

arrival of Harry Anslinger as the first US drug czar at the head of the newly formed Federal Bureau of Narcotics. Today, historians recognize Anslinger as the primary engineer of drug policy and drug scares in the more than thirty years that he held his position. He is responsible for some of the most vitriolic rhetoric regarding drugs, promoting incarceration of the addict as the only defense against the drug menace.[2] As a result of this growing panic over addiction in the country, plays of the 1920s that appear in theatres, playing primarily for middle-class audiences, feature addicts less as figures worthy of sympathy and exploration. Rather, addiction comes to signify the infection of an individual with criminal compulsions, rendering them unsalvageable and deranged. Addiction comes to represent an incurable psychosis, and actors begin to amplify earlier performance techniques to fit the new expectations. The 1930s saw fewer drug addict representations in general as bourgeois propriety deemed the character in bad taste, but the theatrical and filmic depictions that do exist amplify the savageness of the characterization to outrageous levels, portraying addicts as animalistic, insane, and violent.

The source of addiction in these plays is decidedly environmental and circumstantial. Every play discussed in this chapter has an urban setting as, at the time, addiction was perceived as an urban problem with "ninety per cent of heroin addicts liv[ing] within 180 miles of Manhattan" as late as 1926.[3] Dramatic narratives follow a thematic path set by earlier rural melodramas in the US such as *The Contrast* (1871) or *The Old Homestead* (1887). These works feature youth who move to urban areas to pursue their dreams, only to be swept up in widespread degradation of the city's temptations. This focus on external forces rather than internal pathology does not reflect the contemporary science of the period. There was not a serious consideration of theories that located environment as a central cause of addiction until the work of Bingham Dai in the 1930s that sought to classify drug use as "conditioned by the individual's relation to his or her social surroundings."[4] Yet, as is common throughout this history, popular culture was not reliant on the verifiable.

The foundations of this dramatic configuration that link urban existence, criminality, and madness to addiction date back to the late-

Victorian era. Meredith Conti has successfully argued that Richard Mansfield's performance of the characters Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in the stage adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel was significant in forging this association. Mansfield cowrote and starred in the theatrical adaptation beginning in 1887 and gained recognition on both sides of the Atlantic for his embodiment of the character's onstage transformation from elevated man of learning to the brutish alter ego. Scholars have long argued that *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, in both novel and dramatic form, expresses anxieties regarding "the degeneration of humanity and the British Empire through crime, drugs, interracial mixing and decadence" manifested by the crumbling of Jekyll's middle-class decency through deviancy.[5] Though Jekyll's potion is not a recognizable narcotic, his grotesque transformation and unstoppable desire for its effects parallels perceptions of addiction to illicit drugs. His status as a physician links him to dope doctors and to the fear that advances in medical science could go too far with horrible consequences.

At the heart of Stevenson's narrative is a move away from the notion that drug addiction was either the noble experimentation of the high-born poet like Thomas De Quincey or the corrupt pleasure-seeking of the lowbrow. Here was a productive member of the bourgeoisie not simply losing potency because of illicit use of the pharmacopeia, but lustily embracing violent and criminal activity and baring his baser nature without check. The solidifying of the stage addict as a standard character twenty years later manifests Mansfield's legacy in two ways. First, Mansfield refigures the drug narrative into a bourgeois milieu that brings addiction as a social problem into the home of the respectable, rather than tucked away in dens or as a concern of the medical community. Second, although performances in the twentieth century do not attempt to replicate Mansfield's famous onstage metamorphosis, they maintain his and Stevenson's treatment of the pharmacopeia as unveiling the troubling duality of human nature. Plays at the turn of the century publicize the capacity of chemical substances to release the irreconcilable brutality in the individual regardless of class or upbringing. This belief that addicts "are not themselves" only intensifies over time. With the US struggling with an urban drug problem that

the British were more than two decades from facing, performances in America explore this transformation outside of Stevenson's fantastical aesthetic of the mad sciences, concerned instead with the law and order of urban life and the mundanity of middle-class family survival.

TULLY MARSHALL AND THE ADDICT ITCH

Perhaps the most influential performance of a drug-addict character on the US stage during the first half of the twentieth century was that of Tully Marshall in Clyde Fitch's *The City*. Marshall's turn as the morphine-addicted George Hannock set the standard for performing drug addiction in the period, and elements of his characterization are still evident in modern performances. Marshall played Hannock in the Broadway premiere of Fitch's work and on the subsequent national tour over the next two years; key to his significance is that audiences across the country saw his characterization.

As the title suggests, *The City* concerns the corrupting influence of urban spaces. Fitch's play centers on the Rand family, who appear to be of wholesome town stock. However, the patriarch of the family has made his money in shoddy bank dealings, and his bank assistant, George Hannock, is blackmailing him. More than this, Hannock is actually Rand Sr.'s son from an affair, though only the father is aware of the connection. These scandals remain hidden while the family lives in the rural townships, but when they move to the city after Rand Sr.'s death, vice and criminality overrun the family: the son enters into corrupt political and business dealings; the eldest daughter gets a divorce; and the younger daughter falls for Hannock, her own half brother. When Hannock learns of his relation to his betrothed, he shoots her and attempts to kill himself. As the family implodes, the son declaims: "Don't blame the city. It's not her fault! It's our own! What the city does is to bring out what's strongest in us. If at heart we're good, the good in us will win! If the bad is strongest, God help us! *She* gives a man his opportunity; it is up to *him* what he makes of it!"[6] According to the play, the city reveals a person's true nature and provides the opportunity for those with bad intentions to flourish.

Fitch was a prolific playwright, well recognized in the period for plays such as *Beau Brummell*, *The Girl with the Green Eyes*, and *Sapho*

(which inspired a dope-fiend burlesque discussed in the following chapter). He died shortly before the premiere of *The City*, and, as the play was his last, critics approached it with significant interest. Reviewers celebrated *The City* for its roughness, the brutal honesty of its design, and its "photographic characterization."[7] The *New York Tribune* called the play "strong as a raging bull, an elephant in passion, a hungry tiger."[8] And the *New York World* claimed it "was at once the most repellant, most daring and most successful work."[9] Fitch's depiction of a miscreant drug addict was the primary source of the play's perceived brutishness.

In reality, Hannock is secondary to the action of the play. He is the villain against whom Rand Jr. must triumph. However, as numerous reviews make clear, Marshall's performance was the primary draw. *The Philadelphia Enquirer* notes, "As the degenerate drug eater Tully Marshall affords a remarkable characterization, and makes of the role a histrionic figure not easily forgotten."[10] The *New York World* is one of many periodicals to claim that Marshall "emerged as an actor of wondrous and proved power, the shouts of the audience [for him] were the loudest and most prolonged that have been heard in a playhouse in a year."[11] And the *Hartford Courant* spends ample time discussing Marshall's acting as "possessing qualities that make it positively uncanny; he lives his part [. . .] to a remarkable degree and his portrayal of the drug-sodden wretch [. . .] is one of the biggest pieces of acting of the present day."[12] Essentially, Marshall's portrayal received national recognition, and audiences linked the actor with the role for a significant time afterward. In 1930, a *Variety* article marking significant theatrical moments from the past decades has among its nostalgic list: "Things have changed since Tully Marshall played the dope fiend in *The City*."[13]

Fitch paints Hannock as vicious in demeanor. Reports assert that Hannock was the first character to take the lord's name in vain on stage, uttering the line "you're a God damn liar!" which drew "astonished gasps" from the audience.[14] Rand Sr. comments that the city is Hannock's "hunting ground," designating him as having fully embraced the illicit opportunities and degenerative forces of the urban scene.[15] Whereas the modern city neuters and wilts the neurasthenic,

it activates some primal savageness in others. Marshall was gaunt and hatchet-faced, making him well suited to play troubled villains, but his appearance as Hannock also indicates a shift. In performance, addicts without racial markings start to register the viciousness that popular culture formerly attributed to the racial makeup of the Chinese opium addict. As is often the case, over time the addicts change, while the imagined traits simply transfer.

On stage alone, Hannock injects morphine into his wrist, one of the earliest appearances of a syringe on stage (William Gillette's 1899 play *Sherlock Holmes* is the singular earlier example). After a rambling monologue concerning his distaste for Rand Sr. and the upper class, he chides himself: "Damn it, when am I going to stop talking in my sleep when I'm wide awake? (*Looking at the place on his arm, and smoothing it over.*) Too much of the needle, I guess!"[16] This kind of heated ranting by addicts becomes standardized over time, leading to the over-the-top exploitation films of the 1930s that featured complete mental breakdown as an almost immediate result of drug use. These plays forgo the narrated hallucinations of insects or snakes crawling all over the addict's body that were standard in temperance dramas like *The Drunkard* (1844) or *Drink* (1879). The focus instead is on paranoid obsession and the indulgence of desires either criminal or libidinal.

Correspondingly, in the climactic scene, after Hannock learns of his incestuous relationship to his fiancée, he begins to fall apart:

> HANNOCK: (*His mind deranged, rises unevenly; he is loud, partly incoherent, and his face is twitching and distorted, his hands clutching and clenching, his whole body wracked and trembling, but still strong, with a nervous madman's strength.*) It's all a *lie*—to separate Cicely from me!
> RAND JR.: (*Goes to him and sees the change.*) Hannock!
> HANNOCK: I'll never believe it!
> RAND JR.: (*Taking him by the shoulder*) Have you gone out of your mind![17]

Fitch's depiction of Hannock's body as "twitching," "distorted," "wracked," and "trembling" signals the need for an actor to produce

FIGURE 3. Tully Marshall (right) as George Hannock having just shot his fiancée. Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library.

tremendous energy that builds to a violent eruption. There is dramatic suspense in the character's attempt to restrain his own body as he spirals. This hints at the potential influence of Mansfield's performance of Hyde on Fitch's dramaturgy. Conti reports that the earlier performance involved a bowed posture, tremulous arm movements, a "straining hand," and "spontaneous ferocity."[18] In this state of physical and mental perturbation, Hannock shoots his beloved rather than let her learn of their blood relation to each other. The sole publicity shot of Hannock in character features him just after this moment, strug-

gling to take back the gun from Rand Jr. so that he can end his own life (figure 3). Marshall's hands claw into Rand as he seems to lurch toward him. This potential for violence—the early intertwining of drug addiction and criminal nature—is a departure from earlier portrayals of addicts who are more often passive than aggressive.

Two specific sources hint at how Marshall portrayed Hannock. One is an interview Marshall gave to the *New York Tribune* shortly after the Broadway debut of the play in which he discusses his creative process in detail. The other is Marshall's performance as another drug addict in the silent film *The Devil's Needle* (1916), seven years after the premiere of *The City*.

In the interview, Marshall breaks down his process and the inspiration for the character:

> I never saw a "dope fiend." I just imagined the part—my lines suggested it. I have seen many men under the influence of liquor and cocaine in my lifetime of forty years. I have often visited lunatic asylums. I have known drunkards. But I never saw a man take an injection. My brother is a physician, and he explained how a man would feel after an injection. The wrist after an injection is naturally itchy. I play the part as the lines suggest and as I imagine Fitch conceived it. I just worked up to what I thought were the ravings of a maniac.[19]

Unlike so many actors who performed ethnic or racial types at the time, Marshall does not claim to have observed the authentic original.[20] His sources are telling: the drunk, the cocaine user, and the "lunatic." Cocaine was popular for recreational use in the period, available either in its pure form with a prescription or diluted in over-the-counter nostrums such as Grey's Catarrh Powder. Though the effects of cocaine and morphine are essentially diametric, Fitch's play promotes this muddling as he portrays the hyperactivity of the cocaine user as a characteristic of the morphine addict. The result is a blanketing of all drug users in a representational trope of the "dope fiend." Marshall's invocation of the addict's lunacy corresponds to his performance of Hannock as physically and emotionally erratic. While this legitimizes

the extremity of Hannock's actions and brings Fitch's stage directions to life, it also promotes the idea that addicts have lost all reason.

Marshall's mention of his physician brother as a source for his characterization may seem a trivial comment, but the recommendation of an itch at the place of injection is an intriguing detail. Is it possible to trace the incessant itching and scratching of actors who play drug addicts today, a performative signifier of addiction that is clichéd in its recurrence, to the advice offered by Marshall's brother? As far as I have found, reporters and reformers from the period who detail the appearance and plight of addicts do not mention scratching as a trait; nor do reviews of earlier plays that feature addicts. H. H. Kane's authoritative 1880 work *The Hypodermic Injection of Morphia* goes into great detail regarding the physical signs of addiction, and Marshall seems to enact a number of them, but Kane never mentions scratching.[21] In efforts to reject addicts from military service in the buildup to World War I, the Army surgeon general detailed signs of addiction in recruits including "cringing," "restlessness," "anxiety," and muscle pains, but not an incessant need to scratch.[22] Marshall's need to identify the source for his interpretation is due to the fact that it was novel. This indicates that the best observational science regarding addiction at the time did not promote the idea that is, today, so common. Rather, Marshall and his physician brother originated the trend. Marshall establishes a kind of Brechtian gestus in the particular action of the scratch. More expressive than dialogue, the action represents the inner turmoil that was supposedly part of the addict's troubled inner nature.

Clarifying how these ideas translate to performance, *The Devil's Needle* features Marshall as a temperamental artist who turns to morphine for inspiration. His portrayal includes a set of manic gestures in which he frequently scratches his wrist and neck, gnashes his teeth, twitches and strains, and even runs the hypodermic needle along his tongue in a particularly jarring moment. As the character reaches his nadir, Marshall collapses on the floor of a dirty tenement flat, licking cocaine from an envelope. This silent depiction of torment brought on by addiction may hint at the ways in which Marshall portrayed Hannock's "ravings of a maniac" in *The City*. As reviewers of the play hint,

it was the extremity of Marshall's embodiment that drew people to the character and made Marshall such a celebrated figure. Tellingly, *The Devil's Needle* ends with Marshall's character cured through a form of rehab, working on a farm. Confirming his health to his visiting fiancée, Marshall flexes his bicep in a moment that offers commentary on the masculinizing effect of honest American productivity and physical labor, but also on the strict opposition between corporeal mastery and addiction.

Marshall developed a physically demanding performance encompassing a repertoire of gestures and poses that set the standard throughout the coming era. He instituted as a trope the manic hyperactivity and wracked physicality of the stage addict that expressed outwardly the frenzied psyche attributed to drug users. Within the context of Fitch's play, Marshall's physicalizations implied criminal tendencies with the shaking body signifying shaken moral resolve. No representation of a drug addict was more discussed or celebrated in the early twentieth century. Nor did any performance of addiction from the period appear before a larger audience. Actors have endlessly reiterated this exaggerated physical vocabulary. It appears in the exploitation films of the 1930s, such as *Reefer Madness*, and as part of Frank Sinatra's turn as the heroin addict in the groundbreaking film *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955).[23] Marshall's physical repertoire has become so entrenched that the constantly scratching addict is now a modern comic trope. Dave Chappelle's caricature of a crack-smoking tramp, Tyrone Biggums, makes much of this frantic tic.

FEMALE ADDICTS IN PHASES

Most works concerning drug addiction in the first four decades of the twentieth century focus on men. This predominance of the male addict signals anxieties over the threats posed by addiction to national manhood and the patriarchy, especially in the wake of World War I, which increased the value placed on the nation's striplings. This is a reversal from earlier opium den dramas in which female addicts were conventionally the ones who needed saving. When female drug users do appear, they are typically secondary characters. Most frequently, the

female addict is a young aristocrat who functions as a blocking figure, coming between the central romantic couple. She is either a first wife, or a girl to whom the male lead is engaged through family connections. Portrayed as hysterical and selfish, these addicts serve as a foil for the ingénue who shows her purity and worth through her difference from the helpless addict. Such addicts appear in *Morphia* (1908) by Mary McDonough and *The Unknown Woman* (1919) by Margorie Blaine and Willard Mack. This same figure carries over to films such as *The Rise of Susan* (1916) and *That Royle Girl* (1925).[24] In performance, these characters are typically confined to bedrooms, where they mope listlessly about or throw the occasional tantrum. These plays and films usually end with the death of the addicted woman through either overdose or suicide. Her passing makes way for the deserving lovers to unite. These works portray the addicted woman as without utility in the modern world. Her aristocratic standing reflects a growing disdain for the idle rich in a country that so valued social mobility and personal productivity.

A number of important works depart from this conventional representation of the female user. In these plays the female addict is central, rather than peripheral, and receives sympathetic treatment. Without exception, these plays also exploit the association between addiction and crime. Here, I examine two plays in particular. The first is *Madame X*, the melodrama by Alexandre Bisson that became a standard of the US stage after its premiere in 1909 and established a performance convention for the female addict in the same way that Tully Marshall did for the male. The second is Pendleton King's one-act play *Cocaine* that was part of the Provincetown Players season in 1917. These works exhibit the female addict in service to two distinct genres: towering melodrama and gritty realism. By establishing the potency and importance of Bisson's drama to the history of drug addiction on stage, I draw attention to King's attempt to undermine the narrative and performance that *Madame X* helped establish. I hope to accentuate the way in which the conversation over developing aesthetics played out in the dramaturgy itself, and how performances of addiction showcased this development. Namely, arguments over

what the theatre should represent (poverty, intemperance, prostitution, crime, addiction) entwined with commentary over *how* it should represent.[25]

Bisson's play begins with a prologue in which an adulterous wife, Jacqueline, begs her husband to forgive her for straying. The husband, Fleuriot, rejects Jacqueline's pleas, casting her out of their Paris home and denying her access to their young son, Raymond. The first act begins twenty years later, with the arrival of Jacqueline in Bordeaux, now ragged from decades of drinking, drugging, and loose living. Jacqueline's companion is her con-artist paramour, Laroque, who notes that he found her in an opium den in Buenos Aires where she spent her time "brutalizing herself with morphine, ether, opium—all sorts of drugs."[26]

When Laroque and his compatriots threaten to strong-arm Fleuriot for Jacqueline's dowry, she shoots Laroque in an ether-inspired fury. Jacqueline refuses to speak at trial in an attempt to keep news of her shameful life from reaching Raymond. Her sole wish is to keep her son untarnished by her transgressions. Jacqueline remains silent even after she realizes that her attorney is none other than Raymond, who does not recognize her. In an emotional speech that became a highlight for audiences, Raymond wins an acquittal for the woman known only as "Madame X." All is finally revealed, and Jacqueline enjoys a moment of reunion and redemption with her son and husband before dying from the stress of the trial.

This was Bisson's first serious drama, as he was known primarily for farces "of the Parisian air."[27] The work premiered in Paris as *Le Femme X*, and both Lena Ashwell and Jane Hading played Jacqueline to great successes. Charles Frohman produced an English version at London's Globe in 1909, and twelve days later, Henry W. Savage premiered the work in Rochester, New York. For the US production, John Raphael and the actor William H. Wright translated the script, sticking closely to the French original, retaining both the French character names and the settings of Paris and Bordeaux. Savage's production starred the relatively unknown Dorothy Donnelly as Jacqueline. Donnelly had gained some attention as Candida in one of the earliest US productions of Shaw's play in 1903, but it was her portrayal of Jacqueline that

brought her into the limelight. Savage quickly moved the production to Chicago and then New York. He mounted two touring companies in addition to the Broadway production, and the play traveled the country to rave reviews. Called "the most notable emotional melodrama of the past decade" and the "most thrilling play of the season," *Madame X* was almost unanimously celebrated for its ability to wring tears from its audience members both female and male.[28] The *Variety* review of the Chicago productions notes that "with the box office clamoring for a play that uncovers as much of the degenerate as the police will permit, 'Madame X' stands forth as a revelation of a highly strung 'heart interest,' with a moral that cannot fail to stamp indelibly."[29] Four years after the police had shut down *Mrs. Warren's Profession* for moral reasons, Bisson's drama was able to excite without offending, revealing something of the lower depths without upending the status quo.

In a surprising turn, Savage made the rights for the play available to Sarah Bernhardt, who was in the US on tour, while his own Broadway production was still running. The public was anxiously awaiting Bernhardt's interpretation as some reported that Bisson had written the play with her in mind.[30] She performed the work in the original French using her own company for a few select nights. Bernhardt was well suited for the role of Jacqueline, having established the "prototype of an undomesticated and therefore rootless woman falling victim to the tortures of love" in her definitive performance of Marguerite Gautier from Alexandre Dumas's *La Dame aux Camélias* (1852). Reviewers claimed that, as Jacqueline, she offered "the most amazing exhibition of histrionism imaginable," in which she "oozes out at the pores the physical embodiment of complete abandon," impersonating the "role of degenerated mother with an exactness unapproachable by American stars."[31] Bernhardt went on to perform the work when she returned to Paris, and Jacqueline became part of her regular repertoire.[32] At the same time, the play ran steadily in the US into the 1920s. To put it plainly, *Madame X* was a cultural phenomenon, and the character of Jacqueline entered the consciousness of the American public as part of a pantheon of fallen women, commensurate with the likes of Camille, Phèdre, and Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles.[33]

In the play, drug abuse defines the character of Jacqueline. The

stage directions note that she arrives in Bordeaux "dressed in cheap and tawdry finery, is deathly pale and shows the carelessness of herself and her surroundings which drugs induce."[34] She sips from a small bottle of ether throughout the first act, steadily becoming more intoxicated as she approaches the dramatic murder of Laroque. Ether addiction was not widespread in the US, though it was a problem in parts of Europe.[35] Jacqueline is in fact the only ether addict I have found to have made the US stage. Bisson portrays the effects of the drug on the ravaged woman as unpredictable. Laroque tells his coconspirators: "It's queer stuff that. She's a silent kind of woman as a rule, but when she's been drinking ether, she gets talkative about her past and if she doesn't get maudlin too soon flies into furious rages and says anything. She won't live very long."[36] While reading tarot cards for a servant girl, Jacqueline tells her that ether "makes me think of other things—That helps. . . . But sometimes it gets on my nerves and then I either cry my heart out or smash all the furniture."[37] In a wild vacillation between sedation and madness, the narcotic either stifles Jacqueline's raw emotions or exacerbates them to terrific levels. In this, her addiction propels her toward the melodramatic eruption that comes when she shoots Laroque in a frenzy.

Jacqueline's addiction highlights the extraordinariness of her one redeeming quality, that of maternal love. Of the Donnelly production, the *New York Times* notes, "Though a hopeless victim of the ether habit, she retains one great virtue—love for the son she left," adding in a later review that "[a]t bottom [the play's] strength comes from a primal instinct, the love of parent for child."[38] Regarding a 1913 revival of the work, the *San Francisco Chronicle* similarly describes Jacqueline as "a woman who has sunk to the sewer and who, in the ultimate destiny of the narrative, is lifted into a living expression of what is, possibly, all life's most dominant passion, the love of the mother for her young."[39] Though Jacqueline plummets from adultery to drug abuse, then finally to murder, she portrays the capacity of the lowest wretch, marked by her drug use, to achieve redemption. At the heart of this is the idea that the outward degradation of the female drug addict belies the survival of some atavistic goodness that was part of a woman's nature.

Reviews directly compare Donnelly to Tully Marshall, and critics wondered at the "increasing dramatic popularity of drug fiends."[40] There were questions regarding how Donnelly, like Marshall, created what audiences perceived as an authentic portrayal of the drug addict. In a *New York Times* interview from 1910, Donnelly discusses a trip to Paris in which Savage arranged for her to visit sanitariums and meet with addicts. She used her time there "to observe their characteristic poses, and in that way they helped to compose the mental picture I was making of Madame X."[41]

Seemingly encouraged by this observational experience, Donnelly embraced a growing belief that she was somewhat of an expert on addiction and the effects of ether. In October 1909, she lent her expertise to a *Chicago Daily Tribune* article on ether addiction (figure 4). In the piece, Donnelly writes about "the effects of the absorption of ether into the system," which she details as occurring in a number of specific stages. These stages include "Dreams," "Defiance," "Maudlin and Sentimental," "Despair," and, finally, "Tragic Grief." Each stage appears with a corresponding image of Donnelly in a dramatic pose that she used in performance.[42] Many of them are familiar poses from the melodramatic repertoire, though "Defiance" stands out as something coarser, featuring Donnelly with a cigarette dangling from the side of her mouth and a threatening look more fitting for a bruiser from a gangster drama. The difference between these poses and traditional melodramatic posturing is that they are systemized, an aspect enabled by the character's status as an addict. Donnelly could organize her performance through a careful pathologizing of the character's malady. As ether was a pharmaceutical, there was the potential to diagnose its effects more as codified reactions than as the result of a character's individual temperament. The drawing of a devil flowing out of the ether bottle and gripping the images of Donnelly (a standard anthropomorphizing of the narcotic substance) implies the active control of the drug over Jacqueline, further relinquishing the individual character of responsibility for her shifts in mood. Though the article identifies the use of ether as a "vicious sin," the scenario Donnelly promotes is one in which Jacqueline is firmly fixed in the position of victim. Elsewhere, Donnelly discusses "the phases a drug fiend passes through," and how

ETHER DRINKING IS EUROPE'S LATEST AND UGLIEST VICE.

So Far America Apparently Has Escaped This Vicious Sin, and a Desperate Effort Will Be Made To Prevent Its Importation

By L. BLAKE BALDWIN,
City Physician of Chicago.

CHICAGO is not as yet cursed with the use of ether as a drug habit, morphine, cocaine, and opium, the deadly members, but unfortunately other countries are, in blank horrors, a comparative curse.

And yet the fact that the victims of this powerful drug, and of chloroform, exist at all in the city is sufficient cause to alarm all those who have the welfare of humanity at heart and all members of the medical profession.

Ether, used as an anaesthetic in surgical operations, as a narcotic, or as "dope" in the sense that cocaine is "dope," is one of the most subtle and powerful drugs known to the medical profession. In operating the preference has leaned toward ether. Of late years, however, the awakening of the people who trifle with it through a desire to rid themselves of the curse of insomnia realize that such time they are it they literally are playing with life and death. And used as a "dope," as a means to kill the monotone ago and recall unusual sensations, it is a deadly drug. Its after effects are terribly as does narcotic and, only perhaps, it is the deadliest of all drugs used for such purposes. Its sale never should be possible except upon a responsible physician's prescription, and the same is true of its companion drug, chloroform.

* * *

Once Began Habit Holds Fire.

The ether drinker or the user of chloroform is cursed from the moment he begins the habit. Like a fiend it will take hold just as surely on the one ever is begun. Of the effects of cocaine, morphine, and opium the public, fortunately, is aware, and through the knowledge of the horrors which any and all of these drugs bring to their users hundreds of potential dope victims are saved from taking the first fatal step.

Of the effects of ether and "doping" hundreds are not ignorant. The subtle nature of the drug, the fact that it is prominent in materia medica, its comparative cheapness, and the small quantity necessary to produce complete oblivion all help to gain the set time which the victims of the drug habit crave, and first as a user of ether for occasional drug which all first readily falls into the fatal traps which he has walked into with open eyes. His moments steadily enslaved by the drug, he soon acquires the habit of using it, as a morphine user begins to use morphine.

But the effects are worse. Unlike those of ether's cure, and therefore more insidious and subtle, the ether fiend is placing himself on the brink of the grave each time he goes under the drug's influence. So subtle, so powerful, is this pernicious discovery of medical science that even the practiced physician, who knows to the last heart beat a patient's powers of resistance, should ever be permitted to prescribe or administer not a dose.

* * *

Desperate Chance Taken Each Time.

The layman, the drug victim, measuring out a dose as nicely as not to get too much, a fatal dose, as he is to remain in the land of the living. He knows only that he using it he grows himself in a state of mental exhilaration and physical ecstasy. He knows nothing about his powers of resistance, nothing about the fine line of demarcation between the dose fatal and the dose that will bring him back to life. He knows only that he is using and the necessary result of such use the world are full of lists of victims, poor, pitiful victims who "took just a little too much."

With ether is to be included chloroform, not because the chloroform fiend has taken his grave beside the cocaine and morphine fiends, as has the ether fiend, but because the latter drug is rapidly acquiring a growing number of inveterate victims, persons who have fallen into the habit of using chloroform on a handkerchief as a means of exhilarating alone. If those careless users of this powerful drug knew what physicians know, that the next lung on this thin thread of a drop or less, there would be fewer to fought in this insane and suicidal practice. "I only take a few drops, doctor, to excess; it is easy to get over them." That is the danger. And that is why the use of ether should be limited down and stamped out of existence wherever it makes its appearance in threatening fashion.

By DOROTHY DONNELLY.
(Who Plays the Ether Fiend in Madame X.)

THE attention of European sociologists has been attracted during the last few years to the use of comparatively recent origin which is destructive and deadly in its results. I refer to ether drinking. In the days of Mme. Du Barry, Mme. Du Barry, Alexandre Dumas, has chosen to present a somewhat similar moral subject, the effects of a gradual disintegration through the use of ether as a drug. I have chosen to interpret his heroine I have spent several months in a study which has at the same time been interesting and repellent.

Fortunately the vice of ether drinking has never attained a foothold in America, but it is one of the most widespread and deadly curses among the lower European classes. Nor is it confined to the cities alone. In no country is it more prevalent nor has it gained a stronger foothold than in Ireland.

Recent publications of the United States bureau of vital statistics show the tremendous hold the use of cocaine has attained among the negroes of the south and the poor of the great cities, and it is pointed out as one of the problems of the future. Its abuse corresponds with the other habit of Europe. Like cocaine and opium, ether came into use in the hospital and laboratory as a scientific discovery of great moment, and through its use by physicians thousands of lives have been saved and pain racked sufferers have been soothed. Yet through its abuse there has been born in France a word to describe the victims—ethermanie.

* * *

Discovery Startles Scientific World.

Ether as an anaesthetic was first used by Simpson, an American, and an account of his experiments which published in 1847 startled the scientific world. Already an American dentist, Morton, had used the ether drug to his profession, and it soon became the fashion among the wealthy classes to take ether parties. It is interesting to note that at the time of the general acceptance of ether as an anaesthetic there were those who fought against its use, and these opposition were usually Englishmen.

An interesting controversy in the light of subsequent events upon the use of the drug came up and was finally settled in favor of ether. Its use was not a direct violation of the law of God. Simpson, the discoverer, retorted with a memorial in justification of his use and quoted from the bible: "The Lord God sent Adam into profound sleep and while he slept he took from his side a rib," etc.—proving, as Simpson declared, that God was the inventor of anaesthetics!

Ether was hailed as the most important of his time, would be put to such a use as it is today. Last July at one of the famous race courses near Paris a friend of mine who knew of my peculiar interest in this subject took me into the booth where the refreshments for an aristocratic party, to the servants of which I was giving directions of champagne to be poured out a number of flasks of ether for the use of the chic patrons of the race course who did not find the champagne sufficiently stimulating! So the vice is not confined to the poor and the squalid alone. In the hospitals the physicians told me that their otherwise were drawn from all ranks of life.

* * *

Cheap Agonies to the Suffering.

Why then did women should become addicted to this drug is a problem not easy to solve. Its cheapness and almost immediate result may explain its popularity among the poor creatures searching for oblivion. One can distinguish an ether drinker from the victim of any other habit by the fact that the ether fiend is pleasant odor about him, a certain unconsciousness and a few lasting. The effect is almost instantaneous and a few drops produce the same result as many times the amount of alcohol. Only a few days ago I read that in the village of Dragomirtzi, in the county of Lom-Palanka, Bulgaria, the people decided that they no longer desired whisky in its parish. The disagreeableness of the ether made it possible for a man to become intoxicated upon a few pennies' worth, and he was moralizing the English government to prohibit its sale absolutely.

One singular point in regard to this vice is that it is practiced by women more than by men. Why this should be so I do not quite know. It is due that it is used as a solace by the unfortunates who are wrestled with life's distresses. Perhaps it is because it is cheaper and easier to take than other drugs, requiring no special paraphernalia. While under the influence of the drug it is said that the victim can perform the most difficult tasks with ease and temporary exhilaration. That perhaps is the reason Honore chose that Jacqueline (" Mme. X") should be an interwoman. A woman who has been refinement and who sinks into the mire would seek in her degraded surroundings some opposite and this one finds it in ether. She wishes to forget—the cover of her life, the position she has deserted, and the child she lost, and ether is the solution.

Ether is taken into the system by inhaling the fumes or by actually swallowing the dissipled article. The most popular method is to take first a mouthful of water then the ether, then water again. This causes a more immediate effect. Only rarely is it necessary to use the hypodermic needle, as with other drunkards, of which class is Jacqueline. She drinks it and the result of each draught is apparent. Between periods of intoxication the ether sphinx is comparatively indifferent to surroundings and is enveloped in a mental haze, which gives evidence of sluggish volition and seems oblivious of all about her. The mental lethargy of depression becomes more and more apparent month by the fiend. The effects are at first purely mental. The subject has dreams from which she does not desire to be aroused.

* * *

Physicians Often Be Innocent Starters.

Many poor unfortunates become ethermaniacs through the well meaning assistance of some physicians who prescribe the drug to relieve them of pain. Especially does this fatal habit begin with those in whom its action is almost instantaneous and with increasing rapidity after swallowing or inhaling it the entire system responds to its sensuous effects. Those who experiment with the vice usually take the first steps by adding candy and sugar to relieve the sensation of it, finding that it is not necessary.

I have seen the ether habit in the slums of Paris and I have tried to give a photographic description of the actual method by which it is taken into the system by the more confirmed addicts. In drinking the neck of the bottle is taken between the lips and following draught the victim draws a deep breath through the mouth of the fumes in the lungs. Beneath an are the effects of the drug are not so violent, such as is the case with the more terrible quality which for a few sous is served to the poor unfortunates of the Paris barricades.

Russia, in a few words which he has put into the mouth of Jacqueline has given a graphic description of the effects of ether drinking.

"It makes me dream of other things. That helps my sorrow and then I either cry my heart out or else I smash all the furniture."

Sometimes during the effects of the absorption of ether into the system into three stages. The first is that of misery. When the victim makes an hysterical attempt at conviviality. The second maudlin absorption. The third a period of insensibility and depression. The third, a period of insensible rage when the victim is endowed with great muscular strength and is unable to control some fit of violence either to himself or some one about him.

* * *

White Slavery Finally Succumbs.

Quite frequently, however, the ether habit, is caused by wretched heart and lung action superinduced by the drug and the victim is unable to relax from the effects. In spite of the terrible entrapment of her fatal and the shock of meeting with her son Jacques now grown to be a heart, already worn out with years of addiction to drugs, there is a partial renewal of the first act is wretchedly depressed. The deaths to which she has sunk have not caused the slightest remorse and the virtue, blindness, and settlement of her early life. For others she drinks ether and these fatal moments of the periods of convivality, maudlin sorrow, and hysterical rage and exultation, until, goaded to a fury, she commits suicide.

Jacqueline is not a sensational figure—only a pitiful one—but let us remember that our virtues as well as our vices are constitutional and say with John Bunyan:

"There, but for the grace of God—go I."

FIGURE 4. Dorothy Donnelly demonstrating the stages of ether addiction. L. Blake Baldwin and Dorothy Donnelly, "Ether Drinking Is Europe's Latest and Ugliest Vice," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, October 31, 1909.

the effects of the ether drive Jacqueline to the eventual "paroxysms of passion, in which she kills her lover." She concludes: "Just in such a way do the symptoms follow one another in real life."[43]

These articles, which served as publicity items for the production, present the actor's process of developing an arc for her character as something beyond a facet of verisimilitude; rather, it borders on empiricism. The paper bolsters the validity of Donnelly's claims by printing a related article by a medical doctor right alongside her piece. Legitimized as an authentic portrayal of drug addiction in the paper, Donnelly's interpretation of Bisson's character directly formulates the perception of addiction in the national imagination. Donnelly orchestrates her stages of addiction that end in "Tragic Grief" to correspond with and validate the play's narrative—which asserts Jacqueline as a victim and the murder she commits an act of maternal impulse. In a way, this example embodies the central conceit of this study: variant popular media collaboratively and conspicuously promote a performance of addiction that is highly inflected by the conventions of a particular genre, as if it is reality. Donnelly's poses became a "how to" manual for the performance of addiction, creating a theatrical shorthand for the condition as its presence on stage increased through the 1910s and 1920s.

As noted, the influence of *Madame X* was broad. Not only was it regularly performed, but it prompted adaptations of its central plotline. *The Fortune Teller* (1919) by Leighton Graves Osmun is a version of the same story, with a cocaine-addict mother saving the son she abandoned years earlier. Osmun's mother enacts a number of the "phases" that Donnelly highlights, but she does not die at the play's conclusion though her final sacrifice means never seeing her son again. Film versions of *Madame X* began appearing in 1920, and as many as a dozen in various languages premiered over the years, most recently in 1965 with Lana Turner as Jacqueline. However, under the auspices of the censorious Production Code that prohibited the depiction of drug use, the film versions excise Jacqueline's ether drinking, typically portraying her as a drunk rather than a dope fiend, but here too the vacillations between lassitude and hysterics are part of the performances. In the Turner version, she has a taste for absinthe, but the

dialogue mentions addiction only in passing during the courtroom scene.

The proliferation of Madame Xs on stage and screen fixed the convention of the female addict protagonist for decades to come as the fallen woman with a heart of gold whose demise is imminent. However, in 1917, with battles over drug control still in the headlines and drugs like cocaine still relatively available to addicts, Pendleton King's *Cocaine* offered the rare deviation from this standard narrative. King does so with apparent awareness of the conventions and with a dedication to the experimental spirit of the Provincetown Players, who premiered the work. His play is emblematic of a cultural shift that Westgate identifies as a move away from the "Victorian principle of decorum that maintained that the theatre represented the noblest themes, characters, and stories to supply society with the exemplum of social harmony."[44] Rather than Victorian *bienséance*—which determined the redemption and moral triumph of Madame X—*Cocaine* represents the growing influence of Progressive Era humanitarianism on the Little Theatre movement. Christine Stansell sees this as a turn away from the "moralistic language and sentimental effusions" of melodrama. It is also a rejection of what Dorothy Chansky has labeled the moderations of "euphemistic realism" that depicted social problems "in such a way as to avoid, for the most part, creating images that are too harsh or disturbing for mainstream sensibilities."[45] King's play embraces the harsh and disturbing through an aesthetics of mood, rhythm, and atmosphere that came to exemplify the shifting theatre practices in the US in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

King sets *Cocaine* in a darkened attic bedroom off New York City's squalid Bowery. The stage directions call for a single window and a pitched ceiling that "slopes down at the back to within a few feet of the floor."[46] This creates a restrictive and unnatural cave of the small room with a few rickety pieces of furniture and a bed, all of which are "in terrible disorder and confusion."[47] It is 4:00 A.M. on a still summer night; heat as well as an ambiance of destitution permeates the space. The action begins with the return of Nora, played by Provincetown founder Ida Rauh, from a fruitless night of streetwalking. Waiting for her is her lover, Joe, a former prizefighter played by the dark and handsome

young Eugene Lincoln. The short play works quickly, revealing that Joe and Nora are both cocaine addicts, though Nora's recent dry spell as a prostitute, due in part to the fever blister on her face, has left them without "a good old sniff" for four nights. Nora originally met Joe at his lowest after a loss in the ring and nursed him back to health. As he can no longer fight, her prostitution is their only income. The play only hints at Nora's background, but her ability to quote Oscar Wilde and her dislike for Joe's use of slang intimates a well-to-do birth.[48] As Joe remarks, "dope bring funny people together," a note not only of their odd match, but, as Katie Johnson points out, that "their addiction is the basis of their romance."[49] King's title alone clarifies this centrality of drug use to the scenario. As the play progresses, the two admit that the situation is dire. Joe suggests that the landlady might be willing to forgo rent if he was to show her some affection, an idea that Nora rejects. Johnson declares this the inaugural portrayal of male prostitution on the American stage, further linking sex and drugs as well as drugs and criminal activity.[50]

As their options seem to slip away, Nora talks Joe into ending it all. They extinguish the candle, which has until now provided the only light for the scene, plunging the stage into darkness, and they turn on the gas. They lie in each other's arms, wondering whether anyone will care, and waiting to die. After a time, they realize that the gas has run out and there is not a cent in the house to turn it back on. The play ends with them watching the sunrise through the window—Joe relieved, Nora desperate.

In terms of the portrayal of addiction, *Cocaine* takes a rare look at the addict devoid of any hyperbolic or pseudo-scientific conception. There is no actual drug use in the play, no standard moment of sensationalism when the addict imbibes or shoots up and then rants, raves, or rampages. Nor are the characters wildly inconsistent in emotion or action. Though there are few specific details of Rauh and Lincoln's performances, reviews make clear the intrigue of the work's drama. Nora and Joe grind steadily and painfully through life with the cravings of addiction and its consequences: Joe cannot work, and Nora is deteriorating at age thirty with signs of her trade written on her body. King's drama ignores any calls for reform in favor of a focus on the

exhaustive and all-encompassing agony of addiction. As Nora says, "It's terrible to be so dependent on *anything* as that."[51]

The play originally appeared as a kind of addendum to the Provincetown Players' regular season in April 1917. For six nights, *Cocaine* played with short pieces by Susan Glaspell, by Rita Wellman, and by Glaspell with her husband George Cram Cook. Reviews of the evening typically highlight King's work, calling it "the most impressive" of the four, and a review of a 1919 revival of the evening singles it out as "the most theatrically effective."[52] Burns Mantle of the *New York Times* marks *Cocaine* as the play that had drawn attention to the Provincetown Players from the "uptown" audience, and that had engendered controversy due to its power, artistic merit, and social value. Mantle imagines the work's reception as a sign that the Provincetown Players would rival the popular Washington Square Players within a year and, within ten or twenty years, would be considered the theatre that "took up the American drama and began to shake it into a new activity."[53] This "shake-up" may in part refer to the fact that King so effectively subverts deep-seated conventions in his work.

Johnson connects King's Nora with Ibsen's heroine of the same name in *A Doll's House*, noting that "[i]n yanking Nora from her bourgeois household and placing her in the drug-infested Bowery, King retools an icon of modern drama."[54] Not merely in name, Nora seems a character from a different drama. Her dialogue is not only more cultivated than Joe's, but she speaks with a dramatic whimsy that Joe continually undercuts with a practicality devoid of the romance that Nora finds in their situation. As an actress, Rauh was known for her "emotional exuberance," and this likely played well as a contrast to Lincoln's portrayal of Joe as a tough street kid.[55] Lying in Joe's arms, Nora dreams:

> NORA: The Elevated sounds like the wind. Like a spirit that can't rest. The spirit of the city, that goes on and on day and night and never stops and never will stop, no matter what becomes of you and me. But when I am lying close to you like this, touching you—there's a sort of electric current that radiates

from you all over because you're so alive. What was I going to say? What was I talking about?

JOE: You was talking about the El.

NORA: Yes. I was going to say while I am lying close to you like this it all seems so far away, doesn't it? It is like lying snug in bed and listening to the sea. There may be death and storms and shipwrecks and things out there, but they're far away. They can never touch us.

JOE: I wisht we could get a good old sniff, and forget our troubles right.[56]

Joe's interruption of her quixotic lovemaking with banalities or blunt questions runs throughout the play. At every moment, Joe's unadorned realism brings the heightened emotions of Nora's melodramatic tendencies down to earth. This subversion of melodramatic rhythms culminates in the final moment when their suicide attempt fails. The fallen woman (and, in this case, her lover) does not end up dead, nor does she attain any form of redemption. King breaks from the traditions set down by *Madame X* and the host of "fallen women" plays that came both before and after it. There is no promise of cure or reformation. Nor is there some redeeming quality of motherhood or self-sacrifice that would prompt a moralistic resolution in melodramatic tradition. Rather, this night's failed suicide only promises a future of extended suffering. The final sunrise does not represent hope, but the continuation of the cycle in which these two sad souls are trapped. Nora implores, "We've got to do something," but Joe easily negates any potential amelioration: "Naw, I guess not."[57] They must face another day of hooking, of craving, of life within the cycle of addiction. King's play expresses what Brenda Murphy identifies as the ideological worldview behind American dramatic realism, which is "skeptical, ironic, deflating. It rejects both the tragic notion of ultimate transcendence and the comic notions of the ultimate emergence of a new order based on integration and harmony." The result is inevitably a "continual return to the mundane; not resolution or closure but irresolution and open-ended action."[58]

In a way, King's short work explores the potential for drug use to expand from a character trait that signals either victimhood or villainy, to serve as a centralized metaphor in drama searching for new aesthetic principles. *Cocaine*, with its breach of genre standards, exemplifies the Little Theatre movement's borrowing from European avant-garde at the close of World War I. King's play, with its stifling darkness, abysmal atmosphere, and interest in the low, is reminiscent of the kind of work mounted by André Antoine at the Theatre Libre. Drew Eisenhauer highlights "Frank Norris, Emile Zola, Henrik Ibsen, and Maxim Gorky" as other potential models.[59] There are additional signs that *fin de siècle* Symbolists in their obsession with morbidity, suffering, stasis, and mood were influences. The single candle of King's squalid flat was also the lighting scheme for Lugné-Poe's production of Maurice Maeterlinck's Symbolist work *L'Intruse* (1891) that features a family waiting for the arrival of death. King's tenement flat is a far cry from the bourgeois world of *Madame X* or the horror-show sets of the opium den dramas with their trapdoors and snake pits. Even more, performances of Nora significantly departed from Donnelly's attempts at empirical reproduction through designated "phases." Though Nora may have some melodramatic tendencies in her vision of the world, her motivations are driven by experiential torment rather than any pseudo-scientific vision of human behavior. At a time when Madame X was still a sought-after role, King sheds light on the existential implications of addiction as a way of being. It was an effort that corresponded directly with the developing aesthetics of theatrical modernism.

DRUG DRAMAS AFTER HARRISON: CRIME BOSSES AND PICKET FENCES

Between 1920 and 1940 there is a general continuity in portrayals of addiction. This continuity relies upon a widespread belief that the "drug menace" was real and ever encroaching. In the same year that the Supreme Court decided *Webb v. United States*, which expanded the Harrison Act and officially criminalized addiction, a report by the Illinois congressman Henry T. Rainey announced that the nation was home to 1 million drug addicts. Though this figure is specious,

"the American public was convinced that addiction was a problem of massive dimensions."[60] The passing of the Volstead Act a year after the *Webb* decision solidified the prohibitory spirit with which the nation met all substance abuse. Having succeeded in pushing alcohol prohibition from fringe radicalism to national policy, reformers were newly invigorated in their attacks on other vices. The 1920s saw some of the most virulent rhetoric against illicit drug use and some of the most damning representations of addicts. Reformers like Richmond P. Hobson could claim that "the great majority of daylight robberies, daring holdups, cruel murders, etc. are being committed by youthful heroin and cocaine addicts,"[61] and, in 1928, reporter Winifred Black declared in Hearst newspapers that "Sixty Per Cent of All Violent Crimes Traced to Cocaine."[62] These propagandistic claims coincided with a new glamorization of transgressive and illicit behavior that came with the roaring twenties. Drinking and drug use went fully underground, and middle- and upper-class people followed them down. Cocaine was widely used by the smart set of flappers as well as an underworld contingent of pimps, prostitutes, and criminals. Reports of "snowbirds" throwing "sniffing parties" were common in newspapers. Opium smoking made a comeback for those who could afford it, and the subcutaneous injection of morphine and heroin was prominent, while slumming expeditions to Harlem or Chicago's Bronzeville introduced whites to both jazz music and a host of new social lubricants. Essentially, drugs were endemic to the new leisure activities under Prohibition.

This all led to a corresponding increase in the number of addicts featured on stage. However, these plays rarely *focus* on addicts, rather keeping them peripheral characters that serve to signify the presence of organized crime and the danger of the drug pusher. Gangsters are principal figures in popular works that feature drug use, such as *Red Light Annie* (1923), *Kick In* (1925), *Headquarters* (1929), *The Boy Friend* (1932), *Crucible* (1933), and *This Is New York* (1935), and in films like *Human Wreckage* (1923), *The Pace That Kills* (1928), *Reefer Madness* (1936), and *Cocaine Fiends* (1939). These works nearly all depict the ways in which criminal culture preys upon working- and lower-class families. Some works, such as James Gleason and George

Abbott's *The Fall Guy* (1925), do not feature addicts at all but focus on how people are lured into working for the drug trade when no other option presents itself. Kevin Brownlow asserts that the absence of drug addicts as central characters during this period may have been in response to the end of the First World War, when the subject of drug addiction appeared unpatriotic and hinting of bolshevism.[63]

Within this milieu of organized crime, plays and films often feature the search for shadowy kingpins who orchestrate the drug traffic. These figures sport sobriquets such as "The Works" or "Blight," and the plays end with their capture and unveiling, like so many crime mysteries of the era and still today.[64] These nicknamed gangsters parallel those like Charles "Lucky" Luciano, "Dutch" Schultz, and Meyer "Mob's Accountant" Lansky who had transformed the illegal drug trade into an organized enterprise. In the plays, the unknown kingpin occasionally turns out to be a respected member of the upper echelon. A growing trend in the iconography of the day portrayed the "International Dope Ring" or the "Big Fellow of the Opium Ring" as a faceless figure in tails and a top hat, trampling narcotics enforcers or chopping down the masses with a scythe. The contention was that those who ran the illegal drug trade were members of an untouchable class, feeding on the misery of the general population. This theme was especially prevalent in films such as *The Pace That Kills* and *Human Wreckage*, the latter of which opens with a narration claiming that the "Dope Ring" is managed by "men powerful in finance, politics and society, [yet] no investigator has penetrated to the inner circle."[65]

The victims in these plays and films are typically working-class people with bourgeois aspirations that are foiled by the criminal element. The well-meaning young man or woman of low beginnings steps in for the fallen aristocrat of earlier works. The obvious villainy of the gangster and the respectability of his working-class addict-victim opens up new possibilities in the postwar dramaturgy. Because of this, despite innumerable examples of performances of addicts as wildly degraded and criminally insane, there are a number of intriguing exceptions in the period. These include the first examples of addicts having children, and a growing possibility of not only redemption for the addict, but a full return to society.

One of the more popular drug plays of the 1920s that features both an addict's recovery and an addict as a parent is *Red Light Annie* (1923). Authors Norman Houston and Sam Forrest's play is at once hackneyed and a source of subtle insight into the altered perception of addiction after the 1919 fortifying of the Harrison Act. *Red Light Annie* played in New York City at the Belasco Theatre with Mary Ryan in the lead role of Fanny, before a national tour under the production of A. H. Woods. Evenly received as both a "moving human story" and a "simply nauseating" drama that "should be avoided by self-respecting people," *Red Light Annie* follows what was, by then, a recognizable plot of an innocent country girl who falls into the hands of urban corruption.[66] Soon after Fanny and her husband, Tom, move to New York City from the country, Tom is sent to prison for a robbery he did not commit. This is all exposition, as the play begins four years later with Tom back home and he and Fanny working to attain middle-class life, spurred by the fact that Fanny is pregnant. Audiences learn that while Tom was in prison, Fanny fell victim to her sister's husband, a gangster named Nick. With help from his wife, Tot, Nick seduced Fanny, got her hooked on cocaine, and put her to work in the brothel that they run. There she earns the sobriquet "Red Light Annie." Fanny makes it clear that it was her need for cocaine that made her so easy to manipulate, a callback to the captured-girl narratives of the opium den dramas. Tom knows none of this, and Fanny is focused on keeping it from him while battling her guilt and addiction. Nick returns and attempts to win Fanny back by tempting her with cocaine. Like Jacqueline in *Madame X*, Fanny kills her oppressor, shooting him with his own gun. She admits her guilt when Tom tries to take the rap for her. The play ends with a hint that Fanny will avoid prison and that Tom, having learned of her past, has forgiven her.

What separates the drama from earlier works is the apparent rehabilitation and redemption of Fanny, validated by her attaining the position of mother-to-be. The portrayal of a fallen woman and drug user as pregnant was unthinkable in prior eras in which such women rarely survived the play, let alone reproduced. Fanny's pregnancy actually seems to enable her reformation. As Nick and Tot tempt her with cocaine she begins to weaken. The stage directions note, "*She*

is having a terrible battle with her will. Her hand reaches out for it [the cocaine] *slowly. Then her eyes fall upon the baby dress*." Her new position as mother gives her the strength to abstain. Fanny declares, "I'm through. There's someone else to think about now. I'm going to *beat* it—that stuff! I'm off'n it! I'm clean, from now on."[67] Houston and Forrest stress that it is not easy for Fanny to keep this promise. In fact, Fanny struggles against the draw of Nick and the narcotic for the rest of the play until she kills him. Whereas Jacqueline could only represent motherhood nonpareil from afar, *Red Light Annie* reverses the narrative: Fanny comes into motherhood having already been an addict and indicates that she is fit for the actual duties of raising a child. Fanny's triumph is that of middle-class self-control and self-invention over the indulgence and self-destruction of addiction.

However, the narrative complicates Fanny's redemption by asserting that she remains an addict, even if she is abstaining from drug use. No silver-bullet cure relieves her of suffering and ensures her rebirth as sober. Nick's offer of cocaine cripples Fanny with the desire to partake. While, in the past, the contention that addiction had no cure meant a death sentence for the addict, *Red Light Annie* proposes the possibility that one can survive within a state of permanent struggle. Considering this, Fanny's return to idealized domesticity with husband and (eventually) child is a kind of performance, enacted within its social context, forever functioning to obscure her addiction. She triumphs over her persecutors but by no means conquers her addiction with any finality, and the struggle will remain, though potentially latent, throughout her motherhood.

This draws attention to Fanny's capacity to shift identities within various social situations, so much so that she takes on a different persona of "Red Light Annie" when under the influence. This dexterity was part of the appeal of the role, and numerous reviewers highlight it. A *New York Tribune* reviewer notes, "Miss Ryan is lovely as she alternates coke with scrambled eggs and moments of pleasure with her husband and her evil genius."[68] A stock production that appeared in New York a year after the Broadway run discusses the many roles that the actor playing Fanny has to enact, claiming that the actress "as a small-town bride, in an ingénue gown of girlish simplicity, was

admirable; as a novitiate poker player, laugh provoking; as a dope-sniffing inmate of a bawdy house, pathetic, as a little homebody dishing up fricassee chicken dinners, perfectly at home, and as a real woman resenting the attack of a lustful libertine, emotionally dramatic."[69] To wit, Fanny tricks Nick in the final scene by performing the playful courtesan that he so desires.

This variability of character represents more than simply an opportunity for virtuosity by the actor. Rather, it relates to Fanny's status as an addict. Acker designates that the reinforcement of the Harrison Act by the 1919 Supreme Court decision created an explicit shift in the behavior of addicts to encompass a nuanced "set of coping strategies for managing" their addictions. Users enacted a process of "identity management," as they were required to "pass as nonusers with family or employers."[70] Fanny's performances of myriad subject positions and the skills required to succeed in each of them manifests this "identity management" in decidedly performative form. Fanny remains an addict while successfully playing the part of the housewife.

Her performances also signal a growing awareness of the way that drug culture was intruding more and more into regular life. In his foundational work on deviancy in the 1960s, sociologist Howard Becker defined "deviant" and dominant cultures as corresponding groups, each with their own related rules. He perceives deviant cultures as actively self-segregating and organizing in much the same way as supposedly normative communities. According to Becker, dominant cultures, subcultures, and countercultures establish their related social worlds through a set of "constructed language, symbols, practices, identities, and social roles consistent with [their] basic values, rules [and] customs."[71] He significantly asserts that "people belong to many groups simultaneously."[72] At the same time, Becker argues that the "conflicts and disagreements" that arise between the dominant groups and those groups considered transgressive carry significant weight as "part of the political process of society."[73] Thus, Fanny's journey between these deviant and dominant worlds represents a growing recognition of the porous borders between deviancy and normalcy that came with the 1920s. As Prohibition and loosening social mores made certain criminal behaviors socially acceptable, dramatists exploited

the growing recognition that people could indeed belong to a variety of Becker's "groups." Viewing the play and witnessing the fluidity of Fanny's identity was part of the "political process of society" that Becker details. Here, the process plumbs the capacities for redemption and forgiveness as well as the definitions of motherhood and respectability. Inevitably, within the conventions of popular drama, determinations of the addict's "success" in negotiating these cultural constructs rely on her ability to elevate herself from criminal and supposedly deviant conditions in order to acquire middle-class standing anchored in family security.

THE BURNOUT

The rare multiplicity of personhood that *Red Light Annie* manifests did not survive into the 1930s. Addicts did not receive such sympathetic or complex treatment going forward. Three significant events stifled any progressive vision of addiction. First, when Prohibition was repealed in 1933 and the Harrison Act remained, it represented a national consensus that drug use was the more deviant and dangerous form of substance abuse. Second, new anti-drug fervor contributed to the formation in 1930 of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, which undertook the enforcement of drug policy in the country, helping to spread Anslinger's severe rhetoric concerning drug addict criminality. And, lastly, the adoption of the Hays Code by the film industry explicitly prohibited the portrayal of drug use or addiction. The addict was not to be part of the medium that quickly came to dominate US entertainment.[74]

In the theatre, representations of drug use and addiction diminished. Those portrayals that did appear typically maintained a connection to the criminal underworld. D. Hubert Connelly's *Crucible* (1933) combines a growing interest in bohemian lifestyles with the well-established gangster narrative. As Chad Heap has shown, post–World War I slummers explored the bohemian tearooms and cabarets of Greenwich Village, where they found artists and radicals who had begun to "explore the creative energies, leftist leanings, and yearning for free love."[75] Connelly capitalizes on this interest, portraying the infiltration of drug addiction into the lives of the well-meaning Tom

Deering and his artist fiancée Rosemary Adair. The action takes place in Rosemary's New York City walk-up, which is strewn with paintings and through which a colorful group of bohemian locals come and go. The tortuous plot ends in over-the-top tragedy. Tom is left unemployed and on the verge of taking up crime that includes drug dealing; Tom's brother kills the kingpin of the dope ring, but his only remittance is that he will die of tuberculosis before he can be executed for murder; and one of the addict characters is heard killing himself offstage.[76]

The addicts in Connelly's work are deranged criminals and murderers. A scene set in a prison features the echoing screams of addicts calling for "a shot" at intervals. An unnamed prisoner wails: "[I]ron bars don't make a cage! Cells and iron bars: Ha, ha, ha! . . . I'll float through your bars to paradise. I'll get my violin out of pawn, and play—I still *can* play—and dream—and dream—and dream. You can't shackle my soul, Warden—you can't—you can't! I'll have my dope—and my violin—and I'll play—and play. Through bars, to Elysium—on dreams—dreams."[77] *Crucible* joins the films of the 1930s such as *Reefer Madness* and *The Pace That Kills* that extend Anslinger's propaganda efforts to create dehumanized images of the drug addict. Such representations show the influence of the work of Lawrence Kolb, the psychiatrist and later assistant surgeon general, who publicized the idea in the 1920s that addicts were innately psychotic.[78] Anslinger vigorously touted Kolb's findings, receiving further ammunition from people like Maurice Seevers, who claimed as late as 1939 that "the potential bank robber finds in the white crystals of 'snow' (cocaine) the temporary, but necessary, courage to complete his drama, even though murder becomes an essential to its success."[79] Hinted at in Tully Marshall's performance of Hannock, the assumption that addicts were criminally insane became the official stance of the US government.

Crucible was subject to the same complaints as *Red Light Annie* a decade earlier. Critics denounced both dramas as old-fashioned and belonging to the "blood-and-thunder" genre of melodrama that should have been played in the extinct "ten, twent', thirt'" houses where opium den dramas were standard fare.[80] Percy Hammond of the *New York Tribune* went so far as to call *Crucible* "as senile and awkward as *Uncle*

Tom's Cabin."[81] In essence, the drama of the criminal drug world had run its course by the 1930s.

The present-day popularity of some of the drug-prohibition films of the 1930s makes it essential to explore their origins and character. Films such as *Reefer Madness* (1936), *Marihuana* (1936), and *Assassin of Youth* (1937) were made without approval by the Hays Office. Therefore, producers like Dwain Esper, who released both *Reefer Madness* and *Assassin of Youth*, were only able to secure limited runs in smaller theatres.[82] Filmmakers made these films with educational aims or as an attempt to exploit the angle of education for the sake of lurid content. These pieces push the conventional warnings of prurience and madness past any believable threshold for the sake of exploitation and titillation. Though these movies have cult status today for their hyperbolic and campy depictions of drug use, they did little in shaping the national perception of drug addiction at the time.[83] They do, however, reflect the dire rhetoric of Anslinger's publicity campaigns, especially in their demonization of marijuana use and the inevitable presence of the stereotypical criminal element wherever drugs appear. Anslinger's lectures on the "killer weed" were largely responsible for widespread belief in the dangers of the drug that helped pass both the 1932 Uniform State Narcotic Drug Act and the 1937 Marihuana Tax Act. These laws enacted full prohibition of the drug that states around the country are legalizing today.

While most theatrical representations introduce the drug users after they are already initiated and struggling with their dependence, these films almost all highlight the "before" of the addict, depicting the young person's first use of a drug and treating audiences to the spectacle of the character's transformation from novice to confirmed dope fiend. The speed at which the fall happens is reminiscent of the nineteenth-century idea of "temporality" in which "it only takes a short amount of time, such as 'an hour,' to undo years of difficult self-management."[84] Temperance dramas often portrayed the drinker's abandonment of self to total vice as momentary, stemming from the first sip. The drug-prohibition films perform the full cycle of the addict's initiation and fall pictorially represented in Nathaniel Currier's lithograph "The Drunkard's Progress" (1846). Zieger refers to this arc

as a "bildungsroman in reverse" in which the promising youth who is on the verge of making a mark in the world shackles himself to a drug and loses "middle-class advantage, good reputation, prospects for further prosperity, romantic attachment and other kinship relations, self-respect, spiritual well-being, health, sanity, and, often, life itself."[85] In reality, portraying the full cycle of the fall provided filmmakers with more opportunity to show degraded acts, intensifying the lurid behavior as the youth further departs from upright beginnings. Though only peripherally significant in their own time, these films served as models for a generation of exploitation films that flourished over the next decades of the twentieth century.

Moving into the 1940s and 1950s, the restrictions of the Production Code made the appearance of addicts and drug users scant in mainstream film. So too in the theatre. The few drug plays that surface in the 1950s typically recycle the themes visited in this chapter that drug use threatens family stability and involves organized crime. These include Michael Gazzo's *A Hatful of Rain* (1955) and Anita Loos's *Chéri* (1959). Greater influence on the perception of narcotics comes from sources such as the Beat writers William Burroughs and Jack Kerouac, who brought bohemian and counterculture cool to drug use. While virulent anti-drug policies and rhetoric continued to flow from official government sources and newspapers, the 1960s saw the first open challenge to the versions of the drug user that had been set down in the 1920s and '30s. The insouciant drug use of hippies for the sake of free love and mind expansion created an atmosphere in which audiences would accept a celebration of narcotics without the dire consequences popularized by the plays examined in this chapter. The musical *Hair* (1967) is the most celebrated theatrical vehicle for this ethos, signaling an attempt to free the drug user from the reflexive assumption of criminality. Another essential example is the Living Theatre's *Paradise Now*. Inspired in part by the ensemble's use of LSD, the ritualistic piece resembles an acid trip in form. Julian Beck, the group's director and spiritual leader, urged that the drug could serve as a "utopian restorative" for the individual psyche and society at large.[86]

Contemporary plays of modern realism that deal with drugs often reproduce the tone of *Cocaine* and *Red Light Annie*. They find drama

in the daily struggle with dependence. Some of these plays also provide the addict with the ability to maintain a multiplicity of behaviors and social positions. Recently, Duncan Macmillan's *People, Places and Things* (2016) echoes some of these earlier works.[87] The play concerns a young actress as she flows in and out of reality while trying to kick the habit. The focus is on the intricacies of her mental and emotional state as she works, recovers, and interacts with a range of people. The play poses not only the option of living with addiction, but the multifaceted lives of the addicts themselves.

While there may be more examples of this kind of exploratory and sympathetic treatment of addiction, there remains an impulse to connect drug addiction to criminality. Film and television industries are still dedicated to dramatizing battles against the shadowy "dope ring" and propagating the idea of a pipeline that moves people from innocent drug experimentation to criminal deprivation. This narrative and its many facets dominate the representational landscape through films and shows such as *The French Connection* (1971), *New Jack City* (1991), *The Basketball Diaries* (1995), *Trainspotting* (1996), *Traffic* (2000), *Training Day* (2001), *The Wire* (2002–2008), *Layer Cake* (2004), *American Gangster* (2007), and *Hightown* (2020). This list is merely a snapshot. This dominance signals the insurmountable rhetoric that obstructs social justice advocates in their attempts to reform the broken system of drug laws. As in the 1920s, perception enacts limitations on addicts seeking redemption, and proposes that cures are only for the deserving. Rarely do performances make room for a multivariance of identity à la Becker's theorizing. There is, rather, a comfort in the absolutist and all-encompassing label of "addict." Contemporary representations also rarely depict drug culture with the complexity that Becker designates. It is far easier to imagine drug users as a bunch of rejects than as a self-segregating community with autonomy and a social system that rivals that of "straight" society.

The potency of this conception of addiction was on display as the Trump administration renewed a hardline stance on drug laws, revoking some of the legislative reforms made during the Obama presidency. Trump's first attorney general, Jeff Sessions, vilified dealers as deserving of the death penalty and created prohibitions against drug

legalization at the state level, one of the primary legislative actions that can help separate addicts from the label of criminals and free them from the severity of the criminal justice system.[88] The Biden administration has made efforts to reorient state and federal drug laws by promoting access to "behavioral health services" for addicts and prioritizing treatment over incarceration.[89] But change has been slow to come, and the stigma of addiction remains deeply entrenched. In a troubling cycle, the hundred-year representational practice that portrays drug use as linked to crime helps to support ideology and policy that correspondingly criminalizes the drug user.

4

THE COMIC DOPE FIEND

Any attempt to make drug use funny is all in the timing. Perhaps one can say this of all comedy, but the moment at which a drug scare becomes fodder for humor is always a delicate matter. While today the comic treatment of marijuana use in films such *Half Baked* (1998), *Too High* (2001), *Pineapple Express* (2008), or *This Is the End* (2013) is common—belonging to a whole genre of "stoner comedies"—there has yet to be a comic portrayal of opioid addiction in 2021. Dave Chappelle's crack-cocaine smoking clown Tyrone Biggums was admissible in 2003 only because the public concern over the crack epidemic had faded. Comedy often works as a pressure valve by enabling laughter at that which seems scary or grave. Yet, the terror that most drug scares produce at their height precludes the possibility of levity. This is not a new phenomenon. There are only a few examples of the comic treatment of drug addiction between 1890 and 1940, and those performances exist within carefully delineated parameters regarding the identity of the addict, the people with whom those comic addicts interact, and the source of the comedy.

Comic drug performances that proved permissible developed in line with the popular performance traditions of the period. At the turn of the century, forms such as vaudeville, variety, and burlesque that played to lower-, working-, and middle-class audiences provided a forum for the comic treatment of a range of social concerns. In particular, social identities that deviated from white, straight, Anglo-Saxon, and Christian appeared on stage to comic effect. Standard comic characterizations were assigned to most immigrants, ethnic and racial minorities, and those deemed sexually aberrant. For instance, mass immigration from Europe around the turn of the twentieth century gave rise to the comic figures of the stage Jew, the stage Irishman, and the "Dutch" (German) act. Other recognizable figures included the "nance" of the burlesque stage that caricatured gay men, played with a lisp and foppish effeminacy. Though the minstrel show with its formal structure was no longer as popular as it had been throughout much of the nineteenth century, the form's stable of racial characterizations such as Jim Crow, Rastus, and Zip Coon still appeared on stage and in print.

This panoply of "outsider" performances, to which the addict became a member, helped delineate normality by portraying behavior deemed abnormal. By creating clear hierarchies regarding ways of talking, dressing, moving, and being, these performances offered commentary on national identity, gender and sexual norms, family structure, healthy living, and a host of other national mores. While these portrayals were prescriptive regarding unacceptable ways of being, part of their entertainment value was that they offered an audience access to a seemingly dangerous, unsavory, or simply unfamiliar figure from the safety of the theatre seats. Audiences could freely gaze upon the "other," while secure that the character was not the "real" item, but a safe facsimile enacted by a performer who was always in control.

The earliest portrayals of comic drug abuse used some of these already established stage characters. These performances relied on the recognition that standard "outsider" characters were expected to display unfavorable behavior. Likely the earliest comic portrayal of drug use in the US was E. E. Price's 1888 play, *One of the Bravest: A Comedy of New York Life*. The play, which toured nationally in theatres aimed at a lower-class clientele, has all the trappings of what became the recognizable opium den drama.[1] The play featured evil Chinese immigrants, a traitor-to-the-race character, a captured girl, and a middle-class hero. However, it takes a decidedly comic approach to opium smoking and the white-slave trade. *One of the Bravest* features two standard stage characters of the time—the heavily brogued Irish maid and the Jim Crow minstrel figure—each taking turns at the opium pipe. With a growing awareness among the US public of the dangers of opium smoking, the use of the stock, comic figures dulls the edge of the drug's threat. The Irish maid and the buffoonish blackface character lack a valued social position from which to fall, and, even more, they lack a valuable "self" that could be mourned in its loss. The maid, named Mrs. Grogan, smokes at the behest of a Chinese opium den manager and narrates her hallucinations: "Oh, I'm flying. Do you see those ducks riding on horseback? [. . .] I'm up in a balloon, I'm climbing up higher, stop the car, stop the car, I've lost my diamond necklace. Is that the Duke of Marlboro? Put those greenbacks on the roof."[2] These hallucinations that feature flight and

the amassing of riches imitate descriptions of laudanum dreams from both De Quincey's famous memoir and, perhaps more directly, the American memoirist Fitz Hugh Ludlow, whose popular *The Hasheesh Eater* (1857) follows De Quincey's model. The application of these literary motifs becomes a reoccurring comic trope in the period where a low-class character's poverty humorously contrasts their drug-fueled hallucinations of riches. Self-aggrandizement is quintessential of comic drug performances to this day. Though *One of the Bravest* may have served as a prototype for den dramas, these comic bits became standard elsewhere. Playwrights quickly excised the comic from the genre, preferring a dramaturgy that focused on the condemnation of drug use and miscegenation that better matched the reform rhetoric of the period.

Though a growing concern over opium smoking in the 1890s may have dissuaded imitations of *One of the Bravest* and its comic drug users, a comic dope fiend that appeared in 1900 did have staying power. That year, performer Junie McCree debuted a character on the vaudeville stages of New York City that went on to make him famous and inspire a host of imitators.[3] Rather than using an established stage character within a drug context, McCree developed a new characterization *defined* by his status as an addict. In a short playlet written by McCree entitled *The Dope Fiend; or, Sappho in Chinatown*, the actor took to the stage to perform a comic version of an opium-smoking addict from the West of the United States. McCree's addict was recognizable for his slumped posture, his wisecracks and chicanery, and a broad assortment of inventive slang that was intended as a sign of the character's frontier roots. Undermining expectations regarding addicts as vicious or subhuman, this vaudeville dope fiend was charming in his insouciance and playfully eccentric in behavior. Joining so many portrayals examined in this study, McCree's helped provide a stable image of a troubling outsider that—unlike those identities formulated around race, ethnicity, or disability—typically lacked clear markers of their difference. McCree's interpretation was distinct from the already established stage drunk or tramp clown; he was not sloppy or bedraggled, but more the figure of a slow-moving but cunning saloon poet.[4] While McCree substantiated the degenerative effects of the widely

available opium product, his impersonation hinted that particular addicts—those who were white, male, and native—were still human and therefore deserving of sympathy.

Dissecting the anatomy of McCree's characterization, including its sources and cultural impact, unveils the complex way that his performance commented not only on the national drug problem and the condition of addiction, but also on norms of gender and national identity. This commentary was intimately related to the expanding of the nation westward and the growing diversity of the nation's citizenry that upended any attempts at codifying a localized American identity. Like many of the other "outsider" characters of the variety stage, it is in this "unassumingly subversive" capacity that McCree fulfills Rick DesRochers's assertion that the Progressive Era gave birth to a "New Humor" that "disrupt[ed] the propriety of what constituted an American."[5]

Though audiences of variety entertainment between 1900 and 1920 would recognize the characterization immediately, modern scholarship has almost entirely ignored the comic dope fiend. This may be due to the simple fact that a comic version of a drug addict appearing during the reform-driven Progressive Era seems so unlikely (a kind of historian's pipe dream!). McCree's skit survives only in part. I have acquired a copy of the first scene of the playlet, which McCree registered for copyright with the Library of Congress in August 1900. For further clarification, I have identified substantial periodical evidence that reveals the entire plot of the piece, McCree's style of performance, and the reception of his act. I have also located published essays and poems by McCree about drug addicts, which compellingly show that the vaudeville performer was considered an expert on addiction. Together, these sources provide clarifying details of McCree's characterization and the source of the comedy.

UNMANNING THE MORPHODITE

Junie McCree was the stage name of Gonzalvo Macrillo, born in Toledo in 1866 of Italian and German parentage. Historians of vaudeville and burlesque primarily recognize McCree as one of the most sought-after skit writers and lyricists in variety entertainment as well as one of

the early presidents of vaudeville's first performers' union, the White Rats.[6] McCree began his stage career as a member of the Bella Union Stock Company in San Francisco, where he took part in typical burlesque fare and stock plays, as well as blackface routines. The choice to change his name from the ethnically conspicuous "Macrillo" to an ambiguously Irish-sounding "McCree" may have been a way to place himself among the many Irish performers who performed in blackface.[7] After a tour brought him East, McCree debuted his dope-fiend act in a city where audiences perceived the character as novel.

The Dope Fiend; or, Sappho in Chinatown is a short, three-scene playlet that burlesques the popular stage play *Sapho*, which opened on Broadway in 1900 to great controversy. *Sapho* was an adaptation by Clyde Fitch of the French novel and play by Alphonse Daudet. The US production starred the English actress Olga Nethersole, who was famous for her feminist politics, her revealing costumes, and the heightened sexuality that she brought to her performances. In Fitch's adaptation Nethersole played Fannie LeGrand, a loose woman who lures and then discards her male lovers. The play hinges on LeGrand's choice to stay with one such lover who returns from prison and offers to support both her and their illegitimate child. In doing so, she rejects her true love and denies herself happiness for the sake of her son, thereby attesting to her maternal selflessness. The controversy over the drama was more connected to Nethersole's staging than to the plot. Famously LeGrand and her lover ascended a long set of stairs to a bedroom; the raising and lowering of the curtain signaled the time that passed during their coitus. Almost immediately after its opening, the police shut down Nethersole's production and arrested the actress, her costar, and the show's producers on charges of indecency. The court found Nethersole innocent after a captivating trial and media circus. Thanks to the scandal, she went on to perform *Sapho* to capacity crowds.[8]

Sappho in Chinatown cleverly plays upon Nethersole's version by undermining any maternal or romantic heroism on the part of the LeGrand character. In McCree's skit Ruby Belle is a fast city woman, described by one reviewer as an "adventuress," who lives the high life by scamming money from her many lovers.[9] A former paramour,

Ludwig von Katzenfeldt, returns from prison (where Ruby sent him in the first place) to claim her.[10] Ruby declares that she is married and promises to produce her husband, sending Molly, her maid, to find a man to play the spouse. Molly returns with a slightly bewildered opium addict named Bill, played by McCree, and through quick thinking, comical subterfuge, and wild slang, Bill is able to convince Katzenfeldt that he is indeed Ruby's new husband. He "eventually brings peace from chaos," and sends the suitor off.[11] Once successful, Bill announces his plan of spending the money Ruby has given him to "get fifty dollars worth of room rent, and fifty dollars worth of dope and have a jubilee."[12] As an exit line, Bill exhibits underworld sagacity, advising Ruby, "sister—when you mix up with a guy like that, cop his pocketbook, but don't monkey with his heart."[13]

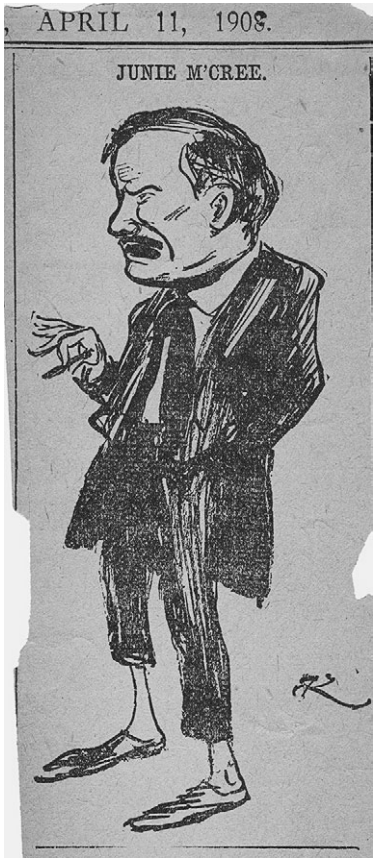
McCree's skit has none of the trappings of the opium den drama, as it lacks a Chinese villain, captured woman, or middle-class hero. It was unconcerned with the "white slave panic" or the threat of miscegenation. McCree's wily clown may have been scruffy, but he had nothing of the dangerous criminal about him. Rather, Bill functions as a reimagined Harlequin in a traditional comic structure. He is the clever servant who solves the conflict for the sake of his mistress. In a playful inversion of a classic plot, he undermines the blocking figure (here, Katzenfeldt) not to bring two *innamorati* together as in classic *commedia degli Zanni* tradition, but to ensure that Ruby can continue her life of corruption and extortion. In its original intention as a burlesque of Nethersole, the depiction of the Fanny LeGrand character as a low-class hustler in cahoots with a drug addict served to deflate Nethersole's celebrated status. The original *Sapho* was an articulation and promotion of feminist beliefs regarding the repression of women's sexuality. LeGrand had no choice but to sacrifice her liberty for the sake of societal expectations regarding her position as woman and mother. But McCree's version lampoons this feminist liberation by turning the LeGrand figure from a politically savvy and "emancipated" woman into nothing more than an oversexed schemer.

Prior to 1900, there are only two examples I can find in which a white male addict takes center stage: the little-known play *John-a-Dreams* by Haddon Chambers, which had a short-lived Broadway run

in 1895, and the more popular *Sherlock Holmes*, which premiered in 1899 and made William Gillette a household name in the title role. Neither of these plays feature addicts of opium smoking. Rather, they focus on aristocratic Englishmen of genius who abuse medically sanctioned narcotics for the purposes of intellectual and spiritual exploration—which is the focus of this study's final chapter. These portrayals do overlap with McCree in expressing addiction as "the atrophying of Victorian masculinity," demonstrating this theme as axiomatic in narratives of drug use when it comes to male users.[14] However, that is the extent of the similarities.

McCree presented a wholly new character and narrative in *The Dope Fiend*. His addict was an American-made figure, with no resemblance to Holmes and his genius. Various renderings of McCree in costume, with fedora, three-quarter-length coat, and Western-style neckerchief, connect him to the frontier and its underworld of saloons and gambling houses (figures 5 and 6). Fittingly, Bill mentions that his former occupation was as a casino card dealer in Arizona. Sketches and images of McCree indicate that he played the character with his shoulders hunched and neck jutting out at an angle. Matching this loose physicality, McCree appears to speak out of the side of a crooked mouth, though the length of his lines in the playlet's dialogue and the importance of wordplay to his act signal that he must have been quick tongued. A seeming precursor to the cliché of the black-clad Beat poet (heady and spastic), McCree's Bill had none of the aristocrat about him. Also unlike Chambers and Gillette, McCree made delving into the low and the revelation of the underworld of drug culture a central draw in his performance.

As this signals, McCree provided a slumming experience like those highlighted by Heap and Westgate that provided a combination of "titillation and transgression" through "contravention of traditional boundaries of taste, propriety and morality."[15] McCree followed the recognizable racial and ethnic stage characters of the period in portraying abnormality in service to the glorification of Anglo-American identity and culture. And yet, following DesRochers's formulation of variety comedy at the time, McCree "intentionally unsettled Anglo-American middle-class values," by providing his audience a way to



(left) FIGURE 5. Junie McCree in character. Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.
(right) FIGURE 6. Junie McCree in character. Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

celebrate resistance to the strictures of respectability.[16] Audiences could define themselves both oppositionally and analogously to his character as McCree simultaneously demonstrated the need for "clean" living and restraint, while allowing audiences to revel in the rejection of those very principles. He did so by appearing as corrupted, yet harmless; as freakish, yet familiar; and as male, yet unmanly.

To this last point, it is noteworthy that McCree's addict is not a potential suitor to the woman he serves. As he is a comic stand-in for

Ruby's husband, one can imagine a scenario in which she falls for the drifter, closing the sketch with strange but true love that promises to reform both sinners. Traditional *commedia* form might have McCree's clown coupling with Molly, the saucy maid. But Bill's inadmissibility as a love interest is significant in a number of ways. McCree recounts, in various interviews and in articles he wrote about opium smokers, that dope fiends are generally disinterested in women. In a 1907 essay, McCree relates a story from his time in Tacoma, Washington, about a drug addict called "Shorty" Wilson. When an attractive woman walks by, a friend remarks,

> "Shorty, [. . .] if I had the coin there's a girl that could cop me out all right, all right." "Bill," answered Shorty in his lackadaisical laconis [*sic*], "if I had the coin she couldn't cop me out—not if I was a lame man." [. . .] [T]his illustrated how little a dope fiend cares for the things that normal men admire.[17]

In McCree's estimation, the dope fiend is not a voluptuary, as the phallic pipe has robbed him of his potency.

In a similar article in *Variety*, McCree sums up the opium addict as a man devoid of normative desires: "The 'dope' fiend is a passive creature to whom nothing in life outside of getting opium is of much consequence. He is as blasé and indifferent as the most pampered man of the world who has been satiated with every luxury [. . .] He is calloused to everything."[18] McCree's commentary falls in line with other representations of the addict as impotent, effeminate, or having a queered sexuality. McCree may not have been aware of specific precursors, but the absence of carnality from his characterization is in keeping with De Quincey and Ludlow.

Other literary precursors are even more explicit in their portrayals of drug addiction's withering effect on male sexual drive. Théophile Gautier's account of his experiments with hashish, "Le Club des Hashischins" (1846), plainly states that, under the influence, Romeo would forget about his Juliet, as "the prettiest girl in Verona, to a hashisheen, is not worth the bother of stirring."[19] Similarly, Charles Baudelaire in "The Poem of Hashish," which was translated into English in 1895, concludes with the warning that the solitary pleasure-seeking of the

addict inspires a kind of onanistic "admiration of himself" that hurtles him toward the same fate as Narcissus.[20] McCree expresses this morbid self-gratification in materialist terms as the "indifference" to "every luxury that money can buy" save "the procuring of opium." In part, this unnatural preoccupation makes Bill harmless, diminishing anxieties regarding the dangers the dope fiend posed. His status as a gelding ensures that there is no transference of the Chinese immigrant's supposed lechery that made him so dangerous to white women. It also made McCree's character the perfect foil for Ruby Belle as she stands in for the sexually liberated Fanny LeGrand/Olga Nethersole. McCree manufactured a scenario in which the emasculating woman, whose sexual appetites troubled standards of Victorian decency and whom audiences celebrated when embodied by Nethersole, is snubbed and thereby disempowered by the lowliest of male creatures, whose particular vice frees him from her control.

The dope fiend's eroded masculinity is explicit in the humor of the skit. In the opening scene, when Ruby orders Molly to find someone to play her husband, Molly asks, "What kind of man do you want? A tall man, a short man, a fat man or a skinny man?" Ruby responds, "Anything, so long as he is a man." This carries over to Molly's first interaction with Bill on the streets of Chinatown.

MOLLY: Are you a man?
BILL: I've often been accused of being one.
MOLLY: Are you sure you're a man?[21]

Bill introduces himself to the audience just before this moment, regaling them with a highly dubious story about beating up Tom Sharkey, the famous prizefighter. The comedy is in the fact that Bill's appearance and demeanor portray the opposite of robust manhood. McCree's representation of degraded—specifically white—masculinity was especially poignant during the Progressive Era as, according to John F. Kasson, there was a "widespread sense of gender malaise," in which "manhood seemed no longer a stable condition—absolute and unproblematic—but rather an arduous, even precarious achievement that had to be vigilantly defended."[22] This was part and parcel of the racial and national decay against which Nordau and Hamilton Wright

warned and appears as a tragic aspect of drug use in so many other portrayals.

Considering the inextricable coupling of gender and sexuality, there is a need to confront the ontological link between perceptions of the addict and the homosexual at the time. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that in nineteenth-century literature, "drug addiction is both a camouflage and an expression for the dynamics of same-sex desire and its prohibition."[23] Under the category of "decadence," both addiction and same-sex libidinousness appeared to be compulsive behaviors that were simultaneously the result of moral failings (vice) and of pathology (disease). Both were deviant conditions stemming from uncontrolled desire for unnatural gratifications. The most direct example of the conflation of queer sexuality and addiction is likely Noël Coward's 1924 play *The Vortex*, in which the main character's cocaine addiction is a thinly veiled metaphor for his same-sex desire.[24] Within the late-Victorian imagination, the substitution of "natural" erotic and reproductive desire with addiction to opium potentially personifies what Michel Foucault deems an interior gender "inversion" of the masculine and the feminine. The penetration of the male body by the narcotic through the phallic pipe—wielded by the requisite male Chinese den proprietor—easily reifies this inversion.

However, in the case of McCree, I am more inclined to heed Zieger's clarification that failed heterosexuality does not "by virtue" equal homosexuality in turn-of-the-century representational practice.[25] There is little in *The Dope Fiend* or McCree's commentary on his work to prompt one to interpret his character's redirected physical cravings euphemistically. His enslavement left him indifferent to flesh, regardless of gender. (As vaudeville managers were interested in creating more family-friendly entertainment, the absence of the licentious would have helped McCree make the bill.) Sedgwick makes room for this clarification in the extension of her investigation to argue that the camouflage of the nineteenth-century literary canon shifts to a twentieth-century paradigm that categorizes issues of will as corresponding to desires that are either "natural," and therefore defined as "needs," or "artificial," and labeled collectively as "addictions." Appearing in 1900, McCree may be an early incarnation of this shifting

paradigm in which the entanglement of the substance abuser in the hetero–homo binary gives way to a "new opposition" between the natural and the artificial. It is a paradigm that problematizes "almost every issue of will."[26] The pathologizing of failures of will is a symptom of its importance at the turn of the twentieth century, especially in the formation of masculinity. Examples that evince the ontological importance of will to gender identity are many. Consider E. P. Roe's focus on his character's loss of will *as* the loss of manhood, or the celebration of the power of will that transformed Theodore Roosevelt from an asthmatic whelp into the brawny definition of "man." As Kasson has argued, the invention of new modalities of American masculinity venerated man's physical, mental, and psychological powers of will. Potentially appearing on the same vaudeville stages, the massive brawn and graceful refinement of the famous bodybuilder Eugen Sandow stood in stark opposition to McCree's sloped spine and debased self-indulgence.[27] In such a lineup, and before an audience of laborers and their families, McCree's addict represented the antithesis of the self-made/self-willed man.

Under the rubric of this collective label of addiction, McCree's character is also pointedly antonymous to middle-class, "American" values. His rejection of normative desire was a rejection of dominant ideologies of class mobility, reproductive sexuality, and gender conformity. Bill's indifference exhibits a sexual identity that leaves him out of the national project that made family a compulsory aspect of national life. McCree establishes a benign version of a dangerous figure by neutering him, but he also creates an addict that is incompatible with familial—and therein national—health. Audience members could affirm their own normative positions by recognizing McCree's deficiency.

Bill's characterization balanced this antagonistic positioning with his enjoyment of moral, social, and economic destitution. His ability to turn impoverishment into humor through a insouciance made Bill an entertainingly enviable figure. His contentment in his humble status resembled that which made the tramp comedians of vaudeville so popular. They both seemed untouched by the pressures to conform or progress. In part, McCree performs a comic version of the "legerdemain" enacted in vampire narratives that turns the protagonist's

loss of individuality and autonomy "into a pleasurable seduction."[28] Finding pleasure in the loss of control was not only dangerously seditious, considering the glorification of Victorian restraint, but was in strict dramaturgical opposition to the narratives of the popular temperance plays that depicted the loss of willpower by the drunk as the greatest of horrors. Whereas the shaking and temporary insanity embodied by actor William H. Smith in *The Drunkard* was meant to dissuade audiences from drink and often impelled them to sign the temperance pledge before leaving the theatre, McCree's comic portrayal of addiction provided a fantasy for audiences. He offered a way of fulfilling what Zieger refers to as the "unusual desire to be freed of the normative obligations of freedom."[29] At a time when aspirations of class ascension, self-improvement, and moderation weighed heavily upon the country's citizenry, McCree's character was happily submissive to a simple, singular dependence. McCree's performance playfully intimated that to be a willing slave to a narcotic was a way to an unfettered existence. The pleasure taken in the character's self-indulgence is axiomatic of comic drug characters from 1900 till today. Their ease of existence remains an enviable freedom, exemplified by portrayals from Cheech and Chong to *The Big Lebowski*'s Dude.

SLANG FROM THE OTHER SIDE

The definitive motif of McCree's performance, and an element that profoundly influenced future dope-fiend performances, is the slang his character used. By 1908, seven years after its premiere, commentators referred to McCree's act as a "slang classic" and acknowledged McCree as the "creator of 'dope' slang."[30] Even after McCree stopped performing the character and focused solely on writing for the stage, reviewers continued to celebrate him as a "comedian-philologist" and refer to the inventive use of slang by other performers as "Junie-esque quips."[31] McCree asserts in a *Variety* article that "most of the 'dope' fiends are clever at repartee," and he offers a number of examples he claims to have overheard in the West, such as a man at a bar requesting "three soft-boiled eggs, and one of them must be good," or declaring, in response to the high price of drinks, "Give us another round and make it grand larceny."[32] This kind of aggressive verbal wit was central to the

vaudeville aesthetic in the United States. Ethnic acts such as Weber and Fields's "Dutch" act or Julian Rose's stage Jew monologues especially traded in wordplay and malapropisms.[33] However, where the stage Jew and other ethnic acts played upon the immigrant's struggle to master American English, McCree's Bill made English strange to those who already spoke it.

In the skit, Bill has a number of fanciful turns of phrase. In his first appearance, he explains his financial situation as "I'm flying lighter than a cork, if you'd cut my suspenders, I'd go up like a balloon. I hain't [*sic*] actually handled enough dough in the last three weeks to buy a canary bird his breakfast."[34] After Molly's initial request that he help her, Bill demands more information, saying, "[P]ut me wise, put me wise. Hand this to me straight, turn on your calciums and let me see this thing."[35] "Calciums" refers the calcium light (or limelight) that theatres used throughout much of the nineteenth century, and manifests Bill's desire for illumination through language. When Ruby asks him if he'd like a smoke, Bill assumes she means opium and describes the needed paraphernalia as "a clarinet and a lamp without a chimney."[36] Similarly, he refers to Ruby's home as a "land office" and a "slab." Regarding the latter, the terms "slab-hut" or "slab-cottage" were in use by the 1890s to describe a cheaply made home of coarse board, but the truncated version may be a McCree original.[37] The joke is that Ruby is living quite luxuriously on the money she has stolen from Katzenfeldt. McCree was most certainly the originator or chief disseminator of a number of other cant terms. Laurence Senelick identifies the expression "coffin nails" for cigarettes as one of many that lexicographers have yet to recognize as coming from the performer.[38]

To his original audience, the slang that McCree spoke was a primary signifier of his character's Western origins. The sources that McCree lists for his wordplay all had associations with the frontier: the faro table of gambling houses, the racetrack, the tramp, and the gangsters and "yeggmen" of the criminal underworld.[39] In this, McCree's vaudeville performances created what Sabine Haenni calls "structures of experience" that offered his audience "fantasies of embodiment and agency."[40] Experiencing McCree's act was a way for his Eastern audience to experience the West, which was notorious for its prurience

and danger. San Francisco, as the primary example, produced enough scandal in the last decade of the nineteenth century—just as McCree began his dope fiend act in New York—that Curt Gentry dubbed the period "San Francisco's naughty nineties."[41] The area known as the Barbary Coast was notorious for its bawdy entertainments, the roughness of its honky-tonks, and the licentious activity that occurred in the open. Prostitution was so widespread and institutionalized that one could purchase a number of competing so-called gentleman's guides to the city that included the information on brothels where some of the madams, such as Ah Toy and Selina, gained national notoriety. Writing in 1933, Herbert Asbury described the Barbary Coast as "the scene of more viciousness and depravity, but which at the same time possessed more glamour, than any other area of vice and iniquity on the American continent."[42]

Bolstering this perception was the belief that the West was the origination point of the nation's opium-smoking problem. San Francisco was home to the oldest and largest Chinatown in the United States, and, even after passing the nation's first anti-opium smoking law in 1875, the city's Board of Supervisors reported in 1885 that there were twenty-six dens in operation, providing 320 bunks open to the public, most of them located in Duncombe Alley of Chinatown.[43] Denver too had a famed "hop alley" where dens were located, and, in fact, McCree performed a later iteration of his act under the title *The Man from Denver*, stressing the character's Western origins. The West took on the semblance of the opium smoker's natural habitat, much as it had for the Chinese immigrant, and McCree's early career there added to the impression that his performances were authentic. As a result, audience members who could follow McCree's slang and laugh at his references were privy to a special body of knowledge, one typically reserved for those who ventured westward.

Contributing to this experiential awareness of the nation's ever-expanding regional identities, McCree often explains that the opium smoker was an individual who had failed in his efforts to conquer the frontier. In essays, he describes the average addict as the "disappointed prospector [who] got rid of his money and then went in for the pleasure pipe."[44] Elsewhere, he remarks that

> in the West one sees many victims. The freedom of a new country is partly accountable for the vices of opium smoking, drinking and gambling [. . .]. [M]en go West to endure hardships for the sake of acquiring fortunes. But their patience gives out if fortune doesn't smile upon them immediately. Then they turn to the faro bank or roulette and to drown their sorrow at their losses take to drink; then to the drug.[45]

There was significant concern over the fall of those who sought their fortunes out West and the influence of the "freedom" that McCree mentions. The frontier was supposedly the source of the nation's manhood, where boys transformed themselves into men and where those who emigrated from Europe could metamorphose into red-blooded Americans by battling the rugged terrain. Many ascribed to the belief stated by historian Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893 that "the frontier promoted the formation of a composite nationality for the American people."[46] This "composite nationality" was a romanticized homogenization of identities that maintained Anglo-American dominance in the national makeup. Whereas urban enclaves of immigrants allowed homeland traditions to survive, the frontier could wipe out those histories through toil and attainment of "self-made" status—thus proving the immigrant's deservedness of the label "American." This was a standard Progressive Era privileging of "melting pot" or assimilationist ideology. But McCree calls attention to a paradox in this theoretical American-making process. The perception of the West as the forge of naturalized citizens stood at odds with the belief that frontier cities were modern Sodoms and Gomorrahs in which those well-meaning speculators came under the influence of unnameable vice. McCree's Bill represented the unfortunate refuse of this process. In his failure to find success out West, he becomes infected by the wickedness of places such as San Francisco and Denver. In the case of McCree, the fulfillment of Haenni's "fantasies of embodiment" corresponds to Mark Winokur's vision of the humor in American vaudeville as "a response to an essentially hostile, alien and alienating landscape. It is a fantasy inclusion of the self, into a landscape that rejects it."[47]

According to McCree, these fallen men were responsible for the

"wave of slang that is washing away pure English all over the country."[48] The use of slang became a marker of Western contamination, while the East could celebrate its refinement and civility through the differences in its vernacular. McCree's performance helped cultivate this demarcation and perpetuation of regional identities. Audience members could enjoy McCree's slang while affirming their superior position as natives of the fully developed areas of the country where they maintained a "pure" English and an unsullied mind. McCree's performance of the linguistic difference seems to challenge the "unified fields of exchange and communication" and "fixity to language" that Benedict Anderson asserts as a prerequisite for the formation of nationalism and "nation-ness."[49] With the notion of a unified nation already struggling under the weight of the country's growing diversity, McCree added a new, seemingly unassimilable figure whose language highlighted the vast gap between East and West, between Victorian rectitude and frontier survival, and between those who lived clean and those who were secretly initiated.

THE DOPE FIEND'S DESCENDANTS

McCree moved away from performing the dope fiend around 1907 to focus on writing, and by 1910 other actors were playing Bill on variety stages.[50] A number of performers created their own versions of the comic dope fiend, building off of McCree's original. Charles Nichols did a "Western style" dope act with a character called "Dopey Dan from Cheyenne"; Tom Barrett, who, as one reviewer notes, "looks like June [*sic*] McCree," had a dope-fiend song called "Opium Tree"; comedy team Ashley and Lee had a bit called "Chinatown" that featured a dope fiend using "bright, snappy talk"; and Cassidy and Logan did an act that portrayed the "hop dream of the dope fiend."[51] At some point, it became standard to use a green spotlight for single acts doing a dope fiend character, and Charles Nichols, Joe Tenner, and Tom Barrett featured this in their acts. The unnatural color matched the disconnected dream state that the opium smokers supposedly experienced when intoxicated.

The most successful imitator of McCree is unquestionably Lew Kelly, who became more famous playing his character "Professor

Dope" or "Doctor Dope" than McCree ever did as Bill. Gaining attention around 1911, Kelly played the character on burlesque stages into the 1920s, eventually starring in his own variety show, which he often closed with the burletta "The Dream Man."[52] By 1918, *The Billboard* reported on the "mammoth salary" that Kelly was making, and by 1920 the *Hartford Courant* called him "so well known that it seems foolish to even attempt to introduce his line to the readers."[53] Kelly played his dope fiend character in a costume almost identical to McCree's, with a Western-style fedora or cowboy hat and a neckerchief (figure 7), and his performance included a similar kind of wild verbal play. However, Kelly seems to have distanced his characterization from the rough-and-tumble roots of McCree's card dealer. Discussing the ways to catch a "Hump Back Herring," and moaning about eating "skinless bananas," Kelly's language is described by reviewers as "ludicrous" and "delightful," rather than reminiscent of the Barbary Coast.[54] Though Kelly claims to have invented his characterization, an obituary notice for McCree in *The Billboard* asserts that he wrote Kelly's earliest material as an elaboration of the original "Sappho" sketch.[55] A bit that Kelly used, called "The Most Contented Man on Earth," may have been from McCree, as the title alone sounds like McCree's conception of the addict as "blasé and indifferent" and "calloused to everything."[56] Kelly's success in the character came despite the national prohibition of opium smoking in 1909. His Professor Dope took on a more general identity of a drug user, rather than specifically an opium smoker. At the same time, with fewer addicts in the streets and the dens closed, audiences could enjoy the character as old fashioned, rather than presently menacing.

McCree's performance (and those of his imitators) gave external form to the internal disorder of addiction. Signified by a particular costume, physicality, language, and delivery, addiction took on a performativity, called into being in its presentation. Uniquely, McCree's characterization stood far apart from the horrifying images of opium smokers that audience members found in almost every other representation of the drug user. His humanized and approachable parody of the addict gave cultural cachet to the demonized figure, turning the signifiers of his ill repute into charming idiosyncrasies. His onstage

FIGURE 7. Lew Kelly in costume. Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

presence dulled the edge of the rhetoric promoted by Wright or the *National Police Gazette* that dominated the conversation over opium smoking and drug addiction.[57] As popular entertainment so often does, McCree allowed audiences to take pleasure from that which polite society deemed unacceptable. Even in his portrayal of addiction's depravation of white masculinity, he maintained a nonthreatening and even enviable glee. And yet, the reception of the addict's encoded physicality by popular audiences as comic depended on particularities of gender, race, and ethnicity. The empathetic response McCree generated only applied to addicts who were white, male, and native; it did not extend to female, foreign, Black, or brown bodies. Looking at the contemporary entertainment landscape raises concerns that advancements have been few.

With the demise of variety entertainments in the 1920s, the comic dope fiend lost his natural performance environment. Elements of McCree's characterization, especially his slang, continued to intrigue audiences of the Jazz Age and beyond. Many of McCree's original phrases appear in the "jive" dictionaries of the later decades that educated the uninitiated on the language of the hip. There were other attempts to feature the addict in a comic frame, but with the official vilification of the addict that came with the Harrison Act, these were few and far between. Notably, Charlie Chaplin involves drugs in two of his films, *Easy Street* (1917) and *Modern Times* (1936). In the former, he sits on a needle, and in the latter, he accidentally uses a saltshaker filled with contraband cocaine to season his food. Key to the comedy is the Tramp's *inadvertent* use of narcotics. The effects of the drugs on the Tramp are to supercharge his small frame, allowing him to clear out a barroom of toughs and stop a prison riot. The bits promote the idea that only through chemical enhancement can one face the brutal urban world. However, these comic treatments were scarce, a circumstance prolonged by the gangster dramas of the 1920s and the intensified anti-drug propaganda of the 1930s and 1940s.

The gleeful bohemianism of the hippie movement spurred new drug humor in the 1960s, and performers such as Cheech and Chong were able to make comic drug use palatable again. The contemporaneous psychedelic movement that promoted the use of narcotics

like LSD for mind expansion spawned the "freakout" escapades of Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters, the anarchism of the Digger's "Invisible Circus," Frank Zappa's absurdist rock and roll, and the grotesquery of Fritz the Cat and the clown Jango Edwards.[58] Many of these, grounded in 1960s counterculture, deliver humor for the sake of political and social critique, portraying drug use as revolutionary and freeing. There are similarities to McCree in the approach of these later comics, who found fun in portraying the twisted reality of the drug user. They envision drug use as an anodyne experience of "the other side," enacting travel either geographical, psychic, or spiritual. Inevitably, the discounted stoner expresses some profound insight, or there is a playful hinting that their altered consciousness gets them closer to reality rather than further from it. Within a comic frame, hallucinations and good vibes provide access to truths. Comic portrayals of drug users inevitably hint at the seditious idea that a significant population of people in the world use drugs without any of the devastating side effects that most narratives insist are an inevitable outcome. Comic addicts insist that not just individuals but entire cultures exist around drug use, occupied perhaps by eccentrics, but human beings nonetheless. As with McCree's encouragement of sympathy in the face of addiction, comic portrayals today may in fact be one of the most effective tools for quelling public outrage and fear. And yet, any of these comic portrayals of drug use defuses the larger concerns regarding the effects of addictive substances on the body and the body politic by framing the representations within very specific contexts. This persistent and telling need for careful parameters occurs whenever deviancy becomes funny.

5

JIVE

Cartoonist Elmer Simms Campbell's 1932 illustrated "Night-Club Map of Harlem" gives visitors the inside scoop on where to go for music, food, and a range of leisure activities around the historically Black neighborhood.[1] The map depicts Harlem as an uncontrolled bacchanal, with every inch of the area glutted with tantalizing activity (figure 8). Far from scale, Campbell (who was African American) designed the map to entertain those whites across the country who, in the 1920s and '30s, envisioned Harlem as a "pornographic playground."[2] Driven by prohibition, these middle- and upper-class whites journeyed into Black neighborhoods in search of bootleg liquor, "hot" jazz, and adventure. Not only New York City, but Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and San Francisco hosted areas with Black cabaret entertainments dedicated to serving white audiences. These nightly migrations were part of a desire by whites to view if not indulge in what Heap calls "the primitive, libidinous atmosphere that they had come to associate with Black urban life."[3] These slumming visits and the general obsession with Black nightlife were parts of a trend that Heap and others have referred to as the "Negro Vogue."[4]

Along with the nightclubs and restaurants that were essential parts of this slumming experience, Campbell's map also gives precedence to the figure of the "Reefer Man." Bent and trench-coated, he stands on Lenox Avenue between 131st and 133rd streets selling "Marijuana Cigarettes, 2 for $.25." Seemingly in plain sight, Campbell's Reefer Man is stationed at the center of a circle of nightclubs that includes Connie's Inn, the Savoy Ballroom, and the Cotton Club. This proximity creates an imagined zone of availability where numerous vices and pleasures converged in one high-density area. As the map signals, the availability of drugs was part and parcel of the Negro Vogue experience. Drugs were available on the streets, within the cabarets, and in small, informal speakeasies called "buffet flats" that often existed within residential spaces. A buffet flat might be set up as an opium den or specifically for the purpose of hosting cocaine parties. Joining Campbell's map in propagating the belief that drug use was a natural part of a trip uptown were numerous literary works, such as Carl Van

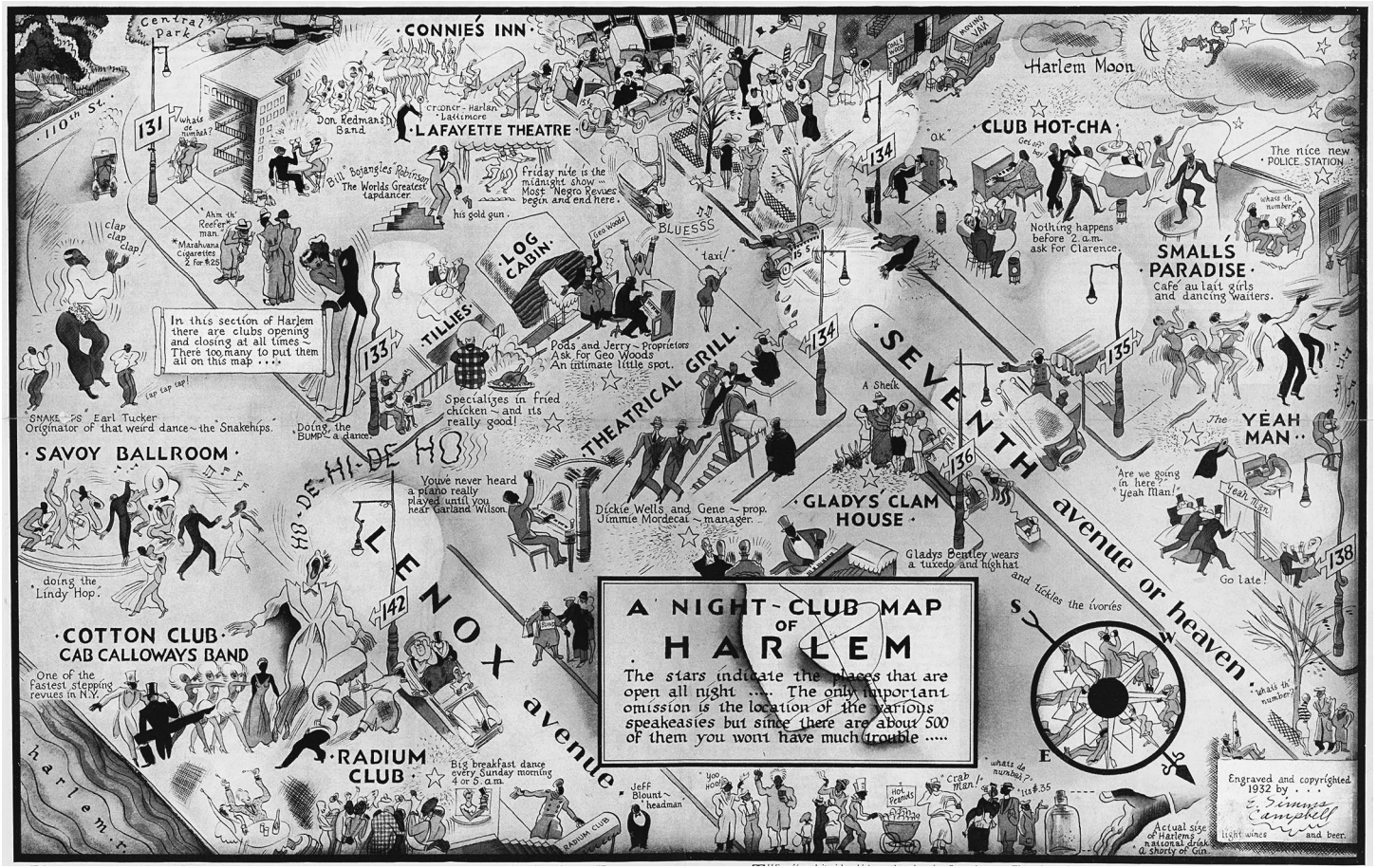


FIGURE 8. Elmer Simms Campbell's "Night-Club Map of Harlem," New York: Dell Publishing, 1932. Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

Vechten's widely read and controversial novel *Nigger Heaven* (1926).[5] Describing an after-hours locale called "Black Mass," one of Vechten's characters celebrates that it is "a garden where champagne flows from all the fountains and the paths are made of happy dust [cocaine] and the perfume of the poppies is opium."[6] Vechten was hyperbolizing for the sake of provocation, but Harlem was a key location for the procuring of narcotics in the 1920s and '30s. Courtwright's collection of interviews with drug users from the period, titled *Addicts Who Survived*, contains many references by its interviewees to their excursions to the area for scores.[7]

Thus, the Negro Vogue involved the suturing together of Black culture, jazz culture, and drug culture in the public's mind. There was a synonymousness in which the experience of one meant exposure to all three. The result was a fusion or imbrication of these three cultures into a cultural, behavioral, and stylistic category that I refer to as "jive." In the 1948 supplement to his influential study *The American Language*, H. L. Mencken defined the term "jive" as "an amalgam of Negro-slang from Harlem and the argots of drug addicts and the pettier sort of criminals."[8] Here, I use the term without Mencken's pejorative connotation, but embrace its expansiveness. Fittingly, in the 1930s, you could talk, play, and smoke jive.[9] Jive inevitably signaled Blackness, but the term became a rubric for the interrelated world of African American urban life, jazz culture, and the culture of drug users. It refers to the practices, language, and style that existed (or were assumed to exist) at the point of intersection between these three. Of course, none of these—Black, jazz, or drug cultures—are monolithic. Rather, they are broad, multifarious, and difficult to encompass. My interest is in how expectations regarding these diverse cultures facilitated their imbrication in the national imaginary. In particular, I investigate how different audiences engaged with and understood this entanglement. For many whites, any interaction with the commodified and commercialized aspects of jive was a form of celebratory rebellion against traditional mores. For many African Americans, jive served as a rejection of dogmas of "racial uplift" that were popular in the period, and a subversive form of ontological expression that challenged white cultural hegemony.[10]

Perhaps no performer made more of this braiding of cultural signifiers and experiences than Cab Calloway. As bandleader at the famous Cotton Club, Calloway's draw was enough to earn him the largest rendering of any figure on Campbell's map, pictured wearing his signature white tuxedo. Calloway built his career on a cycle of songs that chronicled the lives of a cast of drug users including Minnie the Moocher, Smokey Joe, the Man from Harlem, and the Reefer Man himself.[11] This chapter examines the songs, Calloway's performance style, and his persona to illustrate how jazz performances of the late 1920s and 1930s disseminated and commodified narratives of drug use by African Americans. Calloway packaged and performed Black drug use as spectacle, enabling a slumming experience in which his white audiences could get hip to a mythological underworld of addicts, pimps, and prostitutes. Consonant with the prevailing nature of the Negro Vogue, white audiences experienced Calloway's songs through an imagined link between Black culture and sybaritic indulgence. At the same time, Calloway's performances contrasted this Bacchic interpretation with the Delphic, providing a subversive expression of Black autonomy through the embodiment of his addict characters. In doing so, his performances and enactments of jive culture transcended traditional language and quotidian experience in the expression of African American resilience. Calloway's performances, and drug-related performances throughout the Negro Vogue, were less about the pathology of addiction, its causes, or the codification of a performance repertoire. Instead, these cabaret performances exploited addiction as a state of alterity and drug culture as something subversive. They are part of what appears to be a tradition of Black artists using the drug experience and drug culture as a vehicle for a range of hidden expression.

Here, I conceive of Calloway's songs as "music products" in terms set out by Alan Merriam in his *The Anthropology of Music* (1964). Such a product "is inseparable from the behavior that produces it; the behavior in turn can only in theory be distinguished from the concepts that underlie it; and all are tied together through the learning feedback from product to concept."[12] As a music product, Calloway's performances were part of "mutually interfacing feedback loops be-

tween the domains of sound, concept and behavior."[13] Calloway and his audiences, regardless of race, engaged in a reciprocal exchange (including a literal call-and-response) that created the nightlife experience. Travis A. Jackson imagines this feedback loop atmospherically and grounded in place, arguing that a "musical scene" develops when musicians and audiences, "through purposive action, [. . .] create the scene and conceive it as both a physical manifestation of space and a cognitive construct."[14] Here I explore the idea that, depending on the audience member's identity, similar purposive actions of dancing, singing, and imbibing can be part of different cognitive processes. To clarify, my analysis examines Calloway's jazz as not just music or lyrics. Rather, I follow the conceptualizations of Jackson and Merriam in approaching the Harlem nightclub as a matrix of sounds, acts, environments, expectations, and epistemes that all fed the different conceptions and experiences of Calloway's performances of drug use.

Calloway was by no means alone in singing drug-themed songs. High-profile jazz musicians including Louis Armstrong, Don Redman, Benny Goodman, Fats Waller, Stuff Smith, Andy Kirk, Georgia White, Buster Bailey, and Sidney Bechet sang drug songs.[15] Many of the observations and interpretations that I make regarding Calloway's work pertain to the music and performances of these other jazz musicians. They too provided points of access for some audiences and opportunities for insurgency for others. Calloway serves as an effective case study because he had more drug tunes in his repertoire than any other performer of the time, but his musical products are not unique, instead representing a broad genre of performance that expressed and embodied jive culture.

Consequently, the popularity of drug tunes in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the awareness that some jazz performers indulged, contrasts how few representations of Black drug use there were in prior decades.[16] Save for a few anomalous examples where minstrel characters were drug users (Pete in *One of the Bravest* being one), popular entertainment rarely featured Black drug use between 1890 and 1920. However, during this period news media and reform rhetoric *did* forge connections between African Americans and drug use in the public's mind. Reformers often used well-entrenched racist no-

tions to heighten fears over narcotics. In his published notes from the 1909 Shanghai International Opium Commission, Hamilton Wright claimed that "cocaine is often the direct incentive to the crime of rape by Negroes of the South."[17] Leveraging a general fear over miscegenation, these comments intimated that the victims of these rapes could include white women. Richmond P. Hobson, another well-known reformer, asserted in writings and speeches that the intoxicated Negro will quickly "degrade to the level of cannibal."[18] Similarly, a *New York Times* article by Dr. Edward Huntington Williams from 1914 raises this thinking to a fever pitch, claiming that cocaine use by Blacks in the South has given them "temporary immunity to shock—a resistance to 'knock down' effects of fatal wounds." Williams reports that the local police had to exchange their service revolvers for "one of a higher calibre," because the normal pistol had no effect on the Black drug users.[19] These assertions at the turn of the twentieth century were part of a new pattern in which drug use by a particular population (whether actual or imagined) heightened already established stereotypes for that group. In the case of African Americans, this meant racist assumptions regarding their desire for white, female flesh; an inborn primitiveness that could give way to cannibalism; and the Black body's capacity to withstand physical abuse. Official assessments by people such as Wright, Hobson, and Williams laid the groundwork for a century of racially charged anti-drug propaganda. A decade later, Anslinger based his anti-marijuana campaigns of the 1930s in a similar racist rhetoric that warned of the savagery that marijuana could trigger in Black and brown bodies. This was the foundation upon which he built insurmountable legislative fortifications that unfairly targeted minorities.

Such rhetorical mythologies, especially those of the crazed and superhuman drug user, reappear in connection to any new narcotic substance as the public becomes aware of it. As crack cocaine, methamphetamine, and phencyclidine (PCP) came to prominence, there were recurrent rumors that they caused super strength and excited sexual violence especially in a racially or economically disadvantaged population.[20] These assertions are paradigmatic of drug scares in the country.

The early-century emphasis on the dangers of Black drug users had a stifling effect on portrayals of those drug users on stage and screen. There was no appetite to see Black bodies out of control, which was inherent in the condition of drug addiction. A character like Gus, the prototype of the "black brute" in D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), was dangerous enough without the derangement that people believed was a result of drug use. Blackface performance itself was a form of control, antithetical to the unleashed nature of the drug addict.[21] Depictions of Black drug use only became popular when the conventions of upscale nightclub performance were able to temper the widely accepted fictive dangers.

Though this chapter is primarily concerned with cabaret performances, the fact that much of this volume focuses on the theatre means it may be helpful to discuss the few plays that feature Black drug use as a way to contextualize Calloway and his jazz compatriots. Significantly, only a handful of plays qualify, all appearing in the 1920s. A number of these plays are set in the South, where it was believed that the cocaine habit was spreading among African American laborers. These include John Tucker Battle and William Perlman's *The Bottom of the Cup* (1927), Willard Robertson's *Black Velvet* (1927), and an early stage version of *Porgy and Bess* (1927) by Dorothy and DuBose Heyward that became the basis for the libretto of the famous opera. These plays were all unusual for their time in that they featured Black actors rather than whites in blackface. And yet, they were all written by white authors. Though I have been unable to find scripts for these plays, reviews signal that they feature stereotypical images of Black degradation through narcotics, typically featuring the drug user as villain. As with so many other portrayals, drug addiction served as a simple way of marking someone as corrupted or evil.

White authors were also responsible for the most famous play of the period to feature drug use by African American characters. Edward Sheldon and Charles MacArthur's *Lulu Belle* was directed by David Belasco for his Broadway theatre in 1925. The play focuses on Harlem nightlife rather than the postbellum South, and it follows the first Black *femme fatale* character, Lulu Belle. Lulu primarily uses narcotics as a way to stupefy the more aggressive men with whom she becomes

involved. Like Calloway's performances, *Lulu Belle* provided the safe experience of Black urban life within a controlled space. Belasco's famous verisimilitude in set design enhanced depictions of Harlem's street corners and speakeasies. The reception of the play was complex. Though Black intellectuals rejected it as derogatory libel, at least some of the African American public appreciated the opportunities the work created for Black performers and the potential doors it might open for more "slice-of-life" stories about Black existence.[22] Scholars such as Katie Johnson and James Wilson have stressed that Lenore Ulric's performance as Lulu in blackface "unleashed a host of racial and sexual desires and let loose a maelstrom of anxieties revolving around black womanhood."[23] This, rather than the drug experience, was the thrust of the play, and yet it joins cabaret entertainments as evidence of the nation's interest in the fantasies of an African American underworld of jazz, drugs, and sex. Perhaps the difference is that *Lulu Belle* (written by white authors and starring a white woman) was primarily viewed by a white audience, and though Calloway's Cotton Club performances were for whites, his jazz music products were highly popular and influential among Black and other minoritized audiences.[24]

I would like to pause for a moment, before turning attention to the specifics of Calloway's songs and performances, to clarify the notion of jazz as a "Black music." Attempts to fix jazz as African in origin or Afrocentric in character have resulted in significant scholarship. Writers from LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) and Ralph Ellison to modern ethnomusicologists such as Travis A. Jackson and Fred Moten have asserted a range of theories regarding how the rhythmic, ritualistic, expressive, and improvisatory elements of jazz may or may not indicate African or African American traits, origins, or values.[25] Duke Ellington insisted on calling his own music "an authentic Negro music" rather than jazz, essentially asserting the racially specific nature of the art form.[26] There is a danger that such conception can rely on a phenotypical notion of race that imagines a particular population as "having rhythm" or as "lacking restraint." However, I want to endorse Jackson's conception of jazz as a cultural expression that interacts with a particular race in a particular way. To him, "the sounds [of jazz] and [musicians'] choices of sound configurations emerge most strongly from African American

performative strategies. Songs, structures, and ways of manipulating them in performance become mechanics for the regulation of group identity and collective memory."[27] Jazz music and performance are a part of a "conceptual framework which reflects the peculiarities of the American black experience."[28] This conceptualization recognizes a special, if not exclusive, relationship to the music by members of a particular community with African heritage. Because of conditioning by social and cultural schemas, this population has facility with a set of interpretive strategies that help form a deeper understanding of the music and its performance. This deeper understanding finds its expression through a participatory spectatorship and listenership. Clarifying this division between different audiences and their experiences of the music, Billie Holiday cuttingly noted of the Negro Vogue that "[m]ost of the ofays, the white people, who came to Harlem those nights were looking for atmosphere. Damn few of them brought any along."[29] Indeed, the exchanges of sound and identity that Jackson and others discuss happened outside of the commercial contrivances of the Negro Vogue with its great migrations of slummers. I will come back to the importance of interpreting jazz music and performance as configuring a particular group identity later in the chapter when considering the way in which Calloway communicated with his Black audience members.

THE MANY LIVES AND VICES OF MINNIE THE MOOCHER

Cabell Calloway III was born in Rochester, New York, in 1907. He began performing in his teens, becoming part of the thriving club scene in Chicago's South Side while in college. Calloway arrived in New York City in 1929, and two years later, he took the helm of Harlem's hottest nightclub as band leader at the age of twenty-four. Replacing Duke Ellington, Calloway played a kind of jazz that was definitive of the era. This "hot" jazz (as opposed to "sweet," "hard," or "bebop") involved large bands playing music designed for dancing. The Cotton Club, which catered almost exclusively to white audiences, was big enough for a fifteen-piece orchestra, and the jazz they played was polished, upbeat, and accessible.

Scholars and jazz enthusiasts sometimes dismiss Calloway's work as derivative, saccharine, and overtly commercial. He is not considered a musical innovator like Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton, or Count Basie. His work seems to lack the subversive quality of Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, or Howlin' Wolf in the way they challenge white culture or find new ways to express the plight of Black Americans.[30] Typical critiques suggest that Calloway's performances exploited stereotypes of Blackness, perhaps even benefiting from a white prejudice for light-skinned African Americans.[31] However, Calloway was undoubtedly one of the most famous African American performers of the 1930s and '40s. Not only did he play for New York's richest and most fashionable whites, but the Cotton Club broadcast performances nationally over the radio twice weekly. At a time when film and radio still typically used white actors to play Black parts, the Cotton Club ostensibly offered the most exposure a Black performer could get. Calloway became nationally known for his wild stage presence, expressive dance style, perfect grooming, and blaring tenor (figure 9). His cultural influence was substantial especially in terms of sartorial and dance trends as well as the development of US slang. In addition, it is precisely Calloway's ability to remain popular to both white and Black audiences for a prolonged period of nearly six decades that makes him of interest. He crafted a sound and a persona, along with a repertoire of performative gestures that epitomized an era. His performances reveal the contours of certain cultural constructs, shaped through the interactions between white desire and Black cultural commodification, and between white desire and the Black body. At the same time, as I hope to show, he formulated African American autonomy as performative through his exploitation of the relationship between drug use and Blackness.

In 1931, Calloway recorded what became his signature song, "Minnie the Moocher," on the Brunswick label, and the record reached number two and number three in sales in New York and Chicago respectively.[32] Through tours, radio play, filmed renditions, and inclusion in popular Betty Boop cartoons, Calloway, Minnie, and her boyfriend Smokey Joe became nationally known.[33] Calloway followed up the original "Minnie the Moocher" with a song cycle that expanded the life of both Minnie and Joe. These songs span the 1930s and include "Kicking the Gong

FIGURE 9. Image of Cab Calloway in tails. Bettmann Collection via Getty Images.

Around" (1931), "Minnie the Moocher's Wedding Day" (1932), "Zaz Zuh Zaz" (1933), "Mister Paganini—Swing for Minnie" (1938), "The Ghost of Smokey Joe" (1939), and "Minnie's a Hepcat Now" (1947). Calloway also had hits with the drug-related tunes "The Viper's Drag" (1930; "viper" refers to a user of marijuana), "Reefer Man" (1932), "The Man from Harlem" (1932), "The Old Man of the Mountain" (1932),[34] and "We Go Well Together" (1941). Calloway knowingly used each song to add to the lexicon of drug argot that he developed for his audience, a process that culminated in his publishing of *Cab Calloway's Hepster's Dictionary* in 1939 that translated the "jive" of Harlem for the uninitiated. The slang in Calloway's songs theoretically let audiences "in" on the underworld of drug use, much as Junie McCree had done with his act. For Calloway, a "frail" was a girl, "to kick the gong around" referred to a practice in opium dens of striking a gong to signal that a pipe needed refilling, "coky" meant cocaine addict, "hoppy" was an opium user, and "junk" referred to narcotics in general. These slang terms semantically communicate the drug underworld. Calloway effectively made a career of commercializing drug culture, a somewhat surprising fact considering Calloway's own abstinence from drug use and his policy of prohibiting his band members from bringing narcotics into the club.

"Minnie the Moocher" consists of four stanzas, each ending in a chorus of call-and-response scat singing. Calloway became known as "The Hi-De-Ho Man" for the first chorus of the piece. On the recording, the band responds to Calloway's scat singing by repeating his phrases, and, in performance, audience members often took up the response part. The song introduces Minnie and her boyfriend, Smokey Joe. Joe teaches Minnie how to smoke opium in a Chinatown den, and the song relates the dream Minnie has of fantastic luxury and wealth.

Folks now here's a story 'bout Minnie the moocher
She was a red-hot hoochie coocher
She was the roughest, toughest frail
but Minnie had a heart as big as a whale
ho de ho de ho (*four rounds of call-and-response*)
Now she messed around with a bloke named Smokey

She loved him though he was cokey
He took her down to Chinatown
He showed her how to kick the gong around (*repeated by band*)
Ho de ho (*four rounds of call-and-response*)
Now she had a dream about the King of Sweden
He gave her things that she was needing
He gave her a home full of gold and steel
A diamond car with a platinum wheel
Wa di wo di way (*four rounds of call-and-response*)
Now he gave her his townhouse and his racing horses
Each meal she ate was a dozen courses
She had a million dollars worth of nickels and dimes
And she sat around, counted it all a million times
Ho di ho di (*four rounds of call-and-response*)
Poor Min, Poor Min, Poor Min.[35]

Calloway's song closely resembles the popular tune "Willie the Weeper," about a poor opium smoker. In 1927, Frankie "Half-Pint" Jaxon recorded a version of "Willie," and Armstrong regularly performed it as well. Numerous historians, including Sigmund Spaeth, Luc Sante, Olin Downs, and Elie Siegmeister, date the song to turn-of-the-century honky-tonks, vaudeville, or an African American blues tradition.[36] Regardless, Calloway's Minnie is a derivative of the folksy original and shared with it the De Quincean tropes of hallucinations of travel and opulence.

John Gennari notes, "Jazz has never been just music—it's been a cornerstone of the modern cultural imagination, an archive of mythological images, and an aesthetic model for new modes of writing, seeing, and moving."[37] Minnie and Joe, as Calloway portrays them, effectively formed a jive mythology through their many iterations and their widespread popularity. Within this mythology, the two characters represent romanticized versions of addiction and the fantastical world that addicts inhabit. They assume positions of royalty, matched by the King and Queen of Sweden and the Prince of Wales who, in the songs, join them in their hallucinations and on their wedding day.[38] Part of the enjoyment was imagining European royalty as secretly slumming,

befriending underworld figures and consuming narcotics. And yet, Minnie and Joe's domain remained defined by poverty, addiction, and morbid overconsumption (Smokey Joe is a ghost by 1939). The play on the words in the final stanza of "Minnie the Moocher"—"a million dollars worth of nickels and dimes"—reveals the milieu of poverty in which Minnie lives. Even in her drug-induced dreams, she is unable to imagine wealth outside of amassed mountains of small change.

In the song, Calloway does not directly mention the race of Minnie and Joe. However, as they are subjects of a jazz tune it is inferred, and in the 1947 film *Hi-De-Ho*, which bases its plot on the song cycle, an African American actress plays Minnie. Hence, Minnie's dreams of interacting with the King of Sweden signal potential interracial sex. This liaison between royalty and a dark-skinned "hoochie coocher" alludes to the interracial and cross-class desires that slumming in Harlem made possible. Similarly, Heap contends that the light skin of the Cotton Club chorus girls (referred to as "tall, tan, and terrific" in advertisements) "served as potent reminders of the cross-racial sexual desires that circulated" in the clubs.[39] In his line about the King of Sweden giving Minnie "things that she was needing," Calloway seems to go a step further, euphemistically commenting on the practice of keeping Black women as mistresses and the economy of such arrangements. He playfully exaggerates the price of such pleasures to include "a diamond car with a platinum wheel."

Seeing Calloway live at the Cotton Club involved direct interaction with the performer within a very particular mise-en-scène. As the name implies, the Cotton Club featured nostalgia for the antebellum South and the culture of Black servitude under slavery. The cabaret had a plantation motif of cotton plants, trees, and a cabin, all framing the bandstand. Calloway was not ignorant of the connotations, noting in his autobiography *Of Minnie the Moocher and Me* (1976), "I suppose the idea was to make whites who came to the club feel like they were being catered to and entertained by black slaves."[40] The club enacted a fantasy that Shane Vogel deems "Jim Crow Cosmopolitanism," which enforced white elitism and Black subjugation.[41] However, the performances could work in conjunction with the architecture of the club to trouble these supposedly secure racial divisions.

David Savran notes that jazz was "a partly improvisatory practice that happens in the space between performer and spectator."[42] As the Cotton Club bandstand opened to a cleared area that was both Calloway's performance space and the dance floor, there were no explicit demarcations between the performance and the audience. Not surprisingly, the term "floor show" as something that happens in and among the spectators comes into usage in 1927 to refer to cabaret entertainment.[43] As Vogel describes it, the close quarters and absence of a fourth wall combined with the performers' interactions "among the patrons before, after and even during the show [. . .] to create an effect of physical and psychic closeness and shared inwardness."[44] In doing so, the floor show could momentarily evaporate the standard limitations on cross-racial interaction by creating forms of intimacy. Dancing, laughing, singing along with, or repeating Calloway's turns of phrase were ways to enact this abandonment of racial boundaries.

In this environment, Calloway was known not just to sing about his characters, but to embody them. Original recordings of "Minnie the Moocher" have Calloway singing not in the forceful, full tenor for which he was known later in his career, but in a high-pitched and slightly muffled voice. He sings as if stoned, voicing the state of the characters he describes. In addition, as early as 1931, Calloway performed his signature drug songs using a backdrop that depicted an opium den or "Chinese coke hang-out."[45] These performances occasionally employed extras who lounged in the bunks, smoking pipes.[46] Calloway often dressed to resemble the characters in his songs. He would change from his impeccable white tails (the famous zoot suit came in the 1940s) into a crumpled dark suit and beaten fedora, in which critics reported he "gives a convincing impersonation of a drug addict."[47] This impersonation involved "epileptic contortions," as well as miming the snorting of cocaine, nose rubbing, and physical twitching.[48]

Key to the experience was Calloway's shifting subject position. He did not just sing about Smokey Joe; he took on the identity, enacting the previously mentioned gestures to signal his movement in and out of character. An *Afro-American* article from 1947 confirms as much, describing the way that Calloway "essayed the role of a dope addict"

in his performances.[49] Smokey Joe became a kind of alter ego for Calloway, and Minnie became his imagined love interest. Fittingly, in the film *Hi-De-Ho*, Minnie is in fact Calloway's lover, with Calloway playing himself rather than Joe. In the recording of "The Ghost of Smokey Joe," when Calloway sings the chorus "I want Minnie," the band repeats the line with a difference: they echo back "*you* want Minnie" (emphasis added), securing Calloway in the position of Joe, rather than leaving the voice of Joe as a universal that could be any of the performers. Unlike the call-and-response of Calloway's scat singing that occurred freely with the audience, this was a rehearsed element that explicitly locates Joe as Calloway and vice versa.

In this way, Calloway served as an agent of cultural transference. He was a medium through which audiences could experience a forbidden world. Calloway moved in and out of being the object of audience fascination and communicating a jive underworld from a removed position of narrator. At the same time, Calloway's carefully designed persona projected him as a protective shield against the real-life infiltration of these addict figures into the performance space. He was the tour guide, singing in the song "Minnie the Moocher's Wedding Day": "Oh let me take you down / To see them kick the gong around." When not in costume as his characters, his gleaming white tuxedo, flawless grooming, light skin, and inviting grin assured the audience that he was not the thing that he represented. Calloway may have been a playboy, but not a criminal or addict. His performances exploited the perception of "jive" culture to provide a carefully curated fantasy of access and experience for his white audience. He played upon his audience's desire for experiential and sexual freedoms, using the frame of the cabaret, the charged sounds of jazz, and the exhilarating danger of drug use to trouble and dissolve the limitations traditionally placed on those desires. This expression of jive, however, was not only for the white-dominated market of the Negro Vogue.

MINNIE'S JIVE REBELLION

In an interview with Travis Jackson, jazz saxophonist Sam Newsome expresses the belief that "a black person that's . . . , you know, familiar with the music can relate to something that comes from the black

culture on a much deeper level than someone who doesn't."[50] Jackson argues that this enhanced relationship constitutes itself as part of a mechanics of African American communal identity, one with particularly subversive roots. A wide range of scholars and musicians have commented on this relationship, often echoing Jackson's interpretation of jazz as articulating issues of African American selfhood and collective memory.[51] Such conception is necessary when considering the many African American fans who, though denied access to the Cotton Club, bought Calloway's albums, heard him on the radio, saw his films, and attended his concerts when on tour. For this population, Calloway's embodiment of jive takes on potentially deeper meaning. In these cases, the altered state of drug use that his music and performances manifest becomes a potential metonym for the African American experience. As this claim signals, I consider jive performance distinct from nearly every other kind of performance examined in this study. Rather than serving solely as a prescriptive portrayal of a nonnormative behavior, jive let specific audiences experience the performance from an insider position and activated multivalent interpretive processes.

While the slang in Calloway's songs was marketable as a form of slumming to those outside the Black, jazz, and drug communities, his linguistic play was part of a larger movement within those communities that promoted self-expression and self-affirmation. In particular, Calloway's slang communicated the meaningful rebellions and surreptitious expressions of self that Henry Louis Gates Jr. identifies as the product of "Signifyin(g)." Signifyin(g) is a tradition that consists of various rhetorical and semantic practices of the African American community. These include playing the dirty dozens, loud talking or "louding," testifying, rapping, and what Gates refers to as "troping."[52] In each, the act of Signifyin(g) involves rhetorical games, figurative substitutions, and, most typically, repetition and revision or "repetition with a signal difference."[53] Regarding slang, the substitutions and adaptations of Signifyin(g) "tend to be humorous, or function to name a person or a situation in a telling manner," often yielding a visual or aural pun.[54] To recognize this pun, the participant or hearer must be able to parse the figurative from the literal in the language. Within a

community of drug users this figurative and coded speech is essential. The vernacular serves as a celebration of the counterculture that unites them. It also serves as a form of defense, hiding the evidence of their drug use from those outside their community and providing a vetting system that determines whether a person poses a danger—only someone who can speak the language is trustworthy.

More generally, Gates sees the coded linguistic interactions that comprise Signifyin(g) as a defense against the white dominance of American English and white hegemony. The creation of slang is a subversive act that "critique[s] the nature of (white) meaning itself."[55] Calloway was essentially selling to his white audience the very subversion that was originally intended to undermine or exclude them. According to Mezz Mezzrow (who was a jazz musician and long-time drug dealer to Harlem's jazz community), "Historically the hipster's lingo reverses the whole Uncle Tom attitude of the beaten-down Southern Negro. [. . .] Once they tore off the soul-destroying straightjacket of Uncle Tomism, those talents and creative energies just busted out all over."[56] Mezzrow envisions "hipster's lingo," jazz lifestyle, and drug culture as interchangeable. But, more importantly, he sees the colloquial language of the jive community as a revolt against a subjugated social position for the sake of a new identity based on free-flowing and racially specific creativity. This revolt extends beyond the strictures of white hegemony, to comment on hierarchies within the African American community as well.

The Harlem Renaissance produced significant ideologies regarding racial uplift and the ways to enhance the life of Black Americans. However, these ideologies did not go unchallenged within the African American community. Allan Borst, who intimately links jazz and drug cultures through their use of vernacular, argues that "[f]or the jazz-addict subculture, a distinct vernacular in the Signifyin(g) tradition enables self-actualization through language, while also challenging the signifying machine of white capitalist or Talented Tenth hegemonies."[57] By this, Borst broadens the critique inherent in Signifyin(g) from white cultural dominance to the New Negro ideologies of the 1920s and '30s. "Talented Tenth" refers to the theories of W. E. B. Du Bois that recommended that the majority of the Black population

work as subordinates in service to a few promising members of the community who would improve the status of the race as a whole.[58] Related efforts at social engineering included a call by upper-class African Americans and certain intelligentsia, such as Alain Locke and Charles S. Johnson, for the adoption of traditional middle-class (white) values of refinement and family unity as crucial for the ascension of the African American in the country.

To this group of thinkers and reformers, the Negro Vogue that propelled Calloway to stardom distorted Blackness through sensuousness, primitivism, and exhibitionism. To them, cabarets conflicted with the project of racial uplift. Yet, Vogel has convincingly argued that a "cabaret school" of writers (including Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Carl Van Vechten, Zora Neale Hurston, and others) "enacted a radical break from and rebellion against the politics of normative uplift," rejecting desire for class ascension and the promotion of traditional Western aesthetics in art.[59] Vogel, Wilson, and Borst see jive culture as a "location of social and subjective expansion" that created legitimate and variegated ways of being.[60]

Calloway enacts this expansion through his performances and even his very appearance. His light skin, signature hair that flopped around to the music, and gleaming tuxedo all indicated to both Black and white audiences the diversity within individual racial categories. Calloway even notes in his autobiography that "[s]ome people were bothered because they couldn't classify me easily."[61] His light skin not only complied with the "tan" aesthetic of the Cotton Club, but it also served as a reminder of the nation's history of cross-racial intercourse (Calloway had Irish heritage). His hair seemed to confound traditional expectation regarding Black physiology, moving in ways not thought possible for those with African heritage. His wild dance moves challenged the imagination of what could be done in a set of tails. Though the dinner jacket was typically a sign of refinement, Calloway was able to spin, leap, and twist without ever losing the balance that epitomized cosmopolitan elegance. Calloway was not the only jazz musician famous for rakish dress; Ellington was a fashion plate, but being a dancer freed Calloway from the static position behind a piano. Dressed in such raiment while celebrating and humanizing the

lowly underworld characters of Minnie and Joe, Calloway promoted alternative or ambiguous versions of Black identity.[62]

Aware that he emblematized this ambiguity, Calloway fixed his own identity clearly and with pointed language in his autobiography. He relates, "I've always known, from the days when I was a nigger kid selling papers and hustling shoeshines and 'walking hots' out in Pimlico—hell, I'm a nigger and proud of it."[63] Regardless of his unflagging grin and perfected sheen in performance, Calloway situates himself firmly within the unwavering position of "nigger" rather than "Black," "African American," or "Negro." His clear-eyed embrasure of that particular social and cultural position within the US population and African American community stands as a brusque rebuff not only of white audiences and the aesthetics of the Cotton Club that attempted to present Calloway as a safe version of Blackness, but also of uplift ideologies that sought racial improvement through cultural revision. Calloway glorified his reclamation and expression of the subject position of "nigger."

Calloway includes this commentary in his songs through critical references to the hierarchy of Harlem's social scene. In "The Ghost of Smokey Joe," Joe returns from Hades in search of Minnie. Recounting his demise, he sings: "Remember when I kicked the bucket / In my mansion up on Striver's Row / When they came and took me off-in / A zillion dollar Coffin / Cause I'm the ghost of Smokey Joe." "Striver's Row" was an upscale area of Harlem where only the wealthiest African Americans lived. Calloway infers the infiltration by the famous cocaine addict into Harlem's most exclusive and privileged neighborhood. Smokey Joe's presence diminishes the social elevation that those wealthy African Americans maintained, and provided a ribbing snub of any desire for class ascension. Calloway poses himself and his alter ego as representatives of a freewheeling, jazz-infused Harlem underground that stands in opposition to the bourgeois social ascendency that was an important part of some New Negro ideologies. In an alternative rhetoric to racial uplift, Calloway is not so much proposing the adoption of drug use or drug culture as he is using the figure of the addict and the altered reality of the user to signal another course for survival.

This alternative course finds its most powerful expression in the soundings of Calloway's scat singing. Much as he was known for his use of slang, Calloway was famous for his scat singing or scatting, a singing technique that involves using the voice as an instrument and improvising wordless, rhythmic phrases of sounds.[64] Newspapers of the period regularly credited Calloway with having invented scat, and though this claim is untrue, it signals how closely he was connected with the technique.[65] The "craze" for scat singing originated with Armstrong's recording of "Heebie Jeebies" in the late 1920s, which he followed up with songs like "Oop-Sho-Be-Do-Bee."[66] Armstrong, like Calloway, linked scat singing and drug use early on, imagining it as an expression of jive culture. In one of his earliest recorded scat songs, "Sweet Sue (Just You)" (1933), Armstrong informs his audience that the scat singing of his saxophonist is a "viper language," which he then translates for the listener.[67] Mezzrow reports that many of his customers memorized passages of Armstrong's scat singing, "and before long the lines became a form of street greeting among the initiated."[68] Calloway's scatting in particular consists of lightning fast enunciations and moments of explosive vocalization, moving through his entire vocal range. In performance he created opportunities for his audiences to attempt (and fail) to keep up with his whirlwind scatting. White reporters and reviewers often described scat singing as the outpouring of "Negro" emotion that was a result of the race's African origins. *Variety* called Calloway's scat singing "barbaric, jungle calls," and, in another article, "rhythmic hosannas, weird and classification-defying shouting and jungle fervor."[69] However, as Mezzrow signals, within the jive community scat singing was far more complex in its potential meaning.

Formulated in the moment as a completely figurative language, scatting enacts a practice that Zora Neale Hurston identifies as "liquefying the words," which she believes is an ingrained element of African American vocal expression, especially in music.[70] Unlike a double entendre that can be locked down, scat remains an implication, refusing any formal exegesis. Indeed, in the vein of Gates's theory of Signifyin(g), Brent Hayes Edwards argues that scat singing dismantles the rules of semiotic signification, suggesting an excess

of meaning within the vocalization.[71] Moten, in his study of radical Black aesthetics in jazz, notes that "[w]ords don't go there: this implies a difference between words and sounds; it suggests that words are somehow constrained by their implicit reduction to the meanings they carry—meanings inadequate to or detached from the objects or states of affairs they would envelop."[72] In live performance, Calloway disrupted any clear division between his words and his choruses of scat singing by flowing between the two, dissolving his language into a rapid onomatopoeia of sounds. The scatted sounds engulf and explode the clear meaning of the verse as he suddenly shifts between them.[73] By doing so, Calloway seems to express new feelings, ideas, and experiences—ones that he can only express through sound and movement.

Like Signifyin(g), this "generative disintegration," as Moten calls it, is an act of self-affirmation.[74] Eric Lott sees the grinding voice of Howlin' Wolf and the power behind the air pushed through Armstrong's trumpet as statements of empowered identity, and, simultaneously, the source of that identity.[75] Some found this simultaneity in Calloway's stage performance. A 1933 article from the *Afro-American* notes, "Both his manner of singing and his gyrations on the floor were unstudied and wholly spontaneous, the natural expression of his exuberant vitality and innate sense of rhythm."[76] Calloway's soaring tenor, full-bodied howls, and rapid scat solos that would exhaust, if not tongue-tie, a normal person all manifest and proclaim extraordinary self-control. It is this same empowered identity and autonomy that Lott finds in Wolf and Armstrong. Calloway's scat singing does not embody just the indescribable drug experience but celebrates jive as an expression of African American subjecthood.

Consider Calloway's scat-heavy 1933 hit "Zaz Zuh Zaz" as an expression of oppositional and unflagging spirit. Written with his trombonist Harry White, the song includes references to Calloway's two famous protagonists. In performance and recording, Calloway expanded and improvised throughout the scat choruses.

Now, here's a very entrancing phrase
It will put you in a daze
To me it don't mean a thing

But it's got a very peculiar swing
Zaz, zuh, zaz, zuh, zaz (*two rounds of call-and-response*)
Now, zaz, zuh, zaz was handed down
From a bloke down in Chinatown
It seems his name was Smokey Joe
And he used to hi, de, hi, de, ho
Zaz, zuh, zaz, zuh, zaz (*two rounds of call-and-response*)
When Smokey Joe came into town
And he kicked the gong around
Any place that he would go
Minnie the Moocher she was sure to go
With her zaz, zuh, zaz (*two rounds of call-and-response*)
It makes no difference where you go
There's one thing that they sure do know
There's no need for them to be blue
For the zaz, zuh, zaz will always see them through
Zaz, zuh, zaz, zuh, zaz (*two rounds of call-and-response*)[77]

In the tradition of Signifyin(g) and Moten's radical aesthetics, Calloway's scatting carries multiple and ambiguous potential meanings. The phrase "zaz, zuh, zaz" itself can be the narcotic substance, which will "put you in a daze" and which will chase the blues away. And yet, it is also the effect of the drug in its "very peculiar swing." The performance of rapid scatting of the chorus also limns the indescribable experience of being stoned. At the same time, the "zaz, zuh, zaz" is something that Minnie and Joe independently possess. It is "*her* zaz, zuh, zaz" (emphasis added) that keeps her afloat no matter where she goes. It is a survival tool "handed down" through initiation that enables the transcendence of a challenging environment. Calloway's energized singing embodies and glorifies that transcendence.

Moten conceives of such jazz performances as part of a continual process of reinvention fueled by the racial traumas historically suffered by African Americans. He clarifies that scat singing is "a passionate response to passionate utterance, horn-voice-horn over percussion, a protest, an objection [that is] more than another violent scene of subjection too terrible to pass on; it is an ongoing performance, the

pre-figurative scene of (re)appropriation—the deconstruction and reconstruction, the improvisational recording and revaluation—of value, of the theory of value, of the theories of value."[78] Through coordinated and responsive dance, music, and vocalization, Calloway offered a kinesthetic and sensorial expression of the indefinable highs and lows of Blackness. His passionate utterances of soaring scatting eschewed subjection in their improvisational liveness that did not fit into the whitewashed milieu of the Cotton Club, the bourgeois society of Striver's Row, or the Anglo-puritanism of the dominant US culture. Through the demonstration of another way of being, Calloway, rather, challenges the schemas of individual and communal valuation that those institutional and cultural forces promoted. He uses jive expression as a defense for a jive existence.

Linking these deconstructions and reconstructions of Black experience to the altered consciousness of drug use is, in fact, a recurring trope in Black arts. In the celebrated prologue to Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), the unnamed narrator has a revealing experience when he smokes a marijuana cigarette while listening to the music of Louis Armstrong. He narrates that "under the spell of the reefer I discovered a new analytical way of listening to music. [. . .] That night I found myself hearing not only in time, but in space as well. I not only entered the music but descended, like Dante, into its depths."[79] These depths "beneath the swiftness of the hot tempo" feature dreamlike experiences of ghostly ancestors. The narrator meets a female slave that speaks with the voice of his mother, and he becomes overwhelmed by a call-and-response sermon on the nature of Blackness. In discussion with the sermon singer, Ellison's narrator offers that, as an African American, he is trapped between love and hate to the point that he has "become acquainted with ambivalence." Yet, he also admits that "ambivalence" is "a word that doesn't explain it."[80] The sermon singer expresses this same ambivalent ontology in sonic and embodied terms as "I laughs too, but I moans too."[81] Manifesting the ambivalence felt by the narrator and his ancestors toward their position as African Americans, these laughs and moans exist *within* jazz. Marijuana acts as a gateway for the metaphysical experience of the narrator, but his Blackness (the condition of invisibility in Ellison's formulation) is a

primer or prerequisite for this engagement with the music. Prompted by a shared cultural knowledge that enhances the meaning of Armstrong's jazz (à la Jackson) and enabled by the heightened interiority brought on by intoxication, Ellison's narrator "discovered unrecognized compulsions of my being."[82]

These compulsions, I argue, are similar to those Calloway expressed in his scatting and uninhibited dancing. The screams, moans, and howls of his projections from his variable positions as Black man, "nigger," and jive demagogue communicate the impulse to reject definition, to engage in action, and to celebrate the ruptures from an oppressed existence. Calloway signaled the potential of Black autonomy through expression that deconstructed and reevaluated standard ontology not through words, but through uninhibited rhythms, sounds, and movement. These amounted to the presentation of an alternative way of being organized and contoured by the spirit and values of jive.

MINNIE IN CHAINS

Calloway performed his signature songs nearly until his death in 1994. Certainly, Minnie and her gang lost their edge over time, serving rather as nostalgia for the days of swing than anything racy or challenging. Jazz changed significantly in the 1940s and 1950s with the development of bebop. As David Yaffe puts it, bebop or bop "was a radical assault on the swing era, transforming what had been perceived to be a dance music to a form of aural dialects in which solos were supposed to be studied with hermeneutical precision."[83] It was through the music of Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday, and Max Roach that jazz began to exchange mass popularity for the status of an elite art. As Krin Gabbard notes, "Advertisers no longer use jazz to connote the nightlight and slumming that can be purchased along with their products—jazz can now signify refinement and upper-class status, once the exclusive province of classical music."[84] The cabaret music of Calloway and Armstrong became passé for many.

Though the jazz club can still function as a location for reversal and release, and jazz remains a Black music, the link between drugs and jazz is no longer a commercial aspect. Rather, there is a recognition of a line of jazz greats who struggled with substance abuse, primarily

heroin addiction, including Charlie Parker, Chet Baker, and Miles Davis. The notion of a link between their creative genius and their drug use is not uncommon, and the origins of this notion are the focus of the following chapter. The Beat poets of the 1950s may have connected their smoking of marijuana to their enjoyment of jazz, but this was the enigmatic music of Blue Note's bebop, not the mainstream swing of *Connie's Hot Chocolates*. It was Freddie Redd's edgy hard bop that accompanied the Living Theatre's version of Jack Gelber's play *The Connection* about junkies on the streets of New York in 1959. Performances featured real addicts begging for money from the audience and an actor pretending to overdose on stage. This dark and gruesome version of addiction was sparked by the surge of heroin use in poor communities after the Second World War, rather than the accessible charm of Calloway's songs about Minnie or Armstrong's jaunty tune "Muggles" (1928) about marijuana use.

Amid this historical shift in jazz as an art form, there are still potential connections between swing's exploitation of drug culture and more contemporary expression by minoritized artists. This chapter has provided a twofold way of conceiving of the representation of drug use as it relates to African Americans prior to 1940. On the one hand, there is a mainstream, inherently racist image of Black people's natural intemperance and lack of self-control, an image that fueled the activities associated with the Negro Vogue and the commodification of Black culture through jazz and cabaret performance. On the other hand, there is the potential to interpret drug references within the jazz of the era as a subversive form of resistance against limitations placed on Black ways of being. These two seemingly diametric experiences existed simultaneously depending on audience subject position. In culling a potential heuristic method, there are questions regarding whether forms of Black expression today (from hip-hop to reggae to bounce to slam poetry and beyond) engage with drug use as either a rebellious act or a gateway to creativity that resonates with Calloway's celebration of jive as an ontological strategy.[85] There is similar value in examining how perceptions of Blackness, Black culture, and drug culture intertwine in complicated, multivalent, and ever-changing ways.

What is clear is that contemporary Black artists have been aware

of the danger that US drug policy poses to their community for some time. Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's 1984 hit "White Lines" keenly summarizes these inequities:

> A street kid gets arrested, gonna do some time
> He got out three years from now just to commit more crime
> A businessman is caught with twenty-four kilos
> He's out on bail and out of jail
> And that's the way it goes. Raaah![86]

Such lyrics hint at the fact that, today, our nation's drug laws and our perceptions of Black drug users are a leading form of systemic oppression visited upon the African American community. In 2015, imprisonment rates of African Americans for drug charges were six times that of whites.[87] In some states over the last 20 years, African Americans have accounted for 80 to 90 percent of all those sent to prison on drug charges.[88] Facing this extraordinary inequity, Michelle Alexander points to President Ronald Reagan's invigoration of Nixon's War on Drugs in the mid-1980s. The highly publicized governmental endeavor wrought a "media bonanza" regarding the use of crack cocaine by African Americans to the point that "almost no one imagined that 'drug criminals' could be anything other than black."[89] Further problematic policies came into law with the Clinton crime bill in the 1990s, spearheaded by then senator Joe Biden. Rather than stemming rates of addiction, these drug laws created the modern prison industrial complex, filling the nation's prisons with Black and brown bodies. At no point in this nation's history has African Americans' use of drugs been greater than that of whites. In fact, the majority of drug users (and dealers) in the country today, as they were in the 1980s when Reagan fortified his position on drugs, are white people.[90] And yet, perception that things are otherwise has led to the staggering injustices in the enforcement of drug laws in the US.

I have tried to show that the source of such bias dates back not just to the media circus of the 1980s, but to the foundations of a relationship between the US population and drug addiction in the decades after the turn of the century. During this period, popular entertainment and leisure practices joined media reports, reform rhetoric, and

governmental policies to form the problematic perception of a link between drug use and nonwhite racial identity. The Negro Vogue's promotion of a link between Blackness and drug use has echoed across the century in different forms. While Blaxploitation films of the 1970s often depicted drug dealers as the greatest enemy to the Black community, and the rash of films from the 1990s such as *Boyz N the Hood* (1991) and *Menace II Society* (1993) portrayed the horrors of drug use as they existed in the Black community, mainstream audiences often interpreted them as confirming an epidemic of worst-case scenarios.[91] Tending toward the same interpretive processes that perceived Calloway as representative of a naturally debauched Blackness, these works inadvertently legitimized the skyrocketing incarceration rates of the last forty years during America's War on Drugs.

My hope is that this chapter might arm readers to make interpretive interventions that open new possibilities other than exacerbating the epidemic narrative. The dire circumstances that Alexander outlines make clear the exigency of such reevaluation. Present attempts at drug reform barely register in the face of such systematic injustice. By altering *how* particular portrayals of drug use are received—grounding interpretation in marginalized experience rather than exploitation—I hope to help identify new avenues for the deconstruction of problematic notions and promote new forms of amelioration and recompense.

6

OPIATED GENIUS

From the 1890s onward, the nation's public increasingly associated drug use with deviancy. An ethos of condemnation, regulation, and criminalization dominated legislative policy and medical discourse. Correspondingly, the character of the criminal dope fiend eclipsed other portrayals of drug addiction across popular culture. And yet, an anomalous strain within representational history presents drug use outside of these condemnatory discourses. This strain has its origins in a particular literary tradition that imagines narcotics as a gateway to creativity and self-exploration. Here, I examine this conceptualization of addiction in three plays that stretch over twenty-five years: Haddon Chambers's *John-a-Dreams* (1895), William Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes* (1922), and Arnold Bennett's *Sacred and Profane Love* (1919). Each of these plays centers on a self-destructive artist or genius that uses drugs. Each play mixes glorification with condemnation, hinting at the profound creative capacities that narcotics can unleash while asserting that drug use for the sake of artistic or intellectual elevation leads to a creative or existential crisis. Each play weighs the potential for inspiration against the inevitable decline of the drug user.

Between 1890 and 1940, portrayals that fall into this category deviate from other examples that this study explores in their origin, setting, addict characterization, and formulation of how narcotics work on the body and mind. Plays that fit the bill are all British in origin—written by British authors or about British characters—and they nearly all appeared on Broadway. Save for *Madame X*, *The City*, *Red Light Annie*, and *The Shanghai Gesture*, the plays and performances that this study has examined occurred off the Great White Way, typically appearing in cheaper theatres, in nightclubs, or on variety stages. Plays featuring the addict-artist qualified for Broadway because they were written by well-known playwrights, featured already established performers or already famous characters, or were successful in West End runs before arriving in the US. Their British origins mean that they function outside of the anti-immigration rhetoric, Harrison Era policy wrangling, or the propaganda of Anslinger's Federal Bureau of Narcotics. This is not to say that the United Kingdom was free of charged political debate over drugs. Britain's struggle with narcotic regulation

mirrors that of the US in many ways, featuring similar aspects of xenophobia and the vilification of drug users. The UK was slower to criminalize drug use in general, urging the treatment of addicts by physicians rather than the penal system, but it too struggled with the belief that narcotics caused degeneracy in its citizens. There was significant concern about the Chinese opium dens in London's Limehouse district, the secret morphine use of middle-class women, and, in the 1920s, the cocaine use of the "Bright Young Things."[1] However, it was the image of the British aristocrat and the history of England's refined, yet inebriate poets such as Thomas De Quincey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge that formulated the drug addicts that appeared on Broadway during the Progressive Era.

With these real-life poets as models, stage versions of the addict-artist have a distinct anatomy. The delicate aesthetes who use drugs to expand their creative capacities are universally straight, white men of upper-class birth. This seeming sine qua non exposes the absence of a place in both the UK and US imaginations for female, Black, or brown bodies to attain the status of brilliance. This tacit circumscription of the high-functioning addict also signals a privileging of the well-born, white male as having a self that is tragic in its loss. It is a hierarchy of exclusion that manifests the project of white supremacy. Though these pieces are British in origin and setting, their performances in the US were effectively resituated as part of cultural conditions of the new nation. As Joseph Roach has argued, circum-Atlantic performance underwent processes of "surrogation," meaning that US audiences experienced the works as transmissions, rather than foreign recapitulations of originals.[2] *John-a-Dreams*, *Sherlock Holmes*, and *Sacred and Profane Love* may feature European characters in European settings (and work from European literary legacies), and their focus on aristocrats may have taken them out of discourses focused on legislating the urban drug menace, but they were experientially transformed to the US milieu, meaning they engaged with the class, race, and gender norms of the US, rather than communicating foreign mores.

Finally, the conceptualization of narcotic inspiration that underlies this genre's dramaturgy is distinct. Certainly, the notion of narcotics as inspiratory is deeply rooted in an ancient shamanistic altering of

consciousness that supposedly tethers the user to another world or to a depth of internal magic. However, it is De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821) that serves as the locus classicus for the characterization of the opiated genius. This study has noted elsewhere how De Quincean tropes of Orientalism and hallucinations of ethereal flight influenced a range of performances of addiction. But, aligned with characters that resemble the poet himself, De Quincey's vision of addiction as a cycle of intensive introspection provides the vocabulary for these plays. Here, addiction functions as a metaphor built on the Romantic imagination that celebrates the artist's development of individual genius through sublime surrender to poetry and the natural world. De Quincey established a parallel between this sublime submission and the dissociative properties of narcotics. The fragmenting of his subjectivity through opium allowed De Quincey endless opportunity for self-discovery by liming his hallucinations into language. In his multiple memoirs, he renders his opium dreams into a paean of eloquent language that exemplified a Romantic indulgence in unrestrained imagination.

Literary movements throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries venerated De Quincey. Midcentury French poets such as Charles Baudelaire and Théophile Gautier were deeply influenced by De Quincey in both style and subject. Baudelaire translated De Quincey's *Confessions* and published it as part of his own *Les Paradis artificiels* (1860). Approaching the turn of the century, there was a revival of interest in De Quincey in the US and UK. At that time, the first biographies of the poet appeared, and reprintings of his works were abundant.[3] Subsequently, a number of the English Decadents of the *fin de siècle* adopted De Quincey and Baudelaire as forefathers, particularly Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson, Arthur Machen, and John Addington Symonds.[4] Alina Clej has argued that this nearly hundred-year process of influence, modification, and redirection of De Quincey's work manifests the philosophical and aesthetic shifts from Romanticism to modernism.[5]

Essential to understanding De Quincey's influence on these various movements and on the plays that feature the addict-artist is that he did not imagine narcotic inspiration as without its price. In his memoirs,

De Quincey consistently links creativity to suffering, noting in his *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845) that "[e]ither the human being must suffer and struggle as the price of a more searching vision, or his gaze must be shallow, and without intellectual revelation."[6] He relates a dichotomy that is inherent in the narcotic experience in which the potential for stimulation juxtaposes the inevitable dissipation that the drug causes. As Derrida notes in his essay "The Pharmakon" (1981), "There is no such thing as a harmless remedy. The pharmakon can never be simply beneficial."[7] Clej expands on this, noting that the narcotic substance is "both a remedy and a poison, simultaneously a source of memory and oblivion, of excitement and anesthesia."[8] The syringe best manifests this dual outcome of enlivenment and deterioration as it causes pain and pleasure simultaneously at the point of injection. In terms of the addict-artist, this dichotomy means that self-loss matches any potential for self-exploration. Taken to its extreme, the user's search for ecstatic reverie is also a search for death.

Across literary movements, writers envision the dichotomous narcotic experience as part of an existential struggle against the conditions that pervade modernity. As Marshall Berman has described, modern man faces "agitation and turbulence, psychic dizziness and drunkenness, expansion of experiential possibilities and destruction of moral boundaries, [. . .] self-enlargement and self-derangement."[9] Reeling from the perpetual contradictions and ambiguities of the modern world, the artist has to find a way to avoid paralysis. They can do so through intoxication. Inebriety supplements the alienating experience by a process Baudelaire calls "multiplying individuality."[10] Arthur Rimbaud recast this idea in his famous call for "*le dérèglement de tous les sens*," or "a derangement of all the senses" as a way to create.[11] Only by unshackling and enhancing the creative imagination can the artist quell the overwhelming static of the modern urban and industrial landscape. However, as De Quincey asserts, the price for this transformation of bewildering experience into comprehensible meaning is potential annihilation.

Engaging in this exploration of modern ontology, the theatre incorporated De Quincey and his many interpreters in a range of ways. All of the plays manifest the self-destructiveness of the user by eschewing

an antagonist. Essentially, the protagonist's self-destructive impulse takes center stage, and the greatest threat is self-imposed. Beyond this, plays attach different metaphoric significance to addiction. For Chambers, addiction functions as a give-and-take of inspiration and dissipation; for Gillette, drug use provides a transcendence of the quotidian through the metaphoric experience of death; and, for Bennett, addiction to a narcotic serves as a failed surrogate for the need to feed off of another in the act of creation. Linking these theatrical representations to an unlikely patrimony that includes the Romantics and the Decadents, I hope to bolster Clej's claims that addiction is "one of the central paradigms of modernity."[12]

THE MODERNIST (JOHN-A-)DREAMS

Charles Frohman produced *John-a-Dreams* at New York's Empire Theatre in 1895. Frohman acquired the rights from the British actor and impresario Herbert Beerbohm Tree, who had premiered the play at his own Haymarket Theatre in London a year earlier. The play concerns a young poet named Harold Wynn who begins taking laudanum (opium dissolved in alcohol) to write inspired love poetry. Harold is a requisite poet of sensitive, though manic, constitution in the mold of De Quincey and Coleridge. He is the "John-a-Dreams" of the title, a reference to Hamlet's line in which he bemoans his impotence as he is "like a John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause, and can say nothing."[13] Coinciding with the theatrical fashions of the time, Harold is like the Hamlet played by Henry Irving—irritable, yet utterly refined and absent of cruelty.[14] The object of Harold's adoration is Kate Cloud, a successful singer with a hidden past as a courtesan. Harold, Kate, and Harold's brutish college friend, Sir Hubert, become entangled in a love triangle that ends with Hubert attempting to poison Harold with an overdose of laudanum. In the end, Harold survives, Hubert admits his crime, and the poet and Kate sail across the Mediterranean to seek a new life together. From what I have found, *John-a-Dreams* is the first play to appear on the US stage that has a drug addict as its central character, as earlier opium den dramas typically place the addict in subordinate positions. Even in *Queen of Chinatown*, the titular character of Beezie Garrity may have been the star turn, but she is not

the play's central conceit. Ignored by prior scholarship, Chambers's drama is important to theatre history for a number of reasons.[15]

John-a-Dreams found mild success both in the UK and the US. Tree, who played Harold in London, embarked on a highly publicized tour of the US just after his production's closing, and announcements in the *New York Times* noted that *John-a-Dreams* would be part of his touring repertoire.[16] It seems the script made the trip overseas with Tree, but he chose to sell the rights to Frohman.[17] Tree may have had concerns after the backlash the play received from some English critics who objected to the immorality of the characters. A particularly displeased critic referred to Kate as a "reclaimed harlot" and Harold as "an opium-drinking sot."[18] Even before its premiere in the US, some American critics expressed a similar concern. Peter Robertson of the *San Francisco Chronicle* argued that the arrival of the opium addict to the stage signaled that "the modern 'problem drama' is going to pass quietly away into the limbo of all other fads. [. . .] As long as it held up a pretty woman and her wickedness it met with attention, but the introduction of a weak-minded opium idiot to the public as a moral lesson was more than even cranks could stand."[19] The Ibsen-inspired trend of showing on stage what polite society kept hidden had, according to Robertson, found its limit with the drug addict. Others found the novelty of a drug addict character intriguing. The American critic William Archer saw the dramatic potential in the drug addict but criticized that the play did not fully explore Harold's struggle with opiates, complaining that Harold "conquers his vice in the twinkling of an eye."[20] Frohman's choice of the actor Henry Miller as his leading man may have enhanced Archer's perception of Harold's vigor. Miller was far more a rustic hero than Tree. While Tree appears in publicity photographs in a dinner jacket, staring dreamily off into the distance with searching eyes, Miller appears in character with thick mustache, oiled hair, and suit that shows off his broad shoulders. Viola Allen played Kate in the US production and received good reviews but far less attention than Mrs. Patrick Campbell did in the London production.[21] In the end, the US production of *John-a-Dreams* ran for 100 performances and eventually moved to a limited national tour.[22]

Chambers's play represents an early attempt to fit the drug ad-

dict into the moral and social framework of the nineteenth-century "problem play." As a standard "fallen woman," Kate shares much with Marguerite of *La Dame aux Camélias* (1852) and Paula Jarman in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893). British critics highlighted these connections in part because Campbell also played Paula Jarman in the 1893 premiere of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* to great success. However, Chambers's drama is novel in that it tests the potential for the male drug addict to serve as a balanced counterpart to the fallen woman. As a reviewer for *The Illustrated American* notes, Chambers "wanted a hero who should be approximately as hopeless as his heroine in the matter of antecedents. A rake, a libertine, a drunkard, a gambler—the mysterious morale of society deems none of these beyond rehabilitation. But the opium-fiend—there you have a companion-piece of Aspasia!"[23] The male addict presents the ideal figure as both he and the former prostitute seem out of the reach of salvation, either social or divine. By providing the fallen woman with a male complement, Chambers offers his heroine a way out of the standard dramatic structure that punishes her with banishment or death. Whereas Marguerite and Paula Jarman can find redemption only in death, in *John-a-Dreams* the need for the male lover to reform *alongside* the fallen woman enables her survival. At the same time, Chambers is careful to extricate both the addict and the former courtesan from polite society with his final tableau as they sail across the sea. The play asks audiences to accept the characters' reformations but does not propose that anyone should be expected to invite those outcasts in for tea.

Chambers culls significantly from De Quincey in his character design and his conception of drug use. The influence is so direct that a character actually reads aloud from De Quincey's memoirs at one point in the play. However, De Quincey is not the only influence. In order for Harold's drug use to balance Kate's past improprieties as a prostitute, his addiction needed to constitute a social ill. According to Clej, De Quincey's primary act in writing his *Confessions* in 1821 was "to transform opium eating from a working-class pleasure into a refined enjoyment by exploring the stimulating potential of the drug and its oneiric properties."[24] He reoriented an intoxicant that was popular with Manchester textile workers, portraying it as an inspira-

tional aid in the creation of great poetry. His literary appropriation was not, however, subversive. It was a novel conceptualization that paired drug use (specifically the eating of grains of opium or drinking laudanum) with the Romantic tradition of sophisticated and impassioned self-exploration.

Clej asserts that it was later modernists that "radicalized De Quincey's example and made it appear subversive."[25] Baudelaire, Gerard de Nerval, and Gautier, along with Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, and Honoré de Balzac, formed the "Club des Hashischins" that staged its secret "Fantasias" or drug séances at the Hotel Pimodan. Gautier recorded his haunting experiences in a number of published articles. Later on, in what Virginia Berridge calls "a self-conscious literary aping of French fashion," English poets of the Decadent movement also experimented with drug use as members of the literary circle known as the "Rhymer's Club" and produced corresponding literature.[26] Mimicking Baudelaire's *flâneur* as well as the libertinism of Rimbaud, the English Decadents haunted the cafes of London's seedier districts. Symons captured these escapades in detail in his suggestive and often condemned *London Nights* (1895). In poems such as Symons's "The Opium Smoker" (c. 1888) or Dowson's "Absinthia Taetra" (1899) the English writers reoriented Baudelaire's bohemian overindulgences into the context of the late-century industrial urban environment. Exemplifying the way that the Decadents interpreted De Quincey as rebellious, Symons's 1893 manifesto "The Decadent Movement in Literature" urges that De Quincey was a forebear who shared with the Decadents not only an "intense self-consciousness, a restless curiosity in research," but "a spiritual and moral perversity."[27] Though Harold's elevated social position and well-meaning passion may evoke De Quincey, his wildness signals a particular *fin de siècle* poet driven by what Symons identifies as rebellious "perversity." When Harold's father dismisses his son's poetry as "hopelessly modern," he has in mind the Rhymers rather than the Romantics.

This cumulation of literary tropes is evident throughout Chambers's play. As in the tradition of drug memoirs, Harold spends ample time narrating his drug experiences to other characters. He bursts with enthusiasm regarding his ability "to talk more brightly than usual, to

argue more subtly—To laugh more spontaneously, to see things with a larger vision, to feel nearer the stars than the rest of the world."[28] De Quincey refers to his own writing while under the influence as "impassioned prose," a phrase that has traditionally situated him squarely as a member of the Romantic movement, and Harold embodies this kind of emotional overabundance. And yet, Harold's descriptions fall more in line with Baudelaire's assertions that under the influence, "your senses become extraordinarily acute. Your eyes pierce the infinite. Your ears clearly distinguish the slightest sounds amid the most discordant din."[29] Following suit, Nerval claimed to have written his collection of sonnets he called "Chimeras" in a "state of supernaturalist reverie" that mirrors Harold's wild compulsions.[30]

The English Decadents of the 1890s were also obsessed with such irrepressible sensory experiences. Symons's *London: A Book of Aspects* (1909) describes the overwhelming nature of the urban environment and the otherworldliness of his excursions into the lower depth. In it, he notes, "I have always been curious of sensations, and above all of those which seem to lead one into 'artificial paradises' not within everybody's reach. It took me some time to find out that every 'artificial paradise' is within one's own soul, somewhere among one's own dreams."[31] Conjuring Baudelaire with his references to "artificial paradises," Symons promotes the isolation and internal exploration that Harold also enacts with his opiate-inspired literary fervor. To Harold, the artistic process occurs in a withdrawn reverie driven by "the knowledge all the time that you are beyond yourself—and that you alone know it."[32]

References to Harold's poetic pursuits are, throughout the play, tinged with danger. Raving to his father after days without sleep, Harold claims he "could ride a mad horse—hang out on the yard-arm of a full rigged sailing ship in a gale of wind, or swim five miles in the open sea."[33] This recklessness, disguised as masculine pleasure seeking, is far more in the spirit of the Rhymer's Club's hedonistic adventures in London's underworld than in that of De Quincey's agoraphobia.[34] Early in the play, Harold declares an intensive desire to "set my soul free." However, his realization that he has consumed an entire bottle of laudanum in a night of writing and that his poem is "stained with—

with a weakness," undercuts this declaration.[35] Rather than the danger of racial degeneration or sexual abandon that was part of the anti-drug rhetoric of the period, the danger Harold faces is that his pursuit of psychic and spiritual freedom will result in a kind of enslavement. Sir Hubert defines his friend's poetic spirit and his drug use as a dark impulse, noting of Harold, "You are a star-gazer, you are a lover of the sea, the clouds, of solitude. [. . .] I know you Harold, you are a pursuer of phantoms, a confessed victim of narcotics."[36] These "phantoms" signal not only the dark side of Harold's pursuits, but the impossibility of his success. Harold reiterates the existence of these "phantoms" he chases when he describes his own artistic effort as "the inevitable failure to approach one's ideal."[37] A reviewer of the Tree production keenly notes that Harold is "[s]earching, with the ideality of a poet, for that unknown happiness, that remote joy of which life has not the giving."[38] The conviction that the poet's search is in vain, that "life has not the giving," suggests that the creative personality is double-edged; those seeking to unfold the mysteries of life may find their own destruction in the process. Baudelaire expresses this succinctly: "To be sure, any man who does not accept life's conditions is selling his soul. It is easy to grasp the connection between the satanic creations of poets and the creatures who have yielded to the influence of the stimulant drugs. Man wished to be God, and soon he has, by virtue of an ungovernable moral law, fallen lower than the level of his true nature."[39] This self-destructiveness for the sake of creative energy appears throughout the work and lives of the late-century British writers. W. B. Yeats labeled the Decadent poets of the 1890s the "Tragic Generation" for the debilitation they suffered in their search for inspiration—Symons experienced a complete mental collapse, and a number of the Rhymers took their own lives or died young from drink.

Harold eventually curbs his drug use and saves himself from the fate of so many Decadents. He does so by initiating a normative heterosexual relationship with Kate. As the Decadent artists of the period were accused of "sexual abnormality and mental insanity," Chambers's play depicts the surrogation of self-destructive artistic impulse with normative sexual relations.[40] This particular conclusion seems to anticipate Freud's conception of the "death drive" that he outlines in his

essay "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920). In it, Freud discusses those compulsive behaviors that work against survival. Psychoanalyst Sandor Rado, who was a disciple of Freud, specifically interprets addiction as a manifestation of this death drive, claiming that it is the result of an "altered libido, mental atrophy, and sexual impotence."[41] In the resulting "dual-drive" model, the impulses for reproduction battle against self-destruction via drug use.[42] Seeming to presage this interpretation, Chambers promotes the assumption of the conventional position of lover as a corrective cure that redirects destructive impulses.

This corrective is also the result of generic expectations. Chambers was writing for a mainstream, if upper-class, audience, and there were limits to the prurience they would accept on stage. Chambers suppresses the profligacy of the Decadent artists and sterilizes the immense suffering that De Quincey relates in his memoirs. By doing so, the playwright ensures that Harold is not dangerous to anyone but himself and that he easily rehabilitates. Archer's complaint about how quickly Harold cures himself may be more the result of Chambers's perpetuation of genre than of his lack of creativity when it came to envisioning the addict.

In *John-a-Dreams*, Chambers creates a prototypical stage addict who can seemingly thread the needle between aristocratic sophistication and bohemian permissiveness. Working from an amalgamation of literary precursors and contemporaries, he helps formulate addiction in terms of excess, interiority, and sacrificial self-destruction. Appearing in 1895, this characterization helps chart a course on which certain versions of the addict in the period—racially unmarked and male—could assume the position of dramatic hero and even exhibit qualities of renegade genius.

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE 7 PERCENT SOLUTION

In the over fifty stories about the famous detective of Baker Street, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle saddles his central character with a great many eccentric behaviors. In addition to indoor pistol practice and a Byronic unconventionality in dress, Doyle regularly describes Sherlock Holmes as enjoying subcutaneous injections of narcotics. In the very first novel, Doyle's Dr. Watson expresses concern regarding his

new flatmate: "I have noticed such a dreamy, vacant expression in his eyes, that I might have suspected him of being addicted to the use of some narcotic."[43] Doyle makes Holmes's drug use explicit in the second novel, *The Sign of Four* (1890), in which he depicts Holmes injecting himself with a solution of cocaine and arguing with Watson over its dangers.[44] In Doyle's estimation, Holmes's habit is not a minor one. Watson notes that Holmes administers injections up to three times a day into an arm "all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks."[45] In fact, Holmes's addiction remains a factor in Doyle's stories until 1904 with *The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter*, when Watson reports that he has weaned his friend off of narcotics at the risk of the detective's total collapse.

When the actor William Gillette adapted the detective stories into a stage play, he did not shy away from this aspect of Holmes's character, though he did alter it. While published scripts list Doyle as coauthor of the play, it is clear that he had relinquished total control to Gillette.[46] Gillette's plot uses elements from the stories *The Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, and *A Scandal in Bohemia* along with a number of points of his own invention. The resultant play, entitled *Sherlock Holmes; or the Strange Case of Miss Faulkner*, involves Holmes tracking down a parcel of letters containing evidence of a love affair between a prince and a young woman who has recently died. The titular Alice Faulkner is the woman's sister, and she becomes a potential love interest for Holmes. The play also features Holmes's nemesis, Professor Moriarty, who seeks the letters as he attempts to orchestrate Holmes's murder. *Sherlock Holmes*, which debuted in Buffalo and quickly moved to New York's Garrick Theatre, came to define Gillette's career. He became the embodiment of the detective, playing the part more than 1,300 times in the US and internationally over thirty years. The *Hartford Courant* reports in 1930 that Gillette is Holmes "incarnadine [*sic*]," and that illustrators who want to draw an image of Sherlock simply touch up a portrait of Gillette.[47]

Gillette introduces Holmes's drug use in the second act of the play. At home with Watson, Holmes prepares a hypodermic needle of a cocaine solution and injects it into his wrist, potentially the earliest use of the medical tool on stage. Though cocaine was legal at the time

and a real push for its regulation did not begin until 1906 in the US, Gillette seems to recognize the dramatic potential in staging drug use. The script calls for music to accent the onstage injection with "[a] weird bar or two—keeping on a strange pulsation on one note for cocaine bus[iness]."[48] In writing the original story, Doyle was using his knowledge as a physician to give Holmes an eccentric vice, a feature of the detective's special knowledge of chemicals, anatomy, and the sciences. Gillette's performance may have similarly capitalized on the spectacle of cutting-edge science.

Watson asks Holmes whether he is using cocaine or morphine in this particular instance. The exchange is worth quoting at length:

HOLMES: Cocaine, my dear fellow. I'm back to my old love. A seven per cent solution: Would you like to try some?
WATSON: (*Emphatically—rise*). Certainly *not.*
HOLMES: (*As if surprised*) Oh! I'm sorry!
WATSON: I have no wish to break *my* system down before its time.
HOLMES: Quite right, my dear Watson—quite right—but, you see, my time has come. (*Goes to the mantel and replaces case thereon. Throws himself languidly into chesterfield and leans back in luxurious enjoyment of the drug.*)
WATSON: Holmes, for months I have seen you using these deadly drugs—in ever-increasing doses. When they lay hold of you there is no end. It must go on, and on—until the finish.
HOLMES: (*Lying back dreamily*) So must you go on and on eating your breakfast—until the finish.
WATSON: (*Approaching Holmes*) Breakfast is food. These drugs are poisons—slow but certain. They involve tissue changes of a most *serious* nature.
HOLMES: Just what I want. I'm bored to death with my present tissues, and I'm trying to get a brand new lot.
WATSON: (*Going near Holmes—putting hands on Holmes' shoulder*) Ah, Holmes—I'm trying to save you.
HOLMES: (*Earnest at once—place right hand on Watson's arm*) You can't do it, old fellow—so don't waste your time.[49]

A collectible booklet from 1900 that relates the play's narrative in fourteen images includes a full-page rendering of Gillette as Holmes with the syringe while Watson looks on with a scowl.[50] Gillette stares off into the distance, expectantly poised in the moment before the rush of pleasure (figure 10). Its inclusion in the booklet signals the importance of the moment to the play and to Gillette's interpretation of the character. Watson's objections to Holmes's drug use are medical rather than moral, based on what he believes the narcotics are doing to Holmes's organs, and, as the dialogue makes clear, Holmes is aware that his drug use will eventually kill him. He meets the fact that "his time has come" by revealing a zeal for his own death. This drive is as much a part of his nature, he notes, as the need to eat breakfast and its conclusion no more consequential to him than the end of the meal. For Gillette's Holmes, drugs become a way to tempt that end. They provide a momentary and metaphoric experience of death, a euphoria that borders on complete evaporation.

Conti has meticulously reconstructed Gillette's performance of Sherlock while under the influence, detailing how the actor signified this moment "through a brief bout of languidness and lingering blurred vision," which then feeds his energy as he starts on his next case.[51] Gillette's performance of drug use follows a De Quincean model of intoxication in which, according to Andrew Smith, narcotics stimulate "rational thought, even as it alienates the subject from 'reality.'"[52] Gillette inherited this connection, at least in part, from Doyle's original. Doyle knew De Quincey's work well, having referenced it in stories throughout his oeuvre, including the Holmes mystery *The Man with the Twisted Lip* (1891), which details an opium den in the opening pages.[53] De Quincey explains that the use of narcotics "introduces the most exquisite order, legislation, and harmony" to mental faculties, and, while one is under the influence, "the moral affections are in a state of cloudless serenity; and overall is the great light of the majestic intellect."[54] He seemingly legitimizes opium use in the name of a Kantian ascension of sublime moral reason. The only proxy that Holmes finds for the sublimity of narcotics is the stimulation he experiences during one of his investigations. Excited by the Faulkner mystery, Sherlock explains to Watson, "It saves me any number of doses of

FIGURE 10. "William Gillette as Sherlock Holmes as produced at the Garrick Theatre, New York," New York: R. H. Russell, 1900. Courtesy of HathiTrust.

those deadly drugs upon which you occasionally favour me with your medical views! My whole life is spent in a series of frantic endeavours to escape from the dreary commonplaces of existence! For a brief period I escape! You should congratulate me!"[55] Unlike Baudelaire and Chambers's Harold Wynn, Holmes has no interest in paradisal flight, oneiric inspiration, or the experience of celestial harmony. Rather, he seeks either the placation of his hyperactive mind with pleasure or the full activation of his mental capacities through rigorous industry.

Significantly, both the stimulant of narcotics and the stimulant of detective work move Holmes toward the same end. Just as Holmes admits that his cocaine injections will eventually kill him, he admits that the Faulkner mystery will likely end in his death. Deciding to take the case, he muses:

> HOLMES: Oh well! What does it matter? Life is a small affair at the most—a little while—a few sunrises and sunsets—the warm breath of a few summers—the cold chill of a few winters—
> WATSON: And then—?
> HOLMES: And then.[56]

His patent acceptance evinces a poetic morbidity that contains inklings of Hamlet (which incidentally was Gillette's follow-up role after the premiere of Holmes). When not submitting to narcotic deterioration, Holmes's drive for discovery satisfies an identical criterion—the activities are constituent parts of a dichotomy in which sublime cognition matches sublime intoxication, both leading to Holmes's demise. His embrace of death by either means signals Holmes's desire for total detachment from the world. It is an amplifying of his disdain for the corporeal, the bureaucratic, and the bourgeoise morality of the rank and file. These make up "the dreary commonplaces of existence" he so dearly wants to escape. His addiction, like his work, is physically degrading, but it serves (paradoxically) to elevate him above the normality he dreads. His drug use, and his refusal to apologize for it, may be the most profound expression of Holmes's famous iconoclasm.

This reading of Holmes's drug use in the play reorients the critiques that find his enjoyment of narcotics contradictory to his embodiment

of a Victorian ideal. Scholars and fans celebrate Holmes as a paragon of ratiocination and empiricism. Watson famously describes him as the "most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has ever seen."[57] Because of this, some have rejected the possibility of Holmes's drug addiction. In the 1930s, G. F. McCleary asserted that it was a complicated ruse and Holmes was just "pulling Watson's leg," and in the 1970s W. H. Miller simply asserted that "the facts are against it."[58] These acts of selective denial treat Holmes as a historical figure whose biography must be explained rather than interpreted. However, his addiction does seem to contradict the vision of him as a restorative for an estranged Victorian masculinity, what Anna Neil calls "an antidotal influence to the aimlessness and excessiveness of Nordau's *fin de siècle*."[59] And yet, the play actually makes Holmes's dedication to a masculine rationality dependent upon his use of narcotics.

Though Moriarty typically functions as Holmes's archrival, Gillette centers much of the drama on the possibility of a relationship between Holmes and Faulkner. Adapting Doyle's stories into the melodramatic form, Gillette transforms Faulkner from a con artist featured in *Scandal in Bohemia* into an innocent girl. The insertion of a romance for Holmes may have satisfied genre standards, but it also provoked complaint. The *Washington Post* reviewer notes, "Passion is rather an unexplored field for Mr. Holmes, and it is a queer sensation to hear this cocaine-soaked, hard, cold, reasoning, and self-possessed man make love to a pretty girl."[60] Imagining Holmes's famous self-possession as incompatible with romantic excitement is common. The Victorian perception of women was that they were decidedly irrational, thus posing a threat to Holmes's analytical exploits and his homosocial milieu. The novels make Holmes's misogyny blatant, positioning it as a necessary byproduct of his single-minded genius.[61] But Gillette's play is forthright in admitting that the detective has desires.[62] When Watson brings up the possibility of a life with Faulkner, Holmes insists: "You mustn't tempt me—with such a thought. That girl!—young—exquisite—just beginning her sweet life—I—seared, drugged, poisoned, almost at an end! No! no! I must cure her! I must stop it, now—while there's time!"[63] This is not the corrective heteronormativity that safely

concludes *John-a-Dreams*, nor is it the misogyny of the novels. Rather, Holmes's relationship with Faulkner becomes the final string with the material world that he must cut. Holmes's drug use, as a representation of his acceptance of death and his rejection of Victorian norms (including those of reproductivity and family), is actually in service to his allegiance to ratiocination as it enables or even forces his full detachment from corporeal and material desire.

This detachment links Holmes to the bohemian modernists that saw De Quincey as a forefather. Berridge argues that "[t]he 'new aesthetics' of the 1890s rested on a denial of society, a retreat into the individual with an emphasis on separation and inner consciousness and experience, rather than the vulgar materialism of the external world."[64] Much like Holmes, Decadent writers such as Symons and Dowson enacted this denial through their attempts to "remain uncontaminated by the vulgarity, triviality and leveling materialism of worldly society."[65] Daniel Cottom specifically notes that Holmes is like Baudelaire in that he is "one who could not rest satisfied with the pleasures of ordinary life and so must seek out new sensations, whether these be in the world of art inimical to middle-class values or in the dissipations associated with the lives of artists, including indulgence in drugs."[66] Though Baudelaire was intrigued with complete submission to pleasure (a characteristic perhaps more fully embodied by another literary character and drug user, Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray), Holmes seeks to rid himself of sensuality for the sake of unencumbered cerebral activity. The ultimate stimulation comes within range when Holmes is no longer concerned for his survival.

Holmes's obsession with death corresponds to Walter Benjamin's notion of suicide as modern man's greatest act of resistance. Developed in his analysis of Baudelaire's work, Benjamin's argument is that

> the resistance that modernity offers to the productive élan of an individual is out of all proportion to his strength. It is understandable if a person becomes exhausted and takes refuge in death. Modernity must stand under the sign of suicide, an act which seals a heroic will that makes no concession to a mentality

> inimical toward this will. Suicide is not resignation but heroic passion. It is *the* achievement of modernity in the realm of passions.[67]

Holmes consolidates his strength through the stimulation and mental sharpness provided by narcotics, but such a state is unsustainable, serving only as a stopgap. Modeling Benjamin's modern hero, Holmes eventually acquiesces to death as an ultimate expression of individuality. It is a rebellion that makes the bohemian into a "pulp version of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Übermensch*" who rejects the dominant social order for the sake of reaching his potential.[68] Embracing death—whether in its fully realized form or in the symbolic form of drug use—becomes an act of resistance against the repressive irrationality and inimical materiality of modern society. Unsurprisingly, Doyle has Holmes enact such self-sacrifice for the sake of a Kantian intellectual and moral triumph—killing himself and his criminal antipode, Moriarty, with the famous leap from Reichenbach Falls in the 1893 story *The Adventure of the Final Problem*.[69] Gillette's play dramatizes not the detective's death, but, analogously, his release from life.

Gillette's Sherlock set a standard for renderings of the famous detective for generations to come. Gillette's script became the basis for John Barrymore's 1922 film. Though the film excises the use of a syringe, Holmes's sacrifice of love for the sake of cerebral preeminence remains. This tempering of Holmes's drug use in later adaptations was not unusual. Censors edited Basil Rathbone's performance as Holmes in the film *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1939), cutting his reference to his syringe at the film's conclusion ("Oh, Watson, the needle!").[70] Jeremy Brett's Holmes of the 1980s and 1990s restores his drug use, performing it as a kind of giggling hyperactivity. More recently, the modern BBC series (2010–2017) that reimagined Holmes in present-day London embraced the character's drug use. There, Holmes, played by Benedict Cumberbatch, struggles with a deepening substance abuse problem, significantly enhanced by the show's mix of cinematic hyperrealism and fantasticality. The series replaces Holmes's bohemianism with a hipsterish irony, but his drug use cre-

ates the same double-edged commentary on his brilliance. The series maintains Holmes's suicidal willingness to risk his life for a moment of sublime intellectual mastery (rephrased in the modern parlance of "avoiding boredom"). CBS's series *Elementary* (2012–2019) dedicates entire plotlines to the drug use of its Holmes character, depicting him struggling through Narcotics Anonymous meetings and relapsing. There, too, Holmes can only balance his narcotic experiences with the highs of detective work.

Sherlock Holmes's evergreen popularity may come from the fact that, as a character definitive of the modern age, he contains the oppositions that define that age. Though his detective work upholds the standards of morality and justice, Holmes disdains such institutionalized conventionality, nurturing what Diana Barsham calls his own internal "lawlessness and illegality."[71] Holmes refuses to buy into the pettiness of bourgeois rectitude, even as he defends it from dark forces.[72] In the fulfillment of his brilliant potential, this subversive impulse manifests a desire for fragmentation and alienation accomplished through his addictions. With Holmes, his self-destruction is an act of self-actualization.

THE ADDICT AS VAMPIRE

Arnold Bennett's stage adaptation of his novel *Sacred and Profane Love* (1904) begins with a famous pianist seducing a young woman.[73] Of the pianist, Emilio Diaz, the first act reveals that he is perhaps the greatest living interpreter of Chopin, that he feels trapped by his lonely existence on tour, and that he occasionally takes morphine to quell the pain that remains from a past illness (a trait pulled from De Quincey's biography). Of the maiden, Carlotta, audiences learn only that she is twenty-one, an orphan, and that she has promise as a writer. At a seemingly trivial moment in the opening act, Bennett secures one of his central themes. When Carlotta, who is passionately taken with the grandness of Diaz, cuts into a piece of cake that was for the pianist, she realizes with a shock, "Why it's only jam roly-poly with sugar on it!"[74] Roly-poly was a cheap dessert favored by schoolchildren that could be made on the quick. Running throughout *Sacred and Profane Love*

is the idea that what lies beneath is deceptive, corrupted, and lacking substance. The play expresses this motif through numerous metaphors similar to this culinary one.

The second act begins seven years later and finds Carlotta living in London as a successful novelist. She learns that Diaz has fallen from favor and become a hopeless morphine addict, living in a furnished flat on "a dubious street in Paris."[75] She drops everything and tracks him down, finding him destitute and raving. After he accidentally tries to shoot her in his mania, she pledges her life to him. Nearly a year later, Diaz is cured and on the verge of a comeback, which he solidifies with a triumphant first concert. In the final scene, Diaz considers leaving Carlotta, but returns at the last moment to pledge his love and ask for her hand.

Sacred and Profane Love opened in London in 1919 to lackluster reviews. The plot seemed tepid and contrived to most critics. However, David Belasco teamed with Charles Frohman to bring the work to New York. For the part of Carlotta, Belasco was able to secure Elsie Ferguson, who had been a major draw in the past, but had left the stage for film fame. Interestingly, her previous stage success had been in Hubert Henry Davies's *Outcast* (1914), in which she played a low-class girl who reforms her aristocrat lover of his drug addiction. That play was a commentary on love across class divisions. In Bennett's play she essentially revitalized her role except that Carlotta is a more refined character, exploiting Ferguson's celebrated mix of gentility and girlish beauty. Ferguson also starred in the film version of Bennett's play a year later.

Reception in the US was similar to that in Britain. The greatest acclaim went to José Ruben as Diaz, who received high marks for his "forceful, distinguished and flawless performance as the morphine addict."[76] His ability to depict the "tortured nerves, and degraded body" of the addict in the throes of his cravings pleased audiences both in New York and on tour.[77] A review from the *Sun and New York Herald* clarifies that the play's design prompted Ruben's performance to be the central draw, noting, "The artistic temperament was, perhaps, the dominating theme of this latest drama, and maybe for that reason the profane seemed to predominate over the sacred when it came to

loving."[78] *Sacred and Profane Love* is primarily an exploration of the creative impulse and its vampiric nature as Diaz's ability to create depends on the strength he receives from others in the form of adoration and sacrifice.

His relationship with Carlotta is parasitic from its beginning. Playing for her in the first scene, Diaz is stunned by the way his music affects the young woman. The music so moves her that she begs him to stop playing and offers herself as a receptive "vase" for his art.[79] At the height of this sexually charged exchange, Diaz expresses his desire to consummate their passion:

> DIAZ: Listen! I will tell you something mysterious and inexplicable. The most beautiful things and the most vital things and the most lasting things—come suddenly.
> CARLOTTA: I am helpless.
> DIAZ: You! With your character! It is your strength that I have envied . . . . Give it to me.[80]

Diaz's request defines the sexual act in which they engage as a transfer of strength. However, he cannot fully enact this transfer until years later, as Carlotta flees his bed at dawn. The immediate result of their lovemaking is, as Carlotta explains it, that she is "transformed into a woman."[81] Her empowerment and newfound confidence contrast the slow decline that Diaz experiences in her absence.

Diaz's addiction is the result of his vampiric nature. The portrayal of addicts as vampires was not novel, as the two share numerous characteristics. Scholars often interpret Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, for example, as manifesting a concern over British racial and cultural decline, similar to narratives concerning addiction.[82] Popular imagery in the US often used a similar iconography to represent addicts, drug pushers, and vampires, while newspapers and reformers consistently applied phrases like "the living dead" to both vampires and drug users.[83] For Diaz, morphine serves as an insufficient surrogate for a proper victim as the artificial stimulant has little yield save for his own disintegration. Due to his vampiric nature, Diaz cannot sustain himself without another life providing him with sustenance.

Like Harold Wynn's poem that is "stained with a weakness," the art

that Diaz produces under the influence of drugs suffers. As Derrida argues, drugs generate "a pleasure taken in an experience without truth."[84] This trope betrays a clear bias against inauthentic states of alterity in the artistic process, and similar accusations were leveled at Baudelaire and the Decadents. When Carlotta chooses to stand between Diaz and the object of his addiction, she inadvertently becomes the fuel for his vampiric need. Her love is an authentic source of inspiration. As she says, "You've always lived alone. It has been morphine or nothing. But I am here now, I am the alternative. I will be your morphine."[85] She steps in as the substance that gives him strength, but unlike morphine, which exchanges euphoria for the addict's vitality, Diaz can sap Carlotta of her spirit without suffering his own physical or spiritual impost. The exchange begins almost immediately. As the two are fleeing Diaz's decrepit flat, Carlotta suddenly notes, "Oh, I feel so weak!" to which Diaz responds, "You're giving your strength to me."[86]

Bennett does not dramatize the struggle to free Diaz of his addiction, though there are hints of the "terror," "vileness," and "humiliations" that Carlotta suffers while trying to cure him.[87] What is clear is that in the year that Carlotta rebuilds Diaz's strength, she has ceased to write, lost any inspiration, and is nearly financially destitute. Diaz's exploitation of Carlotta eventually evolves into an attempt to destroy her. In the moment before Diaz leaves for his first concert, he requests that she not join him, effectively robbing Carlotta of any fruits of her labor, keeping her from both his art and the public recognition as the architect of his rebirth. Carlotta lets him go, and though he returns in triumph, he then moves to leave her again in order to savor his success among high society. Even then Carlotta is powerless to stop him. "You're a g-g-great artist—again. And—g-g-great artists must not apologize. Don't you remember I said to you—that night—that artists like you were autocrats."[88] Her earlier reference to Diaz as an "autocrat" comes at their first meeting, and it indicates the tyrannical nature of his talents to reduce the autonomy of those who experience his art.[89] Diaz's control over Carlotta is a solipsistic (if not misogynistic) absorption of essence.

Diaz's return to propose marriage at the final moment is a departure from Bennett's original novel, in which he leaves the country with-

out Carlotta and she suddenly dies of appendicitis. The book closes with her obituary, which significantly does not list Diaz as one of the mourners present at her funeral.[90] In this, his full return to power concludes with her total obliteration. Like Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes*, the shift to the dramatic medium leads to a focus on romantic possibility. The *New York Times* fittingly referred to Bennett's new plot point as a "revenue stamp" to end the play.[91] However, the script ends with a telling moment. Diaz returns and declares, "You see this man and this artist standing in front of you, . . . you created him. He's all yours." He embraces Carlotta, and, held in his arms, she closes the drama, uttering: "He doesn't know his strength. (*lightly*) He's hurting my wrists dreadfully."[92] The line of dialogue infers the continuity of Diaz's destructive appetite. He will proceed to feed off of Carlotta, sapping her life force for the sake of his vampiric nature. Carlotta's final line infantilizes the artist, solidifying her in the position of a mother suckling a child with an inexhaustible appetite. The play presents artistic creation as deeply tied to concepts of addiction, in which dependence shifts from one substance to another. The artist-muse relationship parallels that of the addict and his drug.

Bennett's vision of the artist is not unique. Somerset Maugham's novel *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919) follows a self-destructive painter who seeks inspiration through self-deprivation in the form of penury, drug addiction, and illness. His masterpiece only comes at his death when he has forsaken all. Maugham based his novel on romanticized accounts of Paul Gauguin, whose abuse of those around him was supposedly part of his artistic temperament. A stage adaptation of the novel, called *Great Music*, found middling success in 1924.[93] The playwright, Martin Brown, turns Maugham's painter into a composer like Diaz. Perhaps Brown not only found music more dramatic on stage, but considered the musician a more delicate conduit through which inspiration flows. Dickens's John Jasper, in the unfinished *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, was also a musician before losing his mind in opium dens. The repetition of these themes and characters evinces the broad application of addiction as a central metaphor in artistic creation. In each, the individual is incapable of self-sustenance and, at the same time, yoked with an unquenchable craving—oppositional conditions

similar to those faced by Harold Wynn and Holmes. Other than creative excellence, the artist can only engage in momentary, isolated, and inauthentic experiences of becoming—the oppression of another person, the shot of morphine. As such experiences are impossible to maintain or extend, the formation of self becomes a process of repetitive consumption. Bennett's play uses the trope of addiction to manifest this consumption as a psychic impulse within the artist to destroy in the act of creation.

With the birth of the Bright Young Things in the UK and the flappers in the US, Bennett's play missed the mark. The growing popularity of cocaine and marijuana as party drugs among the well-heeled reconfigured the notion of self-destructive drug use in a post–World War I era. Diaz's tale was likely priggish for uptown audiences of the period. However, the dichotomies that this chapter explores remain to an extent. Writers of the 1920s, especially novelists, revealed the confusion, anger, and morbidity that hid beneath a period that was supposedly defined by ebullience. F. Scott Fitzgerald, Evelyn Waugh, Edith Wharton, and many others explored what John Lucas calls the "arid hedonism of the Bright Young Things" and "the deeper decadence of a society living out its final days."[94] Nöel Coward's plays, especially *The Vortex*, find drama in the hidden vapidity of those that appear to embody the vivacity of the moment.[95] The flappers' attempts to test their capacity for pleasure appear frequently as a form of self-destruction that shares something with the actions of the characters discussed in this chapter. But the context had changed as the debauchery of the roaring twenties more specifically served to cope with the overwhelming loss of life in the First World War. The party may have been a release, but it may also reflect the impossibility of sufficiently mourning such ruination. Similarly, it was part of a somber recognition that the great progresses of the modern age had led to the death of a generation of men, particularly in the UK. As Clej notes, "modernity mourns not only the loss (of the self or of the immediacy of experience), but also its very inability to mourn."[96] Though pulp versions of gangsters and criminals dominated theatrical representation, there were writers who made drug use a signifier of widespread sorrow during this postwar malaise.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the theatre helped to formulate the figure of the addict-artist in the American imaginary by propagating an accumulation of literary tropes. Constant across representational practice was that the De Quincean man of genius experiences addiction's mix of pleasure and pain. He does so as an internalization of the existential conflict between the singular generative creator and the crushing nature of the modern experience. Self-destruction became a paradigmatic trait of innovators; it is a price seemingly demanded of those who live above and beyond the quotidian of modern existence. Over the next century, artists such as Jean Cocteau, John Coltrane, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Jim Morrison wore the mantle of the addict-artist, and representations of these figures have tied their addictions to their creative genius.[97] The various interpretations of the condition outlined in this chapter filter into later portrayals of exceptional artists and creators, communicating complex metaphors around notions of creativity, nonconformity, and modern subjecthood.

EPILOGUE LOOKING BACK AT A *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY*

When I discuss with colleagues my research on performances of addiction, O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* inevitably enters the conversation. The play looms large for many performance scholars as the apotheosis of addiction onstage. After six chapters exploring the mass of archival material that exists *outside* of this play, it may seem natural to conclude with it. Though *Long Day's Journey* was not produced until 1956, O'Neill's writing of it in 1941 effectively caps this study as it marks a moment just before the seismic disruptions of the Second World War and a shift in addict identity in the US. And yet, my inclusion of the play is more to clarify that it represents an anomaly rather than a culmination in its application of addiction in dramatic form. Scholars and audiences should celebrate and explore this work, but need to check the impulse to consider it definitive or conclusive in this particular capacity. Here, I attempt to clarify how this iconic work realistically fits into the history I have spelled out in the last six chapters. To do so, I begin with an explicit analysis of the distinctive way that *Long Day's Journey* theatricalizes the condition of addiction. It is an opportunity to activate the heuristic process I have attempted to establish through the numerous case studies in this book. Prompted by this impulse to examine the potential reverberations of this study's argument, I additionally use the epilogue to step back and summarize what this work might mean for future scholarship, performance, and activism.

Written in 1941 and set in 1912, Eugene O'Neill's tragic story of the Tyrone family hinges around the return to morphine use by the matriarch, Mary.[1] Mary embodies an addict of a former age: a housewife of upper-middle-class status, introduced to morphine to quell her

pain after childbirth. She maintains her habit through local physicians while her family scrambles to hide her condition. As I noted in the introduction, though this female iatrogenic addict was the most common drug user in the nineteenth century, she was never a familiar stage presence. Mary's status as a mother makes her kindred to both Jacqueline from *Madame X* and Fanny from *Red Light Annie*, but the standard linkage of drug use to sexual prurience, as seen in both Jacqueline's infidelities and Fanny's time as a prostitute, is not part of O'Neill's drama. Similarly, while Mary complains constantly about the physicians she holds responsible for her condition, O'Neill shows no interest in the politics of narcotic control that were part of reform-minded works of the 1910s about dope doctors. O'Neill is not interested in the drug menace as a social or political issue. Instead, the playwright uses addiction to express an existential worldview that defines his later works.

In doing so, O'Neill deploys addiction within the dramatic form in an entirely novel way. He mechanizes morphine as a form of mental time travel. Each shot that Mary administers in the haunted upper floors of the Tyrone house transports her further into the past. As she notes, her aim is to "go back until at last you are beyond [pain's] reach. Only the past when you were happy is real."[2] As her dread over her son Edmund's tuberculosis grows, she searches for a moment free from pain, guilt, or shame. She finds this calm in a time before she married James Tyrone, before her life in cheap motels, before her rheumatic hands, before the loss of her second child to measles, and before the embarrassment of her profligate sons. As John Henry Raleigh puts it, "The morphine is a road back to that virginal childhood and her 'Long Day's Journey into Night' is a psychological regression into her convent days."[3]

Mary's struggle echoes De Quincey's. In taking laudanum De Quincey could reexperience pivotal moments from his past. His hallucinations reshaped memories in terms of perspective, atmosphere, and detail. De Quincey embraced the palimpsest as a metaphor that expressed how hallucinations could write over personal history with new and evolving images. Virginia Woolf's 1932 essay on De Quincey's writing wonders that he is capable "of realizing how one moment may

transcend in value fifty years."[4] Just as De Quincey's prose swells with memories, Mary compulsively refashions her past to suit her idyllic retellings. Mediation for them both comes in the form of opium, which enables them to embody and refract specified moments. Mary joins the likes of Marcel Proust in an obsessive attempt to recapture the past. And, like these predecessors, Mary confronts the treacherous and untenable nature of memory.

Just as the addict can never achieve satisfaction and is plagued with the inevitable low that will follow a high, Mary is condemned to return to the present. This cyclical nature of addiction, moving from pain to pleasure to pain, suffuses the play's dramaturgy. Famous for his maintenance of Aristotelian unities of action, time, and place, O'Neill finds in the cyclical nature of addiction an additional unity that shapes the arc and action of the play. The play most profoundly manifests this in the final scene. Approaching midnight, the three Tyrone men have finally hit rock bottom after a night of endless arguing. Sitting drunkenly in their dark living room, trapped in a setting that resembles a tomb, they can hear Mary stirring in the rooms above, lost in a haze of morphine. Having aired their cases against each other, the men sit weighted with regret, about to take one last drink that will plunge them into a safe, drunken stupefaction. But before they can tip the glass, Mary appears.

O'Neill's stage directions describe her face as "uncanny" in that "experience seems ironed out of it. It is a marble mask of girlish innocence, the mouth caught in a shy smile."[5] As the men sit, mired in drink and sadness, Mary begins a monologue about the moment she felt the calling to become a nun. For her, it recalls a moment of perfection, before all the disappointments and heartbreaks that she later experiences. This moment of anamnesis, however, does not last. As she closes the monologue:

> (*She pauses and a look of growing uneasiness comes over her face. She passes a hand over her forehead as if brushing cobwebs from her brain—vaguely*) That was the winter of senior year. Then in the spring something happened to me. Yes, I remember. I fell in love with James Tyrone and was so happy for a time. (*She stares*

before her in a sad dream. Tyrone stirs in his chair. Edmund and Jamie remain motionless.)[6]

In this final moment of the play, O'Neill signals that Mary's return to the present and to her nagging pain is inevitable. Following the cyclical nature of addiction, this final line marks the start of her trip back. Mary will proceed forward from this moment of immaculate innocence, marking in succession the part that Tyrone, Jamie, and Edmund have had in her deterioration. As Tyrone says when he first realizes she has relapsed, "Every day from now on, there'll be the same drifting away from us until by the end of each night."[7] Stymied by Mary's speech and its implications, the men lower their drinks, also robbed of their moment of oblivion that would have meant freedom from pain or memory. Directing this final moment in 1971, Michael Blakemore dropped the curtain after Mary's last line as "a cut not a fade [. . .] to suggest that the story had not ended," but that the cycle would continue beyond the time that the audience witnessed.[8]

O'Neill leaves his family in a state of living death in a deterministic world where moral definitives are impossible to demarcate. An aching desire for peace produces not solace, but the long, repetitive howl that this drama represents. The absence of possible transcendence reflects O'Neill's embrace of a Nietzschean belief in God's absence. This works hand in hand with the malignant will that Schopenhauer, as O'Neill's other chief influence, envisions as dominating human motivation.[9] Through these philosophies, O'Neill interprets the ontological disinheritance that comes with modern existence as a source for tragedy. Regarding O'Neill's adoption of classical unities, Westgate asks, "Could the inherited paradigm of tragedy, which depended upon this closed form, sufficiently represent the profound sense of loss borne of modernism?"[10] Westgate finds the fulfillment of this potential in the unresolved ending of *Long Day's Journey*, in which the family survives maimed by the past and yet with an insatiable compulsion to relive it. Profoundly encapsulating this haunting of the family, Mary claims, "The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future, too."[11] O'Neill creates this impossibility of catharsis through his adoption, in both theme and structure, of addiction as a dramatic motif.

Though the influence of *Long Day's Journey* on the US theatrical landscape should not be underestimated, its treatment of addiction is not part of its patrimony, and I challenge its past prominence among representations of drug use. Theatrical and filmic representations moving forward do not widely reproduce O'Neill's vision of drug use as mnemonic trigger or his employment of addiction as a structuring device.[12] The extended period between 1890 and 1940 produced a broad range of other representational paradigms that were far more influential on later performances and perceptions. Within this canon, the addict remains a figure tied to questions of race, gender, sexuality, and nationality, while drug use remains a thematic device used to test a culture's capacities for redemption, forgiveness, and tolerance. Depictions across media also continue to intimately tie the addict to legislative, medical, artistic, and philosophical trends. As a result, the characterization of the addict as foreign, criminal, insane, and unrepentant repeats over and again in new contexts, maintaining so many of the biases and accusations of the past.

Challenging these oppressive edifices, scholars and activists must consider not only the abundant archival material and influential legacies of the fifty years this study covers, but the endlessly fecund territory in the years after World War II. Consider the potential of examining the representations of drug use and addiction that existed alongside the sexual revolution of the 1960s, the return of addicted Vietnam War veterans, the launching of the War on Drugs, the arrival of the crack epidemic, the AIDS epidemic, the methamphetamine epidemic, the push to legalize marijuana, and the spread of opioid addiction among veterans of our military's Middle East conflicts. One might ask: How did the arrival of second-wave feminism, postmodernism, and queer theory as analytical, philosophical, and artistic movements engage with the condition of addiction, much as early-century modernists did? How might notions of intersectionality complicate these questions, when considering that certain populations may respond to and engage with drug use in different ways?

With a growing willingness to come to terms with the magnitude of this nation's struggles with narcotics, some contemporary artists have sought new representational ground. Quiara Alegría Hudes's

Water by the Spoonful (2011) considers the way that the experience of addiction creates new family models and interpersonal relationships, all while embracing the idea that addiction knows no race, class, or gender boundaries. Lynn Nottage's *Sweat* (2015) takes a hard look at the economic and social circumstances that propagate drug use in working-class communities. Joining these is a new wave of plays focused on not only addiction, but recovery, including Sean Daniels's *The White Chip* (2016), Craig Lucas's *I Was Most Alive with You* (2018), and Catya McMullen's *Georgia Mertching Is Dead* (2019). These works point to the possibility of life after substance abuse as a new paradigm in addict representation.

Though these depictions of recovery are promising, they are still rare. In the US representational landscape, not only are portrayals of recovered addicts unusual, but there remains little room for a difference between a drug user and a hopeless drug addict. To use drugs, especially some of the "harder" narcotics, is to be an addict. This implies a maintenance of the nineteenth-century concept of temporality—an absolutism regarding narcotics in which any use automatically carries with it the loss of self, the psychosis, promiscuity, and violence intrinsic in perceptions of "addictedness." What this means is that, still today, drug addiction serves as a shorthand for corruptness. Addicts are characters entirely defined by and fixed in their condition. Addiction retains its status as a narrative device that marks an individual as broken and subhuman. This fact clarifies the unshakable nature of the addict's position in US entertainment.

However, I believe the US faces a significant moment in its relationship to drug use, one that presents opportunity. There is an intense desire to stem the proliferating opioid crisis. There is a growing recognition that narcotic regulations are to blame for skyrocketing incarceration rates. Calls for an end to the wide-ranging War on Drugs sound louder than ever in the courts and in the press. At the time of this writing, ongoing protests are demanding reform of US police departments, including a call for changes in the way authorities enforce drug laws. States around the country are considering the legalization of marijuana, a radical idea only a few years ago. However, turning this pipe dream into a reality will require more. Recognizing the injustices

embedded in our nation's drug policy can only have lasting impact if our perception of the problem changes. After more than a century of vilification, perception is a primary barrier to the reformation of national institutions of correction and treatment. Calls for sympathy are not the same as a fundamental reorientation of standard images of substance abuse, its causes, and its consequences. Such work requires a direct attack upon the biases and fabrications of the last century and a half.

I hope that scholars, artists, and activists will join me in the work of promoting a new kind of thinking, perhaps beginning within our own discipline of performance and theatre studies. Scholars can propagate a new critical practice regarding performances of drug users and addicts, similar to the discourse around performances of race, gender, and sexuality. In an effort to repudiate convention, there is a need to make questions about authenticity and progressive social action requisite in the creation and evaluation of representations of the addict. There are opportunities to unmake so many of our axiomatic beliefs regarding the condition of addiction. Scholars can urge recognition of the addict, multifarious as that identity is, as an underrepresented and marginalized figure in need of allyship. My hope is that *The American Pipe Dream* enables such revision and reevaluation.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: THE GATEWAY

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12. Jonathan Arac, *Critical Genealogies: Historical Situations for Postmodern Literary Studies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 2.

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17. David Courtwright, *Dark Paradise: Opiate Addiction in America before 1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 3.

18. See Kai Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (London: Wiley and Sons, 1966).

19. Peter Conrad and Joseph W. Schneider, *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 2.

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21. Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 58.

22. Numerous scholars studying both addiction and US culture in general at the turn of the century make this assertion. See Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Thin Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin, 1988); Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007); Timothy Hickman, "Double Meaning of Addiction: Habitual Narcotic Use and the Logic of Professionalizing Medical Authority in the United States, 1900–1920," in *Altering American Consciousness: The History of Alcohol and Drug Use in the United States, 1800–2000*, eds. Caroline Jean Acker and Sarah W. Tracy (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004).

23. Hickman, "Double Meaning," 184.

24. Throughout, bracketed ellipses signal author's inclusion, while unbracketed ellipses are in the original. Frank Dikötter, "Race Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics," *American Historical Review* 103, no. 2 (1998): 468.

25. Images showing addicts before and after they begin using drugs such as methamphetamine are standard fare in modern anti-drug campaigns.

They are supposed to demonstrate how the drug eats away the skin and leaves users emaciated. However, much evidence supports the fact that unhygienic lifestyles and poverty are the cause of the physical deterioration, rather than the drug itself.

26. Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 55.

27. The patent medicine industry produced nostrums such as Vin Mariana, a widely consumed cocaine-infused wine, and Dr. Buckland's Scotch Oats Essence, which was a "nerve and brain food tonic" laced with morphine that supposedly cured everything from paralysis and ovarian neuralgia to the opium habit. Like so much snake oil, these products were not only ineffective, but dangerous.

28. Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusement: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 43.

29. Caroline Jean Acker, *Creating the American Junkie* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 3.

30. The Committee of Fifteen was created in 1901 to help curb prostitution and gambling in New York City. The Bureau of Social Hygiene was founded a decade later and focused on the same "social ills." Both drew conclusions about the predominance of drug use and addiction as a driving factor in the sex industry.

31. Hamilton Wright, "Report from the United States of America," in *Report of the International Opium Commission, Shanghai, China, February 1 to February 26, 1909*, vol. 2 (Shanghai: *North-China Daily News and Herald*, 1909), 42.

32. Edward Marshall, "Uncle Sam Is the Worst Drug Fiend in the World," *New York Times*, March 12, 1911, SM12.

33. Andrew Dumez, "Some Facts Concerning Drug Addiction," TS 1918, Records of the United States Public Health Service, record group file 90, file 2123, National Archives, College Park, MD. Quoted in Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 30.

34. Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 9.

35. American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.dsm16.

36. Allen S. Williams, *The Demon of the Orient and His Satellite Fiends of the Joints: Our Opium Smokers as They Are in Tartar Hells and American Paradises* (New York: published by the author, 1883), 77 and 79.

37. Though Barbara Grossman's biography of Clara Morris argues that the actress's morphine addiction became part of the spectacle of her perfor-

mances in famous melodramas, she was not performing in plays concerning drug use. One might consider later performance such as Cheech and Chong's films or the presence of drug users on stage during the Living Theatre's production of *The Connection* as situations in which confirmed drug users were playing drug users.

38. Amy Hughes, in *Spectacles of Reform*, specifically focuses on the performances of William H. Smith in *The Drunkard* (1844), which she argues were enhanced by the audience's knowledge that he was a recovering alcoholic.

39. Meredith Conti, *Playing Sick: Performances of Illness in the Age of Victorian Medicine* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 90.

40. "Cocaine, the Curse of Chicago, Claiming Victims by Tens of Thousands," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 25, 1906.

41. John Frick, *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1.

42. David Musto argues that the Harrison Act had more to do with avoiding international embarrassment as the US took over the Philippines. There was a need to demonstrate exemplary domestic policy before castigating a colony for its intemperance. David Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 51; see also Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 4.

43. Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 6.

44. Campbell, *Discovering Addiction*, 63.

45. Alexander Woollcott, "The Ouija Board," *New York Times*, March 30, 1920.

46. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 130.

47. Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 167.

CHAPTER ONE: DEN DRAMAS

1. Harry Hubbell Kane, *Opium Smoking in America and China* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1882), 154.

2. Charles E. Terry and Mildred Pellens, *The Opium Problem* (New York: Bureau of Social Hygiene, 1928), 808.

3. Kane claims that the first white person to smoke opium in the US was a man named Clendenyn in California in 1868. Kane, *Opium Smoking*, 1.

4. W. S. Whitwell, "The Opium Habit," *Pacific Medical and Surgical Journal* 30 (June 1887): 329.

5. Earlier plays that expressed anti-Chinese sentiment were especially

popular on the West Coast. For example, Henry Grimm's *The Chines Must Go* made professional and amateur tours of California in the 1880s. These plays were more about the evils of Chinese laborers, lacking direct commentary on opium use or scenes set in dens.

6. Other plays that I qualify as opium den dramas include Charles Blaney and Charles Taylor's *King of the Opium Ring* (1896), Charles Blaney and J. J. Mcloskey's *Across the Pacific* (1900), Walter Campbell's *A Night in Chinatown* (1900), Theodore Kremer's *The Bowery after Dark* (1900), Charles Taylor's *From Rags to Riches* (1903) and *Tracked around the World* (1904), Kremer's *A Woman of Fire* (1906), Morgan Gibney's *Secrets of an Opium Den* (1905), Benjamin B. Vernon's *Slaves of Opium* (1905), James Kyrle MacCurdy's *The Old Clothes Man* (1906), Owen Davis's *Chinatown Charlie* (1906), Albert Woods and John Oliver's *Broadway after Dark* (1907), Hal Reid's *From Broadway to the Bowery* (1907), Thomas H. Sewell's *Kate Barton's Temptation* (1908), Owen Davis and Al Woods's *The Millionaire and the Policeman's Wife* (1908), Paul Armstrong's *A Romance of the Underworld* (1911), Walter Montague's *The Slave Girl* (1913), Leon Gordon and LeRoy Clemens's *The Poppy God* (1921), Clara Shepherd Reid's *The Opium Pan* (1925), and Hans Bachwitz's *The Love City* (1926).

7. For more on anti-Chinese sentiment after World War I, see Elliott Young's *Alien Nation: Chinese Migration in the Americas from the Coolie Era through World War II* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

8. John Seed, "Limehouse Blues: Looking for 'Chinatown' in the London Docks, 1900–40," *History Workshop Journal* 62, no. 1 (Autumn 2006): 69; Christopher Fraying, *Dr. Fu Manchu and the Rise of Chinaphobia* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2014), 87 and 101.

9. Marek Kohn, *Dope Girls: The Birth of the British Drug Underground* (London: Granta Books, 1992), 4–5.

10. J. Chris Westgate, *Staging the Slums, Slumming the Stage: Class, Poverty, Ethnicity, and Sexuality in American Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 27.

11. Ericka Lee, *The Making of Asian America: A History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), 59.

12. Chad Heap, *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885–1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 23.

13. Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 5–6.

14. Jim Baumohl, "The 'Dope Fiend's Paradise' Revisited: Notes from

Research in Progress on Drug Law Enforcement in San Francisco, 1875–1915," *The Surveyor* 24 (June 1992): 6.

15. William White, "The Lessons of Language: Historical Perspectives on the Rhetoric of Addiction," in Acker and Tracy, *Altering American Consciousness*, 49.

16. John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats's work *Yellow Peril! An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear* (New York: Verso, 2014) provides a compendium of examples that highlight this process by which images and narratives concerning Asians in the US snowball into wild conspiracies regarding the East's attempts to dominate the West.

17. Heap, *Slumming*, 23.

18. Benedict Giamo, *On the Bowery*: *Confronting Homelessness in American Society* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 31.

19. "The King of the Opium Ring," *Boston Daily Globe*, March 20, 1900, 9.

20. David Brody, *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 59.

21. "Hartford Opera House," *The Hartford Courant*, September 5, 1900. Other advertisements that mention or detail the locations featured in the plays include "King of the Opium Ring," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 9, 1910; "Queen of Chinatown," *Boston Daily Globe*, February 5, 1901; "King of the Opium Ring," *Boston Daily Globe*, March 5, 1899; "Queen of Chinatown," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 22, 1903; "Chinatown Charlie," *Hartford Courant*, March 7, 1906; "Queen of Chinatown," *Hartford Courant*, November 23, 1899.

22. *Secret Service* follows the exploits of the detectives Old and Young King Brady, who spend much of their time wending through Chinatown's secret passages. "The Bradys' Opium-Joint Case," *Secret Service*, no. 120 (May 10, 1901); "The Bradys and the Opium Ring; Or, The Clew in Chinatown," *Secret Service*, no. 170 (April 25, 1902).

23. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 188.

24. Seed, "Limehouse Blues," 76.

25. Edward Ziter, *The Orient on the Victorian Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5.

26. Ruth Mayer, "The Glittering Machine of Modernity: The Chinatown in American Silent Film," *Modernism/modernity* 16, no. 4 (November 2009): 672; Sabine Haenni, *The Immigrant Scene: Ethnic Amusements in New York, 1880–1920* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 153.

27. John Jones, *The Mysteries of Opium Reveal'd* [*sic*] (London: printed for Richard Smith at the Angel and Bible without Temple-Bar, 1700), 24–29.

28. Kane, *Opium Smoking*, 51; Alonzo Calkins, *Opium and the Opium-Appetite* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1871), 71.

29. Joseph Jarrow, *The Queen of Chinatown*, 1899, in *The Chinese Other, 1850–1925*, ed. David Williams (New York: University Press of America, 1997), 192.

30. Billy Getthore's play *Slaves of the Opium Ring* spectacularizes the belief that opium addiction was an inevitable death sentence through a grim metaphor in which the play's drug pusher marks those she wants assassinated with a red poppy flower. Chuck Connors, who was known as the "mayor of Chinatown" in New York, details a similar belief in the inevitable death of the opium smoker in his memoir *Bowery Life* (1904).

31. Jarrow, *The Queen of Chinatown*, 192.

32. Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 64.

33. The victimization of a white female missionary working in Chinatown was also featured in Rillie Anita Deaves's 1907 playlet *The Female Dope*.

34. Jarrow, *The Queen of Chinatown*, 209.

35. "Slave to a Drug," *The National Police Gazette*, July 3, 1880, 5.

36. Jarrow, *The Queen of Chinatown*, 210.

37. "Queen of Chinatown," *Boston Daily Globe*, February 5, 1901, 5.

38. When Charles A. Taylor directed a tour of his own work *King of the Opium Ring* in San Francisco in 1900, part of the draw was that it "included several native Chinese actors." Howard Hall, "Attractions at the Playhouse," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 23, 1900, 12; "Amusements," *The Atlanta Constitution*, January 9, 1901, 9.

39. Jarrow, *The Queen of Chinatown*, 210.

40. Westgate, *Staging the Slums*, 44.

41. Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 90.

42. Sean Metzger, "Charles Parsloe's Chinese Fetish: An Example of Yellowface Performance in Nineteenth-Century American Melodrama," *Theatre Journal*, 56, no. 4 (December 2004): 635.

43. James S. Moy, *Marginal Sights: Staging the Chinese in America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 28.

44. Ibid., 18.

45. Mary F. Brewer, *Staging Whiteness* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), xiv.

46. Westgate, *Staging the Slums*, 45.

47. Susan Koshy, "American Nationhood as Eugenic Romance," *Difference: A Journal of Feminist Cultural* Studies 12, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 70.

48. Barry Keith Grant, *Shadows of Doubt: Negotiations of Masculinity in American Genre Films* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011), 25.

49. Theodore Kremer's *A Woman of Fire* from 1906 also features an empowered female traitor-to-the-race character.

50. Billy Getthore, *Slaves of the Opium Ring* (typescript, Sherman Theatre Collection, Southern Illinois University, 1908), 5B.

51. Jennifer Hedgecock, *The Femme Fatale in Victorian Literature: The Danger and the Sexual Threat* (New York: Cambria Press, 2008), 3.

52. Getthore, *Slaves*, 7F.

53. Ibid., 8F.

54. Ibid., 14F–15F.

55. See James Sturgis, "Britain and the New Imperialism," *British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. C. C. Eldridge (London: Macmillan, 1984), 85–105.

56. Charles Dickens, *Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870; Boston: Dana Estes, 1913), 4.

57. Willa Cather, "The Conversion of Sum Loo," *The Library* 1 (August 11, 1900): 4–6; Frank Norris, *Bix* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1899).

58. Getthore, *Slaves*, 3B.

59. George M. Beard, *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1881), ix.

60. Laurence Senelick, *The Chekhov Theatre: A Century of Plays in Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 49.

61. Quoted in Diana L. Ahmad, *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the Nineteenth-Century American West* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2007), 75.

62. Ibid., 77.

63. Katie N. Johnson, *Sisters in Sin: Brothel Dramas in America, 1900–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 122–23.

64. Albert J. Beveridge, "March of the Flag: Address to an Indiana Republican Meeting, Indianapolis, Indiana, 16 September 1898," National Humanities Center, http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/gilded/empire/text5/beveridge.pdf (accessed June 20, 2019).

65. For more on the media coverage of the annexation of the Philippines, see David Brody, *Visualizing American Empire*, 59–88. Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (1899), in *The White Man's Burdens: An Anthology*

of British Poetry of the Empire, ed. Chris Brooks and Peter Faulkner (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 307.

66. Gary Y. Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 131.

67. Reviews for the show can be found in the *New York Times*, *Boston Daily Globe*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and *Atlanta Constitution*.

68. Charles Blaney and Charles Taylor, *King of the Opium Ring* (typescript, Library of Congress, 1923), 2.

69. Ibid., 44.

70. Ibid., 61.

71. Ibid., 50.

72. Capitalization in original. Ibid., 23.

73. These laws were not rescinded until 1943 with the Magnuson Act. For more on the legal restrictions faced by Chinese immigrants, see Beth Lew-Williams's *The Chinese Must Go*.

74. Lee, *Making*, 8.

75. In *The Shanghai Gesture* the titles of the different settings, such as "The Gallery of the Laughing Dolls," "The Grand Red Hall of Lily and Lotus Roots," and, finally, "The Little Room of the Great Cat," denote Colton's intention of creating a highly suggestive, Oriental atmosphere. John Colton, *The Shanghai Gesture* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926).

76. Brooks Atkinson, "Melodrama of the Orient," *New York Times*, February 2, 1926, 20.

77. Colton, *Shanghai*, 189.

78. Ibid.

79. "Shanghaied," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 3, 1926, 12. The same notion is expressed in "Shanghai Gesture," *Variety*, February 3, 1926, 28.

80. Colton, *Shanghai*, 253.

81. "New Plays in the Provinces," *New York Times*, December 20, 1925, 4.

82. Dikötter, "Race Culture," 467.

83. Urmila Seshagiri, "Modernity's (Yellow) Dr. Fu-Manchu and English Race Paranoia," *Cultural Critique*, 62 (2006): 162–94; John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril!*; Karen Shimakawa, *National Abjection: The Asian American Body Onstage* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

CHAPTER TWO: DOPE DOCTORS

1. The Ohio lawsuit was filed in May 2017 in the Ross County Court of Common Pleas by district attorney Mike DeWine. See "The State of Ohio v. Purdue Pharma L.P., et al.," Court of Common Pleas, May 31, 2017,

https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Briefing-Room/News-Releases/Consumer-Protection/2017-05-31-Final-Complaint-with-Sig-Page.aspx (accessed December 9, 2020).

2. Geoff Mulvihill, "OxyContin Maker Purdue Pharma Pleads Guilty in Criminal Case," *Associated Press* (November 24, 2000), https://apnews.com/article/purdue-pharma-opioid-crisis-guilty-plea-5704ad896e964222a011f053949e0cc0 (accessed December 9, 2020).

3. Jan Hoffman, "Drug Distributors and J&J Reach $26 Billion Deal to End Opioid Lawsuits," *New York Times*, July 21, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/21/health/opioids-distributors-settlement.html (accessed July 10, 2021).

4. Tim Murphy, Rep. Pennsylvania, "Fentanyl: The Next Wave of the Opioid Crisis," House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Energy and Commerce (US Government Publishing Office, March 21, 2017).

5. "Use and Abuse of Stimulants," n.p., May 7, 1893, in *The Dope Chronicles, 1850–1950*, ed. Gary Silver (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 25.

6. Acker argues that the population of iatrogenic addicts was on the rise in the 1890s and began to decline only by 1910 through the reforms enacted by physicians, pharmacists, and lawmakers. Acker, *Creating the American Junkie*, 1–2.

7. Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 2.

8. Hickman, "Double Meaning," 184.

9. Ibsen and Chekhov both problematize this characterization as a way of undermining assumptions regarding traditional morality. Ibsen's Dr. Rank of *A Doll's House* suffers from inherited syphilis, a sign of the troubling realities underlying standard morality. Chekhov's unhappy Astrov from *Uncle Vanya* is just one example of his commentary on doctors as uninspired and beleaguered.

10. For more on the history of the doctor on stage, see Marian P. Whitney, "The Doctor on Stage," *North American Review* 220, no. 824 (September 1924): 147–53.

11. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, "Introduction: Eugenics and the Modern World," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (London: Oxford University Press, 2010), 11; italics in original.

12. Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 140.

13. Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 13.

14. Starr, *Social Transformation*, 112.

15. As early as 1894, J. B. Mattison, MD, asserted that morphine use by physicians was prevalent. Similar accusations, including ones made by Harry Anslinger, would plague the medical profession for decades. I have not, however, found evidence of a portrayal of a doctor who was an addict in the period. J. B. Mattison, "Morphinism in Medical Men," *JAMA* 23, no. 5 (August 4, 1894), 186–88. See Thomas Dormandy, *Opium: Reality's Dark Dream* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 172.

16. Hickman, "Double Meaning," 186.

17. Zieger, *Inventing the Addict*, 11.

18. David Courtwright, Herman Joseph, and Don Des Jarlais, *Addicts Who Survived: An Oral History of Narcotic Use in America, 1923–1965* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 1.

19. Caddell may have been inspired by Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906) as the plot and themes are remarkably similar, though Shaw's critique concerns the influence of financial (rather than personal) incentives that force doctors to decide whose life is worth saving. However, Shaw's play was not widely available in print in the US until 1911 and did not premiere in the country until 1915. It is perhaps more likely that the two plays represent a general cynicism with which doctors were treated in the period on both sides of the Atlantic.

20. Campbell, *Discovering Addiction*, 18.

21. William Douglas Caddell, *The Opium Eater* (typescript, Library of Congress, 1909), Act I, 12.

22. Ibid., Act I, 14.

23. Ibid., Act III, 46.

24. Ibid., Act III, 44.

25. Levine and Bashford, "Eugenics," 6.

26. Caddell, *Opium Eater*, Act III, 48.

27. Owen Davis, *Drugged* (typescript, Library of Congress, 1914), Act III, 27.

28. "Mason the Star in Owen Davis' Play," *Boston Daily Globe*, September 29, 1914, 3.

29. Montague's other relevant works are *The Slave Girl* and *Queen of Rags*, both from 1913.

30. Walter Montague, *The Hop Head: An Intense Episode of a Modern Curse* (typescript, Library of Congress, 1912), 2.

31. Ibid., 3.

32. Ibid.

33. The plot of *The Drug Terror* is recounted in *The Billboard*, April 18, 1914, 73.

34. Montague, *Hop Head*, 5.

35. Ibid., 6.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Zieger, *Inventing the Addict*, 10.

39. E. P. Roe, *Without a Home* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1881), 283.

40. Joseph H. Graham, *The Needle: A Comedy-Drama in One Act* (typescript, Library of Congress, 1915), 1.

41. Ibid., 18.

42. Ibid., 28.

43. Ibid., 2.

44. Peter Clark MacFarlane, *Those Who Have Come Back* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1914).

45. "Lieb's Time Restored," *Variety*, May 1, 1914, 18.

46. Stephen Kandall, *Substance and Shadow: Women and Addiction in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 71.

47. Samuel Hopkins Adams, *The Great American Fraud*: *Articles on the Nostrum Evil and Quacks*, 4th ed. (Chicago: American Medical Association, 1907), 42.

48. "Druggists Who Sell Poison to Be Arrested," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 3, 1908.

49. Joseph Medill Patterson, *Dope: A One-Act Play* (typescript, Library of Congress, 1909), 15.

50. Ibid., 18.

51. Ibid., 27.

52. Frick, *Theatre*, 129.

53. Leib's two remounts of the play in the 1920s involved the addition of a dying prostitute-addict, who turns out to be the former wife of Kalthoff, and the messenger boy, who is revealed to be Kalthoff's son by that very woman. Kalthoff ends the play reformed of his own volition and ready to make a go at fatherhood. Most reviews considered it clichéd for the time. By the 1920s, the conversation over drug addiction had changed. There was no longer a concern over corrupt pharmacists, and interest had shifted to black-market dope pushers and gangsters.

54. Conrad and Schneider, *Deviance*, 23.

55. "A Few Letters on the Harrison Law," *JAMA* 64, no. 12 (March 1915): 1016.

56. Rebecca Stott, *The Fabrication of the Late-Victorian 'Femme Fatale': The Kiss of Death* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), 18.

57. Derrida, "The Rhetoric of Drugs," 230.

58. Signaling a return to skepticism of doctor fallibility, dope doctors or addicted doctors appear in *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) and the television show *House* (2004–2012).

59. Katie Thomas, "Using Doctors with Troubled Pasts to Market a Painkiller," *New York Times*, November 28, 2014, 1; Ashley Turner, "FDA Issues Warnings to Companies That Claim an Herbal Drug Can Cure Opioid Addiction," CNBC, June 25, 2019, https://www.cnbc.com/2019/06/25/fda-warns-companies-against-claiming-herbal-drug-cures-opioid-addiction.html (accessed July 24, 2020).

60. Sam Quinones, "The Penance of Doc O," *The Atlantic* (May 2019), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/05/opioid-epidemic-west-virginia-doctor/586036/ (accessed July 5, 2020).

CHAPTER THREE: CRIMINAL ADDICTIONS

1. Susan Speaker, "Demons for the Twentieth Century: The Rhetoric of Drug Reform, 1920–1940," in Acker and Tracy, *Altering American Consciousness*, 215.

2. Histories dedicated to the impact that Anslinger had on national drug policy include Alexandra Chasin, *Assassin of Youth: A Kaleidoscopic History of Harry J. Anslinger's War on Drugs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Suzanna Reiss, *We Sell Drugs: The Alchemy of US Empire* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014); Matthew Pembleton, *Containing Addiction: The Federal Bureau of Narcotics and the Origins of America's Global Drug War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2017).

3. Dormandy, *Opium*, 241.

4. Acker, *Creating the American Junkie*, 195.

5. Meredith Conti, "Ungentlemanly Habits: The Dramaturgy of Drug Addiction in *Fin-de-Siècle* Theatrical Adaptations of Sherlock Holmes Stories and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*," in *Victorian Medicine and Popular Culture*, ed. Louise Penner and Tabitha Sparks (New York: Routledge, 2016), 112.

6. Clyde Fitch, *Plays by Clyde Fitch*, ed. Montrose J. Moses and Virginia Gerson (Boston: Little, Brown, 1915), 627–28; italics in original.

7. "'The City' Visits Hartford Again," *The Hartford Courant*, February 14, 1911, 6.

8. Quoted in "The Abuse of Dramatic Criticism," *The Billboard*, September 24, 1910, 13.

9. Ibid., 40.

10. "Last Fitch Play Opens at Lyric," *The Philadelphia Enquirer*, March 28, 1911. The reference to Hannock as a "drug eater" rather than needle user is a remnant of nineteenth-century, and specifically British, nomenclature.

11. Quoted in "The Abuse of Dramatic Criticism," 40.

12. "'The City' Visits Hartford Again."

13. "Things Have Changed Since," *Variety*, April 9, 1930, 66.

14. In performance, Marshall apparently tempered the moment by turning upstage when uttering the curse. Michael Schwartz, "No Red Blood: Clyde Fitch and the Staging of the Neurasthenic," *Text and Presentation 2007*, ed. Stratos E. Constantinidis (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007), 160.

15. Fitch, *Plays*, 489.

16. Ibid., 512.

17. Ibid., 582–83.

18. Conti, *Playing Sick*, 126–27.

19. "Actor Tells Story," *New York Tribune*, December 25, 1909, 7.

20. Other actors, including Dorothy Donnelly, who portrayed drug addicts did boast of their real-life sources. Frank Darien, who played a dope fiend in the 1914 drama *Kick In* by Willard Mack, discusses the prototype for his performance as a "hophead whom he discovered in Chinatown." "Dope Fiend Prototype," *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 1915.

21. Harry Hubbell Kane, *The Hypodermic Injection of Morphia* (New York: Chas. L. Bermingham, 1880), 290. Kane details the signs of the addict: "The patients begin to sneeze, and have paroxysms of yawning; they start if anyone approaches them; touching their skin causes cramping movements and convulsions; the trembling of hands, if not already evident, now becomes distinctly perceptible. The power of speech is disordered; lisping and stammering take place." I believe Marshall portrayed a number of these, including shaking and stammering, in his performance. But it is my impression that he was the first to do so, as there is no evidence from either stage directions or periodical reviews that addicts from the opium den dramas undertook such behavior.

22. From Pearce Baily, Frankwood Williams, and Paul Komora, *Neuropsychiatry in the United States*, vol. 10 of *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War* (Washington: US Government Printing Office,

1929), 69, quoted in Caroline Jean Acker, *Creating the American Junkie*, 138–39.

23. The film *The Man with the Golden Arm* is noteworthy for a number of reasons. Sinatra plays a jazz musician addicted to heroin, making it a kind of selective adaptation of the narratives discussed in the fifth and six chapters of this study, which link addiction to jazz and to creativity respectively. The film also represented a significant shift in Hollywood politics as it was the first major motion picture of the period to receive a national release without the seal of approval from the Motion Picture Association of America.

24. Zieger notes that these same narratives are present in literature of the time, arguing that "addiction thrives on the ruins of heterosexual alliances." Zieger, *Inventing the Addict*, 173.

25. I make this comparison with full recognition of Thomas Postlewait's calls to avoid the simplifying of North American theatre of the time to a battle of melodrama versus realism. I do not mean to further this limited and positivistic narrative of theatre history, but to discuss the complexity and overlap of genres at the time.

26. Alexandre Bisson, *Madame X*, trans. John Raphael and William H. Wright (typescript, Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library, 1909), Act I, 14.

27. "Music and Drama," *Current Literature*, ed. Edward J. Wheeler, vol. 48 (January–June 1910): 649.

28. "Madame X in City Next Week," *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 1910, 15.

29. "Madame X," *Variety*, October 23, 1909, 18.

30. "Bernhardt in Madame X," *The Billboard* 22, no. 43, October 22, 1910, 6.

31. "Bernhardt's Power Shown in 'Madame X,'" *New York Times*, December 13, 1910, 7; "Bernhardt in Madame X," *The Billboard* 22, no. 52, December 24, 1910, 12.

32. On an American tour in 1917, Bernhardt played *La Dame aux Camélias* and *La Femme X* in repertoire. Leigh Woods, "Two-a-Day Redemptions and Truncated Camilles: The Vaudeville Repertoire of Sarah Bernhardt," *New Theatre Quarterly* 10, no. 37 (February 1994): 13.

33. Another marker of its popularity was the burlesque *Madame 10* starring Eddie Cantor that travestied the play.

34. Bisson, *Madame X*, Act I, 1.

35. Ether served as a general anesthetic in the nineteenth century and has the potential to cause temporary dependence. Richard Lawrence Miller details its rampant use in Ireland and Poland, where it was drunk straight and

chased with sips of water. *The Encyclopedia of Addictive Drugs* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2002), s.v. "Ether," 153–54.

36. Bisson, *Madame X*, Act I, 15.

37. Ibid., Act I, 20.

38. "Savage Gives 'Madame X,'" *New York Times*, September 14, 1909, 9; "Madame X Opens Salty Floodgate," *New York Times*, February 3, 1910, 9.

39. Waldemar Young, "Madame X Is Lacazar Bill Miss Vaughan in Title Role," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 11, 1913, 9.

40. Ralph Renaud, "Tense Melodrama Grips Audience," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 12, 1910, 4.

41. "Unconscious Suggestion—the Part It Plays in Acting," *New York Times*, February 13, 1910, 8. Donnelly mentions this trip in a number of other articles as well.

42. Dorothy Donnelly, "Ether Drinking Is Europe's Latest and Ugliest Vice," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 31, 1909, G6.

43. "Unconscious Suggestion."

44. Westgate, *Staging the Slums*, 1.

45. Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 161; Dorothy Chansky, *Composing Ourselves: The Little Theatre Movement and the American Audience* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 4.

46. Pendleton King, *Cocaine*, in *Sex for Sale: Six Progressive-Era Brothel Dramas*, ed. Katie Johnson (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015), 43.

47. Ibid.

48. As evidence of her higher-class origins, Nora quotes two lines from Wilde's poem "My Voice" and asks that Joe not use the British slang "Ta" for "thanks."

49. King, *Cocaine*, 45; Johnson, *Sex for Sale,* 41.

50. King, *Cocaine*, 42.

51. Ibid., 44; italics in original.

52. Clayton Hamilton, "Seen on the Stage," *Vogue* 49, no. 10 (May 15, 1917): 67; "Four Plays Revived by Provincetown Players," *New York Tribune*, April 26, 1919, 13.

53. Burns Mantle, "Burns Mantle's New York Letter," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 25, 1917, D2.

54. Johnson, *Sex for Sale*, 41.

55. "Ida Rauh, Helped Create Theatre," *New York Times*, March 12, 1970, 41.

56. King, *Cocaine*, 46.

57. Ibid., 52.

58. Brenda Murphy, *American Realism and American Drama, 1880–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), xii.

59. Drew Eisenhauer, review of *Cocaine* by the Metropolitan Virtual Playhouse, *Eugene O'Neill Review* 42, no. 3 (2021): 211.

60. Courtwright, *Dark Paradise*, 33.

61. Quoted in Susan Speaker, "'The Struggle of Mankind against Its Deadliest Foe': Themes of Counter-Subversion in Anti-Narcotic Campaigns, 1920–1940," *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 3 (Spring 2001): 600.

62. Winifred Black, "60 Per Cent of All Violent Crimes Traced to Cocaine," *San Francisco Examiner*, February 23, 1928.

63. Kevin Brownlow, *Behind the Mask of Innocence* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1990), 109.

64. "The Works" is the shadowy villain in *The Fall Guy* by James Gleason and George Abbott, and "Blight" is the high-rolling Mafioso in *Crucible*.

65. Brownlow, *Behind the Mask*, 122.

66. "Frank Thomas in 'Red Light Annie,'" *Buffalo Enquirer*, December 22, 1923; "Red Light Annie," *New York Tribune*, August 22, 1923.

67. Norman Huston and Sam Forrest, *The Slavemaker* (typescript, Library of Congress, 1923), 1-56–1-57. The play was originally submitted for publication under the title *The Slavemaker*, referring to cocaine's power to enslave addicts and stressing the centrality of the drug to the play. *Red Light Annie* highlights Fanny's time as a prostitute, which is only hinted at in the play, while drug use is front and center.

68. Percy Hammond, "Red Light Annie," *New York Tribune*, August 22, 1923, 10.

69. "Red Light Annie," *The Billboard* 36, no. 40 (October 4, 1924): 26.

70. Acker, *Creating the American Junkie*, 5, 120.

71. Ibid., 68.

72. Howard Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Free Press, 1963), 8.

73. Ibid., 18.

74. "The Motion Picture Production Code—Appendix 1," March 1930, https://www.asu.edu/courses/fms200s/total-readings/MotionPictureProductionCode.pdf (accessed July 29, 2020), 595.

75. Heap, *Slumming*, 61.

76. D. Hubert Connelly, *Crucible* (typescript, Library of Congress, 1933).

77. Ibid., Act II, 8.

78. Kolb published three major papers between 1924 and 1925 espousing

the idea that addicts were psychotic. "Drug Addiction and Its Relation to Crime," *Mental Hygiene* 9 (1925): 74–89; "Pleasure and Deterioration from Narcotic Addiction," *Mental Hygiene* 9 (1925): 699–724; "The Prevalence and Trends of Drug Addiction in the United States and the Factors Influencing It," *Public Health Service Reports* 39, no. 21 (May 23, 1924): 1193–1202.

79. Seevers, "Drug Addiction Problems," 96.

80. "'Red Light Annie' Burns a Fuse Out at the Belasco," *Washington Post*, January 21, 1924, 4; Brooks Atkinson, "The Play," *New York Times*, September 5, 1933, 22.

81. Hammond, "Red Light Annie."

82. John Markert, *Hooked in Film: Substance Abuse on the Big Screen* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 22.

83. Unlike the exploitation films of the 1930s, there was one earlier film that did get a full theatrical release and likely influenced the general public's vision of drug use. *Human Wreckage* (1923) starred Mrs. Wallace Reid and was a full-frontal attack on the drug industry that incorporated conventions from the prior thirty years of drug plays. These included xenophobic anti-Asian propaganda, the suicidal fallen women, and paranoid accusations regarding the political protection afforded those involved in the drug trade. The film received special permission for release from Will Hays. Its popularity was due, in part, to the fact that the Hollywood matinee idol Wallace Reid had died only a year earlier from a morphine overdose after becoming addicted.

84. Zieger, *Inventing the Addict*, 182.

85. Ibid., 21.

86. James Penner, "On Aggro Performance: Audience Participation and the Dystopian Response to the Living Theatre's 'Paradise Now,'" *Comparative Drama* 48, no. 1/2, (Spring/Summer 2014): 81.

87. The 2006 film *Candy* with Heath Ledger and Abbie Cornish seems kin to King's *Cocaine* in not only the prostitution of the young girl, but the very setting in which they live. As a sign of how little has changed, Cornish becomes pregnant while still using and delivers a stillborn baby, a quintessential denial of the drug user's potential as parent.

88. See William Avilés, "Trump and US Drug Policy in the Americas," in *The Future of US Empire in the Americas: The Trump Administration and Beyond*, ed. Timothy M. Gill (New York: Routledge, 2020), 286–306; Rebecca R. Ruiz, "Sessions to Toughen Rules on Prosecuting Drug Crimes," *New York Times*, May 10, 2017, A1; Rebecca R. Ruiz, "Attorney General Orders Tougher Sentences, Rolling Back Obama Policy," *New York Times*, May 13, 2017, A15.

89. *The Biden-Harris Administration's Statement of Drug Policy Priorities for Year One*, Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/BidenHarris-Statement-of-Drug-Policy-Priorities-April-1.pdf (accessed October 10, 2021).

CHAPTER FOUR: THE COMIC DOPE FIEND

1. "'One of the Bravest' Produced with Great Success," *Boston Daily Globe*, January 11, 1887, 3; "Notes on the Stage," *New York Times*, December 18, 1888, 4; "At the Play," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 24, 1889, 8; "The Theatre This Week," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 8, 1891, 17; "Drama and Music: Plays of Rural Life the New Offerings of the Week," *Boston Daily Globe*, October 6, 1901, 18.

2. E. E. Price, *One of the Bravest: A Comedy Drama of New York Life* (typescript, Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library, 1887), 17.

3. In 1901, a comedian named Andy Lewis registered with the Library of Congress a skit entitled "The Cocaine Fiend" that he performed with Sam Devere's Own Company between 1901 and 1907. The skit features a number of the De Quincean tropes mentioned in reference to *One of the Bravest* regarding travel and riches.

4. For more on the tramp clown of vaudeville and burlesque, see Douglas Gilbert, *American Vaudeville: Its Life and Times* (New York: Dover, 1963), 269–92. For more on the stage drunk, see Frick, *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform*, 186–98.

5. Rick DesRochers, *The New Humor in the Progressive Era: Americanization and the Vaudeville Comedian* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), xvi.

6. McCree wrote material for the following performers (among others): Lydia Barry, Stella Mayhew, Byron-Merkel and Company, Armstrong and Milloy, Cohan and Harris Minstrels, Rich Lancaster, Sam and Kitty Morton, Taylor Granville, Laura Pierpont, Bernard and Scarth, Lew Ward, Harry Crandall, The Rempel Sisters, Emma Carus, Frank Fogarty, Hallen and Fuller, Clara Morton, Leroy and Lytton, Joe Jenny, Girard and Gardner, Will H. Philbrick, Stuart Barnes, and Al H. Wilson. McCree also served two terms as president of the White Rats, from 1913 to 1916.

7. McCree continued to write minstrel pieces long after he abandoned the dope fiend. "Keith Vaudeville," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 14, 1916. For the history of Irish Americans in minstrelsy, see Robert Nowatzki, "Paddy Jumps Jim Crow: Irish-Americans and Blackface Minstrelsy," *Éire-Ireland* 41, no. 3–4 (2006): 162–84.

8. As the first censorship trial of the new century in the United States, *Sapho* has received substantial scholarly attention from Katie Johnson, Anne Callis, John Houchin, Randy Kapelle, and Joyce Reilly. McCree was not the only performer to capitalize on the attention Nethersole received. The vaudeville duo Weber and Fields had a spoof called "Sapolio: A Clean Travesty of 'Sapho'" at the same time. Sapolio was a brand of soap.

9. *Toledo Blade*, March 19, 1907.

10. The German word "Katzenfell" means "catskin," which as slang may refer to an inferior type of silk hat, and thus be a way to mock the suitor; on the other hand, it may mark him as rich enough to afford a real catskin coat.

11. December 3, 1910, n.p., Envelope 1391, Robinson Locke Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library.

12. Junie McCree, *A Dope Fiend* (typescript, Library of Congress, 1900), 6.

13. "Junie McCree's Funny Sketch," *New York Telegraph*, March 30, 1906.

14. Conti, "Ungentlemanly Habits," 112.

15. Westgate, *Staging the Slums*, 3.

16. DesRochers, *New Humor*, xvi.

17. Junie McCree, "The Man from Denver," n.p., March 10, 1907, Envelope 1391, Robinson Locke Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library.

18. Junie McCree, "The Dope Fiend," *Variety* 9, no. 1 (December 14, 1907): 23 and 81, at 81. These same stories and commentary, or versions of them, were reprinted in numerous periodicals.

19. Théophile Gautier, "Le Club des Hashischins," *Revue des deux mondes*, February 1846. Published as "The Hashish Club," trans. Ralph J. Gladstone, in *The Marihuana Papers*, ed. David Solomon (New York: Signet Books, 1968), 163–78, at 173.

20. Charles Baudelaire, "The Poem of Hashish" ("Le Poème du haschisch," 1860), trans. Aleister Crowley, 1895, https://erowid.org/culture/characters/baudelaire_charles/baudelaire_charles_poem1.shtml (accessed April 13, 2018).

21. McCree, *A Dope Fiend* (1900), 2.

22. John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2001), 23.

23. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 172.

24. For more on Coward's coded portrayals of homosexuality see Alan Sinfield, "Private Lives/Public Theater: Noël Coward and the Politics of

Homosexual Representation," *Representation*, no. 36 (Autumn 1991): 43–61; and Penny Farfan, "Noël Coward and Sexual Modernism: *Private Lives* as Queer Comedy," *Modern Drama* 48, no. 4 (2005): 67–88.

25. Zieger, *Inventing the Addict*, 162.

26. Sedgwick, 172.

27. See Kasson's discussion of Sandow, 21–76.

28. Zieger, *Inventing the Addict*, 197.

29. Ibid.

30. *New York Telegraph*, September 27, 1908; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 12, 1911.

31. "Theatrical News and Gossip," *Washington Post*, May 17, 1908; "Empire Opens on Sunday with a Toledoan's Show," *Toledo News*, August 4, 1917.

32. McCree, "The Dope Fiend," 81.

33. Harley Erdman, *Staging the Jew: The Performance of American Ethnicity 1860–1920* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 102–4.

34. McCree, "A Dope Fiend," 3.

35. Ibid., 4.

36. Ibid., 6.

37. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Slab," https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/181189#eid22448450 (accessed July 6, 2019).

38. Laurence Senelick, "McCree, Junie," in *The Cambridge Guide to American Theatre*, ed. Don B. Wilmeth and Tice Miller (updated paperback ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 241–42.

39. "Shakespeare First Used Slang, Says Junie M'Cree [*sic*]," n.p., 1907, Envelope 1391, Robinson Locke Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library.

40. Haenni, *Immigrant Scene*, 16.

41. Curt Gentry, *The Madams of San Francisco* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 169–70.

42. Herbert Asbury, *Barbary Coast: An Informal History of the San Francisco Underworld* (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 1933), 3.

43. M. Kienholz, *Opium Traders and Their Worlds: A Revisionist Expose of the World's Greatest Opium Traders*, vol. 1 (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2008), 409.

44. "Shakespeare First Used Slang."

45. McCree, "The Dope Fiend," 23.

46. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*, 3rd ed., ed. George Rogers Taylor (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1972), 17. Adding to the concern over the West was

Turner's announcement that the frontier no longer existed. Not having a frontier to tame contributed to the concern over the characters who were now coming out of the West. For more on the formation of American manhood, see Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man*, and Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

47. Mark Winokur, *American Laughter* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 69.

48. "Shakespeare First Used Slang."

49. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 46 and 4.

50. James A. Smith played Bill in a production at the Chutes Theatre in San Francisco. "Junie McCree in Slang Classic Is Top of Bill," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 26 1910.

51. "Charles Nichols and Co.," *Variety* 13, no. 4 (January 2, 1909), 12; "Century Girls," *Variety* 9, no. 3 (December 28, 1907), 13; "Ashley and Lee," *Variety* 20, no. 13 (December 3, 1910), 13; "Amusements," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 13, 1916.

52. "Lew Kelly's Show at the Grand Theatre: Dope Fiend Impersonator Appears in Three Comic Burlettas," *Hartford Courant*, September 26, 1920.

53. "Lew Kelly Welcomed Back to Singer Fold," *The Billboard*, January 26, 1918; "Lew Kelly's Show at the Grand Theatre."

54. These jokes by Kelly are recorded in "Lew Kelly's Show at Grand Theatre." The description of his act is from "Schaffer Amazes by His Versatility," *Boston Daily Globe*, November 3, 1914.

55. "Junie McCree Taken by Death," *The Billboard*, January 19, 1918.

56. This skit is announced in "Behman Show," *Variety* 32, no. 12 (November 21, 1913), 18. McCree quotes are from "The Dope Fiend," 23 and 81.

57. There is evidence that McCree struggled with substance abuse himself. In 1903 he was reportedly hospitalized for "alcoholic mania," and his drinking may have contributed to his early death in 1918 at the age of fifty-two. An obituary note in *Variety* lists "apoplexy" as the cause, and the term often referred to the paroxysms caused by alcoholism. It may be a reach too far to imagine that his own struggles influenced his sympathetic portrayals of the opium addict. "Actor Taken to Bellevue," n.p., September 6, 1903, Envelope 1391, Locke Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library; *Variety* 49, no. 8 (January 18, 1918), 23.

58. Craig J. Peariso, *Radical Theatrics: Put-ons, Politics, and the Sixties* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), 28.

CHAPTER FIVE: JIVE

1. Throughout, I use the terms "Black" and "African American" to refer to a specific race and culture, as opposed to skin tone.

2. Jim Wilson, *Bulldaggers, Pansies, and Chocolate Babies: Performance, Race, and Sexuality in the Harlem Renaissance* (Detroit: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 25.

3. Heap, *Slumming*, 190.

4. The term "Negro Vogue" likely derives from Langston Hughes's autobiography, *The Big Sea* (1940), and the line "It was the period when the Negro was in vogue." The line refers not only to the slumming practices in places like Harlem, but to the popularity of plays such as *Shuffle Along*. Scholars including Chad Heap, Shane Vogel, and Catherine Morley have used the term to discuss the period.

5. Carl Van Vechten's novel joins such works as Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem* (1928), Rudolph Fisher's *The Walls of Jericho* (1928), Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929), and Katherine Brush's *Young Man of Manhattan* (1930) in featuring black-and-tan night spots. However, the reform organization called the Committee of Fourteen specifically cites *Nigger Heaven* as a work that moved white people to discover the nightclubs of Black neighborhoods. Committee of Fourteen, *Annual Report for 1926*, in "Committee Minutes October 1925–December 1929" notebook, box 86, C14P, New York Public Library.

6. Carl Van Vechten, *Nigger Heaven* (New York: Knopf, 1926), 252.

7. Courtwright, Joseph, and Des Jarlais, *Addicts Who Survived*.

8. Henry Louis Mencken, *The American Language: An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States*, suppl. 2 (New York: Knopf, 1948), 704.

9. The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers all three of these definitions for the term "jive," all of which were used during approximately the same period. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Jive," https://www-oed-com.libproxy.uccs.edu/view/Entry/101380?result=1&rskey=zfT85D& (accessed November 01, 2021).

10. Dedicated to transparency, I will note that, as a white scholar writing about African American ontology, I rely heavily on scholars such as Travis Jackson, Fred Moten, and Henry Louis Gates in my analysis throughout this chapter.

11. Set lists that include Calloway's drug songs appear in "Earle," *The Washington Post*, April 8, 1933, and "Tin Pan Alley Gets Ideas from Harlem Jibe," *Afro-American*, January 28, 1933.

12. Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 35.

13. Gabriel Solis, "Blurred Genres: Reflections on Ethnomusicology of Jazz Today," *Ethnomusicology Scholarship and Teaching* 54 (2014), https://www.jstor.org/stable/26574373 (accessed October 21, 2021).

14. Travis A. Jackson, *Blowing the Blues Away: Performance and Meaning on the New York Jazz Scene* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 68.

15. A comprehensive list of singers and the drug songs they sang would take significant room. Examples of recordings include Louis Armstrong, "Muggles" (1928); Don Redman, "Chant of the Weed" (1931) and "Reefer Man" (1932); Benny Goodman, "Texas Tea Party" (1933); Fats Waller, "Viper's Drag" (1935, also recorded by Calloway); Stuff Smith, "If You're a Viper" (1936); Andy Kirk, "All the Jive Is Gone" (1936); Georgia White, "The Stuff Is Here" (1937); Buster Bailey, "Light Up" (1938); and Sidney Bechet, "Viper Mad" (1938).

16. Armstrong was arrested in Los Angeles on marijuana charges in 1930, an event that Martin Torgoff considers the "first celebrity marijuana bust in American history." Martin Torgoff, *Bop Apocalypse: Jazz, Race, the Beats, and Drugs* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2016), 46.

17. Wright, "Report from the United States of America," 43–44.

18. Richmond P. Hobson, "The Great Destroyer" (speech delivered to the Alabama House of Representatives, February 2, 1911), 6.

19. Edward Huntington Williams, "Negro Cocaine Fiends Are New Southern Menace: Murder and Insanity Increasing among Lower Class Blacks Because They Have Taken to 'Sniffing' Since Deprived of Whisky by Prohibition," *New York Times*, February 8, 1914, SM 12. Other articles that cited a connection between African Americans and narcotic use are "Negro Cocaine Fiends," *Medical News* 81 (1902): 895; "The Cocaine Habit among Negroes," *British Medical Journal* (November 29, 1902): 1729; "The Cocaine Habit," *JAMA* 34 (1900), 1637; and "The Cocaine Habit among the Negroes," *JAMA* 35 (1900): 175.

20. Carl Hart, "Science Says We Should Decriminalize Drugs," *Reason TV* (lecture, Los Angeles, June 21, 2013), YouTube video, 22:16, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JDfzzit5f4 (accessed July 9, 2015).

21. For a clarification of how minstrelsy created a fantasy of controlling Black bodies, see Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (London: Oxford University Press, 1993).

22. Katie Johnson, "From *Camille* to *Lulu Belle*: Constructing the Black

Courtesan in the American Brothel Drama," in *Querying Difference in Theatre History*, ed. Scott Magelssen and Ann Haugo (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 102; Wilson, *Bulldaggers*, 90.

23. Wilson, *Bulldaggers*, 89.

24. Ibid., 95.

25. See LeRoi Jones, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1963); Ralph Ellison, *Living with Music: Ralph Ellison's Jazz Writings*, ed. Robert G. O'Meally (New York: Random House, 2002); Jackson, *Blowing the Blues Away*; Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

26. Duke Ellington, "Duke Says Swing Is Stagnant!" *Down Beat*, February 2, 1939, 16–17.

27. Jackson, *Blowing the Blues Away*, 38.

28. Ibid., 47.

29. Billie Holiday, *Lady Sings the Blues* (New York: Lancer Books, 1959), 52.

30. The subversive qualities of music by Howlin' Wolf and Louis Armstrong are discussed in Eric Lott, "Back Door Man: Howlin' Wolf and the Sound of Jim Crow," *American Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (September 2011): 697–710.

31. Charles Hiroshi Garrett catalogues similar reasons for Calloway's dismissal as a serious musician in *Jazz/Not Jazz* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 60.

32. *Variety*, May 20, 1931.

33. Between 1932 and 1935, the Fleischer brothers built cartoons around Calloway's songs "St. James Infirmary," "Minnie the Moocher," and "Old Man of the Mountain." Each featured Calloway rotoscoped into a ghoulish form interacting with Betty Boop. The sinister, dark, yet jaunty portrayals capture the drug motif, turning the songs into hallucinations. The Fleischers' outlandish and risqué style manifests the otherworldliness of the song's slang. These cartoons contributed significantly to Calloway's popularity. For more, see Christopher P. Lehman, *The Colored Cartoon: Black Representation in American Animated Short Films, 1907–1954* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).

34. "The Old Man of the Mountain" is a reference to the Persian tale of the "hashishin" that Marco Polo recorded on his travels. The hashishin were mercenaries who took narcotics in their initiation ceremony. It is the source of the modern term "assassin."

35. Transcribed from the 1931 recording on Brunswick label. Calloway altered the lyrics slightly in performance, often excising potentially risqué references for his television appearances.

36. Sigmund Spaeth, *Read 'Em and Weep: The Songs You Forgot to Remember* (New York: Halcyon House, 1939), 117; Luc Sante, *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016), 148; Olin Downs and Elie Siegmeister, *A Treasury of American Songs* (New York: Howell, Soskin, 1940), 296.

37. John Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool: Jazz and Its Critics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 4.

38. All three royal figures are mentioned in "Minnie the Moocher's Wedding Day."

39. Heap, *Slumming*, 199.

40. Cab Calloway and Bryan Rollins, *Of Minnie the Moocher and Me* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell, 1976), 88.

41. Shane Vogel, *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret: Race, Sexuality, Performance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 81.

42. David Savran, *Highbrow/Lowdown: Theatre, Jazz and the Making of the New Middle Class* (Detroit: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 15.

43. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Floor show," https://www-oed-com.libproxy.uccs.edu/view/Entry/71822?redirectedFrom=floor+show#eid4137117 (accessed August 1, 2019).

44. Vogel, *Scene of Harlem Cabaret*, 23.

45. "The Entertainment in the Supper Clubs," *New York Evening Post*, October 24, 1931; Eva M. Warner, "Buffalo, Buffalo," *The Billboard*, December 30, 1939.

46. Herb, "Flatbush, B'klyn," *Variety*, October 4, 1939.

47. "The Entertainment in the Supper Clubs."

48. "Cab Calloway and His Cotton Club Orchestra," *The Billboard*, September 6, 1930. The 1932 film *The Big Broadcast* features a young Calloway enacting all of these gestures while singing "Kicking the Gong Around."

49. Ralph Matthews, "Anything for a Thrill: Marijuana, Zoot Suits All Products of the Jazz Craze," *Afro-American*, February 22, 1947, M12A.

50. From Travis Jackson's interview with Sam Newsome, February 5, 1995. Jackson, *Blowing the Blues Away*, 118.

51. A list of scholars and musicians who have commented on the relationship between African Americans and jazz might include Amiri Baraka, Ralph Ellison, Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, Martin Torgoff, Alan Merriam, Eric Lott, Shane Vogel, and Gabriel Solis.

52. Gates's efforts to define Signifyin(g) comprise the second chapter of his book. Henry Louis Gates Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1989).

53. Ibid., 49 and 51.

54. Ibid., 49.

55. Ibid., 47.

56. Mezzrow's comment on "Tomism" and his authority regarding Black culture in general might be tempered by the recognition of his position as a white man. However, following Henry Louis Gates's use of Mezzrow's commentary as foundational to his theory of "Signifyin(g)," it is Mezzrow's experiences with the overlapping of jazz and drug cultures in Harlem that make his observations of value. See Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, 69–70. Milton "Mezz" Mezzrow and Bernard Wolfe, *Really the Blues* (New York: Random House, 1946), 225.

57. Allan G. Borst, "Signifyin(g) Afro-Orientalism: The Jazz-Addict Subculture in *Nigger Heaven* and *Home to Harlem*," *Modernism/modernity* 16, no. 4 (November 2009): 694.

58. See W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," in Booker T. Washington et al., *The Negro Problem* (1903; New York: Arno Press, 1969), 31–75.

59. Vogel, *Scene of Harlem Cabaret*, 4.

60. Ibid., 13.

61. Calloway and Rollins, *Of Minnie the Moocher*, 42.

62. Wilson confirms that popular entertainers of the period could destabilize racial categories, arguing that some of them showcased "highly ambiguous, ambivalent, and bewildering" race and gender identities as a challenge to those that would "fasten and delineate" such categories within the Black community for the sake of racial advancement. Wilson, *Bulldaggers*, 3.

63. "Walking Hots" refers to the practice of cooling down racehorses after a run, which Calloway did as a young man for small sums at the Pimlico racetrack. Calloway, *Of Minnie the Moocher*, 42.

64. *Encyclopedia of African American Popular Culture* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), s.v. "Scat singing," 1251–53.

65. "Calloway Invented 'Scat' Singing by Accident," *Daily Boston Globe*, March 17, 1935.

66. Neil Leonard, "The Jazzman's Verbal Usage," *Black American Literature Forum* 2, no. 1/2 (Spring–Summer 1986): 157.

67. Transcribed by author from Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra, "Sweet Sue (Just You)," Victor Records, 1933.

68. Leonard, "The Jazzman's Verbal Usage," 157.

69. Abel, "Cotton Club, N.Y.," *Variety*, February 21, 1933; "Paramount NY," *Variety*, March 16, 1938.

70. Zora Neale Hurston, "Spirituals and Neo-Spirituals" (1934), in *The New Negro: Readings on Race, Representation, and African American Culture, 1892–1928*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Gene Andrew Jarrett (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021), 475.

71. Brent Hayes Edwards, "Louis Armstrong and the Syntax of Scat," *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 625–49.

72. Moten, *In the Break*, 42.

73. Calloway demonstrates this same seamless flow between clear lyrics and scat in his performance of "Jumping Jive" in the 1943 film *Stormy Weather*.

74. Moten, *In the Break*, 42.

75. Lott, "Back Door Man," 701.

76. "Tin Pan Alley Gets Ideas from Harlem Jibe."

77. Transcribed by author from "Zaz Zuh Zaz," RCA Victor recording (Camden, NJ), 1933.

78. Moten, *In the Break*, 13–14.

79. Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Vintage Books, 1952), 8–9.

80. Ibid., 10.

81. Ibid., 11.

82. Ibid., 13.

83. David Yaffe, *Fascinating Rhythm: Reading Jazz in American Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 69.

84. Krin Gabbard, *Jazz among the Discourses* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 1–2.

85. See Dimitri A. Bogazianos, *5 Grams: Crack Cocaine, Rap Music, and the War on Drugs* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

86. Transcribed by author from Melle Mel, "White Lines (Don't Don't Do It)," Sugar Hill Records, 1983.

87. "Criminal Justice Fact Sheet," NAACP, https://www.naacp.org/criminal-justice-fact-sheet/ (accessed August 1, 2020).

88. Human Rights Watch, *Punishment and Prejudice: Racial Disparities in the War on Drugs*, Human Rights Watch Report 12, no. 2 (May 2000), https://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/usa/ (accessed August 20, 2021). Similar inequities exist in the arrest of Latinx persons for drug charges.

89. Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 133.

90. Ibid., 8–9.

91. See Michael Starks's discussion of *Super Fly* (1972) in *Cocaine Fiends and Reefer Madness*: *An Illustrated History of Drugs in the Movies* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1982), 183.

CHAPTER SIX: OPIATED GENIUS

1. For more on the British history of narcotic legislation, see Christopher Hallam, *White Drug Cultures and Regulation in London, 1916–1960* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); and Adrian Barton, *Illicit Drugs: Use and Control* (London: Routledge, 2003).

2. Joseph Roach outlines how circum-Atlantic performances undergo a process of surrogation in which they are always reinvented through the "adaptation of historical practices to changing conditions." Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 28–29.

3. In 1878, David Massey published a biography of De Quincey, and in 1889 he edited the first printing of De Quincey's complete works. *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* was widely available to the British public. Machen reports buying the work as a young man at a railway station, and the book was published in pocket size. It was the same in the US, where De Quincey's *Confessions* was published in a variety of forms and available with a number of different introductions. *The American Catalogue* from 1900 lists five different editions of the work along with diverse collections of De Quincey's essays in circulation.

4. Symons commented directly on De Quincey's writing in "A Word on De Quincey," *Studies in Prose and Verse* (London: Dent, 1905), 47–51. De Quincey's influence was also present in Symons's attempts to mimic Baudelaire. Machen clarifies the extent of De Quincey's influence on his writing in the first volume of his memoirs, *Far Off Things* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922).

5. Alina Clej, *A Genealogy of the Modern Self*: *Thomas De Quincey and the Intoxication of Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), vii–viii.

6. Thomas de Quincey, *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845; Mineola, NY: Dover, 2019), 70.

7. Jacques Derrida, "The Pharmakon," in *Dissemination* (1972), trans. Barbara Johnson (New York: Continuum, 1981), 102.

8. Clej, *Genealogy*, viii.

9. Berman, *All That Is Solid*, 18.

10. The phrase comes from Baudelaire's 1851 essay "Du vin et du haschisch

comparés comme moyens de multiplication de l'individualité." See E. S. Burt, "Baudelaire and Intoxicants," in *The Cambridge Companion to Baudelaire*, ed. Rosemary Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 119.

11. From Rimbaud's "Lettres du Voyant," written to Georges Izambard, May 15, 1871. In *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters, a Bilingual Edition*, ed. Seth Whidden (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 377.

12. Clej, *Genealogy*, ix.

13. William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, Act II, Scene 2.

14. Austin Brereton, *The Life of Henry Irving* (London: Longman, Green, 1908), 106.

15. The only extant copies of *John-a-Dreams* are a set of original prompt-books from the Haymarket production held by the University of Bristol. I extend my appreciation to the university librarians for their help.

16. "Theatrical Gossip," *New York Times*, November 12, 1894, 8.

17. It is worth noting that Tree remounted *John-a-Dreams* on his return to London in April 1895 and followed it with another work by Chambers, *Tyranny of Tears*, which proved to be the playwright's greatest success.

18. X.Y.Z., "The Modern Society Play," *London Times*, December 5, 1894, 6.

19. Peter Robertson, "Theaters," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 3, 1895.

20. William Archer, *The Theatrical 'World' of 1894* (London: Walter Scott, 1895): 307–8.

21. "Simply a Stupid Thing," *New York Times*, March 19, 1895, 5.

22. "His Hero Is an Opium-Eater," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 15, 1895, 36.

23. *The Illustrated American*, April 6, 1895.

24. Clej, *Genealogy*, viii.

25. Ibid., vii.

26. Virginia Berridge, *Demons: Our Changing Attitudes to Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 154.

27. Arthur Symons, "The Decadent Movement in Literature," *Harper's Monthly*, November 1893, 858–59.

28. Haddon Chambers, *John-a-Dreams* (typescript, HBT/000060, Herbert Beerbohm Tree Collection, University of Bristol, 1985), Act II, 4.

29. Charles Baudelaire, *Artificial Paradises*, trans. Stacy Diamon (New York: Citadel Press, 1996), 19.

30. Nerval's references to "supernaturalist reverie" come from his preface to *Daughters of Fire*, a collection he published in 1857. Gérard de Nerval, *Selected Writings*, trans. Richard Sieburth (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 350.

31. Arthur Symons, *London: A Book of Aspects* (London: Chiswick Press, 1909), 48.

32. Chambers, *John-a-Dreams*, Act II, 4.

33. Ibid., Act II, 3.

34. Petra Pointner details the trips to opium dens, gin shops, and bordellos that Symons, Dowson, Symonds, and Johnson all undertook in her *A Prelude to Modernism Studies on the Urban and Erotic Poetry of Arthur Symons* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2004).

35. Chambers, Act I, 19, and Act II, 1.

36. Ibid., Act I, 25–26.

37. Ibid., Act I, 17.

38. *The Saturday Review*, November 10, 1894, 507.

39. Baudelaire, *Artificial Paradises*, 72.

40. Pointner, *Prelude*, 11.

41. Quoted in Campbell, *Discovering Addiction*, 22.

42. Freud and Rado's idea of the "death drive" as it relates to addiction is similar to Beard's conception of neurasthenia, in which addiction worked in opposition to normal tendencies of survival and sexual reproduction.

43. Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (1897; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1901), 14.

44. Gillette lifts the dialogue of this argument from *Sign of Four* almost wholesale.

45. Arthur Conan Doyle, *Sign of Four* (1890; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1901), 149.

46. Rosemary Cullen and Don B. Wilmeth report that Doyle cabled Gillette to tell him that, when it came to Holmes, Gillette "may marry or murder or do what you like with him." Rosemary Cullen and Don B. Wilmeth, eds., introduction to *Plays by William Hooker Gillette* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 12.

47. This claim could later be applied to actors John Barrymore, Basil Rathbone, and Jeremy Brett. "Mr. Gillette's Return," *Hartford Courant*, February 9, 1930.

48. William Gillette and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes: A Drama in Four Acts* (London: Samuel French, 1922), 54.

49. Ibid., 54–55.

50. Gillette portrayed Holmes's drug use in a second piece as well. In 1905 he wrote and performed a comic curtain raiser entitled *The Painful Predicament of Sherlock Holmes*, in which Gillette ends the five-minute piece with an

injection of cocaine, signaling the centrality of drug use to Gillette's interpretation of the character.

51. Conti, *Playing Sick*, 119.

52. Andrew Smith, *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity, and the Gothic at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 121.

53. Doyle makes reference to De Quincey's works in the additional stories *The Silver Hatchet* (1883), *J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement* (1884), *Uncle Jeremy's Household* (1887), and *Through the Magic Door* (1906).

54. De Quincey, *Suspiria de Profundis*, 69 and 71.

55. Gillette, *Sherlock Holmes*, 56.

56. Ibid., 113–14.

57. Arthur Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes: Selected Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 102.

58. G. F. McCleary, "Was Sherlock Holmes a Drug Addict?" *Lancet* 2 (1936): 1555; W. H. Miller, "The Habit of Sherlock Holmes," *Transactions & Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia* 4, no. 45 (1978): 252.

59. Anna Neil, "The Savage Genius of Sherlock Holmes," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37, no. 2 (2009): 612.

60. "William Gillette in *Sherlock Holmes* at the New National," *Washington Post*, November 20, 1900, 27. Other articles that chastise Gillette for his inclusion of a love story include "Music and Drama," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 5, 1900, 4; and "Mr. Gillette in London," *London Times*, September 22, 1901, 11.

61. Daniel Cottom, "Sherlock Holmes Meets Dracula," *ELH* 79, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 552.

62. In *Scandal in Bohemia*, Doyle has Faulkner evade Holmes's capture, making her a kind of female match for the detective. Thereafter, Holmes maintains a quiet respect and interest with the figure he refers to simply as "the woman." However, this is the extent of Holmes's interest in anything that could be considered romance; as Watson notes, the detective "never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer." Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventures and Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1921; New York: Bantam Books, 1986), 239.

63. Gillette, *Sherlock Holmes*, 114.

64. Berridge, "The Origins of the English Drug 'Scene,'" *Medical History* 32 (1988): 53.

65. Pointner, *Prelude*, 112.

66. Cottom, "Sherlock Holmes Meets Dracula," 556.

67. Italics in original. Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 104.

68. Cottom, "Sherlock Holmes Meets Dracula," 554.

69. Doyle considered this the end of Holmes until popular demand led him to revive the detective in 1903.

70. The line was restored in the 1975 rerelease.

71. Diana Barsham, *Arthur Conan Doyle and the Meaning of Masculinity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 106.

72. Cottom notes, "The fact that he solves crimes that upstanding citizens, the police, or the government want solved is but an incidental byproduct, a pragmatic rationalization, of his commitment to achieving the kind of intellectual stimulation that he needs to stave off ennui." Holmes signals as much in his remark to Watson in "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton" (1904) that "I have always had an idea that I would have made a highly efficient criminal." Cottom, "Sherlock Holmes Meets Dracula," 557; Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (London: George Newnes, 1905), 209.

73. The novel was reissued in 1911 with the title *The Book of Carlotta*.

74. Arnold Bennett, *Sacred and Profane Love* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1919), 44.

75. Ibid., 107.

76. "Elsie Ferguson Returns," *New York Times*, February 24, 1920, 11.

77. Ibid. Significantly, the *New York Times* reviewer notes that Ruben's performance was similar to his celebrated appearance as Oswald in Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* three years earlier. The reviewer notes that Ruben plays the part of the addict "much as you think he would if you saw his Oswald." Like Jack in *Slaves of the Opium Ring* in 1908, the character of Diaz was a continuation of history that linked the neurasthenic with the addict.

78. "Miss Ferguson Appealing in Arnold Bennett Play," *The Sun and New York Herald*, September 24, 1920.

79. Bennett, *Sacred and Profane Love*, 47.

80. Ibid., 49.

81. Ibid., 132.

82. See "Displacing Masculinity: Sherlock Holmes, Count Dracula and London," in Andrew Smith's *Victorian Demons*, 118–49. See also William Hughes, *Bram Stoker's Dracula: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2009), 32–34; David Amigoni, *Victorian Literature* (London: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 162.

83. Journalist Winifred Black's hyperbolic articles about drug users in

Hearst newspapers were published as a collection entitled *Dope: The Story of the Living Dead* (New York: Star Company, 1928).

84. Derrida, "The Rhetoric of Drugs," 236.

85. Bennett, *Sacred and Profane Love*, 130.

86. Ibid., 136.

87. Diaz's recovery is detailed in a conversation between Carlotta and the character Rosalie. Ibid., 161.

88. Ibid., 177.

89. In many ways, Bennett inverts the standard Svengali trope from George du Maurier's popular novel and stage play. Another potential influence may have been that of August Strindberg and his concept of "psychic murder." In plays such as *Dance of Death* (1900) and *The Ghost Sonata* (1907) Strindberg's characters constantly attempt to siphon one another's life and happiness.

90. Arnold Bennett, *The Book of Carlotta* (New York: George H. Doran, 1911), 294.

91. "Elsie Ferguson Returns."

92. Bennett, *Sacred and Profane Love*, 179–80.

93. A film version of the play entitled *Soul Fire* starring Richard Barthelmess appeared in 1925. In it, the composer survives, having found peace on a tropical island, much like Gauguin's Tahiti.

94. John Lucas, *The Radical Twenties: Writing, Politics, and Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 113.

95. *The Vortex* centers on a cocaine addict called Nicky, played by Coward in the UK and US premieres. Coward pulls plot points from headlines, including reports of the cocaine overdose of Billie Carleton, an English music-hall actress whom Coward knew personally.

96. Clej, *Genealogy*, xiv.

97. See Jean Cocteau, *Opium: The Diary of His Cure* (London: Peter Owen, 1930); and the films *Bird*, directed by Clint Eastwood (1988; Warner Brothers, 1988); *Basquiat*, directed by Julian Schnabel (1996; Miramax Films, 1996); and *The Doors*, directed by Oliver Stone (1991; Tri-Star Pictures, 1991).

EPILOGUE: A LOOK BACK AT A *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY*

1. Scholars have investigated O'Neill's portrayal of addiction in pathological terms, with a focus on the behavioral dynamics and coping mechanism related to addiction. Stephen F. Bloom and Michael Bennett have explored these angles, and they demonstrate the faithfulness of O'Neill's depictions of family strife to the diagnostic paradigms established by behavioral psychol-

ogists. These studies often put the Tyrone men's drinking on par with Mary's opium use, labeling them alcoholics. However, the whiskey bottle and the syringe are not the same in the play. The men drink *in response* to Mary's addiction, and they call their enjoyment "a good man's failing." Their substance abuse is given a soft focus and the romance of the barroom raconteur. Mary's morphine use receives no such sympathy or romantic treatment. The men may struggle with their drinking, but it is Mary's drug use that is the engine for the play. See Steven F. Bloom, "Empty Bottles, Empty Dreams: O'Neill's Use of Drinking and Alcoholism in *Long Day's Journey into Night*," in *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill*, ed. James Martine (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1984): 159–77; Michael Y. Bennett, "Family Dynamics in O'Neill's Drama: The Diseased Body in *Long Day's Journey into Night*," in *Eugene O'Neill: Critical Insights*, ed. Steven F. Bloom (Ipswich, MA: Salem Press, 2013): 189–204.

2. Eugene O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 107.

3. John Henry Raleigh, "O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* and New England Irish-Catholicism," in *O'Neill: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. John Gassner (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 132.

4. Virginia Woolf, "De Quincey's Autobiography" (1932), in *Virginia Woolf: The Second Common Reader*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1932), 138.

5. O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey*, 173.

6. Ibid., 179.

7. Ibid., 80.

8. Blakemore directed the play in 1971 at London's National Theatre with Laurence Olivier and Constance Cummins in the roles of Tyrone and Mary. Michael Blakemore, *Stage Blood: Five Tempestuous Years in the Early Life of the National Theatre* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013), 93.

9. Discussed at length in Harold Bloom's introduction in *Eugene O'Neill: Modern Critical Views*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987).

10. Westgate, *Staging the Slums*, 27.

11. O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey*, 90.

12. The recent series *Maniac* (Netflix, 2018) does, however, enact the connection between addiction and memory in a way reminiscent of O'Neill's conceptualization.

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