

*Force of Habit: the Mystical Foundations of the  
Narcotic*

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### *Abstract*

This thesis aims to investigate and deconstruct the relationship between the narcotic, its narrative, and western modernity. To reveal the relationship, this thesis argues that it is possible to understand the philosophical, political, cultural and ethical dimensions of western modernity through the ulterior lens of the narcotic. As such, this thesis investigates western modernity's relationship to (a) cocaine as a specific narcotic, and (b) the concept of the narcotic with all its attendant connotations of addictions, illegitimacy, transgression, illegality, and so on. Accordingly, the thesis is both interpretive of the historical narrative of the narcotic of cocaine, and generative in its deconstruction of the relationship between western modernity and the concept of the narcotic. The deconstruction of this relationship ultimately reveals both prior narratives not as oppositional, but as supplementary. This has radical consequences for the manner in which we engage with narcotic use and the user – if the narcotic is supplement to the logic of western modernity, at each attempt to expel the use and user of the narcotic, rather than create difference, we self implicate ourselves in that expulsion and distance. To seek a new and more just means of dealing with the concept of the narcotic, and its use, therefore requires a new epistemological framework which can at once contemplate both narratives at the same time. To this end, the thesis suggests the use of critical complexity theory as one such methodological tool, if supplemented by the thoughts and strategies of Derridian deconstruction and Foucauldian discourse analysis.

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## *Introduction: Mystical Foundations*

### Introduction

The story of the western world's addiction to cocaine begins with a cut. Ernst von Fleischl-Marxow, a prominent scientist and close friend of Sigmund Freud, was dissecting a cadaver when he cut his thumb with the surgical knife. The wound became infected, and von Fleischl-Marxow had to have the digit amputated. Unfortunately the amputation did not remove the infection, and a neuromata soon formed. The wound became extremely painful, so much so that von Fleischl-Marxow considered suicide. Unable to continue his decorated career in the burgeoning field of medical science, he also fell into a deep depression. As was the prescribed remedy of the time, von Fleischl-Marxow began to use morphine in order to ease the pain; however he soon became addicted to the drug. Freud, upon seeing his friend's plight, a friend he once described as "a most distinguished man, for both whom nature and upbringing have done their best. Rich, trained in all physical exercises, with the stamp of genius in his energetic features, handsome, with fine feelings, gifted with all the talents, and able to form an original judgement on all matters" (Jones 1961. Vol. 3: 69) recommended a little-known substance he had recently been experimenting with, cocaine. Freud's thought, based on his experimentations, was that the cocaine would not only provide respite from the pain of the neuromata but may also cure von Fleischl-Marxow's morphine addiction. True to Freud's word, for a brief time von Fleischl-Marxow's consumption of morphine steadied and the pain of the neuromata was relieved.

The beneficial effect that cocaine was having was not to last however. Soon von Fleischl-Marxow's consumption of *both* cocaine and morphine increased, so much so that the supposed respite offered by either substance was eliminated. Indeed, "[w]ithin days Fleischl was consuming larger doses of cocaine, more and more often. He took so much he started to hallucinate. Terrified, he thought that snakes were slithering over his body" (Reef 2001: 41). While Freud thought it would be only six months before he died, it was actually six years. All of this time, his consumption of cocaine increased. Distraught and broken, von Fleischl-Marxow finally died on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1891. He was 45 years old. For his part, "[a]fter witnessing the suffering that he had caused his friend, Freud deeply regretted his championing of cocaine. He reproached himself for urging the drug on his loved ones and for

singing its praises in print” (Reef 2001: 42). Cocaine had both served to ease von Fleischl-Marxow’s pain and contributed to his death.

While at the time the incident may have seem relatively isolated, perhaps even a product of von Fleischl-Marxow’s decent into oblivion, today the concept of addiction is thoroughly normative. So too is the concept of a narcotic. Yet, this has not always been so; as shall be explored, the concept of addiction and what constitutes a narcotic has changed radically over time. How then did we arrive at the point we are at now? How, in other words, did the concept of addiction and the fear of the narcotic become so prominent in contemporary western society, and how does this fear effect the very way in which we deal with the use and user of the narcotic? These are the questions that this study seeks to analyse. The answer to these questions, as it turns out, is that the meaning of the concepts of the narcotic and addiction are not a product of some natural or innate quality, but a function of the manner in which they are articulated, and the position they occupy in relation to what is considered normal.

It is with this in mind, on the one hand, that this study seeks to analyse what I have termed the narcotic narrative – it is a critical engagement with the history of the narcotic conducted in the hope of finding a more just means of dealing with the problem that it presents to us. On the other hand, this study is a philosophical engagement with the *concept* of the narcotic, and how it has been articulated in and through western modernity. As shall be explored, both of these dimensions demand a serious and critical engagement with the concept of the narcotic and western modernity.

## **Analytical Foundations**

The foundation or origin of both western modernity and the narrative of the narcotic is what, in following Derrida (1989: 943), I have termed “mystical.” The use of the term mystical is not to be interpreted in the theological sense however, of “[h]aving a spiritual character or significance by virtue of a connection or union with God that transcends human understanding.”<sup>1</sup> Rather, it is to be interpreted in the sense of a “secret, concealed; *unconfessed*.”<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that the origins of western modernity or of the narrative of the narcotic are somehow unknown or unknowable. Rather, the term points to the *strategies* by which those origins are re-imagined in order to justify the present through the legitimacy

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<sup>1</sup> OED online. Ref: Mystical.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis added.



of the past; the manner in which the origin is mythologized plays a crucial role in the way in which the present is articulated. As I hope to show in the narrative of the narcotic, and seen through the example of cocaine, the origin is often re-invoked in order to justify the position that the use and user occupies in the present. Problematically however, every time the origin is invoked, the descriptive and normative presuppositions of the origin are also invoked. To deal more justly with the contemporary problem of the narcotic therefore requires that we reveal and understand the manner in which the origin supplements the present. As I hope to show, this has both descriptive and normative consequences.

Descriptively, this study is concerned with revealing the origin at work in the narrative of cocaine. This enterprise is both philosophical and historical – philosophical because the study critiques the manner in which the origin is used as a strategy; historical because it shows the role that the origin plays in the present. Such a critique is made possible, and meaningful, through a two-step process of engagement. In the first instance, while the philosophical engagement with the narrative is afforded more analytical weight, the examples that history provides are analysed through a Foucauldian framework, and the various “tools” (Link 2004: 14) that the oeuvre offers. In the second instance, it is the *relationship* between this uncovered history and the conventional historiography of western modernity that is critiqued through the *strategy* of Derridian deconstruction. As such, Foucault’s oeuvre, always consciously and explicitly concerned with the delimitation of power structures and their play, serves as the magnifying glass by which the foundational moments, their juridical possibility, and consequential legitimation of various key aspects of the narcotic narrative can be seen in operation. With this history revealed, deconstruction is used to critique the process of prioritisation, as a function of the logic of western modernity, which creates the normative binaries according to which the concepts of the addict and the narcotic are critiqued.

Consequently the delimitation of power structures offered to us by Foucault’s analytical lens also allows us to trace the limits of the discourses, *limits that are a function of the foundation itself*. This tracing of the supplementary logic of the foundation is achieved, as noted, through the critical application of Derridian deconstruction, and forms the second methodological basis for this study’s larger purpose of critique. That purpose of critique, ultimately, is an attempt to re-imagine the very logic of the narcotic in relation to the social, and to demystify the history that has hidden these foundational moments from view. It is only, I argue, by revealing the limits of these discourses, limits that must necessarily be a function of foundation itself that this re-imagining of the social and the narcotic can begin. Finally, however, the space for such a re-imagining beyond the limits of western modernity’s

narrative of the narcotic is offered to us by critical complexity theory. This, in essence, is the descriptive aspect of my argument.

The normative aspect of my argument, however, is a product of a concern for the distance and difference between the narcotic, addiction, and the normal. As shall be analysed, each time the origin is resurrected it becomes a rule by which difference is structured in the present. If that rule is unjust, then it will infect the manner in which we deal with addicts and narcotics, for instance, in the present. This is extremely problematic, for as I hope to show, the origin was never just but simply forceful. The employment of Foucault and Derrida's oeuvres is then an attempt to reveal and critique the origin in the name of seeking justice in the present. By reconsidering the past and the origin a new epistemological space is opened in the present. The methodological tools needed to engage with this new space, I argue, are offered to us by critical complexity theory. This is because critical complexity theory is self-reflexive of its own origins, as well as of that which it critiques. While the narcotic narrative can never escape the origin, we may be able to begin to be critical of it.

Accordingly, this analysis then is an extension of what Cornell (1992) has described as the philosophy of the limit. Philosophy is not, and indeed *should* not be, a mere extension of thought; it should have practical consequences. Indeed, as she (1992: 165) argues philosophy “*does* have practical consequences; the practical consequences [in this case] are precisely that law cannot *inevitably* shut out its challengers and prevent transformation, at least not on the basis that the law itself demands that it do so.” Cornell continues a long tradition of critically engaging with the possibility of reconciliation, legal obligation and freedom in a post-metaphysical world. In such a world, she argues, the law is without ground. This “radical” nihilism does not, however, create a void of meaning. Rather, it is through the acceptance of this meaning that we can strive for further justice. In fact, justice only becomes possible in the absence of a foundation for the law. In following Derrida (1989), justice is always *to come*. As Berkowitz (2006: 1) argues, “Understood as the philosophy of the limit, law *is* the thinking of the absolute (the metaphysical dream of universal justice) from the position of human finitude (the limit).”<sup>3</sup> This understanding of the philosophy of the limit is vitally important to this study. After all we have here a subject that is minimally concerned with justice and the law *qua* the very concept of the narcotic. Consequently this study is conceived in the terms of this tradition and uses as reference points a journey that stretches

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<sup>3</sup> The original paper cited was obtained directly from Roger Berkowitz's website. However, it has also been published in *Memory, Imagination, Feminism: on Drucilla Cornell* (2006) as referenced in the bibliography. This book was unavailable to me during the researching of this thesis.

from Kant and Hegel to Foucault, Cornell and Derrida. It is an attempt, in other words, to position justice in relation to and through an engagement with the limit of the concept of the narcotic, whether understood in terms of legality, epistemology or ontology. The practical consequence of this is the opening of a space where new policy and legislation can be thought possible. However, it must be noted that the onus on this study is to provide a critical analysis of the space itself, and not on attempting to create or think through new policy regulations; without the new epistemological space, new policy recommendations would not be possible.

Equally, however, the study is an investigation and critique of the structure, logic and authority of western modernity and its relationship to the narrative of the narcotic. This raises a number of questions however. Is it possible, for instance, to use the narrative of the narcotic in general, and cocaine specifically, as a lens through which we can view the story of western modernity? If so, can the narrative of cocaine reveal to us the supplementary logic by which the foundations of western metaphysics not only operates, but has also become hidden? Indeed, in this vein I argue it is precisely because of the relationship between western modernity and the narrative of the narcotic that these foundations become mutually deconstructable. Simply because this relationship is deconstructible, however, does not spell the end of a serious enquiry; indeed, it is only because this relationship is deconstructible that we can use the narcotic to illuminate modernity and vice versa. As Derrida, in *The Rhetoric of Drugs: An Interview* (1993: 10) has noted,

We are here dealing with a metaphysical burden and a history that we must never stop questioning. We have at stake here no less than the self, consciousness, reason, liberty, the responsible subject, alienation, one's own body or the foreign body, sexual difference, the unconscious, repression or suppression, the different "parts" of the body, injection, introjection, incorporation (oral or not), the relationship to death (mourning and interiorization), idealisation, sublimation, the real and the law, and I could go on.

While this study touches on all of these subjects, and many more, ultimately it is an attempt to do justice to the concept of the narcotic by revealing its foundations and limits, a reality that I argue can only be contemplated in relation to a variety of institutional elements.

It must also be remembered that unlike many other studies and analyses of the narcotic (see, for instance, Reeves and Campbell 1994: 1), I make no apology for my subject matter, my choices, or my views. It is because the analytical terrain of the narcotic is broad,

the lines of enquiry so numerous, that one is forced to acknowledge the limitations of one's own observation of the narrative, forced to acknowledge that at best, this is a selective reading. This however, as I hope to show in the final chapter, is not a downfall but an asset, for it is the self-reflexivity of one's own involvement in the narrative of the narcotic that brings to fruition and makes the demand of justice so compelling and forthright. Because the narrative of the narcotic is so broad, I have chosen to use the example of cocaine as my primary exhibit. The narcotic of cocaine was chosen, in part, because of its meandering history, the availability of resources, and indeed its morbid lustre. This is not to say that other substances cannot be analysed in a similar manner or that the history of other drugs and narcotics do not affect the narrative of cocaine.

Finally then, as a product of the methodological considerations briefly explored above, this study focuses to a larger degree not only on the binary structure of western modernity, but on the process of prioritisation which makes these distinctions powerful. In point of fact, Derrida has argued that "[i]n the final analysis, or in the very long run (for by definition there will never be any absolutely final analysis) a thinking and a politics of this thing called "drugs" would involve the displacement of these two ideologies at once opposed on their common metaphysics." This is not a final analysis, but in the example of cocaine, an attempt to contemplate the historical place of the narrative of the narcotic, and an attempt to deconstruct the logic by which that narrative has been seen as separate from – in the sense of being subversive of – western modernity. However I cannot speak beyond the experiences and knowledge that I have, and therefore, this is not an attempt to "make" theory that is universal, pragmatic, or scientific. Rather, it is an attempt to displace the authority and analytical need that those concepts have come to embody in the first place. This is not, however, a simple reversal. I do not discard or ignore the power that these concepts have over this analysis. Rather, it is an attempt to question the authority that makes them powerful. What follows then is, firstly, an analytical clarification of the epistemological space that this study occupies, an engagement with the various methodological approaches employed by this thesis, and finally an outline of the chapters to come.

### The Purpose and Direction of the Study

This study is both historically interpretive and analytically generative. By interpretive I mean the study provides an analysis of, but maintains a critical stance in

relation to, past material and texts. By generative I mean this study will attempt to produce, based on that interpretative gesture, a *renewed* epistemological vantage point from which to view the narcotic narrative. In its purely interpretive mode, Foucauldian discourse analysis is the primary methodological lens that is employed herein. On the other hand, in its purely generative moments critical complexity theory provides an additional analytical lens. However, neither the acts of interpretation nor generation are taken as mutually exclusive in this study – they are supplement to one another. At a purely analytical level, this supplementary logic is narrated through the application of Derridian deconstruction. The symbiosis of these methodological approaches is not an attempt to devise a radically new methodological perspective, but rather is the continuation of a critique explored by a number of authors (see, paradigmatically, Megill 1987; Boyne 1990; Royle 1995: 27; Miller, James 2000: 118; McCumber 2000; Miller, Joseph 2009: 136). As shall be discussed below, I offer no explicit analysis as to why they can be used in conjunction with one another. Nor do I feel I have to; their simultaneous deployment in the larger thesis provides the best justification for this process and reveals my understanding of their singularity and iterability far more conclusively. Furthermore, this is not an attempt to provide an analysis of their recognisably different languages and modes of thought (although this is implicit in the larger study), but rather to provide a refined epistemological lens through which to view the narrative and concept of the narcotic. Furthermore, the epistemological lens employed by this study, engendered at the shared focal point of these methodological traditions, demands an *ethical* engagement with the narcotic, which is the primary concern of this study. It is for this reason that this study takes as *a priori* this ethical demand for justice over and above the traditional analytical demand for methodological categorisation. Consequently, the ethical demand that structures the study is both a product of the analysis employed and the specific epistemological lens through which the narrative of the narcotic is viewed.

These two concerns have also undeniably affected the structure of this thesis. Most obviously, there is no purely methodological chapter, or what might be termed “The Methodology.” This is not to say, however, that there is no pure methodological engagement with the subject matter or lengthy discussions of the analytical approaches employed – far from it. Rather, it is my argument that is precisely *because* of these two prior concerns that there can be no methodology. In other words, and as shall be explained below, in order to do *justice* both to these methodological approaches and to the ethical demand of the study, it is not possible, *a priori*, to have a completely separate methodological chapter, or The Methodology. This concern, like Derrida’s concern with justice (1989: 961 – 963) is a

concern with the singular. To do justice to the concept of the methodology we must both follow its rule and interpret it at each moment. What applies to this study is not a rule for all studies. It is a rule only for this study, an attempt to do justice to the concept of the narcotic and its *relation* to the methodology in the singular.

As shall be discussed below, in order to do justice to the methodological considerations of a certain epistemology, what is required is *not* a blanket application of a rule but the singular and self-reflexive utilisation of a methodological consideration in its individual instance. This is both the ethical demand of a post-structural viewpoint and the only methodological vantage point by which to do justice to the approaches employed herein. Ultimately, there will always be a tension between what Cornell has termed the rigour of the rule of law and the necessity of freedom (1992: 165). The requirement of a coherent foundational methodology is to the ethical demand for the singularity of analysis as the law is to justice. Each must be constantly aware of their limits, which are ultimately a function of the foundations upon which themselves they rest.

Western modernity, its fundamental concepts, narrative, logic and relationship to the narcotic cannot be “escaped” or “overrun.” Yet those relationships can be revealed and critiqued. As Derrida has noted, for instance, in critiquing Foucault’s attempt to provide madness with a voice in and of itself (that is ultimately different to the one synthesised by modernity), one is forced to either *be* mad (thus delegitimising the authority of that voice), or to remain silent and therefore to have no voice (Derrida 2001: 42 – 43). The concept of the narcotic is simply one amongst others that have haunted modernity. It is my argument that until such time as we begin to see the concept of the narcotic in such a manner, we shall never be able to solve it as a problem. Indeed, it is precisely this *a priori* that leads one to seek a new epistemological lens, one not shadowed by the origin, but one that is critical of that origin.

Looking for and revealing the analytical contradictions of the logic of a discourse or narrative is not necessarily an attempt to overthrow or somehow “replace” that logic and discourse. Rather, it is an attempt to do justice to those limits, to reveal and re-imagine them in the present. This work is never complete, and justice is therefore a concept that is always *to come* (as is the ultimate conclusion to this study). Consequently, in order to reveal the logical limits of an object of analysis such as western modernity, it is necessary first to analyse that discourse. It is for this reason that this study is firstly interpretive. Equally, however, considering the vast history of western modernity, it is necessary to focus on specific objects that are made meaningful through their interaction with that history. It is for

this reason that this study is primarily concerned with the concept of the narcotic and its relationship to those other well-known objects within modernity such as discipline, confinement, sexual deviancy and racism (among others). It is also for this reason that those other objects are allowed to speak on their own terms, in the manner that they have been presented in the past, rather than attempting at all times to provide fresh analysis – the means by which an analysis focuses on an object is just as important as the object under focus. This is especially important in an historical analysis. Moreover, the “new” analysis, the generative aspect of the thesis, is confined solely to the concept of the narcotic, as seen through the epistemological lenses of critical complexity theory and deconstruction.

As noted, the three main methodological approaches employed are Foucauldian discourse analysis, Derridian deconstruction and critical complexity theory. Considering the importance of these methodologies to the larger study, a few brief words need to be said on and about them, in order to sharpen focus on the specific manner by which they are employed. It must be noted however, that while all three methodological approaches are used in this study, they do *not* all carry the same analytical weight. Nor is this an exhaustive analysis of their various forms. Of primary analytical priority is the deployment of, and interaction between, Foucauldian discourse analysis and Derridian deconstruction. This study’s first task, therefore, is to analyse the past epistemology/metaphysics of the narcotic narrative, *in order that a new epistemology might be thought possible*. It is only once that new epistemological space is opened that one can begin to focus on, for instance, policy recommendations and legislative frameworks. While I offer critical complexity theory as a tentative example of what such an epistemology might look at, this is at best a selective rather than “complete” or “total” approach. The task of this study is ultimately then an attempt to make sense of, and make meaningful, the past narcotic narrative with the view of revealing this epistemology/metaphysics in the hopes that we may one day be able more fruitfully to deal with the narcotic and its narrative. Before such an overview can begin however, it is also necessary to situate the study in the larger bibliographic context of analyses that have preceded it.

## Literature Review<sup>4</sup>

Historical accounts of the cocaine trade are perhaps the most widely read, and well known. This approach was formally introduced with Mortimer's *History of Coca: "The Divine Plant of the Inca's"* (1901). Very few historical accounts were published after this, until the late 1970s when the rise of the "crack epidemic" provoked a more critical engagement with the narrative of cocaine. With this turn of events Grinspoon and Bakalar's book, *Cocaine: a Drug and its Social Evolution* (1976), became largely cited, followed by a number of re-readings of the narcotic narrative, by various authors, most noticeably Karch with his many versions of *A Brief History of Cocaine* (1997), Gootenberg's edited book *Cocaine: Global Histories* (1999), and his most recent contribution *Andean Cocaine: the Making of a Modern Drug* (2009), as well as Spillane's *Cocaine: from Medical Marvel to Modern Menace in the United States, 1884 – 1920* (2000), and *Federal Drug Control: the Evolution of Policy and Practice* (2004). Other contributors include Berridge's numerous, extremely influential and detailed papers on cocaine, and her seminal work on opium in the UK, *Opium and the People: Opiate Use and Drug Control Policy in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Britain* (1999). Kohn has also contributed to this field with *Dope Girls: the Birth of the British Drug Underground* (1992; 2003). The field has been further expanded by Friman and De Kort's (1999) work on the European history of cocaine, drug use and production.

Accounts concerned solely with the use of cocaine in its modern form vary, although most can be categorised either as "warning" or informational texts. Paradigmatic of those texts that seek to warn the larger public against the use of cocaine are the National Institute on Drug Abuse's research monograph *Cocaine: Pharmacology, Effects and Treatment of Abuse* edited by Grabowski (1994), the second edition of *Cocaine* by Wiess, Mirin and Bartel (2002), *Cocaine* by Wagner (2003), a part of the "Drugs: the Straight Facts" series, and *Cocaine* by Sommer (2008), which notably forms part of the "Incredibly Disgusting Drugs" series. Books written by Steven Karch also provide such warnings. More objective texts that have been of use in this study include *Cocaine: the Great White Plague* by Nahas and Peters

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<sup>4</sup> This literature review is at best selective. There is a vast body of literature on the *subject* of cocaine, but very little on the *concept*. Many authors will allude to the subject without adequately engaging with it. Therefore, this literature review has only included the paradigmatic texts on the topic, and those that have been central to the study itself. All literature associated with the theoretical and methodological oeuvres employed in this study are included below, and are contained within the discussions on the specific topics. Moreover, and as the reader will notice, this study has touched on a vast range of topics and themes. To include *every* work and topic here is simply impractical.



(1989), Flynn's *Cocaine: an In-Depth Look at the Facts, Science, History and Future of the World's Most Addictive Drug* (1993), *The Pleasures of Cocaine* (1999) by Gottlieb (which interestingly also invokes the First Amendment Right to Information on the first page as an obligatory disclaimer), and *Cocaine: Seduction and Solution* by Stone, Fromme and Kagan (1985).

The journalistic accounts of the transnational cocaine trade and its history can be divided into those authors who have written books on the subject, and those who have “reported” on the subject through the media. Of those that have engaged with the cocaine trade at the more serious level, Streatfeild's *Cocaine: an Unauthorised Biography* (2001), and Webb's *Dark Alliance: the CIA, the Contras, and the Crack Cocaine Explosion* (1999) stand out as paradigmatic. This is not to say, however, that the more localised reporting efforts of various journalists have not been influential. Indeed, these efforts provide one of the best barometers of measuring the pressure of the discourses of cocaine over time. Some examples of the better-known accounts can be seen in the changing covers that *Time* has employed with regards to cocaine, and the various articles that can be found in the archives of *The New York Times* – an that has been especially influential in the earlier chapters of this study, as it is one of the few newspapers to make its archives freely available to researchers.

There are numerous highly detailed scientific papers on the subject of cocaine and its effects on various organisms. Because of the specificity and technicality of these papers, they have been of limited value to this study specifically, although the authority of the language they use exemplifies my critique of the scientific paradigm. Perhaps the first paper in this field, although not read today as a scientific paper, is Freud's *Über Coca* (1884) (*On Cocaine*). Present explorations are extremely localised, with very few being dominant. Examples include such titles as *Effects of UV Irradiation on Detection of Cocaine Hydrochloride and Crack Vapors by IMIS and API-MS Methods* (2009) and *Cocaine receptors on dopamine transporters are related to self-administration of cocaine* (1987).

Finally, with the emergence and subsequent dominance of, what I shall analyse as the “criminal discourse” in chapter six, criminology and policy formation journals and writers have become extremely interested in the subject of cocaine. Paradigmatic in this field are Dale Scott's *Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies and the CIA in Central America* (1998), and Parry's *Lost History: Contras, Cocaine, the Press & 'Project Truth'* (1999). Clare Hargreave's in-depth account, *Snowfields: the War on Cocaine in the Andes* (1992), stands at the interface of “factual” journalism and criminology, while Rowe's *Federal Narcotics Laws and the War on Drugs: Money Down a Rat Hole* (2006) provides a substantive critique of

failed policy formation. These larger works are also supplemented by a vast archive of journal articles found, most prominently, in the *British Medical Journal*, the *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *Crime and Justice*, *Drugs and Society*, and the *Journal of Political Science*.

With regard to this body of literature, this study is placed at the interface of post-structural philosophy, criminology and contemporary research concerning the concept of the narcotic. It is not, however, an attempt to provide an exhaustive or radically new historical account of the narcotic narrative. Rather, it is an attempt to uncover those foundational moments that have defined the limit of the narrative, which have affected the narrative, and ultimately, have made the narcotic a juridical concept in western modernity. As such, for much of the interpretive aspects of this study it is the archive material that is the most important. Therefore, while archive material has been garnered from second-hand sources, a steadfast attempt has been made to source the original materials. In its generative aspect, as noted, the study focuses on the epistemological opportunities offered by critical complexity theory. The analysis is original in its application of critical complexity theory to the narcotic narrative, and more specifically cocaine.

## **Foucault's Oeuvre**

With regards to Foucauldian discourse analysis it is necessary to place this study in the larger context of the three main methodological shifts found in Foucault's work, namely archaeology, genealogy, and ethics. While these three domains of analysis have been artificially separated for analytical clarity, Davidson (1986: 221) argues that each represents "an analysis of systems of knowledge, of modalities of power, and of the self's relationship to itself" respectively. Considering the methodological difficulty of this separation and indeed in respect to the academic debate that this division has generated (see Macey 1993; McNay 1994; Detel 2005), this study takes as *a priori* the difference, rather than similarities, between each domain.

Foucault is well known for seeking out the illicit, the downtrodden, the obscure (Caputo and Yount 1993: 4 – 7). This focus is highly revealing, for in doing so, Foucault directs our attention away from the obvious and well known to that which exists in relation to, that defines *a priori*, and yet remains hidden. History, in this reading, "should not be used to make ourselves comfortable, but rather to disturb the taken-for-granted" (Kendall and

Wickham 1999: 4). History, within a Foucauldian analysis, does not seek to see *why* the present has come to be, but rather *how* it has been constructed through different mechanisms of power, and legitimated by different regimes of truth. Implicit within this acknowledgment is the rejection of the metaphysical “origin” (or “author”); what is of importance here is not the acceptance of an origin, but a critique of why that origin has an ontological benevolence within the discursive structures that it claims to be the originator of. As Shiner (1982: 387) documents, “[G]enealogy contests the “origin-continuity-subject-event” complex at every point.”

As such, the move from archaeology to genealogy and then ethics should not, and indeed cannot be seen as some sort of Foucauldian developmental trajectory. As Foucault himself states rather infamously, “[d]o not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order” (Foucault 1974: 17). For this reason it is taken for granted, in following Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982: 104), that “[t]here is no pre- and post archaeology or genealogy in Foucault.” They can be separated for analytical clarity however.

Archaeology, as a separate analytical domain, was first developed in *Madness and Civilisation* (1971) and later expanded upon in *The Order of Things* (1970: 2002), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1975: 2003) and *Discipline and Punish* (1979). The analytical space opened up by the methodology was consolidated in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1974).<sup>5</sup> These works represent an attempt to uncover and to reveal the discursive formations and practices that have made very serious speech acts possible and authoritative. In Rabinow and Dreyfus’ interpretation, “the archaeologist performs on all discourse and knowledge, especially our own, the same sort of distancing of truth and meaning which we naturally bring to the medical accounts and other theories of the classical age” (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 13). Foucault, in discussing the archaeological method, argues that

Such an analysis does not belong to the history of ideas or of science: it is rather an enquiry whose aim is to rediscover on what basis knowledge and theory have become possible; within what space of order knowledge was constituted; on the basis of what historical *a priori* ... ideas could appear, sciences be established, experience be reflected in philosophies, rationalities be formed, only perhaps, to dissolve and vanish soon afterwards (Foucault 1974: xxi – xxii).

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<sup>5</sup> Problematically, these books *were not* published in English in the same order as they were written in the French. For brevity, this study cites only the English translations used.

What is of importance then, what is to be gained through the use of the archaeological method, is an analysis of the very system of meaning that makes meaning possible and to analyse the strategies, the contestation of truth claims, that bring about knowledge and truth in its epistemic form. Archaeology thus aids in highlighting the matrix that has given past truth claims their foundation and power in the present.

The contestation of the supposed teleological or chronological continuity of history focuses analysis on the breaks, disturbances and upheavals that are displayed through, yet glanced over by, the historical metanarrative. Most importantly in such an analysis, the subject *becomes* the object of analysis. As such the subject is displaced from its historical and epistemological throne as *primum movens* of the grand visage of history, and is instead made subject to the creative forces of what Foucault (1977: 113 – 138) identifies as the power-knowledge complex. This act of displacement, genealogy, is

a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of events.

Furthermore, “a genealogy will not take its events as they are conventionally given to it, but will constitute its own events” (Shiner 1983: 388). This concentration and displacement of the subject, as previously mentioned, is perhaps best seen in, and argued for, in Foucault’s article (1977: 113 – 138), “What is an Author?” This then is not a reconstruction of history (although it is self-reflexive of the problems of hermeneutics), but rather an attempt to find that which is hidden *by* history. The recognition that history is a narrative, and a narrative that is furthermore articulated through specific political and knowledge paradigms/practices becomes genealogy’s target. The narration of history is not only a political interpretation, but a means of analysing the very structure of history, as constituted by its own predisposed narratives. Truth, then, in its metaphysical exemplification, is to be displaced, or at least to be shown as constructed (thus bringing into doubt the very notion of the metaphysical status of some truths), the product rather than source of knowledge paradigms. By attempting to reread history through its breakages, its disruptions and forgotten archives, especially in the context of cocaine, I hope to show the manner in which the origin influenced the present, and which ultimately led to the various transformations that the narrative of cocaine underwent.

Genealogy then, and in contrast to the thoroughly discursive analysis of archaeology, is primarily concerned with the relationship between power, knowledge, and the body.

Foucault's exploration of this new mode of thought was outlined in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (1977), and later concretised in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1979), and in a number of public lectures such as those contained in *Society Must be Defended* (2004) and *Abnormal* (2003). The relationship between archaeology and genealogy, while complex, for the purposes of this study is summarised thus: on the one hand, archaeology's purpose is to bring to the fore those historically contingent discursive phenomena which simultaneously constrain and enable serious speech acts. These discursive phenomena, before archaeology, "are inserted into universal explanatory schemas and given a false unity. The interpretation of events according to a 'transcendental teleology' deprives them of the impact of their own singularity and immediacy" (McNay 1994: 88). Genealogy's task then is to identify the transcendental teleology, those power structures which authorise meaning through the mystification of their own foundations. Genealogy's primary concern is to highlight, critique and reveal the different manifestations of power/truth as they are played out in history upon and through institutions, bodies and juridical structures with the ultimate aim of displacing the metaphysical foundations of their truth-value. In Foucault's words (1971: 139. *op cit.* Dreyfus and Rabinow 1971: 106), genealogy's primary aim is to "record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality." A genealogical account of the narrative of the narcotic is then not an attempt to reassert a metaphysical foundation, *telos*, or grand narrative into that narrative, but to reveal and to critique how the narrative has been authorised and rendered legitimate through reinscribing it as metaphysical.

Ethics, finally, represents Foucault's final concern, a concern with the body and how it might resist those power structures that he identified through his archaeological/genealogical analyses of various institutional structures. The ethical concern for the self seems to derive, symbiotically, from a concern with sexuality and the social body. Foucault's first explorations in this new direction can be seen in articles such as *What is an Author?* (1987), *The Care of the Self* (1978) (the third volume of *The History of Sexuality*), and *The Return to Morality* (1990) and later expanded upon in *Technologies of the Self* (1988). This last critique attempts to highlight the fragility of the self. In the words of Foucault (*op. cit.* Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 257), "[i]t seems obvious that a revived culture of the self concretized in new reciprocal relationships is, although a change from entanglement in the deep self, as an isolated achievement, thoroughly vulnerable." His emphasis on the systems of thought, however, methodologically constrains him to comparisons of these systems. To advance a new or revised system focussing primarily on sexuality would require a radical methodological shift that Foucault only briefly hinted at.

The theoretical oeuvre offered by Foucault, then, is a means of interpretively engaging with the narcotic narrative. Through the excavation and highlighting of the limits of the foundational moments in that narrative, I hope to reveal how those limits have become a function of the foundation from which they were derived. The use of Foucault's archaeological and genealogical method is then a means whereby these foundations can be interpreted. However, in order to avoid the problems associated with the genealogical method, this study does not attempt to follow Foucault in asserting the normativity of those discourses and foundations that are uncovered (Dreyfus *et al* 1982). The question of the normativity of the narrative cannot remain unanswered though. After all, we are dealing here with real people, situations and lives intimately involved with the narcotic narrative. To critique that normative burden, however, requires an analysis of the very limits of that discourse. That analysis, I believe, is offered to us by the strategy of deconstruction. The narcotic narrative has become caught within, indeed, caught because of a metaphysics of presence which not only makes that narcotic as a concept juridical but prevents us from analysing the foundational logic which makes meaningful the concept of the narcotic. It is, in other words, because the narcotic narrative is always seen *apart* from modernity, rather than *within* modernity, that this normativity has become so hard to articulate.

## **Derrida's Oeuvre**

With regards to Derridian deconstruction, as Norris (1982; 2002) argues in his paradigmatic study *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*, “[t]o present ‘deconstruction’ as if it were a method, a system or a settled body of ideas would be to falsify its nature and lay oneself open to charges of reductive understanding” (1). Derrida's oeuvre, as previously mentioned, was extremely expansive and therefore the selection criterion is relevance to the subject matter of the study. This is not to say, however, that there are not a number of strategies or activities that guide a deconstructive reading of any text. These elements, rather than being elucidated *through* a definition (which is but one strategy) will be shown through their deployment in other texts; primary among these will be Derrida's critique of Saussure in *Of Grammatology* (1976). Christopher Norris (whose work seems to be the most cited, clear, and conscientious of the process of deconstruction),<sup>6</sup> argues (2002: 24) that one should

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<sup>6</sup> Norris's centrality is even made clear in texts highly critical of deconstruction. As Ellis notes, “Norris is widely thought to be among the most faithful of all English-language expositors of deconstruction; a leading figure in the movement, Harold Bloom, hails his as ‘the most accurate’ account of deconstruction available,

“fasten upon certain crucial themes and argumentative strategies, acting as far as possible on Derrida’s reiterated warning that his texts are not a store of ready made ‘concepts’ but an *activity* resistant to any such reductive ploy.”

If deconstruction applies itself to the textual level, then the activity of a deconstructive *reading* is methodologically extremely important. Following this, Paul de Man (1971: 110) argues that

[s]ince they are not scientific, critical texts have to be read with the same awareness of ambivalence that is brought to the study of non-critical literary texts, and since the rhetoric of their discourse depends on categorical statements, the discrepancy between the meaning and the assertion is a constitutive part of their logic.

The assertion here is that unlike previous distinctions *between* philosophy and literature, philosophy should be read *as* literature. This conceptual move is important for it opens up the philosophical text to ambiguity, play and questions of truth *at the textual level*. As Norris further argues (2002: 19) “Derrida’s texts ... rest on the assumption that modes of rhetorical analysis, hitherto applied mainly to literary texts, are in fact indispensable for reading *any* kind of discourse, philosophy included.”

The deconstructive strategy has a number of philosophemes that are central to the larger project of deconstruction. Central to this thesis, although in no way exhaustive, is the minimal analysis of “logocentrism,” the advancement of the “free play” of texts, the “*différance*” of the sign, and the “trace” of meaning (with its concomitant term the “supplement”). While these terms are central to the project of Derridian deconstruction, it is through their deployment that they are made manifest. Thus what follows is an attempt to bring to light the strategies employed by deconstruction in order to further aid the analysis.

The difference between logocentrism and the metaphysics of presence is that the former is the identification of a strategy while the latter is the acknowledgment of a strategic discursive framework. Both, however, are invoked in similar strategies of a critique of the origin. The critique of a metaphysics of presence is a form of analysis which “uncovers those rules governing the production of all Western philosophical discourse which would attempt to establish the signifier as a transparency yielding an unobstructed view of a privileged and autonomous signified (truth, reality, being)” (Ellis 1989: 36. *op cit.* Lentricchia 1980: 177).

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while other reviewers have praised ‘Norris’s remarkable success at presenting a clear and critical picture of central issues,’ attributed to him ‘much skill [in] the exposition of Derrida’s teachings,’ and recommended his books as a particularly useful exposition” (Ellis 1989: 32).

Emphasis here is placed on the generative ability of the strategies employed by discursive frameworks. For example, and in relation to the original analysis of Saussurean structuralism, the metaphysics of presence is a critique of the way in which the signifier is seen as equal to, or able to replace the meaning of the signified. The signifier, in short, *becomes* the signified. In the words of Jameson (1972: 173. *op. cit* Kimball 2000: 11), “it implies an illusion that universal substances exist, in which we come face to face once and for all with objects.” It is through the generative capacity of this discursive framework that logocentrism becomes apparent: “the illusion that reality and its ultimate categories are directly present to the mind, passed on by language without being shaped or altered by it in anyway whatsoever.” (Ellis 1989: 36). Both the metaphysics of presence and logocentrism are summed up by Norris (2002: 69) as “the craving for origins, truth and presence.” Derrida’s critique of this reasoning (as highlighted through the isolation of both terms) concerns the “overbearing” predominance of the very logic of reasoning: if one conceptualises the terms of language as directly reflecting structures in the world, one is led to believe that the concepts of language *are* the structure of reality (in the *present*). The critique extends further though, for if this metaphysical axiom is all pervasive within western modernity (through both its historicity and continual reproduction) then it may not be possible to conceive of any alternative. As Ellis surmises (1989: 37), “its [the metaphysics of presence] categories will seem to be the world’s categories, its concepts the structure of reality.” A Derridian critique of both of these interrelated concepts takes two forms: the first is to highlight the text’s collusion with the strategic discursive framework, and the second is to highlight how this very collusion has warped the text’s analysis through the discursive lens which it must deploy in order to be considered legitimate knowledge. Again, it is for this reason that this study does not have an isolated methodology.

With the domination of both the metaphysics of presence and logocentrism identified, Derrida deploys four closely interrelated strategies of critique: *différance*, play, the trace and the supplement. As Derrida argues (1981: 26), “[t]he play of differences supposes, in effect syntheses and referrals that forbid at any moment, or in any sense, that a simple element be *present* in and of itself, referring only to itself ... There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces.” Derrida most clearly uses the term “play” as a methodological strategy in *Of Grammatology* (1976: 50): “[o]ne could call *play* the absence of the transcendental signified as limitlessness of play, that is to say the destruction of onto-theology and the metaphysics of presence.” Importantly though, there are two further aspects of play, the first being derived



from the linguistic critique of Saussure's structuralism and the second from the displacement of the metaphysics of presence.

In the first instance the notion of play is derived from the displacement of the link between the signified and signifier as articulated by Saussure. Conceptually, one of the most important aspects of Saussure's work is the conclusion that "language is a *differential* network of meaning" (Norris 2002: 24). From this it is derived that "[t]here is no self-evident or one-to-one link between 'signifier' and 'signified', the word as (spoken or written) vehicle and the concept it serves to evoke" (*ibid*). This new synchronic approach to linguistic structure (which was placed in contrast to the diachronic structures of the past) not only cemented Saussure as a leading figure of the structuralist movement, but also allowed the expansion the theoretical framework to potentially include all social systems, not just language. The Derridian critique of this "phonocentric" system, in which the spoken word is prioritised over that of the written is well known and is the main purpose of *Of Grammatology* (1976). What is important to note is that it is because of the "systematic degradation" of writing that the temporality and spatiality of a metaphysics of the present is invoked: it is only in speech that the "here" and "now" are present in the communicative strategy. The insistence on an immediate temporality of reality creates a structure whereby the requirements of the system itself *precede* that of the "content" in the system. Derrida introduces the notion of play in order to counteract this preponderance and emphasis. By showing that encased within the very metaphor that is necessarily encountered by any language is a limitless number of meanings, Derrida seeks to critique (although not necessarily reverse) this position. *Play* here stands as the self-reflexive metaphor through which this critique is engendered.

In the Saussure's synchronic system the relationship between signifier and signified is determined, ultimately, by the system's conventions. Derrida's critique of this reasoning is best summarised by Derrida (1981: 19 – 20) himself:

The maintenance of the rigorous distinction – an essential and juridical distinction – between the *signans* and *signatum*, the equation of the *signatum* and the concept, inherently leaves open the possibility of thinking a *concept signified in and of itself*, a concept simply present for thought, independent of a relationship to language, that is of a relationship to language, that is of a relationship to a system of signifiers. By leaving open this possibility – and it is inherent even in the opposition signifier/signified, that is in the sign – Saussure contradicts the critical acquisition of which we were just speaking. He accedes to the classical exigency of what I have

proposed to call a “transcendental signified,” of which in and of itself, in its essence, would refer to no signifier, would exceed the chain of signs, and would no longer itself function as a signifier. On the contrary, through, from the moment one questions the possibility of such a transcendental signified, and that one recognizes that every signified is also in the position of a signifier, the distinction between signified and signifier becomes problematical at its root.

With the identification of this critical problem, Derrida argues that meaning is generated through play, rather than the rigid structure proposed by Saussure. Even though there is no longer a specific contrast between signified and signifier, this does not mean that “meaning has become limitless, infinite, and indefinite” (Ellis 1989: 52). Play, after all, still has meaning. Indeed, it is this play of differences that generates meaning. Importantly though through the displacement of the immediate temporal structure of the sign, as Saussure presented it, meaning becomes *deferred*, to come, and relies on the trace of other meanings that have come before and which supplement the present meaning. Thus, meaning is generated both through a process of difference and deferment, which leads Derrida to coin the neologism *différance*. Ultimately, as Norris notes, interpretation is no longer turned back in a deluded quest for origins and truth. Rather, it assumes the vertiginous freedom of writing itself: “a writing launched by the encounter with a text which itself acknowledges no limit to the free play of meaning” (Norris 2002: 69).

As noted, *différance* takes its cue “from a more Saussurean view of language” and is a neologism “to suggest not only that which is different, but also that which is deferred” (Kearney and Rainwater 1996: 438). Derrida’s own account of the origination of the term is found in his article *Différance* (1973):

The verb ‘to differ’ [*différer*] seems to differ from itself. On the one hand, it indicates difference as distinction, inequality, or discernibility; on the other, it expresses the interposition of delay, the interval of a *spacing* and *temporalizing* that puts off until ‘later’ what is presently denied, the possible that is presently impossible. Sometimes the *different* and sometimes the *deferred* correspond [in French] to the verb ‘to differ’. This correlation, however, is not simply one act and object, cause and effect, or primordial and derived (*op cit.* Kearney and Rainwater 1996: 441).

This neologism needs to be interpreted and analysed in two ways. The first is that *différance*, as critique of the Saussurean method, “sets up a disturbance at the level of the signifier” (Norris 2002: 31). Its target is thus language, the text, through its very embodiment and

deployment. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, is the relationship between *différance* and the metaphysics of presence (and thus also logocentrism).

The constitutive elements of a metaphysics of the present is temporality and spatiality. The appeal to a self-present and self-authenticating truth is justified through their embodiment, speech. This can be traced back from Saussure to Rousseau “who thought of speech as the originary form and the healthiest, most ‘natural’ condition of language” (Norris 2002: 32). Language (and writing specifically) in this form represents a slippage from the grace of truth to the endless repetition of deferred gratification: “[I]anguage becomes an index of the degree to which nature is corrupted and divided against itself by the false sophistications of culture” (*ibid*). *True* meaning, in this context, is found in the present at the spear-point of speech; its articulation *becomes* truth through its very deployment. This subversion of writing, however, presupposes (contradictorily) the very deployment of writing. It is, in other words, only because of a specific conception of the immediacy of time and space that requires and justifies an argument such as, for instance, Foucault’s. If we are to acknowledge that the meaning of language is epiphenomenal of not only the difference of words, but *also* relies on their past deployment (of both the word under question and those other words which, through their difference, allow it to be meaningful) then not only is the immediacy of language brought into doubt, but its very deployment relies on a deferred meaning of what it is to be meaningful. As Derrida (1976: 226) concludes,

Our language, even if we are pleased to speak it, has already substituted too many articulations for too many accents, it has lost life and warmth, it is already eaten by writing. Its accentuated features have been gnawed through by the consonants.

The means by which Derrida, on the one hand, brings to light this ever present yet ever hidden primacy of immediacy, and on the other, provides a critique of the mechanism by which this system is both made articulate and disguised can best be seen in his highlighting of the trace and the supplement. These words “reinforce the idea that no single final act of perceiving meaning is possible – the extended and indefinite play of differences will introduce supplements and uncover ‘traces’ of them” (Ellis 1989: 52). For example, in Derrida’s critique of Rousseau he argues that once language goes beyond the primordial squeak of, for example, a pinprick, language will already have a structure (1976: 344). Importantly, this structure, in order to make meaning, relies on the meaning generated through difference. A sentence, so to speak, is made meaningful not only through the words it

includes, but by the words *it does* not include. Meaning is generated through the residue trace of the absent, of the *choice* to include one word and not another. That choice in itself relies on the varying distinctions between words; a word can also then *supplement* the meaning of another depending on the context. Through this, the free play of language is unleashed.

Through these four philosophemes, the critique of the metaphysics of presence, the free play and continual *différance* of meaning, and the supplement, and trace of language Derrida provides the conceptual framework by which deconstruction operates. This is not to say that these concepts *are* deconstruction, but rather the minimal means by which it operates; even so, deconstruction is more than the sum of its parts. What I hope to have achieved here, however, is a self-referential analysis that has brought at least some clarity to the overall structure of the strategy. In order to highlight these strategies at work, an analysis of four central Derridian texts will be conducted in chapters one and two, focussing to a large degree on the strategies employed in *Of Grammatology* (1976), *Cogito and the History of Madness* (2001), *Dissemination* (1981) and *The Rhetoric of Drugs* (1993). These texts have been selected for a number of methodological purposes. Firstly, they span the length of Derrida's authorship, providing important insights into the development of his thought. Secondly, they are particularly relevant considering (and in their respective order) their concern with structure and language, the placement and foundation of "the Other," the *Pharmakon* and *Pharmakos*, and modern discursive strategies and frameworks relating to illicit drugs and narcotics. Thirdly, it is in these texts that the foundational binaries of western metaphysics are most clearly and intensely discussed and these binaries are ultimately central to the analysis offered here. Finally, they also place the thesis in a philosophical tradition and context, a tradition that is highly critical of its past and the longing for its own "foundations." Revealing these limits as constitutive of the foundation of the narcotic narrative allows us not only to engage with the current metaphysical and epistemological configuration of cocaine, but also allows us to re-imagine an analytical space *beyond* the constraints of this present epistemology/metaphysics.

The interpretive gesture of this study is aimed at revealing the foundations and logical limits of the discourse. It is only, in other words, by understanding the historical narrative of the current epistemology of cocaine that we can begin to imagine a space *beyond* that discourse. Crucially though, such a re-imagining cannot escape the current discourse, but must be informed by it. It is this relationship therefore, between the interpretive analysis offered to us by Foucault and Derrida, and the generative possibilities offered to us by critical complexity theory, that informs the larger methodology of this thesis. Simply put, it is only

by understanding the past that we might hope to look to the future. The interpretive analysis, however, leaves one central question unanswered: even with an understanding of the past discursive twists in the narcotic narrative, their foundations and their effects, how do we form a revised epistemological lens through which to view that narcotic *that does justice* to that very narrative? It is my argument that the self-reflexive and critical stance of complexity theory, while not offering us an exhaustive “shopping list” of theoretical positions and tools, does open up an analytical space where such an epistemology might be contemplated.

### Critical Complexity Theory

Finally then, with regards to critical complexity theory, while there are a number of “models” or “modalities” of complexity theory, there is also at least one analytical tension between them. While this tension may manifest itself at the level of the procedures, processes and operations that each approach may seek to undertake, the primary analytical division is between reductive/restrictive complexity and general/critical complexity. Reductive complexity seeks to understand complex phenomena through the formulating of certain *a priori* processes and models, with the view of *simplifying* or *overcoming* that complexity. True complexity, in this reading, is considered somewhat of a stumbling block. The Santa Fé Institute has championed this form of complexity (or “chaos”) theory, of which the models are known, colloquially, by the same name. On the other hand, general complexity has been articulated most prominently by Niklas Luhmann (1993; 1989),<sup>7</sup> William Rasch (2000a; 2000b), Edgar Morin (1983a; 1983b; 1992; 2005; 2007), and Paul Cilliers (1998a; 2000a; 2000c; 2001; 2002; 2004; 2005a; 2005b; 2006). I agree with both Morin (2005: 9 – 10) and Cilliers (1998a: 3 – 5) that reductive complexity does not offer a suitable model of analysis or application with regards to the phenomenon of the narcotic as articulated by this study, precisely because reductive complexity never escapes the clutches of modernity’s analytical

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<sup>7</sup> In recent years, Luhmann’s work and relationship with other poststructuralists has been explored and critiqued at length; see, for instance, Rasch and Wolf (2000) and Luhmann himself (1993). Indeed, Luhmann has explored the relationship, specifically, between deconstruction and systems theory in “Deconstruction as Second-order Observing.” Both Cilliers (1998a) and Morin (1992), however, reject Luhmann’s analysis of systems theory, as by Luhmann’s own admission, he argues that operational closure is fundamentally important for the continuation of a complex system (1993). Considering this, and bearing in mind that Cilliers’ and Morin’s analyses are more central to this study, Luhmann’s work will largely be shelved, although not ignored. While this may be “counter-hegemonic” in practice (Pickel 2007: 395), this is done for the far more important reason that Luhmann’s definition of systems theory and Cilliers’ *et al* are at odds at a meta level, and due to the space constraints of this thesis, cannot be sufficiently dealt with. However, one of Luhmann’s central concepts, the paradox of differentiation, will continued to be used, as it can be used with sufficient analytical clarity in either domain.

mode (the very same mode which, this study has argued, has given rise to the problem of the narcotic in the first instance). Critical complexity theory, moreover (and unlike reductive complexity theory) is acutely aware of the paradox of reduction; a paradox which not only has interpretive consequences for this study, but from which critical complexity takes its starting point. This relationship and starting point will be explored in more detail in chapter seven (“The Conclusion”), which concerns critical complexity theory directly. Briefly however it is fruitful to note that the paradox of reduction might be articulated thus: in order to have a theory of the world in general, and of a complex system specifically, one necessarily restricts or demarcates all the data and knowledge that exists in a complex system in order to derive a theory from it. A theory is then ultimately a generalised (albeit informed) model of the world around us. Complexity, however, resists *a priori* this reduction and simplification, which is the totemic mark of theorising. The paradox, then, is that complexity cannot be reduced through theorising if that complexity is to be appreciated in its complexity. However, equally, we cannot know a complex system in its complexity and therefore the analytical pursuit of complexity must, epistemologically, be to simplify or theorise (Cilliers 2005b: 137 – 138). Recognisably then, while theories of complexity may prove epistemologically useful, they are also fundamentally finite and restricted – the self-reflexivity of this paradox, that we cannot reduce complexity but that we must in order to deal with reality, this aporatic tension, is what accounts for the “critical” in critical complexity theory.

While both deconstruction and critical complexity theory may be framed within the analytical compartments of poststructuralism or infrastructuralism (especially, in the instance of reductive complexity theory, when theorised through the “Santa Fé” paradigm) neither make any unilateral commitment to either of these schools of thought. Each deployment of deconstruction or of critical complexity theory is unique, necessitating, at the very minimum, sensitivity to this distinct and unrepeatable instance of analysis. Both deconstruction and critical complexity theory are also sentient of their own limitations, producing, in opposition to the grand narratives of modernity, knowledge that is fragile and conditional. Indeed, Morin (1992: 3; 2007: 4) has argued that the grand narratives of modernity are “mutilating” in their refusal and blindness to understanding their own contingency and historicity. This does not mean, however, in the case of deconstruction and critical complexity theory, that the

knowledge that is produced is random, haphazard or “relative.”<sup>8</sup> It is the force of this dialectical operation of modernity that is, after all, under critique. The language of complexity can be complex however, so much so I have felt that it needs to be grounded (but not framed) by the more familiar linguistic territory of deconstruction. Ultimately, this is the *raison d’être* of their use in this study – critical complexity provides the new epistemological framework that I seek to advance, while deconstruction provides the narrative and linguistic tools through which that framework can be further explored along the lines of the previous chapters and their emphasis on discourse. Considering, too, that I have employed Derridian deconstruction and Foucauldian discourse analysis throughout the study, as outlined in chapters one and two, deconstruction serves as the analytical bridge between Foucauldian discourse analysis and critical complexity theory. Not only does the epistemological framework of critical complexity theory disclose to us its own inherent normativity, but also because it is self-reflective of its own use and deployment as a choice or decision, and because it is fundamentally an open system itself, the framework is always aware that the possibilities of other explanandums exist. As such, rather than stability, critical complexity theory seeks change. One such hope of this analysis, then, is that even if I cannot suggest how to change the concept of the narcotic, I can introduce the concept of change *to* the discourse of the narcotic, from which in the future new and fruitful engagements with the concept might emerge. The departure from modernity demands this.

### Outline of the Study

As noted, this study is both generative and interpretive. However none of the chapters are either “purely” interpretive or generative. While each chapter follows the general analytical modality of interpretation before generation, it must be equally noted that the interpretations, *qua* the analytical concept of interpretations, are also necessarily generative. There is, in other words, no objective vantage point from which to view the narrative of the

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<sup>8</sup> The charge of relativity must be considered from two perspectives. Firstly, the charge only gains power because of the dialectical and oppositional structure of the logic of western modernity. Relativity is placed in contrast to objectivity, and therefore, when one is relative one is not objective, rational, deterministic, etc. The knowledge that is produced is therefore illegitimate. The power of such a claim, however, is only conditional of it being situated in a logical system that places in opposition objectivity and relativity. Secondly, this charge has its own genealogy, arising in early critiques of postmodernism and poststructuralism. To make this charge is to fundamentally misunderstand both projects. It is not that either analytical field attempts to make everything relative and in which there is “no truth,” but rather, seeks to show how certain truths have become powerful. Those truths would exist irrespective of the analysis, the analysis however highlights them, questions them and displaces them.

narcotic, and therefore, each interpretation *chooses* to view the narrative in a certain light. Furthermore, the political process of choice and interpretation, as discussed previously and which will be dealt with more conclusively in chapter six and the conclusion, creates or generates an ethical demand and retrospective framework for this study.

It is within this interpretive/generative modality that each chapter seeks to highlight a number of core “tropes” in the narcotic narrative. These tropes serve, firstly, as paradigmatic examples of the subtler and shifting discourse of the narrative – they are *not* intended to be read as the *sole* interpretation of the larger narrative. They do however reveal the origin in operation in the present. By highlighting these “themes” or “tropes” and their epistemic dominance I hope to not only reveal the subtle similarities in the narcotic narrative, but also the differences. Thus, for instance, while the concept of race is a common trope in the narrative of the narcotic, its usage within that narrative has also changed dramatically over the last century. It represents both a foundation and a limit of the narcotic narrative – it is a trope of the origin that guides the strategies of the present. Perhaps a more accurate definition of these tropes would be to analyse *their field of use* (in a Foucauldian sense) in the narrative. However, to do so would require too much space, and therefore, the conceptual shorthand of “trope” will continue to be used. By interpreting the similarities and differences revealed by these tropes’ interactions with the narcotic narrative the study *becomes* generative, and might be seen not only as a philosophical examination but a cultural critique of those discourses which fall within its range. With this in place, critical complexity is then deployed as a means not only of critiquing, but also of generating a revised epistemological arena. It is through the lens of complexity therefore, that I hope to make a substantive contribution to the field of narcotic analysis both at a theoretical and pragmatic level.

Chapter one thus begins with cocaine’s first *serious* interaction with the episteme of western modernity in 1860, when Albert Niemann first artificially extracted cocaine hydrochloride. In this chapter I argue that the literal and metaphorical free trade in the substance of cocaine occurred or *was allowed* precisely because it was just that, a substance. There was no normative association to speak of and consequently no condemnation. Nor could there be; the substance was yet *to become* a drug or narcotic. Indeed, at first, the exact opposite occurred – the substance of cocaine was lauded as a “medical miracle” (Spillane 2000: 32). While a number of authors have noted this “fact” (see, for instance, de Kort 1999: 123 – 144 or Friman 1999: 83 – 104), and excepting Joseph Spillane’s work (see, also 1998, 2000, 2001), there have been very few sustained analyses as to why this was so. It is my argument therefore, firstly, that cocaine’s legitimacy as a substance that did not require



regulation did not derive from a lack of knowledge or empirical evidence as to its powers or addictive potential, but rather, from the institutional legitimacy that transformed it from a substance into a miracle. In other words, it was the particular *relationship* between the substance and medical science that constituted its nature, rather than any innate or inherent “properties.” Considering too that it was at this very same time that rational medical *science* (with all the epistemological force that the concept generates) was constituting itself as a legitimate and powerful form of knowledge that cocaine, first as a substance and then as a drug, was legitimated and remained legitimate so long as the relationship between the two could be maintained.

The legitimacy of the drug, wrought from its relationship and interaction with western medical science, allowed what I have termed a “free trade” in the substance to occur. In contrast to the policies of prohibition that were to come, cocaine’s legitimate distribution, use, and trade increased greatly before 1906. This increase, however, rather than being the result of a lack of prohibition and its attendant measures was a function of the legitimacy of the medical. This would have both epistemological consequences for the substance itself and ontological consequences for the user, dispenser, and distributor, determined by their position vis-à-vis medical science.

While the changing epistemological and ontological status of the substance and the user are directly related, chapter one confines itself to an epistemological analysis of the substance of cocaine, while chapter two primarily focuses on the ontological analysis of various instances, situations and characters revealed by the archive. Again, this is a product of the narrative – until such time as some uses of cocaine became seen as illegitimate, those interacting with it were rarely assumed to be normatively suspect, and therefore, very rarely newsworthy. This is not to say that the free trade in the substance of cocaine was somehow beyond the various political technologies of surveillance, but rather, a result of those technologies having yet to train their lens on the narrative. This is in direct contrast to those analyses that argue that the free trade in cocaine was a consequence of a *lack* of knowledge concerning its properties etc (see, for instance, Jonnes 1996). My analysis argues that it was the relationship between the drug and western modernity and not the inherent properties of the substance that defined cocaine’s status in western modernity.

The changing relationship between cocaine and western medical science would also have radical effects on those who regularly interacted with cocaine. Indeed, when cocaine became a narcotic, the normative power of such a charge would negate the very being of those caught in its clutches – not through their addiction itself, but through the stigma of their

addiction. Chapter two's primary analytical focus is on this change and condemnation. Indeed, it is my argument that the concept of the narcotic, when it first became normatively powerful, became the trigger-charge for declaring and critiquing a range of differences other than those implicit in the relationship between the narcotic and the social. The narcotic did not cause those changes itself, but became a means of articulating them.

The system of differences that had thus far structured western modernity began to ebb away, necessitating what René Girard has termed a sacrificial crisis (Girard 1986). Constitutive of the sacrificial crisis is two movements. In the first difference is dedifferentiated; that is, the differences which structure a society break down, or fall away. Without these differences the very ontological fabric of society is brought into doubt. Furthermore, the mythology which structures these differences while legitimating and making them meaningful is also brought into doubt, thus signalling the end of the legitimacy of those differences which give structure to the social. The need to restore order is signalled by the sacrificial crisis, but it is only through the performative act of sacrificial exclusion itself that the order can be rejuvenated and legitimated. Girard and Derrida's work match closely here, both showing how at the moment of the foundation, whether that be justice (Derrida) or the mythology that legitimates any system of difference (Girard), there is nothing more than real, performative, founding violence. Everything else is mystical, textual, and constructed. This analysis serves not only to give a foundation to the narrative of the narcotic, but reveals to us the inversion of the relationship that defined the narcotic, allowing the narcotic to become illegitimate from a state of legitimacy. It is from this point, I argue, that cocaine, *as a concept*, became a narcotic.

Using this argument as a point of departure, the narrative of the narcotic twists away from cocaine, as does the analysis, to highlight the importance of the confluence of what has been termed "the jazz trope" and heroin. Here the analysis becomes much more interpretive, revealing how the *normative* concept of the narcotic interacted with the larger discourse of jazz as a strategy of condemnation. This is the work of chapter three, *Narcotic Instruments*. Primarily, this chapter seeks to highlight the relationship between the logic of western modernity and the narcotic narrative, revealing that it is the relationship that has placed the narcotic as the carnal supplement to modernity. It is then the relationship itself that constitutes both elements, of which the narcotic is highlighted as the focus of the analysis. The supplementary logic of the relationship not only reveals to us the relationship itself, but reveals also the strategic deployment of that relationship as a function of various institutional structures. Jazz music, for instance, was initially "illegitimate" in contrast to the rational

functionalism of classical western music not only because it displayed a different form, but because the consequences of that form undermined the sovereignty of rationality. There is a Cartesian logic at work here, in which the narcotic supplements the jazz-loving “Negro” body in order to perform and in order to be, at the same time as the rational mind is displaced from its ontological reign by the body. The narcotic becomes the supplementary concept that delegitimizes the larger ontological position of the “Negro,” encapsulated by the notion of a “jazz-fiend.”

Interestingly however, it is the trace of the narcotic that was used to perform this political reversal. Thus, for instance, the body, sensuality, and feeling were taken to be more important, indeed ontologically constitutive of the identity of the self. The birth of the “bebopper” represents this, a new means of engaging with and reversing the force of those institutions tasked with condemning them. Indeed, the difference between the “bebopper” and the “square” came to signify so much more than simple musical taste. This is not a justification for the use of drugs as a political means of subversion, but rather an analysis of how that justification is possible. Thus, I argue, there is a “narcotic metaphysics” in which the narcotic not only creates difference, but also and paradoxically, eliminates it. This is possible because the meaning of the concept of the narcotic is not derived from itself, but from its relationship with other discourses. In the case of “beboppers,” for instance, their perceived use of narcotics differentiated them from larger society. However, equally, that difference provided the movement necessary for their condemnation.

Chapter four highlights the narcotic narrative’s interaction with the discourse, place, and narrative of Hollywood. Hollywood, I argue, represented the pinnacle of the consumptive American Dream, in which a relationship was established between the consumption of cocaine and the concept of individuality. The chapter seeks not only to analyse that relationship, but also to analyse the cultural capital both of the narcotic and the place. It is my argument that a confluence occurred between the place (Hollywood) and the narcotic (cocaine), in which both elements fed off each other, increasing their cultural capital. However, this relationship was fraught with anxieties. In the first instance, the confluence of the narcotic narrative and Hollywood created an epistemological temptation – both concepts became a sovereign means of articulating one’s identity. In the case of the narcotic, it was through the difference that its use created that it aided in this identity formation. In the case of Hollywood it was what it represented and symbolised that became important.

I argue that, as a consequence, this process created an ontological frustration, wrought from the consumerist ideology that was sweeping America. In order to be an individual one

had to consume. However, if everyone was a consumer, then one no longer had anything unique to consume. The narcotic, as a political tool, would expedite the differentiation constitutive of a unique identity, but at a price. The cultural capital that the narcotic of cocaine garnered for itself during this time allowed it to become pseudo-legitimate in the consumerist discourse – it was legitimately illegitimate. This created the first sustained illegitimate market for the narcotic, as revealed by the exponential increase in cocaine's consumption, distribution, trade and price during this era. At the same time however this increased consumption dedifferentiated the difference that was created by the consumption of the narcotic, which once again was to have the effect of delegitimizing it. Again, however, what is important to note is that the narcotic, as a concept, is constituted by its relationship to western modernity. Considering the speed at which this inversion occurred the chapter serves to highlight the dual nature of the narcotic-as-*pharmakon*, as both poison and elixir. While this duality remained during the Hollywood era, it was with the rise of “crack cocaine,” that the poisonous axiom of the narcotic would once again come to the fore.

Chapter five, entitled *Reagan's Pharmacy*, questions the beginnings of the war on drugs and Reagan's various policies against “crack” cocaine. Here I argue that rather than representing a “break” or a re-beginning of the anti-drug rhetoric, the discourse is actually a continuation of the logic that pervaded the narcotic narrative from the very beginning. Reagan attempted to legitimise the fundamental changes that were sweeping the American nation through his rhetoric of “back to the future.” Fundamentally, the discourse was an attempt to invoke the mythology and the legitimacy of the Founding Fathers. Thus, for instance, figurative metaphors such as pious work, individuality, freedom and heterosexuality pervade his serious speech acts. The net result of the discursive construction of this legitimating mythology is the absolute exclusion of the other – whether that be, for instance, the “crack addict,” homosexual, or socialist. Reagan's administration, however, encountered a paradox of differentiation that inevitably created a sacrificial crisis in society. His attempts to reassert the transcendental legitimacy of the Founding Fathers, rather than create an inclusionary society, became premised on the sacrificial exclusion of the ulterior “other.” This division occurred at the very point where cohesion was supposed to occur – the sacrificial crisis that gripped the American nation is one of the main areas of analysis of the chapter.

Reagan's administration also began the process of legislation that would ratify the difference between what Foucault has termed the delinquent and the offender. The offender, in contrast to the delinquent, maintains access to the confessional matrices that allow their

reincorporation into society. Thus, for instance, the Hollywood starlet who became addicted to cocaine, because of her ontological status within the larger Order of Things, and so long as she confessed to her sins, was allowed to re-enter society through such institutions as the (privatised) “addiction treatment centre.” The delinquent, however, such as the “crack addict” was always conceptualised ontologically as beyond the Order of Things. They were the nefarious and parasitic other whose very existence undermined the system of differences. Their sacrificial expulsion, therefore, was necessary. It is this confluence of discourse and legislation, I argue, that led to the vast disparity in incarceration rates between white and black people (socially) and the rich and the poor (economically). Both, however, displayed a remarkable confluence. As a result, I argue, the “crack problem,” “plague,” or “scourge” was the consequence not of some inbred or deviant desire *qua* function of the origin by (mostly) black impoverished people to undermine Reagan’s administration, but, paradoxically, the result of those policies that defined the administration.

Chapter six takes as its point of departure the episteme of the war on drugs. While the war on drugs has begun to rescind from public discourse, the episteme does represent the logical conclusion of the historical analysis undertaken by this study. Considering this, the first section of the chapter is dedicated to a brief archaeological examination of the myriad of laws, regulations and Acts that have, over the years, given force to the anti-narcotic discourse. This analysis reveals the manner in which discourse and legislation have interacted. While this thesis primarily exhumes the discursive narrative of the narcotic, with its completion it is possible to view that narrative through the more traditional lens of criminology and legislative analysis. The central argument of the chapter is that the *pharmakon*, within the episteme of the war on drugs, became the *pharmakos* to the emerging order. In other words the fear of the narcotic itself became a justification for a new *raison d’état*, the war on drugs. While the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos*, as movements, are articulated as oppositional in preceding chapters, here I argue that they are supplemental to one another. The fear of the *pharmakon*, then, within modernity, will always be supplemented by an expulsion articulated through the *pharmakos*. As scapegoat to the episteme, the existence of the narcotic justified a new militaristic governmentality that superseded traditional variations of the concern with sovereignty, territory and domestic law. As such the concept of the narcotic became supplementary to the rationality of the state.

## *Chapter 1: The Free Trade*

### Introduction

For 46 years, from 1860 to 1906, the substance of cocaine was legally available in the United States of America and indeed much of the larger world. As a consequence, any constraints on trade in the substance were a function of the market, and not a function of the strategies of legislation and normative discourses with which we are familiar today. Even though this was to begin to change in the same time period described above, the free trade in cocaine was not simply the result of a lack of knowledge with regard to its dangerous nature and addictive potential. After all, medical science and indeed societal prejudices were well acquainted with the problem of opium, as shall be explored. Rather, cocaine's availability, indeed its *legitimacy* as a consecrated substance of medical science was the result of a unique combination of discursive events. It is the combination of these discursive events, and their effects on the epistemological status of the substance of cocaine, that can be seen as a foundational moment in the history of the narcotic narrative of cocaine. Indeed, it is this foundational moment which set the limits to what could be thought possible vis-à-vis the substance of cocaine, and which articulated the manner by which it, and its users would be defined in the media and press of the time, and ultimately, the coming legislation. The argument in this chapter is therefore twofold. On the one hand, the chapter attempts to reveal the founding moments, and their limits, which transformed the epistemological status of cocaine from substance to drug. On the other, the chapter is an analysis of the rise and fall of the free trade in cocaine, and a specific discursive event, what I have termed The Decision, which ushered in a new regime of containment and control of the *drug* of cocaine. It is only by understanding these past limits and foundational moments, I argue, that we may one day be able to recognise the limits on contemporary thought which prevent us adequately dealing with the problem of the narcotic.

While cocaine's transformation from substance to drug, and then from drug to narcotic is presented as a linear teleology, this is done solely for analytical clarity and to reveal the deeper methodological considerations that this thesis takes into account. There are many instances when cocaine was considered both a legitimate drug and a moral problem, depending on the position of the speaker vis-à-vis the legitimating medical discourse.

However, what this study attempts to do is to map out the larger discursive shifts which ultimately led to our present perceptions of the narcotic of cocaine. As I shall argue then, it is these perceptions, which have their roots in a vast history, which can and have prevented us from dealing more justly with cocaine, its use and users.

Today the narcotic of cocaine is almost unimaginable without the normative discourses that surround it – it is very difficult to speak of cocaine without necessarily invoking a whole range of moral and legal presuppositions. Consequently, in the time under analysis, a time in which these normative presuppositions only began to exist, there was both a literal and discursive free trade in the substance of cocaine, by virtue of it being a mere substance. There were of course already normative presuppositions to do with illegitimate drugs and their use, such as opium. What falls under analysis here though is the specific narrative of cocaine. Indeed, what I have described as the free trade served as one of the foundations upon which much of the discursive history of cocaine would one day be built. Because of the preponderance of the present normative assumptions concerning the narcotic and discourse of cocaine, however, these foundations have become hidden or what I, following Jacques Derrida's analysis (1989: 920-1046), have termed mystical.

To rediscover these mystical foundations requires, in the contemporary world, a suspension and indeed suspicion of the present normative discourses evoked in most descriptions of the narcotic. To conduct an analysis of cocaine's free trade, therefore, requires that we suspend the judgment that is never far from the concept of the narcotic today, if for only a brief time.<sup>9</sup> The suspension of that judgement allows us to begin to peel away the layers of meaning that have, in the final analysis, prevented us from confronting directly the problem that cocaine presents to western modernity. Fortunately this distillation is not reductive but historical – a deconstructive and genealogical historical analysis of the concept allows us to examine its founding moments and limits. Contained within these founding moments, I argue, is the logic that makes powerful the concept of the narcotic today. Revealing this logic, then, will reveal to us the mystical foundations of the narcotic's authority in and over western modernity.

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<sup>9</sup> The suspension of judgement is an analytical strategy offered to us by Foucauldian discourse analysis. Equally, however, this strategy has not been without its critics (see, for instance, Taylor 1985: 377 – 385). Indeed, Foucault himself has been criticised for not *truly* suspending judgement in his analyses of the prison and health systems. It must be remembered, however, that I do not follow Foucault in using discourse analysis, whether it be of the archaeological or genealogical species, to critique the normative jacket that surrounds the concept of cocaine. This is left to deconstruction and critical complexity theory, for which the problem of normativity is entirely different and will be dealt with accordingly in the relevant chapters.

Methodologically, such an enquiry requires an analysis of the conceptual framework in which the meaning and epistemological status of cocaine is made, and has changed, through history. Such a historical analysis is not only of cocaine itself, but also of the larger episteme in which it finds itself – that of western modernity (of which, importantly, other drugs and substances have also played a role). In following Derrida’s many critiques of the episteme of western modernity, an enquiry into the changing epistemological status of cocaine would require a deconstructive reading “of a vast number of conceptual oppositions: nature/culture or nature/convention, nature/artifice, emancipation/alienation, public/private, etc” (Derrida 1995: 240). Secondly, such an analysis would also have to take into account a genealogy of “a history ... and a culture, conventions, evaluations, norms, an entire network of intertwined discourses, a rhetoric, whether explicit or elliptical” (Derrida 1995: 249). A deconstructive reading of western modernity, and the narrative of cocaine found within it, will then necessarily engage with the binary logic that is integral to its very structure. The genealogical reading, on the other hand, highlights the discursive and rhetorical infrastructure whereby those core binary oppositions are made meaningful and *political*. Thus, while the latter analysis is conducted through an archaeological excavation of the various tropes, discourses, and regimes of truth that have articulated this narcotic modernity, these motifs are simultaneously enabled *and* constrained by the logic of their western metaphysical foundations. It is, in other words, because of the logic by which western modernity describes the world that the narrative of cocaine itself follows a well-worn path from the legitimate to the illegitimate, and from the legal to the illegal.

With the above methodological considerations in mind, and indeed in focussing on the actual historical narrative of cocaine, three areas of analytical importance become apparent. These have been termed, chronologically, The Economy of Doubt, The Decision, and the Repetition of Addiction and are dealt with as individual sections in the chapter. While each analytical area might be usefully thought of as an individual event, they also form an integral part of the larger process or historical narrative that cocaine has written for itself in its transformation from a substance to a drug. The task therefore is to discern in the historical record the events themselves, and their impact on the larger narrative of the narcotic, as seen in the media, legislation, and other reactive platforms of the day. Again, it must be reiterated that this linear teleology is used for the purpose of analytical clarity, which is necessary to reveal the logical undercurrents that form the analytical heart of the study.

The prehistory, free trade, and birth of the narcotic of cocaine can also be ordered into three theoretical tiers, which mirror the historical transformation of cocaine from a substance



to a drug in North America's history. These three tiers are signified by three analytical divisions – cocaine as a substance, as a drug, and as a narcotic. It must be noted that this chapter is *only* concerned with transformation of cocaine from a substance to a drug, while the second chapter is only concerned with the transformation of cocaine from a drug to a narcotic. Each, however, relies heavily on the other and cannot be read as separate events.

Considering the theoretical complexity of this chapter, a brief outline of the coming analysis needs to be provided. This complexity is, unfortunately, a result of combining post-structural philosophical thought with various historical analyses. However, as I hope to show, such an analysis provides a useful means of engaging with the history of cocaine, and its relationship with western modernity, with the express aim of discerning past features and events which still have a bearing on our contemporary interactions with the narcotic. If we wish to find out why we have failed so dismally in dealing with the present problem of the narcotic of cocaine, we need to look to, and indeed be critical of, how we have dealt with cocaine in the past. It is for this reason the complexity of the chapter is justified.

In the first section of this chapter I analyse the discursive and historical events that led to cocaine's legitimacy as the first effective and widely used topical anaesthetic, and its consequent articulation as a "medical miracle." Accordingly I argue that the legitimacy of the substance of cocaine, as a powerful tool within the *material medica's* arsenal, was a function both of its chemical effects and discursive placement as a miracle. As a consequence of this legitimacy, the production, trade and use of cocaine soared. There was then a literal and discursive free trade in the substance. Importantly though, and as the heading of the first section of this chapter indicates, this free trade was a function of what may seem a paradoxical relationship with what Foucault would term the "economy of doubt" of medical science. As shall be explored, it is only by the constant doubting, testing and critique of a substance that it may gain scientific legitimacy – to enter into the hallowed halls of scientific legitimacy, a substance (or indeed a person) must first be doubted, and through that doubt proven legitimate. It is for this reason that a drug, even in the contemporary world, will be used by medical science only after extensive testing and only until its effects prove inadequate or harmful. This is the logic of doubt which allows the free flow and trade of a substance within the medical community, and which imbues it with a legitimacy which transforms its normative status from unknown or neutral to "good" (or indeed "bad").

Considering this history, the first methodological task of this chapter is to "reach the point at which the dialogue was broken off, dividing itself into two soliloquies – what Foucault calls, using a very strong word, the *Decision*" (Derrida 1995: 249). The Decision

however, as a definitive temporal and spatial event of modernity,<sup>10</sup> presupposes a time where there was a *free trade* in the narcotic – a time before the Decision. This free trade represents a time when one might speak of cocaine “without having to add quotation marks to indicate that one is only mentioning them [narcotics] and not using them, that one is not buying, selling, or ingesting the ‘stuff itself’” (Derrida 1995: 228). The justification for an analysis of the economy of doubt of medical science that made cocaine legitimate is then twofold – both its very status as legitimate, and its transformation into an illegitimate drug, point to this time.

Thus, in this chapter, and focussing on the first tier, which spans from 1860 to late 1885, cocaine’s epistemological status as a substance is a function of its unknown qualities. It had no confirmed use, although as shall be noted below there were at least some prefatory experimentations with the substance. It was therefore seen as an intriguing, but medically unknown substance – it was just another substance in the world at this point. In the second tier however, from 1885 to 1895, cocaine became medically useful with its adoption as an effective topical anaesthetic used in all manner of surgery. Considering the urgent need for such a drug, cocaine’s status changed to that of “elixir” or “medical miracle.” It is in this guise as an elixir that it is quickly adopted into the *materia medica* of the time. Equally, it is at this point that the substance becomes a *drug*, a useful chemical substance that was defined through its adoption by medical science. As such it becomes *the* modern miracle of medical science – a tool by which the efficiency and productive efficacy of the modern subject can be vastly increased by decreasing, for instance, the recovery times associated with surgery. Importantly though it is through the larger discourse of productivity which is premised, as I shall show, on the episteme of rationality/irrationality that cocaine’s epistemological status would be articulated. When, in other words, its use was effective at mitigating pain, it was glorified. When, however, its illegitimate use brought into question or further highlighted the rationality of the consuming subject, it was demonised.

Following this, in the second section of the chapter I analyse what I have termed The Decision itself. The Decision both “links and separates” the normative discourse on cocaine “and it [the Decision] must be understood at once both as the original act of an order, a fiat, a decree, and as a schism, a caesura, a separation, a dissection” (Derrida 1995: 228). In the first instance, The Decision transformed cocaine from a substance to a drug by allowing it into the

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<sup>10</sup> Lyotard’s conception of modernity relies heavily on these two dimensions (1979: 1). The decision presupposes a time and place where these two dimensions had not infected the narcotic. This is not to say that this time was *pre-modern*. It certainly wasn’t. It is my argument, however, that this time represents a *pre-narcotic* modernity, that is, before the concept of the narcotic of cocaine became meaningful in its present manifestation. See, also, Beardsworth, 1996: 49.

pharmacy. In the second instance, however, when cocaine's addictive nature became apparent (and thus the first vestiges of an "irrational" use of the drug became known), a decision would be made to demarcate between legitimate and illegitimate uses of the drug. The Decision however, in both instances, is a function of the power of medical science *to decide* what constitutes a legitimate or illegitimate drug. The first instance of The Decision will be dealt with in this chapter, and the second in the next. What is intriguing is that The Decision is no longer conceived of as an active process, but has been retrospectively naturalised, as shall be explored, through the narrative of rationality – the progression of the adoption of cocaine as a medical miracle, and then its expulsion (because of its addictive nature), has been mythologized as the natural course of medical science when in fact it was a conscious and indeed politically significant act. Understanding the *process* by which these acts have become mythologized is especially important to later arguments in this study.

Consequently I argue one such means of articulating this duality of the narcotic is through an analysis of the concept of the *pharmakon*. Deriving from a platonic analysis of the duality of western logic, the term is a specific reference to the dual nature of certain substances in the world, and provides a direct link between this analysis and that of Derrida in *Dissemination* (1981). As shall be explored, the *pharmakon*, as both poison and elixir, allows us to highlight the oppositional logic that has made the narcotic supplementary to western modernity. It is here that the analysis contemplates both the discourse and physical substance of cocaine – it is the changing disparity and articulation of the distance between the two that brings into doubt, and provides the basis of critique, for our present articulations of the narcotic of cocaine. *Simply put then, while the substance of cocaine, as a physical substance, remains unchanged, the manner and mechanisms that we use to articulate it and its consumption have changed radically over time.* What allows this change is a specific structure to the very logic we use to articulate the world. In the case of western modernity, which is the primary logic under analysis, that logic displays a binary form. Articulations of cocaine, as with other substances, oscillate diametrically because of this form. It is for this reason that shifts in the narcotic narrative follow the same path, between legitimate and illegitimate or legal and illegal, for instance. By analysing these past shifts, it is possible to discern how we presently articulate the narcotic of cocaine, and *it is upon the basis of this critique that we may then, and only then, make informed political and legislative decisions.* As such, the entire point of this analysis is to present that foundation, for it is only with that foundation that secondary analyses can begin to seek practical means by which to stem the

flow and trade of narcotics. This is, ultimately, one of the very reasons to conduct a philosophical analysis of a subject such as cocaine.

Finally, in the last section of this chapter and through the emerging episteme of productive medical science, the drug of cocaine becomes both useful and addictive. In its useful guise as a legitimate anaesthetic it increases productivity; in its addictive guise it decreases productivity. This ambivalence can clearly be seen in the politico-ontological status of what we would now term an “addict” – neither criminal nor innocent, the first *habitué*’s are seen as *victims*. Intriguingly, the Greek for the ambiguous victim is *pharmakos*. The linguistic coincidence with the ambiguous term for drug, the *pharmakon*, cannot go unnoticed. Indeed, it is because both terms bring to the fore the essential ambiguity of both concepts that they are deployed. As I hope to show, both are manifest upon the plain of western modernity, and both have haunted our present interactions with the trade in narcotics – one only has to look to the manner in which the “drug addict” is socially ostracised to understand both their innocence and guilt. Ultimately however what would determine the ontological status of the victim in this chapter is their access to, and legitimacy, within the eyes of the medico-confessional matrices of the time. Thus, for instance, while doctors remained victims of their “experimenting,” “Negro cocaine fiends” would become criminal. This highlights the study’s concern with historical fact – the logic of the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* allows for the possibility of oscillation between good and bad, innocence and guilt. What *determines* this status, however, is a function of political and social forces that generally presuppose and confirm existing stereotypes, biases, and racial discord. It is for this reason that this study uses philosophy to analyse history. The meeting point of the *pharmakos*, the *pharmakon*, and the various social forces at play at a specific point in history, I argue, can be seen in the logic of sacrifice, as articulated by Girard (1977; 1986) and as shall be explored in subsequent chapters. The ultimate consequence of this analysis then, is to look for a means to escape the sacrificial logic that has structured our interactions with the narcotic, from the past to the present, and speaks to seeking justice in our future interactions with the narcotic (user). In this instance, as I hope to show, even our first interactions with cocaine were fraught with tension, and not just simply the changing of attitudes led by the conservative right, as conventional historiography would have it.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> This may seem a moot point in considering the predominant views taken by contemporary research of this history. However before such enquiries began prohibition was not considered a result of the ontological status of the victim but rather the product of the rational quest and betterment of medical science of the time. As Spillane argues, “[p]roblems associated with cocaine were solely the fault of the user. The dramatic expansion of nonmedical consumption transformed the medical wonder drug into a social vice. These changes, in both use

## Legitimacy and the Economy of Doubt

While the history of cocaine begins with its source, the coca bush, and its first recorded use by the Inca, what concerns this study is cocaine's interaction with western modernity. In this regard it was Albert Niemann who first artificially extracted cocaine hydrochloride from the coca leaf in 1860, for which he won his doctorate.<sup>12</sup> However, while “[p]harmaceutical companies had early taken note of the initial work of Niemann and Lossen” (Friman 1999: 84), there existed for a number of years what some authors have termed a “lag” – “not much was done with this compound for the next two decades” (Friman 1999: 84). Indeed, one of the few surviving reports is by Sir Robert Christison (1876: 529), who reported in the *British Medical Journal* that

My first trials were made in 1870, when I was not aware that any one else in Europe had experimented with it ... Two of my students, out of the habit of material exercise for five months, tired themselves thoroughly with a walk of sixteen miles. They returned home at their dinner hour ... They were very hungry, but refrained from food, and took each an infusion of two drachms of cuca [coca leaves] ... Presently hunger left them entirely, all sense of fatigue soon vanished, and they proceeded to promenade Prince's Street for an hour; which they did with ease and pleasure.

Noticeably, Merck, one of the foremost manufacturers of cocaine hydrochloride of the time recorded the following import figures from 1879 – 1900 (in kg's) (Spillane 1999: 85):<sup>13</sup>

Year	Merck Production	Peruvian Coca	Peruvian Crude Cocaine
1879 – 80	0.05	25	
1880 – 1	0.05	25	
1881 – 2	0.09	58	
1882 – 3	0.30	138	
1883 – 4	1.41	655	
1884 – 5	30	8, 655	

and perception, occurred *before*, not after, prohibition. Drug prohibition merely built upon a set of negative images already well developed” (2000: 104).

<sup>12</sup> There are a number of works that outline in detail this historical narrative. See, for example, Spillane 2000; Streatfeild 2001; Karch 1997.

<sup>13</sup> Original Source: 1908/1919 Manuscripts of Carl Scriba, Alkaloid Division, E. Merck, reprinted in Albrecht Hirschmüller, “E. Merck und das Kokain,” *Gesnerus* 52 (1995), 119 – 20.

1885 – 6	70	18, 396	
1886 – 7	257	3, 629	389
1887 – 8	300		375
1888 – 9	303		350
1889 – 90	511		595
1890 – 1	557		585
1891 – 2	436		434
1892 – 3	505		558
1893 – 4	626		656
1894 – 5	645		683
1895 – 6	791		1, 801
1896 – 7	831		870
1897 – 8	1, 509		1, 819
1898 – 9	1, 553		1, 832
1899 – 1900	1, 564		1, 695

In the above table, what is important to note is that between 1883 and 1885 the production of cocaine mushroomed by nearly 300 percent. The reason for this literal explosion of production, and indeed demand, was the discovery of cocaine’s anaesthetic effects on the human body.

Discovered by two relatively unknown scientists at the time, Karl Koller<sup>14</sup> and Sigmund Freud, cocaine became the first effective topical anaesthetic known to medical science. Before this discovery, anaesthesia had been largely performed through the application of chloroform, the use of which was problematic in delicate operations such as eye and ear surgery, not to mention dentistry, which also often required the patient to remain conscious (Streatfeild 2001: 105 – 116).<sup>15</sup> The culmination of this research was the reading of Koller’s paper at the Heidelberg Ophthalmology Conference of 1884 (the paper received a standing ovation) and was taken to the extreme by Freud in his “song of praise” to the substance, *Über Coca* (1884: 289 – 314).

Considering the need for such an easily applicable and effective topical anaesthetic, cocaine’s use within the medical community rapidly spread. Indeed, cocaine soon became seen as a “medical miracle” (Spillane 2000: 7), its use being legitimated while at the very

<sup>14</sup> There is some disparity to the spelling of Koller’s first name in the literature. Some authors choose to spell Koller’s name Carl, while others spell it Karl. Considering that Koller was German, I have refrained from anglicising his name.

<sup>15</sup> While Koller is largely credited with this scientific rediscovery, a number of scientist and doctors had previously noted cocaine’s anesthetic properties, including Freud and Vassily von Anrepp. See, also, Boucher 1991: 72 – 76.

same time as the drug was legitimating medical science as a serious and pervasive form of enquiry. The news of this discovery, and the use of cocaine spread rapidly, for by December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1884, *The New York Times* had already reported that

Dr. William Oliver Moore read a paper ... last evening, before the County Medical Society. Physiologically he spoke of the stimulating and nutritive qualities of the plant, which had been properly called, he thought, the most tonic plant of the vegetable world ... cocaine had been quickly and generally adopted by the medical and surgical profession for certain delicate classes of ailments, notably infections of the eye and ear ... As instancing the favour which cocaine at once commanded he said that out of 147 operations since Oct. 10, at the Eye and Ear Infirmary, cocaine was used in 102 cases.<sup>16</sup>

The *Zeitgeist* with regards to the wonder of cocaine is perhaps best captured by the *London Lancet*, in an article entitled “Cocaine in Hay fever” and published on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1885 in *The New York Times*:

The therapeutic uses of cocaine are so numerous that the value of this wonderful remedy seems only beginning to be appreciated. Almost daily we hear of some disease or combination of symptoms in which it has been tried for the first time, and has answered beyond expectation.<sup>17</sup>

With the above archive material in mind, it is clear that cocaine was transformed from a little known substance to a drug at the very heart of the emerging discourse of medical science. However, even at the very point at which the drug was most lauded, doubts concerning its “true” nature, its addictive potential, began to surface. On the one hand then, cocaine’s use, distribution and trade was rapidly advancing. On the other, it was precisely because its use was so rampant, while the measures and indeed knowledge of its were abuse still in their infancy, that a “disruption” or concern from the very community that had lauded its use begun to be voiced. It began to be noted, in other words, that the miraculous nature of cocaine’s efficacy and many uses were tainted by its addictive potential. This, combined with various social tensions revolving around race, class and sex, transformed the medical miracle into a tool that could be used to highlight and confirm preconceived notions of difference. It was then a unique series of events that led to the drug of cocaine, and its misuse, confirming rather than dispelling the tensions that had long remained a feature of American society.

<sup>16</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1884.

<sup>17</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1885.

## The Concept of the Free Trade

In order to understand how cocaine became supplemental to, and was used as a tool to confirm, the many politico-social tensions stratifying American society, it is necessary to understand just how cocaine became darling to, and then poltergeist of, the emerging medical discourse. From 1860, when cocaine was first extracted by Niemann, until 1884, when it was adopted by medical science, there were no juridical or legislative limits to its production, distribution, or consumption. This was simply a function of its epistemological status, or lack thereof. Unlike today, where it is difficult to imagine, cocaine was simply another substance in the world. It must be noted, however, that this only holds true for the substance's history in western modernity – it had already passed through many stages of meaning in the Inca Empire, for instance, albeit in the form of the coca plant.<sup>18</sup> With no supporting discourse with which to make the substance of cocaine a normative appellation, its existence was neither condemned nor cordoned. Once, however, its poisonous nature was confirmed then the previous narrative of opium would come to supplement the new fears concerning the drug. At this point in time though it simply did not have the epistemic status from which such a normative judgement or decision might have been derived. From a discursive position then, one might say that the normative limits that cocaine would one day come to encounter, as a drug or a narcotic, could not have existed, because both presuppose that the substance occupies a normative position i.e. that it is good or bad, helpful or harmful, its use rational or irrational. Its meaning, or lack thereof, was free to circulate, as was as its physical distribution, until such time as the substance became useful (or reviled). Importantly, that usefulness was predicated by the larger episteme and logic of western modernity – it was only when cocaine was found to increase the productivity of the human body (in an episteme which revered productivity) that the status of “useful” was bestowed upon it. Its use and meaning, then, were a function of its interaction with those epistemes that were sovereign during the time of interaction. In the same manner, when “getting high” became as much a political as physical state, cocaine's use would be re-legitimated (although crucially, not legalised) as a means of supplementing a new social identity. *The epistemic status of the drug of cocaine, then, is a product of those discourses within which it is asserted and which give it*

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<sup>18</sup> It is precisely for this reason that this study does not delve deeper into the ancient historical uses of coca leaves – the study is concerned with cocaine's use, which was only extracted in 1860, and which then became a drug. It is beyond the scope and space limitations of this study to encounter *every* form of the substance, or indeed the history of every drug that may have followed a similar pattern to that of cocaine.



*meaning*. There are, as shall be explored in the next chapter, “no drugs ‘in nature’” (Derrida 1993: 1).

The unbridled free trade in cocaine could not continue once the substance’s pharmacological properties had been discovered by medical science. In an episteme concerned with productivity, cocaine’s ability to speed up surgery while mitigating pain was simply too attractive to be ignored. With its adoption by medical science, cocaine moved from being a substance to a drug. Now, for the first time, its use, distribution, and indeed manufacture could be justified by its need by medical science – this is reflected in the above manufacturing table from Merck. For a time, before the addictive potential of the drug became known, this justification bolstered trade of the drug in all areas. Accordingly, and importantly, the drug became available not only to medical science, but to anyone who could afford it. As there were no regulations, as yet, concerning the drug’s use or distribution, one could obtain cocaine from any local drug store or pharmacy, even if it was somewhat expensive (until such time, that is, as the manufacturing process had been streamlined). In this instance there was a literal free trade in the drug of cocaine. Problematically however, cocaine was being lauded by medical science at the same time as it was easily available; this legitimated its use beyond the borders of medical science by virtue of the legitimacy that medical science held in the eyes of the public. In other words, while medical science controlled (and indeed still does) from the very earliest times the use of cocaine by patients, many citizens were spurred on by fantastic reports of cocaine’s many uses, self-medicating themselves and in the process becoming addicted. The legitimacy of medical science in the history of western modernity is then equally important in understanding the transformation of cocaine from substance to drug, and indeed elixir.

### **The Concept of the Economy of Doubt**

The spectacle of a new medical miracle is the product of thorough observation and empirical experimentation. This observation, or what Foucault would term the clinical gaze, held

at the same time the privileges of a pure gaze, prior to all intervention and faithful to the immediate, which it took up without modifying it, and those of a gaze equipped with a whole logical armature, which exorcised from the outset the naivety of an unprepared empiricism (Foucault 2003: 107).

The clinical gaze, in this reading, is directed by the larger needs of the episteme within which it is made – in an episteme concerned with productivity, the gaze will focus on those mechanisms, medicines, and patients which increase that productivity (for example). The overarching episteme of western modernity, that of rationality, directs the clinical gaze, and indeed the manner in which it functions, relying on the dictum that “[t]he correlative of observation is never the invisible, but always the immediately visible, once one has removed the obstacles erected to reason by theories and to the senses by the imagination” (Foucault 2003: 107).

The epistemology of this method, it must be noted, is not simply the sum of the “advancement” of rational knowledge but rather the product of a certain set of metaphysical presuppositions that provide the discursive parameters of what constitutes the legitimate knowledge and method – metaphorically, cocaine was now placed upon the Great Chain of Being through its interaction with medical science. Thus, Foucault’s “initial approximation” of a definition of the clinical gaze is summed up by himself as

a perceptual act sustained by a logic of operations; it is analytic because it restores the genesis of composition; but it is pure of all intervention insofar as this genesis is only the syntax of the language spoken by things themselves in an original silence. The gaze of observation and the things it perceives communicate through the same Logos, which, in the latter, is a genesis of totalities and, in the former, a logic of operations (Foucault 2003: 109).

This epistemological strategy of engaging with the world relies on the observation and classification of difference, both between objects and between classificatory schedules – the taxonomy of meaning. Thus birds are different to mammals, but are both living organisms. In the same manner, medicine, disease, psychological states and substances are all different in their classification, effects, and so on. This may seem a mute point, but what is important to recognise is the *mechanism* by which this principle works – doubt, in a word. Since the methodology was established by Descartes, as shall be explored in the following chapters, it has been doubt that has allowed us to position objects in the world by virtue of what they are not. In the instance of cocaine, therefore, through rigorous testing, experimentation, and observation, it was found that the substance was indeed efficacious in the mitigation of pain (among other things). With its efficacy determined then, by no longer being doubted, it was allowed into the *economy* of medical science, the *economy of doubt*. At all times, however,

the certainty of a principle, medication, or observation is only contingent on it remaining true; if doubt begins to creep in again, then the object or substance can be expelled from the discourse. This is the scientific method. It is through these borders that cocaine not only passed, but was welcomed, becoming the darling of medical science at the very same time as medical science needed the drug of cocaine. Finally, the economy of doubt is generative, for it only recognises (or “sees”) certain speech acts, substances, practices and patients as legitimate.

The free trade in the discourse and substance of cocaine was thus made possible, indeed was allowed, by the substance’s inclusion, through the economy of doubt, into the episteme of medical science. It is because, in other words, cocaine moved beyond doubt *qua* the scientific method that its use proliferated. As has been noted above, the position of cocaine within the episteme is a product not only of cocaine’s relationship to medical science, but also of medical science’s relationship to western modernity and enlightenment thinking. Importantly though, the “irrational passion for dispassionate rationality” (Williams 1998: 57) would not only affect the *epistemological* status of cocaine, but would also have a profound effect on the *ontological* status and placement of the cocaine-using subject. When that subject was articulated *through* medical science, at the same time as cocaine was legitimate within the eyes of medical science, then that consumption was justified. If, however, that consumption was to occur beyond the borders of the medical (as it first did), or if the drug was consumed externally to the medical regime and was no longer legitimate (as cocaine later would be), then the act of consumption, and indeed the consuming subject, would be illegitimate. *It is upon this basis of illegitimacy that any other socio-political differences could be focused and/or highlighted.*

With specific regard to the substance of cocaine, its mutation into a drug required two unique discursive events. On the one hand, the substance of cocaine, before its adoption, held no normative position. On the other, when cocaine was *classified* as a drug, this classification was made solely from within the realm of the regulatory schedule of an emerging pharmacopeia.<sup>19</sup> Knowledge of cocaine, as a drug, was derived from a system of differences where each drug, substance, cure and malady had its place upon the shelves of medical science. The justification for its place within the medical arsenal of the time was its efficacy as an anaesthetic, as a general medicine, and as a substance with the ability to increase

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<sup>19</sup> Again, it must be emphasised that I am not making the claim that there were no normative connotations relating to the *drug* of cocaine. Rather, I am suggesting that the moral baggage of later years was absent. This is important, for either axiomatic of the *pharmakon* has an implicit normative assumption; it is not necessarily true that those assumptions are *moral* however.

productivity and line pharmacists' coffers (Spillane 2000: 91 – 93). The denotation of cocaine as a drug, then, is made in reference to its adoption by medical science, and does not carry the same normative connotations that “cocaine the drug” might carry today. Because cocaine's epistemological status was wrought from medical science, what we today classify as normative “addicts,” illegitimate users of an illegal drug, could not have existed. This is not to say though that illegitimate users and uses of the drug could not have existed *within* the medical discourse of the time. However, as shall be more adequately dealt with in the last section of this chapter, because their addiction was not of the same analytical type as the illegitimate addict, a different means of articulating their addiction arose –they were said to have been experimenting, and were called *habitués* or *victims*. As shall be explored, this is because there was a certain undecidability over their status; their use of the drug was illegitimate, but the drug itself was still legitimate. Because of this relationship, one that is interior rather than exterior to the justifying discourse, the victim was still seen as a legitimate subject with a legitimate “illness,” albeit one who needed to be saved through the medical regime.

Consequently, so long as cocaine remained a legitimate drug *within* medical discourse, the first critiques of the ontological position of the illegitimate user of cocaine also came from within, rather than external too, medical discourse. Furthermore, the judgment that decided the status of the illegitimate user of cocaine also originated from within medical discourse – it was doctors, in the very first cases, who judged their peers for the misuse of cocaine. This was to have the consequence not only of cementing a certain language of judgment within medical discourse, but was also to confirm the status of the user that was beyond the medical discourse: thoroughly illegitimate and therefore an ample target of condemnation, which was generally articulated through pre-existing social differences and disparities. This relationship between differing users, substances, and the institutions that define them are linked in a complex interaction, perhaps most fruitfully articulated by Sontag (1978) as “illness metaphors.”

Such was the veracity and certainty of this rational appropriation of cocaine that the drug was entrusted in the treatment of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in 1885:

Muriate of cocaine was applied to relieve the General from the intense pain in the angle of the mouth where the membrane is deflected from the tongue up to the soft palate. This was applied twice a day at first and gave almost instant relief from the pain ... The physicians were anxious to make a more satisfactory investigation of the nature of the disease than was possible by

examining Gen. Grant's mouth, and on Feb. 18 the throat was sprayed with a 4 per cent. solution of the hydrochlorate of cocaine, which allayed to a great extent the irritability of affected tissue.<sup>20</sup>

The repeated application of cocaine, and the continued production of verifiable results, led to cocaine's continued legitimacy within medical discourse. The continued status of cocaine as a legitimate and useful drug was also continually reiterated through the production of measured results – as Derrida has noted, “[b]y showing itself in a repetitive form, the truth indicates the way by which it may be acquired” (Derrida 1995: 235). The status of cocaine was entrenched in this truth-producing discourse as one of the central methods of medical science. As such, the substance of cocaine, for the first time, became a legitimate drug of pharmacopeia, having continually and repetitively satisfied the methodological requirements of the economy of doubt.<sup>21</sup>

The free trade in the drug of cocaine, unlike when it was a mere substance, was both enabled and constrained by the legitimating episteme of medical science – enabled by its use within the episteme, constrained because it could only be used legitimately within the borders of the episteme. Indeed, this continues today – the use of cocaine is illegal and illegitimate in all but the most special of medical cases. Situated on this border then, between the medical and the non-medical, between legitimate and illegitimate uses of the drug of cocaine, was the first normative understanding of the drug. So long as the use of cocaine remained within the borders of its legitimating episteme, the free trade in the drug could flourish. When however cocaine exceeded the borders of the medical, when its use was not solely confined to the medical, then that legitimacy was brought into doubt. It is upon this basis, with the birth of illegitimate uses of cocaine, that the free trade in the drug of cocaine began to be curtailed.

It must be remembered that episteme of medical science itself was subject to much larger archaeological foundations. With the burden of labour being instilled within a mechanistic society, increasing the productivity of the body was an extremely important enterprise, if not *the* enterprise. Any supplement that could aid in this “good” repetition, of mind and body, was adopted with characteristic force and veracity. For instance, if we are to reread Christison's report quoted above, it is not health, but productivity that is of primary concern. Health is only of concern as a necessary function of productivity. What Christison's

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<sup>20</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1885.

<sup>21</sup> In other words, and this is still visible today in the application of a drug, so long as cocaine continued to be efficacious in its application, it would continued to be used by medical science.

report exemplifies then is the means by which this larger regime regarding the truth of productivity was justified: the medical profession became the lens through which the productivity of certain substances were reflected in the name of productivity itself. Indeed, as shall be explored in the following section the very conception of disease during this era was not one of health but one of productivity – health was only conceptualised within a moral strata because good health led to increased productivity.<sup>22</sup> Those substances that aided the human body to be healthy, and thus productive, found their immediate entrenchment within this controlling ethos.

Consequently, the free trade in the drug of cocaine was a function of its epistemic status *qua* legitimate drug, while medical science legitimacy rested on its status *qua* legitimate form of enquiry. Operating as an effective topical anaesthetic, its ability to increase the productivity of the human body, or at least increase the productivity of medical science tasked with the maintenance of that productive body, reformulated the drug of cocaine *and its chemical operation* as a legitimate and valuable action. It is at this point that the free trade in cocaine became premised not on its epistemic status as an unknown substance, as it had previously been, but as a function of the legitimating action of medical science. Accordingly, so long as cocaine remained within this foundational discourse, so long as it did not exceed the borders of the discourse that was legitimating it as a useful drug, the free trade could continue.

Belief in the curative powers of cocaine were continually extolled during this era, further cementing the emerging rational science of medicine as a leader in the project of modernisation. For instance, on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1885, *The New York Times* published an article entitled “A Remedy for Many Ills: The Great Demand Springing up for Cocaine” and is worth quoting at length:

Recent publications on the subject of cocaine and the various therapeutic uses to which it can be put have caused a widespread demand for this valuable drug. This increased demand for cocaine is a source of marked satisfaction among all the druggists because, like everything else which is new and valuable, it commands a large price and ensures a handsome profit ... The doctors say cocaine is bound to be a blessing for that source of horrible annoyance so easy to obtain and so hard to get rid of – a cold in the head ... All will be given to understand that cocaine will cure the worst cold in the head ever heard of ... It is the contemplation of these little matters that make the druggist happy, for they are assured beyond doubt of the absolute

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<sup>22</sup> Foucault 2003: 24 – 43. See, also, Foucault 2003: 175 – 207.

excellence of cocaine treatment in cases such as indicated ... there is a universal medical belief that many blessings will yet result from experimenting with cocaine.<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, news of cocaine's miraculous abilities spread as far as Wanganui in New Zealand. The *Wanganui Chronicle* published an article on the 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1885, entitled "Cocaine as a Cure-All."<sup>24</sup> This, however, was the last article to be published extolling the *solely* virtuous character of the substance, for on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1885, *The New York Times* published an article "Poisoned by Cocaine."<sup>25</sup> The economy of doubt had begun to operate, and as that doubt became stronger, the free trade in the drug of cocaine would slowly disappear, until it was labelled, literally and metaphorically, "poison."

The announcement that cocaine could indeed *also* act as a poison represents the definitive moment when the drug/elixir of cocaine exceeded the logical limits of its own justification, and encountered the economy of doubt that had previously legitimated it. This would place the drug under scrutiny – revealed as no longer the elixir it was once thought to be, questions began to be raised over its use and distribution. This doubt was then a result both of cocaine's implicit pharmacological action on the human body, and indeed a consequence of the very logic that had structured the episteme of medical science, and which had heretofore justified its use and position in western modernity. Ironically then, it was the selfsame founding discourse that not only legitimated cocaine as a medical miracle (upon which the free trade in the drug was premised), but it was the very borders of the discourse, and cocaine's exceeding of them, which functioned as the means by which cocaine's illegitimacy and eventual narration through the concept of the narcotic was born. It is this process of exclusion, a result of the Decision which excluded cocaine through the method of the economy of doubt, which is the subject of the following section.

### The Decision

The first real doubts concerning cocaine focused not only on the way in which it was being used in all manner of cures and medicines, but also on its addictive potential, which was a function of its repetitive use. These doubts became apparent in November 1885; however this is not to say that the free trade in the drug did not continue for a time. Indeed,

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<sup>23</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1885.

<sup>24</sup> Unknown Author. *Wanganui Chronicle*. October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1885.

<sup>25</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1885.

none of the archival material from the time points to a sustained decrease in the sale, production or distribution of cocaine hydrochloride, even though crude cocaine, rather than coca leaves, became the main source of cocaine hydrochloride.<sup>26</sup> What occurred, rather, was a realisation that the drug of cocaine was not solely an elixir, but could also act as a poison (and therefore an ideal *pharmakon*). Moreover, with the continued and plentiful supply of cocaine beyond the borders of the medical, coupled with unscrupulous pharmacists and the drug's availability without subscription, illegitimate and *recreational* uses of the drug soon emerged. On the one hand, and as shall be explored, the recreational use of cocaine entered the drug into an already burgeoning body of critique, and indeed made the drug and its use subject to a number of existing moral assumptions that find their birth in the use of opium and the fear of the foreign "chinaman." On the other hand, by overcoming the difference between the legitimate and illegitimate, between medicine and quack potion, cocaine revealed the mythology that maintained the border between the two (as legitimate/serious and illegitimate/quack). It also minimised the difference between the two, both asserting their efficacy (and ability to increase human productivity) because of cocaine's properties. There was then a need to reassert the borders of the legitimately medical, even if this would result in the exclusion of the very drug that helped define the medical.

The point at which cocaine was expelled from the medical episteme, and thus lost its legitimacy as a drug/elixir, has been termed The Decision. However, this decision was both a process and an event – if it were not for doubts over cocaine efficacy, and its continued use beyond the borders of the medical, then it may never have occurred. There are however also definitive points in the archive when it is possible to see the very real decisions that led to cocaine's illegitimacy. Therefore, The Decision, *as a concept*, can be usefully thought of through three paradigms: as a political act, as a founding moment, and as the beginning of the juridical/illegitimate narrative of cocaine. As an understanding of the concept of The Decision is important to the larger thesis, each paradigm needs to be individually explored.

As a political act, a decision reveals the active prioritisation over one or more distinctions. The decision, then, should also be seen as an exercise in power, the sovereign prioritising of one option over that of another. In the case of cocaine, as shall be explored, it was *decided* that cocaine should be excluded from the medical even though cocaine itself had always contained the very properties that became the lynchpin for that exclusion.

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<sup>26</sup> This was done to aid distribution. Coca leaves were notoriously difficult to transport the long distances from South America to the principle refineries in Europe. Crude cocaine, by being partially refined, allowed for a far more sustainable flow of the raw product to Europe.



As a founding moment, The Decision represents a definitive response to the point when cocaine exceeded the borders of its founding discourse. In other words, it is the point when the supplementary nature of cocaine's status as *pharmakon* became revealed as both poison and elixir, and therefore became subject to the very same process (the economy of doubt) that had imbued it with legitimacy. Of course, the pharmacological action of cocaine on the human body, as an anaesthetic and as an addictive substance always existed; what changed was the realisation or discovery of cocaine's poisonous or addictive nature. It is The Decision which represents the discursive shift, the moment when cocaine became seen as a *pharmakon*, and which would later lead to the complete eradication of its status as elixir within the eyes of the medical. It is a founding moment, for it is from this point onwards that cocaine, as a drug, began its long journey to reach the epistemological status of narcotic. This will be further explicated in the following chapter.

Finally, The Decision also represents the process and final moment when the demarcation between cocaine the legitimate drug and cocaine the poison became juridical. It is because the distinction between "good" and "bad" uses of cocaine became juridical that the ontological status of the consumer could also shift from victim to fiend – the concept of a fiend is irrevocably normative, and indeed, is a judgement of someone's ontological status. What is important to note, however, is that all three of the above facets of the Decision occurred – what determines which is highlighted is a function of the analytical lens we choose to employ. The Decision, however, could not have been made possible unless the drug of cocaine could simultaneously occupy two or more epistemological positions at once – elixir and poison for instance. This is, as shall be explored, a function of its metaphysical heritage as a *pharmakon*. What made this heritage meaningful, however, was the drug's interaction with western modernity, and medical science specifically. Considering the importance of the status of cocaine as a *pharmakon* to this study, it is to that concept that we must now turn. As I hope to show, rather than rendering ambiguous the historical narrative of cocaine, the use of the concept of the *pharmakon* provides critical insights into that historical narrative which can be used to engage contemporary discussions over the problem that the narcotic of cocaine presents to us.

## The Pharmakon

An analysis of cocaine's ability to occupy the epistemological statuses of both poison and elixir is most easily highlighted by its metaphysical status as a *pharmakon*. As Derrida notes in *Dissemination* (1981: 70, emphasis added):

This *pharmakon*, this “medicine,” this philter, *which acts as both* remedy and poison, already introduces itself into spellbinding virtue, this power of fascination, can be – alternatively or simultaneously – beneficent or maleficent. The *pharmakon* would be a *substance* – with all that word can connote in terms of matter with occult virtues, cryptic depths refusing to submit their ambivalence to analysis, already paving the way for alchemy – if we didn't have eventually to come to recognise it as antistubstance itself ...

The concept of the *pharmakon* is made meaningful vis-à-vis the logic of western modernity discussed in this and the introduction – that is, in relation to the system of differences by which meaning is made. On the one hand, the *pharmakon* is a medicine, an elixir in its most primal of forms. In this form it is healing, not only to the subject, but also to the system of differences through which meaning is generated. This is because the *pharmakon* minimises the differences within a system, allowing that system to continue to function in its present state. On the other hand the *pharmakon* is a poison of the deadliest type – one that can infect and affect not only a single subject, but be a contagion to the entire Order of Things. This is because the mitigation of difference in a system will always lead to competition and repetition; the minimisation of difference has an entropic effect on the Order of Things. Thus while the *pharmakon* will have the same effect on a system, that of the minimisation of difference, the mitigation of different can either be poisonous or healing *depending on the state of that system*. Which side of the *pharmakon* is efficacious, therefore, is a function of the system itself, and not necessarily the *pharmakon*. Finally, from a purely logical perspective, each side of the *pharmakon* depends on the trace of the other, and each side supplements the other. Most simply, this means that we cannot know of the concept of poison without the concept of elixir. This is simply a function of the binary logic of western modernity.

While this logic will become practically apparent in this and later chapters, a simple example may provide clarity. When cocaine was legitimated by medical science, it also legitimated medical science. This occurred because it did not disrupt the present system of

differences, the medical taxonomy, but rather strengthened that system by complying with, and indeed fitting in with, the present system. However, when cocaine began to be used beyond the borders of the medical, the self same drug disrupted the medical taxonomy by being a part of both the medical and the “quack” or recreational. By eliminating the difference between the two, by calling into question the difference that both system of meaning relied on to make meaning, the *pharmakon* acted as poisonous to both systems. The ambiguity of the *pharmakon* allows an oscillation between its status as poison or elixir. Which axiom will become visible is determined by the *pharmakon*'s relationship with the institutions that articulate it.

The ontological status of either axiom of the *pharmakon* is made juridical through whichever normative framework it is inserted into. By being deployed as an elixir, the *pharmakon* justifies the system within which it is articulated. By being deployed as a poison, the *pharmakon* calls into question the border of the system(s) within which it is articulated. What is important to understand is that in both instances this operation is a function of the minimisation of difference – in a system of differences in which the difference can be justified or is “good,” such as medical taxonomy, this action strengthens the system. In a system of differences where the minimisation of difference is “bad,” such as the example Girard often cites of the twins (1977: 8), it weakens the system. *When* this occurs, as noted above, the re-creation of difference (as anathema to the action of the *pharmakon*) displays a sacrificial logic, deployed through the identification and expulsion of the *pharmakos*. The *pharmakos*, through sacrifice, recreates difference. The *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* are thus intricately linked. This relationship will be explored in the following chapter, where it becomes relevant.

The discovery of cocaine's poisonous nature, as noted above, was a process marked in the archive by some paradigmatic events. This process, I argue, moved from alarm, to indecision, to the rejection of cocaine. Similarly, concerns over habitual cocaine users moved from one of interest, to concern, to expulsion or rejection. All of these movements and concerns, however, find their origination in the medical discourse of the time. For instance, *The New York Times* reported the following, on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1885:

At a meeting of the Medico-Legal Society last evening ... a case of fatal poisoning from the application of cocaine to an aching tooth [was heard] ... On Nov. 3 Dr. Thomas was called to attend the woman referred to. He found her dying and quite unconscious. The doctor made enquiries and was convinced that it was a case of cocaine poisoning ... after listening to the

facts the meeting agreed, with one exception, that it was a case of cocaine poisoning ... It was suggested that, in view of the cocaine spray used in Gen. Grant's case it would be interesting at some future meeting to hear something from the General's physicians on the effect of the drug.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to the above article, *The New York Times* had on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 1885 published the article cited earlier in the chapter entitled "A Remedy for Many Ills." In both instances however, the efficacy of cocaine as a legitimate medicine of the *pharmacopeia* is not doubted – if it were, it would be unlikely that Gen. Grant, considering his prominence and importance, would have continued to be medicated with it. Indeed, while the woman's death is seen as regrettable, there is no sustained medical or moral concern over continuing use of the drug – "it would be interesting at some future meeting to hear something ... on the effect of the drug." This is because cocaine was simply too important and too central to the medical profession to be expelled for its suspicious use, and consequent death, by one unknown woman. What is important however, is the austere, medically neutral terms in which the death is discussed; the person poisoned by cocaine is not an "addict," "fiend," "user," or "*habitué*," but rather simply, a "woman." There is, as yet, no generic category for those who have fallen prey to the bad repetition of the substance. Such a category would come about later through the lens of addiction.<sup>28</sup>

As the use of cocaine, both within and outside of the medical community continued to increase, it would only be a matter of time before cases of addiction, poisoning, and death would emerge. This would, as noted, lead to the eventual expulsion of cocaine from the medical discourse in all but the most specific of cases, but not before it revealed the mythology of the border between what was considered legitimate medical practices and "quack" potions and cures. This would be achieved through a specific conception of repetition, the addictive behaviour of both prominent medical men and lower-class roustabouts. As Derrida has argued, "[g]ood repetition is always haunted or contaminated by 'bad' repetition, so much for the better and so much the worse for it. The *pharmakon* will always be understood both as antidote and as poison" (Derrida 1995: 235).

<sup>27</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1885. Emphasis added.

<sup>28</sup> Indeed, while there is a vast body of literature concerning the process of addiction (Swinson 1978), its psychological and physiological characteristics (McMurran 1994; Levin 2001; Flores 2004), its meaning in contemporary society (Roth 2004; DiClemente 2003) and its avoidance and correction (Schur 1963; Elster 1999), what concerns this study is the concept and discursive invention of addiction. Given the philosophical nature of this study I want to limit my comments on this discursive invention of addiction to what Derrida calls "the concept of [the] concept," (*ibid*) which really implies an analysis of a (western) metaphysics of addiction.

## Habitués

In the archives, there is one key example that offers us a window into the changing epistemic status of the drug of cocaine, and importantly, the changing ontological status of the (illegitimate) cocaine user – Dr. C. D. Bradley, whose narrative can coalesce in three consecutive articles.<sup>29</sup> This example, because it allows us to follow Bradley’s demise from the status of respected doctor to that of mental patient, allows us to view the logic by which the first habitués or victims of cocaine were expelled from the legitimacy of the medical profession. In this precise instance however, it also allows us to view the more deeply entrenched disparities in American society – Dr. Bradley, as a doctor who had fallen from the grace of the medical profession, was assigned to a psychiatric hospital. For those who were not of the same standing, their demise often ended in the penitentiary. As shall be highlighted, however, following Foucault, both the mental institution and penitentiary display a very similar logic of correctional discipline, especially during this era.

In the first article, published on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1885, it was reported that

A Chicago Physician Become Insane from Using the Drug ... Dr. Charles D. Bradley, a well known physician of the north side, who has become crazed from excessive indulgence in cocaine, was taken before Judge Prendergast by his friends on Friday ... From the evidence ... it was shown that Dr. Bradley from excessive use of the drug has become practically insane, and while under its influence had made experiments on his family that have ruined their health ... He soon became a slave to its use himself ... [the doctors present] believed he should be confined in an institution ... Dr. W. R. Brower stated that a remarkable effect of the indulgence in cocaine was the destruction of the moral sense and the affections ... He added that cocaine was the most diabolical and fascinating of the narcotics, and its use was fast becoming prevalent.<sup>30</sup>

In the first instance, it is noteworthy how cocaine is described. It is “the most diabolical and fascinating *of the narcotics*.” While the term “narcotic” does not have the same normative weight as what it would have today, it is recognised that cocaine has both the power to cure

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<sup>29</sup> There is some disparity in the spelling of the doctor’s name. In some articles it is spelt C. D. Bradley, in some C. T. Bradley. At all times his name is spelt as it is found in the archive material.

<sup>30</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1885. This story was also presented in *The Aroha News*. January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1886.

and to kill. The drug's true nature, through it being the cause of Bradley's downfall, has become revealed. In the second instance, what is extremely important to note is the manner in which Bradley's addiction or "excessive indulgence" is articulated – his addiction is *still* situated *within* the medical discourse of rationality/irrationality. He has "become insane," not criminal. At no time is the non-criminal status of the good doctor brought into doubt, for neither he nor the drug of cocaine has been expelled from the medical discourse. The moral condemnation of the repetitive use of cocaine is however becoming apparent, however subtly – "a remarkable effect of the indulgence in cocaine was the destruction of the moral sense and affections." On December 8<sup>th</sup> of the same year the case was further highlighted:

The Cocaine Victim Improving ... Dr. C. T. Bradley, who was sent to the Washingtonian Home two weeks ago, while suffering from the effects of cocaine, which he had experimented with to such an extent as to prostrate him, is fast recovering his health in the institution ... He freely admits that his experiments were carried too far, and that they impaired his health, but repudiates the idea that he is of unsound mind.<sup>31</sup>

In the second article, Bradley is assumed to be recovering. This is signified by his admittance of guilt – "He freely admits that his experiments were carried too far." By doubting his previous actions, and by accepting complicity in his actions, he is carried towards forgiveness and acceptance – this *confession matrix* will be highlighted in subsequent chapters. However, what needs to be noted now is that it was precisely because of his position within society vis-à-vis the medical episteme that he was *allowed* to confess. He occupies, as shall be shown, the same ontological position as the rich Hollywood starlet; both are seen as victims not of their condition itself, but by virtue of their perceived position in the order of things. The poor user however, the "negro cocaine fiend," for instance, would never be able to occupy this territory, for their ontological status *already* condemned them. There is a very similar logic at work in the condemnation of the "crack" addict. It is also for this reason that he is placed in a position where he may one day confess but return to society – the psychiatric clinic. If he were placed in jail, if he were condemned by virtue of his very being to a criminal institution, then his return to society would be far more perilous. This will be further outlined in the following chapters. On January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1887, Dr. Bradley's case emerges once again:

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<sup>31</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1885.

Cocaine's Destructive Work ... Dr. Bradley, whose fall beneath the cocaine habit a year ago made him a rather prominent figure in the medical world, was arrested on the streets here Sunday night and locked up in the East Chicago-avenue station. *He is suffering from acute mania, convulsions, and every distressing phase of violent insanity.* He is reduced to a skeleton, and has been practicing every form of deception to procure the drug which has been the cause of his ruin. A short time ago he was refused cocaine at a drug store in South Robey-street, and he turned on a gas jet, which well nigh asphyxiated the sleeping clerk before morning. He will probably be put under permanent restraint this time.<sup>32</sup>

In the final example, it is possible to see the escalating condemnation of Bradley. Between the second and the above article, the confessional avenues open to him, open because of his position within society, are closed. His insanity is no longer doubted; the economy of doubt, to which he too is subject, has condemned his legitimacy as a rational human being. Not only does this mean he cannot be a part of the medical profession. It means he can no longer function or be a part of rational society, at least until that rationality is restored in the eyes of society. Interestingly though, his condemnation is not made from beyond the medical regime but through it – the psychiatric clinic is an extension of the sovereignty of the medical regime over him. Even more importantly, this points to the continued existence of the legitimacy of cocaine. While a shadow of doubt has been brought over its use, this doubt has not reached the extent where cocaine's status as a legitimate medicine threatens the legitimacy or sovereignty of medical science. It is only when cocaine became associated with those "lesser classes" for whom their criminality was already assumed by virtue of pre-existing biases (such as through the history of American racism, as will be explored in the following chapter), that the unbridled condemnation of the medically illegitimate uses of cocaine could be sustained.

On the one hand then, Dr. Bradley's case highlights the beginning of the doubt that would eventually all but exclude cocaine from the legitimacy of the medical regime. The Decision that one day would achieve this had not yet been reached at this point. However, the first hints of that expulsion have become apparent. Both the epistemological status of the drug and the ontological status of the user have begun to shift. At all times, however, cocaine continues to embody the dual axioms of the *pharmakon*, of being both an elixir and a poison. Indeed, this duality is perhaps never more clearly seen than in this era. Once cocaine is given the many layers of normative meaning that it would acquire in the future, even being able to

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<sup>32</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1887. Emphasis added.

understand that cocaine was *once* seen as an elixir becomes difficult.<sup>33</sup> Cocaine was thus still situated within the medical discourse at this time. However, because of its increasingly illegitimate use, not only was its position within that discourse becoming doubtful, but its many illegitimate uses were becoming magnified. The *pharmakon* was to erode the distinction between the legitimately medical and the illegitimate “quack” from both sides – the *pharmakon* was to become parasitic on the very distinction which it had once helped maintain.

Indeed, from a theoretical perspective Derrida argues that “[t]he bad *pharmakon* can always parasitise the good *pharmakon*, bad repetition can always parasitise good repetition ... like any good parasite, it is at once *inside* and *outside* – the outside feeding on the inside (Derrida 1995: 234). This parasitism positions the illegitimate drug user in active (for parasitism is an activity) and direct opposition to the steadfast moral regime that is constantly reaffirmed through “good” repetition. It is not simply that the illegitimate user of cocaine is beyond the borders of the medical; their condemnation is premised on their active and parasitic opposition to the medical. It is upon this basis that the illegitimate user is condemned; the medical episteme will forcefully protect its own sovereignty even if that means the total exclusion of those substances and users who were once at the very centre. While cocaine would never be totally excluded from the medical regime, its illegitimate use would. Interestingly though, in the above case, Dr. Bradley’s exclusion actually strengthens the sovereignty of the medical regime, for it is the very same regime that is tasked with his rehabilitation through the psychiatric clinic. Again, it is through the breaking down of difference that the *pharmakon* becomes parasitic on the very system of difference that hosts it.

Finally then Derrida (1995: 253) asks, “[w]hat do we hold against the drug addict? That he cuts himself off from the world, in exile from reality, far from objective reality and the real life of the city and the community; that he escapes into a world of simulacrum and fiction.” The illegitimate drug user, by *willingly* embarking on this exodus (the very exile, it must be remembered, is a function of the discourse from which they escape), by *willingly* excluding themselves from the sanctity of the city or society (and thus the legitimate system of differences) is held accountable on two counts. Firstly, they are held accountable *in the name of society itself*. By willingly excluding themselves from the shared reality of society, drug users no longer share the rights and responsibilities of that society. They are thus

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<sup>33</sup> Of course, cocaine *is* still used by medicine, in very limited instances. However, beyond that small medical realm, cocaine’s status is generally perceived as illegitimate *qua* its status as narcotic.



condemned for being parasitic on society, for being the exception, for remaining in the same space but not the same reality as societal members. As shall be shown in this and later chapters, it is this condemnation of revelry in the face of piety that is often transformed into a *moral* argument against the use of drugs. Secondly, they are held accountable for their revelry in the simulacrum of drug use. They are held accountable, in other words, for the falsity of the reality they willingly create. In a metaphysics of presence concerned with the importance of “the real” this is the ultimate sin. As Derrida has further noted, – “drugs make us lose any sense of true reality ... It is under this charge that the prohibition is declared” (Derrida 1995: 236). Not only this, for while the drug user revels in the falsity of the reality that they have created, they also reveal the illusion of falsity of the “true” reality through the exceeding of, and yet being a function of, the “truth.”

Finally then, it must be noted that The Decision is a function of sovereignty. At the moment of The Decision, in other words, that Decision is a product of the power of the discourse from which it is made, and not an attempt to be “just” or “true.” The Decision which demarcates the legitimate from the illegitimate, the right from the wrong, at the moment of that demarcation, is simply a function of the power of the discourse which is sovereign over the distinction. As such, the distinction is made solely in the name of the replication and continuation of that discourse. Just like law, The Decision demarcates the medically legitimate and the illegitimate not in the name of justice but in the name of itself, its own sovereignty. The Decision is then, in following Derrida, mystical (1989: 943). The repetition of this founding event is heralded by the notion of addiction. While The Decision is nothing more than a function of its own power/sovereignty, the *consequences* of that Decision are juridical – an analysis of these consequences is the subject of the next section of this chapter.

### Repetition and Addiction

The increasing instances of the illegitimate uses of cocaine, specifically by those *within* the medical episteme, brought into question the legitimacy of the drug. However, these first victims were considered precisely that because their illegitimate use of cocaine was still construed through the medical paradigm. When, however, the illegitimate consumption of cocaine extended beyond the borders of the medical, its consumption and effects would be used as a justificatory strategy to confirm pre-existing stereotypes and biases – this is perhaps

most clearly seen in cocaine's entanglement with a familiar trope of American history, that of race and racism. The "Negro race," for instance, was already seen as prone to "moral excess." Their consumption of cocaine, and consequent addiction, simply confirmed the ontological stratification that already existed in society – the *pharmakon*, rather than create difference, further cemented those differences that already existed in society. Cocaine, as shall be explored, can be usefully seen as a lynchpin or the inciting factor that magnified and made more powerful the larger and pre-existing differences that existed in society. Their use of, and addiction, to cocaine was therefore not seen as the exception but as the norm – it was this entanglement that would ultimately result in cocaine being seen firstly, as poisonous to society, and eventually (as shall be analysed in the following chapter) as a narcotic.

In a discourse concerned with truth, falsity becomes parasitic on that truth. The illegitimate consumption of cocaine, beyond the borders of the medical, displayed a similar logic. It was, in other words, a major concern that upstanding people in society and indeed the medical profession were becoming addicted to cocaine. It was a concern too that their addiction was causing them to lose the very rational faculties upon which their membership of the medical profession was predicated. Consequently, it was their minds that had to be interned – it is for this reason that the justification that was used to send the first habitués to psychiatric clinics was articulated through the underlying discourse of rationality. However, and interestingly, when cases of addiction superseded the borders of the medical, and became a feature of those who were *already* considered to be irrational (or lower upon the Great Chain of Being), such as the "Negro cocaine fiend," it was their bodies that would be interned; both instances however were a product of the underlying demand of rationality. While this would become more pronounced as the narcotic narrative of cocaine gained momentum, differing policies of internment existed from very early on. And this was a function of society's preconceived notions of what, and indeed who, could be perceived as a rational actor. From this, we might draw two points. Firstly, and as I hope to show, the concept of irrationality vis-à-vis western modernity (articulated through, for instance, addiction) has always been haunted by the ghost of perceptions of rationality. Secondly, society has always interned those who are perceived as too rational and those who are not, differently. For the rational, it is their mind that is worked upon. For the irrational, it is their bodies. This will be justified in the following chapter. Importantly though, *who* is perceived as rational and who is not is a function of their ontological placement in society; the concept of "Negro cocaine fiend" or "crack addict," for instance, is far more deeply embedded in social and historical mechanisms of articulation than simply pointing to the illegitimate

consumption of a drug. The condemnation of the drug user, then, is as much a function of society's preconceptions regarding the ontological position of an individual as it is about the consumption of a drug.

Another infamous case points to this, that of Dr. Hazen. The first report of the doctor's case occurred on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1886, in *The New York Times*:

Slaves to the Cocaine Habit ... The victims of the cocaine habit ... received treatment at the City Hospital during the night and morning. Although seeming rational the couple presented a sorry sight and showed clearly that their brains had undergone slow but sure poisoning by the persistent experimenting of the doctor on himself and his daughter.<sup>34</sup>

Immediately it is possible to discern the measure by which the doctor and his daughter are judged, that of rationality. As the locus of that rationality, it is "their brains" that have been undermined. His expulsion from the episteme of medical science is achieved through the action of the economy of doubt (the very system which instated him as a doctor). No longer displaying those attributes which are considered *a priori* necessary for inclusion in the system, the doctor's expulsion from the system highlights the borders whereby meaning is made and which operates at the very edge of its own internal meaning. With the mind of the good doctor brought into doubt, his very subjectivity *qua* doctor doubted, he is pulled inside out, becoming an *object* of medical science rather than a *subject* of that episteme. Thus, he is in some sense an experiment, but importantly a *medical* experiment, a locus of analysis that falls under the medical gaze of the time (allowing him to occupy, as shall be discussed below, the ambivalent status of victim). And his mind, precisely because it has "undergone slow but sure poisoning," is the focus of that attention.

Considering this usage of the term "victim," it is important to note the etymological evolution of the word itself. In the term's earliest usage, a victim is "[a] living creature killed and offered as a sacrifice to some deity or supernatural power."<sup>35</sup> In the eighteenth century it was "applied to Christ as an offering for mankind,"<sup>36</sup> while later it designates "one who perishes or suffers in health, etc., from some enterprise or pursuit *voluntarily* undertaken."<sup>37</sup> Throughout these semantic shifts there is a backdrop of harm that befalls the subject. What changes, however, relates to what Foucault calls the birth of the subject – the harm becomes

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<sup>34</sup> Unknown Author, *The New York Times*. May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1886.

<sup>35</sup> OED online. Ref: Victim

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.* Emphasis added.

voluntary, presupposing a will to power. *This will to power, in western modernity, is a function of rationality qua subject.* This radically alters the deployment of the conception of harm for the subject becomes complicit in his or her own harm. While they are innocent in the sense that a form of harm is committed to and by themselves, which may even be undue or undeserved, they are complicit in their own punishment in that the harm that befalls them was of their own doing. Thus the victim is simultaneously guilty and innocent, both inside and outside of their own complicity, their undecided status mediating the oscillation between the institutional responses that would be applicable if only one axiom could be thought possible. It is for this reason that the concept of *pharmakos* provides a deep insight into the duality of these and later cocaine users.

### **The Birth of the Victim**

Many of these victims/doctors first began to use cocaine as a remedy for morphine or opium addiction, a habit they had acquired in a similar manner, as was the general assumption of the time (Courtwright 2001: 35 – 60). For instance, there is an instance of “A Physician’s Sad Plight” who was “Driven Mad by the Use of Cocaine to Allay Pain.”<sup>38</sup> A year later “Dr. F. M. Hamlin ... a prominent physician of this place [Auburn, N.Y.], [had] been removed to the asylum at Utica, a victim of the morphine and cocaine habits.”<sup>39</sup> In August 1888, a Dr. N. H. Borland “was found lying in his sleeping room in the rear of his office ... By his side was an empty hypodermic syringe, which had recently been used ... The cause of the suicide is not known, but it is believed to have been the result of the excessive use of cocaine.”<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1888, the last “Victim of Cocaine and Morphine” was found, who “killed himself at the Washingtonian Home last night ... He was sent to the home suffering from the effects of overdoses of morphine, cocaine, and beer.”<sup>41</sup>

It is interesting to note that all of these reports originate from the latter half of 1887 and 1888. Many of the victims were also respected members of society and indeed the medical community. This is not to say, however, that many less prominent people did not become addicted to cocaine during this time; the archive examples used are from sources

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<sup>38</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1887.

<sup>39</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1888.

<sup>40</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1888.

<sup>41</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1888.

which may have only published what they felt newsworthy. What is important to note, however, is that these people's confinement to psychiatric clinics, most prominently the Washingtonian Home, was a function both of their status as victim and the status of cocaine. That addiction, however, is explained in terms of rationality first, and only in moral terms secondly. They are victims insofar as their addiction displays a lapse in their rationality. Furthermore, they are not condemned to a life of imprisonment. The "victims" are medical victims, the "treatment" that is invoked by this classification is located within medical institutions. Indeed, the engendering of this institutional location can be seen as a necessary consequence of the discursive concomitance of the victim and the medical regime. As noted previously, had the victim been seen as solely guilty (and thus not a victim) they would not have been sent to a medical institution but rather simply jailed (as they would be later). Thus the production of the discourse not only enabled a specific institutional response, but was also only made meaningful through an understanding of the "victim" which took into account the ambiguity of the *pharmakon*. This itself was a function of cocaine remaining a legitimate drug of choice, even if these individual cases had taken to abusing it. The very conception of the doctors being irrational is made from within the wholly rational regime of medical science – it is through the interaction of both discourses that the other is identified and known as a function of the founding discourse of medical science.

### **The Birth of the Fiend**

The birth and articulation of the "fiend" was also a function of the rational/irrational episteme which had thus far guided medical accounts of the first cocaine victims. However, unlike the victim in which their rationality/mind was the locus of attention, it was their irrationality/body that was used to condemn fiends. It must be noted now however, *that both articulations were a justification for the core distinction between the rational and the irrational, and were not a sole consequence of their use of cocaine. Cocaine qua pharmakon*, in other words, reinforced the distinction rather than separating it. The discursive positioning of the fiend within this dichotomy was a product of three convergent considerations. In the first instance, the consumption of cocaine by the fiend can be seen as subversive of a metaphysics of presence in which the mind and its various epistemologies (rationality, instrumentality, et cetera) reigned supreme, since it threatened to replace the mind with the body as the locus of activity and identity. This however would become the focus of the

critique of the black jazz player, as shall be explored in later chapters. Secondly, this sensuality of the body was articulated as an aspect of moral decay. Much like the body's susceptibility to the contagion of a virus, the virus of moral degeneracy found its host in the body too. This made the fiend dangerous, and morally troublesome. The fiend had become, in other words, "a threat to public safety" (Spillane 2000: 106).

The moral discourse, however, was of a very specific type – it is moral *disease* that is most often alluded to. On the one hand, as shall be explored, this was a function of the legitimacy of the medical regime in continuing to remain sovereign over the concept of addiction. On the other, however, it also points to a different understanding of the individual, or actually, the lack thereof. The victim was always considered in the singular. The fiend, however, was considered as a type, as part of a *race*. This was because there was an *a priori* assumption that the fiend could never embody the very rationality needed to construe an individual identity. The fiend, generally black and poor, was too low upon the Great Chain of Being to be an individual and importantly, to be rational and have a mind. Thirdly then, this led to the fiend being articulated not through their minds but their bodies. The medical regime maintained sovereignty over this discourse however, both in attempting to reform the mind of the victim and the body of the fiend at least until the moral arguments against the illegitimate use of cocaine superseded those of the rational. This is not however to say that delinquent lower-class drug users, and concerns over their moral and ontological statuses began with the cocaine narrative. The narrative of opium, which itself displays a very similar albeit more political (at least during this time) narrative had already focussed attention of the moral problems of illegitimate drug use, and displayed some of the very same tropes that will be examined in the following chapters – the corruption of white men and women and the fear of foreigners being the two primary sites of discord (Aurin 2000: 414 – 441).

This explains why *the first laws against the drug of cocaine and its consumption were medical laws*. Importantly though, they were a consequence of The Decision discussed above. As noted, this could only have occurred if there was a socially meaningful distinction between the victim and the fiend. Both however came under the gaze of the medical. In the former this was because the victim was conceptualised *within* the borders of the medical, while in the latter the fiend was seen as external to, yet an object or function, of the medical. The subversive repetition of their sensual consumption was not only parasitic but also "false" – their consumption was "addiction" rather than "experimentation." It was not their minds that had fallen prey to cocaine (for they were never included within that rational hemisphere)

but their body's revelling in the sensual consumption that defined their alterity in relation to the social.

The identification of the "fiend" is articulated as such in a number of reports from the time. One of the first instances of a cocaine user specifically being termed a fiend is in an article from 1898 entitled "Cocaine Kills a Doctor." With the death reported the article states "[h]e began using cocaine some time ago to secure relief from nasal catarrh, and became a cocaine 'fiend.'"<sup>42</sup> The doctor and his conception as a fiend is terse here; the inverted commas point to a reluctance to categorise the good doctor as such. The ambiguity of the simultaneous deployment and distancing of the term, in this instance, allows medical science to begin to re-conceptualise the nature of addiction while still maintaining sovereignty over the user. Of course, the term "fiend" had been long in use with regards to opium users. What is interesting here is the reluctant slippage of terminology.

More conclusively, Spillane points out that "[t]he earliest reporting of popular cocaine use appeared in a letter to the editors of the *American Druggist* concerning cocaine use in Dallas, Texas, in 1894" (Spillane 2000: 94). As Spillane further notes, "[the Dallas report] stressed two themes that would recur time and again: that the use of cocaine embodied a social threat far beyond simple health effects and that the drug held a special appeal among blacks and in 'the lower quarters of the city'" (*ibid*). What is important to note here, over and above the discursive/advertising strategies employed is the *means* by which they operated. Firstly there is a differentiation between medical use and "popular" or private use. Secondly, with this differentiation in place, there is a deferment to another class or race of people. The discourses of difference (such as race, sex, and class) acted as supplementary to the original differentiation between victim and fiend, and later, it is these traces that become paradigmatic of the larger *narcotic* narrative (as shall be dealt with in the following chapter and as Spillane notes briefly, 2001: 105 – 122).

In the case of the narrative of cocaine the point of diffraction is the mechanism whereby the politicisation of a once unified discourse becomes apparent and thus archaeologically relevant. For example, as Spillane notes (2000: 71 – 72, emphasis added),

*With Steward providing credibility*, the firm hoped its future advertising might be viewed as evidence of *scientific progress rather than quackery*. Stewart himself suggested that 'before the introduction of the working bulletin system the publication of this information in medical

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<sup>42</sup> Unknown Author, *The New York Times*. January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1898.

journal advertisement was called the “worst form of quackery.” When published in the form of working bulletins it was credited as valuable research work.

The figure of authority, Dr. Steward, provides the serious speech act that legitimates the “working bulletin.” The working bulletin, as such, is a means of legitimating the products that fall within its auspices. Thus those products that fall within the working bulletin are scientific endeavours, even though in fact the working bulletin was an advertising gimmick. What differentiates the working bulletin from quack medicine is that it employs the same language and logic of the medical economy of doubt. The “worst forms of quackery” and the working bulletin become differentiated by their institutional deployment, “as a group of individuals ... [or] as a body of knowledge and practice, as an authority recognised by public opinion, the law, and government” (Foucault 1972:42). It is thus the institutional domain and its authority that defines each regime. That which is legitimate is within the borders of the medical. That which is outside of the medical is thought of as “quack.” The border is not stagnant, and as shown by the above quote, can be manipulated. In the same manner, the substance of cocaine, when used within the borders of the medical, was a legitimate drug. When used beyond the borders of the medical, it was reconceptualised for recreation, for escape, by the mind from the body. Again, it is important to note that these discursive borders can be manipulated for political ends – this would become highly apparent during the “crack wars.”

With the continued use of cocaine beyond the borders of the medical, a new system of understanding became necessary. In order to delegitimize the use of the drug, the drug of cocaine became associated with “unsavoury elements.” This was at once both a fact and a political project. There is no denying that “Negros” and “lower class whites” used cocaine. The extent of that use remains undefined and contentious however. The political project of assuming that all the underclass were *prone* to illicit drug use, however, spread very rapidly and finds its roots in concerns over opium. This assumption originates, again, out of an essentialising discourse that came to its most obvious fruition in the 1940s (as will be explored in chapter three) and which relies on the binary distinction between the rational and the irrational, as discussed above. On the one hand however, and as explored above, the illegitimate use of cocaine was seen as an activity of the body. On the other, the “negro,” (as placeholder, for instance) by being *de facto* beyond the borders of the rational was seen as more prone to the sensual. The concomitance of these two discourses therefore did not require a great leap of the imagination. It also provided an expedient means of delegitimizing



both. Both were destabilising the Order of Things – cocaine by dissolving the border between the legitimate and the illegitimate, the “Negro” through their gradual emancipation (as shall be discussed in the following chapter).

As Spillane has documented, the first archival evidence of this realisation comes from the *Medical News* of 1898 (see Sheppegrell 1898: 421 – 422). Importantly though, “the popularisation of cocaine began with its use by labourers as a stimulant” (Spillane 2000: 91). However, as Spillane contends “[p]hysicians ... had employed cocaine most often as a *mental* stimulant.” One can therefore see, even in these very earliest of instances, the differentiation between the use of cocaine as a mental stimulant by doctors (by virtue of their rationality/mind), and the popularisation of cocaine by labourers (by virtue of the irrationality/body). Importantly though, these reports remained within the domain of the medical. One is tempted to think therefore that these reports acted as one mechanism by which the medical discourse could maintain sovereignty over the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate uses of the drug.

The labourers discussed above are more clearly defined as those “roustabouts of New Orleans and the Mississippi River” (*ibid*). These labourers “occupied the bottom of the waterfront worker hierarchy, enduring long shifts of uninterrupted labour in handling ship cargoes.” Furthermore, “[m]ost of the roustabouts were black, and to outside observers the blacks’ use of cocaine seemed to confirm the racial stereotypes they already held” (*ibid*). This is important, for as noted above, the illegitimate or popular usage of cocaine, within the eyes of rational medical science, became a means to confirm the social stereotypes and differentiations in society that those within the medical regime already held. The use of cocaine as a stimulant “held obvious attractions for labourers:”

Opiates offered pain relief or escape but lacked the stimulant effects of cocaine. Cocaine sometimes replaced the work camp whiskey ration for the same reason. Workers sniffed cocaine powders almost exclusively; cocaine powder was compact, transported easily, and used readily in workplace settings ... Because waterfront employment was seasonal, roustabouts in search of work spread the use of cocaine throughout southern workplaces (Spillane 2000: 92).

The use of cocaine by manual labourers was also advantageous for employers: the stimulant increased productivity and endurance, allowing labourers to work harder and longer, and thus increased the productivity of their bodies. Labourers were placed at the bottom of the Chain of Production, followed by the foreman, the supervisor, and eventually the owner of the

business. If cocaine use was concentrated at the lowest level of the order, the place also where most black people worked, then there is a complicity by virtue of association that is born. The consumption of cocaine by these labourers thus did not only increase productivity – the fusion of drug and discourse provided a point of reference whereby the meaning of this now popular drug/poison could be generated.

The use of cocaine by these people was not simply limited to their places of work – “cocaine linked the dockworkers with the city’s (New Orleans) less-reputable neighbourhoods because the roustabouts spent much of their free time on Franklin Street [a notorious street which was occupied by dancehalls and brothels]” (Spillane 2000: 93 – 94). The consumption of cocaine beyond the borders of the medical now also began to be conceptualised in moral terms. This was a function of, in the first instance, the illegitimate consumption of cocaine becoming seen as irrational. However, when it also became seen as a justification for the continued stratification of society, due to the lower members of society being “prone” to such irrational behaviour, its use took on a moral tone, because these people were conceptualised through their bodies, the locus, since the very beginning, of immorality and sensuality. Of course, this is not to say that cocaine and sex had not been associated with one another before – since the very earliest days of Freud, cocaine was sometimes seen as an aphrodisiac, as was opium, and the fear of both was often articulated through a hyper-sexualised discourse. What is important to note here is the transformation of the drug from legitimate and rational tool of medical science to immoral elixir of the lower classes. Indeed, this was articulated as such by one New Orleans police officer who stated that cocaine “has always been confined to the immoral and lower classes of the community, both white and black” (Spillane 2000: 94). This immorality, however, was a function of the founding binary of the rational and the irrational, the mind and the body, which as shall be explored in the following chapters, originates in the work of Descartes.

The presuppositions of the ontological positioning of different races in American society, and their continued justification (if not strengthening) through the illegitimate usage of cocaine, can be seen in a number of instances from the time. For instance, at the “Hampton Negro Conference” two subjects were taken up: “sanitation and domestic economy.” As the report states:

The first was introduced by Dr. J. W. Prather of Baltimore, who, in the course of an elaborate report on the diseases to which the negro is prone, called attention to the alarming spread of the

cocaine habit among the blacks. More than 200, 000 negroes, he showed, are addicted to the use of cocaine and other narcotics.<sup>43</sup>

While the validity of the facts are plainly unconfirmed (although, as Spillane has noted (2000: 63), many authors and speaker discussing the “negro problem” were apt to overemphasis), what is interesting to note is that addiction is transformed from medical fact into mythological disease. The epistemological consequence of this is to invoke a whole field of knowledge and deep undercurrents of spurious moral ammunition whereby “the Negro” and the “diseases to which they are prone” can be condemned. It also invokes the consequence of the contagion: if addiction is a disease then it can spread “alarmingly ... among the blacks.” The fear of the contagion and the fear of its circulation beyond the borders of the medical necessitated action. As one article reports, there was a “Cocaine Evil Among Negroes.” This “alarming growth ... has caused the suggestion to be made that medical *laws* should be enacted for the suppression of this evil, which is demoralising the race in this State.”<sup>44</sup> This alarming growth, then, was still being articulated through the medical regime – it was still medical science that held sovereignty over the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate uses of cocaine, and indeed the people that were using the drug. As the article further notes “[p]hysicians say that if the habit among the negroes is not suppressed and radical steps to this end taken very quickly it will mean the utter ruin and final extermination of the race in the South.”<sup>45</sup> It is the legitimacy of medical science that is deployed to make the distinction between the different races.

## Conclusion

In this manner, cocaine was transformed from an unknown substance, to a legitimate drug, to a drug that could be used illegitimately. By virtue of its heritage as a *pharmakon*, cocaine minimised the differences within the medical system. This further justified the medical taxonomy, and indeed its methodology (the economy of doubt). However, when cocaine began to minimise the differences between the legitimately medical and “popular use,” this minimisation had the effect of eroding the legitimacy of rational medical science. In order to prevent this, medical science claimed sovereignty over the legitimate and the

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<sup>43</sup> Unknown Author, *The New York Times*. July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1903.

<sup>44</sup> Unknown Author, *The New York Times*, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1902.

<sup>45</sup> Unknown Author, *The New York Times*. November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1902.

illegitimate, and as such, over how, where and by whom the drug could, and could not be used. As a consequence, the first law against the drug's illegitimate use came from the medical realm and was paradigmatically seen in the 1906 Pure Food and Drugs Act. The Act "imposed a national labelling requirement, one which meant that manufacturers were henceforth required to state the presence of cocaine in their products" (Gootenberg 1999:37).<sup>46</sup> The federal requirement of this law was to indicate the presence of cocaine in the preparation, however many states also required that the preparations bear a label reading "POISON" (Spillane 1999: 37 – 39).<sup>47</sup> The syntactical construction of these names is highly revealing: The "Pure" Food and Drugs Act was an attempt to re-articulate those objects which came under its mandate as having to pass a battery of empirical tests, the formation of the concept of "pure" being a consequence of the larger medico-scientific discourse and the method of the economy of doubt. The status of The Decision, however, also further cemented those differences that were already being used as a means of articulating different races and people within society. It is for this reason that the rational treatment of victims focussed on their minds, and as shall be shown in the following chapter, the rational treatment of fiends focussed on their bodies.

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<sup>46</sup> This measure was at the time counter-productive, for these labels, rather than scaring off users, led those self-same habitual users to products that contained cocaine.

<sup>47</sup> This federal law was also supplemented by state laws, such as the California Act of 1907, restricting the sale of cocaine and opiates to a physician's prescription. Following this, "[I]n 1913, the New York State legislature passed the Delahanty measure, which restricted the stocks [of cocaine] of druggists to only 5 ounces at a time" (Gootenberg 1999: 36).

## *Chapter 2: The Sacrificial Invention of Narcotic Modernity*

### Introduction

In the previous chapter, cocaine's movement from a substance to a drug came under analysis. This transformation, it was argued, was a function of its adoption by the legitimating discourse of medical science. As noted however, another transformation was equally as important – cocaine's transformation from a drug to a narcotic. Importantly though, this second transformation was also a product of its interaction with medical science. Here, I argue, we witness the sacrificial birth of the *narcotic* narrative of cocaine, and indeed the first vestiges of a narcotic modernity that would begin to define the parameters of what could be thought possible vis-à-vis cocaine. It is this second transformation that is the subject of this chapter.

As noted in the previous chapter, cocaine's interaction with the medical episteme, itself rooted in a specific western metaphysics, transformed cocaine from a substance to a drug. It also provided the logical structure necessary for the articulation of the first habitués, whether they were victims or fiends. In this narrative, The Decision was epistemologically represented by the transformation of cocaine from a substance to a drug. Ontologically however, The Decision was represented by the manner in which the first cases of addiction were treated – rather than condemn the user, they were thrust back into the guiding discourse of rationality. It was for this reason that addiction was conceptualised through the paradigm of medical (and rational) treatment and care. It also explains why the first laws that attempted to control the illegitimate use of cocaine originated from the medical. However, this was soon to change, with the birth of what might be termed the narcotic population.

The narrative of cocaine did not operate in isolation from the larger narratives shaping American society and identity – far from it. Rather, while the birth of different races and indeed species of American subjects had occurred far earlier, the illegitimate use of cocaine became one means of articulating this difference. In Britain during the war years this same logic would be translated into a fear of the foreigner. In each instance, however, the illegitimate use of cocaine by certain members of society confirmed, rather than mitigated the differences according to which different populations were articulated. As always, the action of the *pharmakon* was to affirm the differences that already existed in society by veiling these

different populations in similarity. In this instance, however, that affirmation would become poisonous, and would necessitate, as I hope to show, the re-creation of difference through a sacrificial logic which would call to the altar some very specific scapegoats.

This process, however, would not remain hidden or beyond the borders of legislation and political manipulation – the narrative of cocaine would now become juridical. To explain this process, this chapter employs the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics. As I shall argue, the birth of the narcotic population provided a new grid of specification upon which meaning could be made. This biopolitical grid of specification was concerned, at heart, with the “vital characteristics”<sup>48</sup> of the narcotic using subject. However, with the formation of a recognisable narcotic population, and its increasing complexity, a new “juridical matrix” (Tadros 1998: 76) emerged concerned with the control and governmentality of the narcotic citizen. These shifts, from a singular biopolitical concern with the “Negro cocaine fiend” to a sovereign and state-sanctioned juridical concern with a narcotic population, as shall be analysed, provide a useful means of engaging with the transformation of cocaine and the cocaine-using subject.

The pivotal analytical moment of the previous chapter occurred when it was realised that cocaine could be *both* an elixir and poison. This was made possible, on the one hand, by cocaine’s status as a *pharmakon* – it is because cocaine, as a drug, was a *pharmakon* that it could incorporate both axioms of poison and elixir at the same time. The first instances of cocaine acting as a poison were seen as the exception rather than the norm. This was a product of simple experience – the use of cocaine had more often healed rather than hurt. On the other hand, cocaine was still very central to many medical practices of the day – its importance to medicine meant it could not simply be left by the wayside because there were some isolated instances of poisoning. Moreover, and like today, medical science was always extremely careful in the application and use of cocaine on subjects; these instances of poisoning were as much a function of cocaine’s misuse as its poisonous potential. However, when cocaine began being used recreationally by those who were already considered to be “prone” to irrational and dangerous behaviour, a moral panic occurred in which these users had to be ostracised, sacrificially, from the community in the name of that community. Importantly though, the expulsion of these people also became a means of articulating far deeper concerns, such as masculinity, nationalism, and the question of race.

The exclusion of these members of society, in confluence with the narrative of cocaine, displays a very specific logic. When the first habitués were placed in psychiatric

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<sup>48</sup> The vital characteristics of the subject/object are explored more fully by Rabinow and Rose in *Biopolitics Today* (2006).

hospitals, their exclusion came from *within* the medical paradigm; their treatment was an extension of the medical episteme, rather than their utter expulsion from the discourse. It might be said that their “exclusion,” in that they were placed in psychiatric homes, was in another sense a means of continued inclusion and observation by the medical gaze. However, these people had a very particular ontological status in society – most were medical men, well to do and well respected. They were seen as rational actors; cocaine had caused that rationality to come into doubt however, which led to their exclusion. In spite of this, when those people who were not respected, such as “Negro cocaine fiends,” and who were considered *a priori* irrational began to use cocaine illegitimately or for recreational purposes, this strategy of internment could not function. This is because their ontological status was defined by their membership of a race (with its own set of presuppositions). If these presuppositions included notions of racial degeneracy, criminality, and sexual deviancy, then the mechanisms needed to articulate their illegitimate consumption of cocaine would be very different.

These acts of exclusion, I argue, can be usefully modelled by employing Girard’s (1965; 1977; 1978; 1986; 1987a; 1987b; 2001) theory of sacrificial violence and the scapegoat. To illustrate this, the chapter will highlight two different examples of the sacrificial exclusion and subsequent invention of narcotic modernity. Interestingly though, the examples also serve to further highlight the process by which illegitimate cocaine users began to be excluded from medical discourse; the first example, that of Bill Way, reveals to us the manner in which rationality still played an integral role in his condemnation. In the second example, however, we find a very different justification for the exclusion of one Brilliant Chang – the illegitimate use of cocaine became a lens by which the differences within society are magnified. There is then a subtle movement away from the justification of medical science as a means of condemning illegitimate uses of cocaine, to one that had broader political and social implications. This is not to say, however, that the role of medical science in the condemnation of illegitimate uses of cocaine was eliminated, but rather that it was superseded by other considerations that were very important to society, and with specific regard to the second example, were a function of the War effort. Medical science would always continue to play a role in the articulation of cocaine, for it did and still does have legitimate uses for the drug. What is of concern here however is the birth of the *narcotic* of cocaine, which has a very specific meaning in larger society. It is for this reason that I have differentiated between the medical drug of cocaine and the street bought narcotic of cocaine – they are the same substance, but have intrinsically different social meanings.

Consequently, it is this and the preceding chapter that form the analytical backbone to the larger study. Indeed, one of the central arguments of this study is that it is the logic of sacrificial exclusion, and the violence that accompanies it, that has haunted the narcotic narrative since its very inception. As shall be explored in the final two chapters, it is this logic that necessitated the war on drugs, and perhaps even its failure.

To sum up the coming chapter then: the transformation that cocaine undertook, from drug to narcotic, or more accurately, this *birth* was the result of narcotic modernity sacrificially inventing itself. In order to understand this claim, a reading of Girard's concept of sacrificial violence has to be undertaken, bearing in mind many of the conceptual claims made by Derridian deconstruction (as highlighted in the introduction to this thesis). Accordingly, this chapter is structured in the following manner: in the first section I present an analysis of the Girardian concept of sacrificial violence (and its further conceptual claim that all Orders have as their origin a violent and sacrificial birth) and its confluence and differences with Derridian deconstruction. The analytical work of this section then is to formulate a viable theoretical framework through which to view the birth of the narcotic. In light of this a serious examination of the similarities and differences between the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* is undertaken. In the third section I continue with the narrative of cocaine in the US, as begun and highlighted in chapter one. Continuing from the point of Decision when the poisonous nature of cocaine was first realised, I argue that illegitimate uses of cocaine continued to be articulated through the paradigm of rationality. However, a moral panic soon spread over the illegitimate use of cocaine by those who were themselves considered illegitimate in the eyes of rationality. This was to have two consequences. Firstly, this transformation and the resulting birth of narcotic modernity was distinctly violent. Secondly, the violence that haunted this birth was a function of cocaine's own status as a *pharmakon* and its relationship to the systems of differences that had thus far structured society – it is for this reason that the resulting violence was of a sacrificial nature. Finally, in the last section of the chapter I further explore the sacrificial nature of this founding violence by shifting focus to a very different part of the world, namely London, U.K., during the First World War. This is done, on the one hand, to further explore the nature of the sacrificial violence caught at the birth of narcotic modernity. Equally however, by shifting analytical focus I hope to show that this analysis is not solely constrained to the predominant examples and areas used in this study – while interpretive in this chapter, the study's generative moments will be applicable to a far broader arena. Indeed, and as noted in the introduction, the analysis and critique is ultimately aimed at western modernity itself.



### Sacrifice and the *Pharmakon*

Derrida has noted in *The Rhetoric of Drugs* (1993: 229) that “there are no drugs ‘in nature’” while in *Force of Law: The “Mystical Foundations of Authority”* (1989: 983) he notes that “[t]he concept of violence permits an evaluative critique only in the sphere of moral relations. There is no natural or physical violence.”<sup>49</sup> In both instances, Derrida is alluding to the *concepts* themselves – there are no drugs, and there is no violence, “in nature” because these concepts only become meaningful in their interaction and *relationships* with other socio-discursive phenomena. Both the concepts of violence and of the drug are relational; they are both made meaningful in their interactions with far deeper systems of meaning. This is not to say, however, that either concept lacks power, force, or veracity. Rather, as conceptual products of the systems of meaning within which they are articulated, their meaning is contingent on those prior systems, as is their legitimacy. It is for this reason that both can oscillate between the “good” and the “bad;” it is their relationships with other discourses which creates their meaning. As an example, and most simply, violence can and is justified through the legal framework – the act of meting out justice is inherently violent. Equally, the drug of cocaine was and indeed can still be seen as either good or bad; when used on a medical patient its use is justified. When it is used in a nightclub, it is not.

As I have previously noted, one such means of understanding how this meaning is made, within both the concepts of drugs and violence, is through a Girardian framework. Indeed, this theoretical framework is ideally suited to such an analysis as it expressly concerns, on the one hand, the concept of violence, and on the other, the *pharmakos* or scapegoat – both of which are central to the narcotic narrative. Before such an analysis can begin, however, it is necessary to explore the central tenets of Girard’s theoretical framework and moreover, align these central concepts to a more Derridian or deconstructive understanding of the process of meaning and/or theory making. Again, this is done not only for analytical clarity, but also because of two further analytical concerns – firstly, to constrain Girard’s somewhat universalistic theory, and secondly, to align the key concepts to the methodological assertions employed by the larger study.

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<sup>49</sup> This is not to say that there are not acts of force, but rather that the term violence itself is not natural. In the same manner, there are chemical configurations that affect the human body physiologically and psychologically. However, the concept of drugs itself is not found “in nature.”

## Sacrifice and the Scapegoat

Girard's theoretical framework begins with an observation: for Girard (1965: 15 – 17) desire (which is taken as foundational to the human condition) is mimetic. Desire, in other words, is transferred and learnt. In this model there is a tripartite configuration – the subject, the object, and the model. The subject learns to want or desire an object not because of the object's intrinsic worth, but because the model (the model here being that or who the subject respects and looks up to) also desires the self-same object. This, for Girard, is where the feeling of envy originates. However, when the subject gains the means to obtain the object that the model also desires competition is born. This is where the feeling of hatred originates. As John Steele (2001: 42 – 43, original emphasis) summarises, “[t]he ambivalent nature of the model – a *scandal* both loved and hated – creates the possibilities of envy and hatred as the subject resents the model's success (envy) or seeks to destroy the model hated.” It is not necessarily true that *all* mimetic desire will cause conflict. Rather, there must be a sufficiently strong desire for the same object, and indeed the model must be sufficiently important to the subject, for mimetic desire to cause conflict. For Girard then, it is the loss of difference, the dedifferentiation of the subject and the model, which will cause mimetic violence. This, as previously noted, can be caused by the action of a *pharmakon*.

The loss of difference creates what Girard has termed a crisis of degree – when the differences that exists *between* the subject and the model disappear (through their wanting of the same object) there is no longer a degree of difference which makes either recognisable to the other. The rivals are now dedifferentiated to the point where they mirror one another and it is this crisis of the (degree) of difference which necessitates the violence necessary to restore a semblance of difference between the subject and the model. The crisis of degree is perhaps best summed up by John Kerrigan (1996: 6): “[w]hen B, injured by A, does to A what B did to him, he makes himself resemble the opponent he has blamed, while he transforms his enemy into the kind of victim he once was.”

Dedifferentiation can occur between more than two people. With the loss of the degree of differences that had thus far sustained order, *any* difference can stand as placeholder and be the source of conflict. This is termed sacrificial substitution. Thus, for instance, a mob is often willing to attack the police, even though the police had nothing to do with the original conflict. Girard (1977: 8) terms the violent identification of this substitute the surrogate victim. Crucially, it is the identification and violent attack of this surrogate victim that restores order because it restores difference – at its most simple level there is now

minimally the mob on the one hand and the victim on the other. The surrogate victim, through the violence that is committed against them, restores order through the catharsis of their own death. The identification of the surrogate victim, *the scapegoat*, and their consequent murder “discharges the violence, regenerates the differentiation which sustains culture, and provides a short-lived peace” (Steele 2001: 44). Collective violence, in this reading, restores order through the sacrificial substitution of a scapegoat, the surrogate victim. In order for this mechanism to operate, however, the surrogate victim must be ambivalent – the crimes for which they are accused must be of the type that can never be definitively proven. It is for this reason that the sacrificial victim is often accused of crimes in public that occur in the private – sleeping with the enemy (a private act with public consequences) or being a witch for instance (Praeg 2007: 62 – 64). The illegitimate use of cocaine can follow a similar path – a private act with public consequences.

The power to restore order through violence makes the surrogate victim, in their death, sacred (Girard 1987: 28). This is because, on the one hand, in the heat of battle there must also be collective amnesia – the original source of the violence must be forgotten. Equally, and on the other hand, the power of the surrogate victim to restore order, while seen by the collective, cannot be understood. As Steele (2001: 44) concludes,

It is apparent to the mob that tension, disorder, lack of differentiation, and crisis existed while the victim lived – and ceased when the victim died [or more accurately, was killed]. The mob naturally interprets that the victim was the source of the disorder and the resulting peace, although both factors originate with the mob. This double attribution renders the victim all-powerful, transcendent, and sacred.

It is from this understanding of the action of the surrogate victim that the most important consequences of this study might be drawn.

Firstly, it must be remembered that the sacrificial substitution of the victim, the identification and murder of the scapegoat is not understood in itself, but the resulting placement of the victim as sacred is. In order to justify the murder, then, the true story of the sacrificial substitution cannot be told; the murder is paradoxically remembered and made meaningful through collective amnesia and consequently, myth making. Secondly then, and following from this, sacrifice is not only constitutive of *all* culture (Girard’s universalistic claim that will be critiqued below), but is the *a priori* functional technology of power which allows societies to be constituted. Sacrifice creates order, but that order is sustained through a

process of legitimating myth making which retrospectively justifies the original murder – as McKenna (1992: 30) surmises, “sacrifice restores order by restoring difference.” Thirdly, the identification of the surrogate victim is arbitrary, the surrogate victim’s position vis-à-vis the mob becomes a placeholder for the very violence and disorder which plagues the community. As Girard (1977: 8) argues, “The victim is not a substitute for some particularly endangered individual, nor is it offered up to some individual of particularly bloodthirsty temperament. Rather, it is a substitute for all the members of the community, offered up by the members themselves.” As a consequence, “[t]he sacrifice serves to protect the community from *its own* violence; it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside of itself” (*ibid*).

Girard’s theoretical framework is perhaps most easily seen in what he calls “primitive” societies – the literal sacrificial substitution of, for instance, a witch whose crimes can neither be proven nor disproved, and their consequent burning at a stake in order to regenerate the difference between the concept of the witch and the collective. More relevantly to this study however, Girard does also often contrast the sacrificial substitution of these “primitive” societies with western modernity’s legal system. This contrast is important, for it reveals the difference in the logic of the founding moments that will become relevant in the following two sections of this chapter.

Girard differentiates between the reciprocal violence of “primitive” societies and the sovereignty of modern legal systems. In the former he argues that sacrificial substitution was always a dangerous enterprise as it was ultimately a form of vengeance (1977: 22). That vengeance, not properly mythologised, would lead to more reciprocal violence, or vengeance, thus continually plunging the community into referred acts of violence. To prevent this reciprocity of violence, *ritual* acts of violence became important to the continuity of the community. As Hammerton-Kelly (1992: 32 – 33) argues, “Ritual sacrifice, as the controlled transgression of the prohibition on violence, is the way to express violence without incurring vengeance. It works by deflecting the reciprocating violence from its target onto victims that cannot retaliate and have no one to avenge them.” To further prevent the reciprocal cycle of vengeance, a mythology is needed that could justify the acts of violence to such an extent that they were no longer seen as violent – the mythology told must be so powerful that it masks the violence completely. In western modernity this is the role played by the ritual of justice. This conception of justice is justified because the victims of its violence are believed to be true victims; the victims of law, and thus justice, are the real perpetrators of the original act of violence for which they are accused and therefore *state* reprisal against them in the form of legitimate violence is good. Without the ritual of the courtroom, however, even these “good”

acts of reprisal would lose their potency and legitimacy. We see this every time citizens “take the law into their own hands.” Without the ritual of justice, their justice is seen simply as illegitimate violence, even though it may have the same ends as the courtroom. Indeed, as Girard (1977: 15) further notes, “The [legal] system does not suppress vengeance; rather, it effectively limits it to a single act of reprisal, enacted by a sovereign authority specializing in this function.” The state’s reprisal, as the sovereign collective of “we the people” is so strong that the judge’s hammer can no longer be argued with. There can be no reprisal or vengeance because the sovereignty of the state is simply too great, the mythology central to the very social order. This however, presupposes that the mythology that legitimates the act of justice remains true to us – every time, for instance, that we see people wrongly sentenced, acts of reprisal immediately become possible. Revealing the operation of the mythology of justice is one aim of this and future chapters.

While Girard uncovers the mechanisms whereby difference is sacrificially generated, Derrida (1981) uncovers the logic of sacrificial exclusion through the textual exploitation of the *Phaedrus* in “Plato’s Pharmacy” (in *Dissemination*, 1981). As McKenna has commented,

The victim is the matrix of difference for Girard for the same reason that writing is the matrix of difference for Derrida: both succumb to a mystified expulsion to which order and difference owe their origin, their institution. The victim in Girard’s scenario plays the same structuring role as writing in Derrida’s reading of Plato, that of the “*supplement d’ origine*,” “the supplement of (at) the origin” (1992: 32).

For Girard, and as noted, violence is the generatively constitutive act of order and indeed culture. Violence, then, is endemic to and constitutive of all cultures. Following from this, “a culture founded on violence can only sustain itself violently” (Praeg 2007: 22). Even though Girard differentiates between “primitive” and “modern” societies, Derrida (1989)(following Walter Benjamin) reveals the iteration of the founding violence of law that, following the same logic as Girard’s argument, makes violence constitutive of law in western modernity. Considering the importance of this logic to the larger study, however, a far more substantive analysis is required. However, the violence of law forms the backbone of chapter six, and will be more forcefully dealt with there.

## The Violence of Law

To begin to find the conceptual affinities in both Girard and Derrida's work it is necessary to first look at the difference.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps the first difference, the *structural* difference, is the level of analysis – simply put Girard is concerned with the generative effects of ritualised violence and the status of the victim. Derrida, on the other hand, is concerned with the systematic semiotic displacement of writing that occurs within a metaphysics of presence. In the former, it is the sacrificial victim that is excluded. In the latter it is the signifier.<sup>51</sup> However, “[n]otwithstanding the substantial difference between a discourse concerned with signifiers and one concerned with victims, there is a *formal* or *structural* resemblance in the process of expulsion and mystification” (McKenna 1992: 27).

Girard, throughout his theoretical oeuvre, claims that violence is the performative technology by which culture originates and continually functions or rejuvenates itself – *a new order, a new degree, is made manifest and sustained through the catharsis of violence*. This, however, presupposes that violence is outside of the very order that it makes function; the founding violence of the sacrifice of the scapegoat restores and rejuvenates order, but is not of or a part of the order itself. It occurs both prior to and outside of the order that it makes possible. Retrospectively this violence is legitimated as just, as necessary, as a part of the order through the various myths that are told about the founding moment. However, the founding moment itself, of itself, is both prior to and beyond the very order that it makes possible. The legitimacy of that founding violence is solely a function of the power of the retrospective myth told about the event. If that myth can no longer justify the violence that it simultaneously hides from, and yet is a function of the order that originated from the foundational violence, then the very legitimacy of that order is once more thrust into a crisis of degree. In other words, without the myth that makes sacred that first differentiation between victim and perpetrator(s), any order that has sustained itself through that myth will be brought into question. The failure to correctly or adequately mythologize the myth that justifies the foundational violence that gave birth to that order will allow the cycle of vengeance to occur – Praeg (2007: 36 – 41) has termed the resulting cyclical action of revenge (as a function of an illegitimate mythology) a *deferred* act of foundational violence.

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<sup>50</sup> Both authors have written extensively. However, the primary sources relevant here, are for Girard *The Scapegoat* (1986) and *Violence and the Sacred* (1977), and for Derrida, *Dissemination* (1981) and *The Rhetoric of Drugs* (1993) are important here.

<sup>51</sup> For a more detailed *political* discussion see Beardsworth, R. 1996: pp 6 – 25.

Derrida, in *Force of Law: the “Mystical Foundation of Authority,”* (1989) and in deconstructing Walter Benjamin’s “Critique of Violence” (1921)<sup>52</sup> highlights Benjamin’s distinction between law founding violence and law conserving violence. Law founding violence, the force which *makes* or *decides* law is *a priori* forceful – the law, at its moment of foundation is not just but forceful. Simply put, it is one individual or collective deciding on a course of action forcefully over that of another. That course of action, that order, at least in the very beginning, must be forcefully presided over. However, the law itself is an order – it is formed and guarded by violent reprisal at the same time as it enforces order. The founding violence that makes legitimate (but not just) a new law or order is necessarily anterior to the law itself – “All foundational acts of law-making are necessarily acts of lawlessness” (Praeg 2007: 12). Equally however, to sustain a legal order, to *enforce* the law, violence is required. As Derrida (1989: 961) argues,

In short, for a decision to be just and responsible, it must, in its proper moment if there is one, be both regulated and without regulation: it must conserve the law and also destroy it or at least suspend it enough to have to reinvent it in every case, rejustify it, or at least reinvent it in the reaffirmation and the new and free confirmation of its principles.

It is this iteration of violence that is fundamental to law and order. While Girard may seek an anthropological foundation for this violence, and while Derrida’s critique may be concerned with the philosophical implications, both have an understanding of violence that is fundamental to, yet apart from, the order which that violence founds. There are thus two crucial points to note: law itself, in the time before its time, is built on nothing but performative force itself. Secondly however, it is the ritual of violence, and the subsequent narration of this performative ritual that provides the transcendental or mythological basis for the power of law. It is then only the forgetting or hiding of the performative act, and the subsequent “story telling” or mythology, that provides law with its power and legitimacy. Working backwards, as previously, noted, “[w]hoever traces it [law] to its [performative] source annihilates [the legitimacy which] it [holds]” (Derrida 1989: 939). Thus, finally, “[t]he very emergence of justice and law, the founding and justifying moment that institutes law implies a performative force, which is always an interpretive force ... in the sense of law that would maintain a more internal, more complex relation with what one calls force, power or violence” (Derrida 1989: 941).

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<sup>52</sup> All citations are from Derrida’s critique in *Force of Law* (1989).

Law and order are, then, a function of the violence from which they originate and are sustained, even if that violence is necessary antecedent the order itself. As Derrida (cited in Praeg 2000: 22) argues, “Foundational violence is not only forgotten. The foundation is made *in order* to hide it; by its essence it tends to organise amnesia, sometimes under the celebration and sublimation of the grand beginnings.” One of the questions this study seeks to answer is whether this “mystical foundation” if not of the same type, is of the same logic as that displayed by the narcotic narrative. Just as the normative discourse surrounding, or perhaps more accurately, *engulfing* the narcotic narrative today prevents us from seeing its foundation, its origin, could not the normative discourse, the myth of justice, prevent us from seeing the violent foundation of law? In both instance, the normative myth prevents the violent foundation of the order being revealed in order for that system to be sustained. When a myth is revealed as a myth, in other words, it can no longer claim legitimacy over the story it tells to hide the violence that founded the order the myth legitimates. This has a practical consequence – could the violence which society perpetuates against modern drug addicts have its roots and legitimacy in founding acts of violence which themselves have no basis other than the very same mythology by which they were justified, and which has been endlessly reinvented and perpetuated? If this is true, then each time we deal with modern drug addicts violently, we simply resurrect the very violence that has nothing but the legitimacy of its own mythological invention to justify it. Consequently, if we are to seek a new way of dealing with the modern drug addict, if we are to seek a new justice for the modern drug addict, then at the very minimum we must reveal these mythologies for what they are. It is only upon this basis that we might then construct a new legal system by which we conceptualise the addict and their acts.

It must be noted however that this retrospective analysis makes the analytical distinction between the narrative of cocaine and the narrative of other drugs/narcotics. This is *not* to say that they do not affect each other, and at those points that they clearly do, this is highlighted. Ultimately however, this analysis is primarily concerned with the history of cocaine, as one *example* revealing the logic of western modernity. There are many, many other examples of this process – indeed, just a cursory reading of Foucault’s many analyses reveals that the paths by which western modernity may be critiqued are very broad. Furthermore, simply because this thesis limits itself to *cocaine’s* foundations and history does not imply that many of the social forces which come under analysis did not occur far earlier, and were articulated through other drugs such as opium. This is always openly acknowledged. However, in order for analytical clarity, and indeed due to simple space



constraints, not every instance of cocaine's interaction with other institutions or discourses can be taken into account. This account focuses on those instances in which major disruptions occurred in the narrative of cocaine and the narcotic, and which have a substantive bearing on our present articulations of the narcotic (and as a consequence, our inability to deal with the problem that the narcotic presents to us). There are many other foundational moments in the larger narrative of cocaine, as have been highlighted by the many studies referenced here. However, in the precise context of the example of cocaine, and with regard to the specific analytical demands of the methodologies employed herein, the foundational moments that are highlighted provide an analytically clear path by which we can narrate the course of the narcotic and its interactions with western modernity.

This brief analysis of foundational violence has been conducted to provide a theoretical backbone to this chapter. It is not a complete analysis because the myth has to be analysed from where it speaks today, and not from yesterday, in order for its legitimacy to be questioned. This is the task of chapter six. However, before such an analysis can begin, although posterior to the above analysis, the confluence and differences between the two central concepts of this thesis, the *pharmakon* (drug) and the *pharmakos* (scapegoat) must be conducted – as previously noted, their spelling is not merely incidental.

### The Pharmakon and Pharmakos

As was noted in the previous chapter, the *pharmakon* embodies both the axioms of poison and elixir. These axioms are not opposing but supplementary. However, because of the metaphysical structure of western modernity in which difference is constituted by binary oppositions, when the *pharmakon* interacts with that metaphysics, its supplementary axioms can be split apart. This is contingent, however, on the precise systems of difference that the *pharmakon* encounters. For instance, when cocaine's poisonous nature became revealed, its legitimacy and many of its uses were called into question. When cocaine began being used recreationally however, beyond the borders of its legitimating discourse, this form and use was seen as thoroughly illegitimate. This is not to say, however, that cocaine was completely expelled from medical science, but rather, a decision or distinction was made as to what constituted legitimate and illegitimate uses of the drug. In the same manner, when the cocaine was used illegitimately by those who were already considered illegitimate (by virtue of colour, or creed, or social standing), then cocaine became seen as another means of justifying

the differences which sustained these distinctions in the first place. It must be remembered then that the concept of cocaine does not have the power to create new differences, but does have the power to sustain already existing differences. Of course, many objects of consumption have this power, but in the narrative of cocaine, its illegitimate use and expulsion became extremely important to the continued existence of the system of differences that had heretofore structured certain societies. This will be demonstrated in the examples below.

The pharmacological action of cocaine, as an addictive substance, only became apparent when the human subject consumed the drug of cocaine. As Foucault has repeatedly shown, there are differing *species* of human subjects (explored paradigmatically in *The Birth of Bio-politics* [2008]). In the archives this is articulated through the difference between the medical concept of “experimenting” and the “sensual” consumption of cocaine beyond the borders of the medical. In the case of the white male doctors whose stories are told above, this experimenting had simply been taken too far. However, when cocaine’s addictive potential was realised in those human subjects whose epistemic status was *a priori* beyond the pale of rationality, the “negro cocaine fiend” for instance, this addiction was considered an extension of their subversive and indeed parasitic nature. It is then the relationship between the pharmacological action of cocaine and the ontological status of the human subject with which it is interacting that would come to define cocaine’s epistemic status as a narcotic. On the one hand, this would engender different levels of analysis. For the doctors to be seen as the exception their addiction had to be conceptualised in the singular (as the singular exception). In the case of the “Negro” however, their rationality and indeed their addiction had to be conceptualised as an *a priori* constitutive element of their subjectivity. For this reason it was feared that the entire *race* of “Negros” would be subject to cocaine’s addictive potential. In both instances, however, cocaine’s addictive potential, and its articulation in the human subject, is a function of the system of differences that made different the rational white doctor and the “Negro.” The condemnation of the drug, however, occurred in part because the illegitimate use of the drug dedifferentiated the doctor and the “Negro” – both were cocaine addicts. In the face of the ontological hierarchy of North American society, this was simply not acceptable. Cocaine’s articulation then is a function or extension of the relationship it held to the larger episteme, in this instance exactly, of western medical science.

## Exile and Return

As has been previously noted, both the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* are ambivalent. They are also both supplementary to each other – the *pharmakon* minimises difference, while the *pharmakos* creates difference. However, through their interactions with various systems of difference, both are shorn of their ambivalence. In the case of the *pharmakon*, whether the substance is considered good or bad, legitimate or illegitimate, or an elixir or poison, is a function of the larger regime or episteme within which it is inserted, and consequently, wherein its meaning is made. With regards to the example of cocaine, the physical substance has the potential to be either good or bad. However, it is its use and subsequent articulation that defines it as one or the other. If in a system that takes as *a priori* the importance of rationality, this substance can somehow further legitimate the distinction between the rational and irrational, then it too will be legitimated. In the same manner, the sacrificial violence that is committed against the *pharmakos*, at that moment of violence, is neither good or bad, legitimate or illegitimate. What determines the violence's epistemological status vis-à-vis the community is the retrospective myth that justifies the violence. If that myth fails in its justification, then the violence is illegitimate, as well as acting as a poison to the system of differences from which it is made. If however the myth is successful, then the violence becomes justified and cathartic to the system of differences. In both instances then, the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* receive their eventual status from the systems of difference within which they are inserted. Moreover, that status can change over time – a justifying myth can only exist for so long before it needs rejuvenating.

For this reason the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* are intricately linked. Indeed, as Girard (1974: 296) has noted, “the Platonic *pharmakon* functions like the human *pharmakos* and leads to similar results.” While the ambivalence of both concepts is a product of their dual axioms, their epistemological status is determined by the (de)legitimizing myth by which we articulate the concepts. As Derrida (1981: 133) explains,

[t]he ceremony of the *pharmakos* is thus played out on the border line between the inside and the outside, which it has as its function ceaselessly to trace and retrace ... the origin of difference and division, the *pharmakos* represents evil both introjected and projected. Beneficial insofar as he cures –and for that, venerated and cared for – harmful insofar as he incarnates the powers of evil – and for that, feared and treated with caution. Alarming and

calming. Sacred and accursed. The conjunction, the *coincidentia oppositorum*, ceaselessly undoes itself in the passage to the [D]ecision or crisis.

It is here that the logical similarities between the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* become apparent. Both are ambivalent in their metaphysical heritage, and both are separated into their binary oppositions through their interaction with western modernity. Which axiom is legitimated, in both concepts, is decided by the system of meaning in which they are placed. The *consequence* of which, beyond pure philosophy, is that the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* act as *movements* within a system – the former can be usefully seen as an exile from increasing difference, the latter a return to difference. From a systemic perspective, the *pharmakon* increases the entropy of a system by creating similarity, while the *pharmakos* decreases entropy by creating difference. The *pharmakon* then, paradoxically produces difference by creating similarity, for it is from similarity to difference that a system will attempt to move. This will become important in the final chapter, which speaks directly to critical complexity theory.

It must be remembered that the concepts of the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* are analytical tools by which to analyse the narrative of cocaine and western modernity. They are used because of the ambivalence and complexity of these narratives in the real world. Analytically then, there is a one-to-one relationship between the *pharmakon* and cocaine, but importantly, they are not of the same logical order. In the same manner, if the surrogate victim was recognised as a placeholder at the time of their expulsion the violence committed against them would cease to be effective, for no retrospective legitimating mythology could be built to tell the story of an innocent person being killed. It is also for this reason that both concepts can be posited as movements in the analysis – they are analytical tools that help us explain complex phenomena, such as drug use and violence, while taking into account their inherent duality. Indeed Derrida (1981: 133) says as much: “[t]he *pharmakon* is the movement, the locus, and the play: (the production of) difference. It is the difference of difference. It holds in reserve, in its undecided shadow and vigil, the opposites and the differends that the process of discrimination will come to carve out.” It is important to note therefore that an analysis of cocaine that is conducted through the lens of the *pharmakon* does not entail that cocaine itself is somehow a “movement” or that the physical substance can “minimise difference.” Equally however, simply understanding the physical substance of cocaine would not help us explain the complex social phenomena that revolve around it. Therefore, these tools and this language is deployed because of its effectiveness in

understanding the phenomenon under analysis. And as always, it is only once we understand the social phenomenon of cocaine that we can hope to deal more effectively with the contemporary problems it presents to us.

The *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* are thus similar in that they both describe ambivalent objects, and in that they are both movements. It is their difference, however, that is more important to understand. As noted, the difference is realised in the *movements* that the *pharmakos* and *pharmakon* embody – namely the *pharmakon* is an *exile*, while the *pharmakos* is a *return*. Indeed, as (Derrida 1981: 127, emphasis added) argues, “[i]f the *pharmakon* is “ambivalent,” it is because it constitutes the *medium* in which opposites are opposed, the *movement* and the *play* that links them among themselves, reverses them or makes one side cross over into the other (soul/body, good/evil, inside/outside, memory/forgetfulness, speech/writing, etc).”

The *pharmakon* engenders an exile from the order of things because it increases similarity, most basically through repetition. The exile and fear of similarity exists in such an order because a system of differences is constituted by those differences – as noted above, for a doctor to hold the same ontological status as a “Negro” within a racist system would be extremely problematic, and moreover, reveal the mythology which separated the two as nothing more than a mythology, thus collapsing it. Accordingly, those substances or objects that decrease differences within the system will have an entropic effect on the system. By creating similarity within a system of differences, in other words, the system can no longer function by virtue of the differences upon which it relies. *Philosophically*, this creates an exile *to* difference, as a system will always attempt to counter any entropy in order to continue to exist. *Practically*, by creating similarity between two objects, beings, or social formations, those differences are broken down. However, in order for those systems to exist, there must be a difference between the two. The *pharmakon*, and its use, is exiled in the name of the sovereignty of the distinction that it has begun to erode. While these conceptual claims will be further explored in this and later chapters, an example from the last chapter can illustrate the above point more clearly. If we are to understand that the medical regime is constituted, in part, by its difference to other regimes, for instance the patent medicine regime, then any substance that breaks down the border between the two will reveal the mythology (in this case rationality) that justifies their separation. If one system maintains sovereignty over the distinction (in other words, it is the legitimately medical that maintains the distinction between it and “quack” cures, which are defined by it), then that system will seek to maintain the distinction. The *pharmakon* of cocaine, however, by being central to

both systems, began to break down the distinction, revealing the mythology that sustained the border between the two. In its illegitimate guise then, it was exiled from that system in the name of the difference that the system needed to maintain. By breaking down the distinctions necessary for the medical regime to continue to function as sovereign, it became “bad,” and its illegitimate uses were highlighted as a justification for this expulsion. This does not, however, mean that all the traces of cocaine within the medical regime had to be eliminated; it was only the illegitimate uses of the drug which had caused the system of differences to become dedifferentiated, which is why cocaine was and is still used in very limited instances by medical science.

This however is only the first step in the logic described above, for the exile engendered by the *pharmakon* also entails the need for the re-creation of difference. The *pharmakos*, of course, is perfectly suited to this purpose, and therefore can be seen as a return, for the action of sacrifice restores difference by creating difference. By restoring difference the sacrificial victim is held up as sacred. At all times however, neither the identification of the *pharmakon* nor the *pharmakos* can be conscious, for then they would lose their ambivalence. Considering this, one of the tasks of this study is to reveal those retrospective mythologies that have in the past legitimated the various transformations that the narrative of cocaine has undergone.

The reconstituting of order through difference thus falls upon the shoulders of the *pharmakos*. As I hope to show, by ridding the community of the *pharmakos*, not only is the difference necessary for the functioning of that order restored, but the locus of discord is also taken away from the community through its expulsion. Again these actions, in their physical deployment and violence, are not conscious. In the same manner as Girard’s analysis of the surrogate victim, the exclusion of the poison of the *pharmakon* and the violent inclusion of the *pharmakos* occur anterior to their own memory. It is myth and political spectacle that ultimately and retrospectively legitimates these movements. As Derrida (1981: 133) reiterates, “the mastery of the critical instance requires that surprise be prepared for: by rules, by law, by the regularity of repetition, by fixing the date.” Collective amnesia needs to be engineered. Crucially though, the power of both the *pharmakon* and the *pharmakos*, while seemingly *beyond* the collective violence of society, is in fact a function of that collective. Even at its furthest point, the position of the *pharmakos* (as a product of revelling in the consumption of the *pharmakon*) is a function of the logic of the collective that makes that distance meaningful. To return to the beginning of this chapter, “there are no drugs ‘in nature’.” The meaning of the narcotic is only ever made in relationship to the collective from

which it provides an exodus. In the same manner, there are no “natural” scapegoats – one *becomes* a scapegoat through the collective substitution, the Decision, which is then mythologized and legitimated retrospectively.

To conclude then the *pharmakon* is external to the city and the body, and yet its consumption and play also represents the *movement* from the inside to the outside. It is properly thought of as an exodus. The *pharmakos*, however, represents the movement from the outside in, the acknowledgment and expulsion of the internal strife that has become parasitic upon the community. It is a return. The expulsion of this strife, the crowning of the *pharmakos* as sacred in their death throes, reiterates and reformulates the societal vows, the expulsion of evil instantiating a new order. The violence, occurring in the unknown time just after the Decision, still however needs to be analysed for it is upon these foundations that order can once again emerge. The interior becomes exterior, the exterior becoming interior, the constitutive binaries forever at repetitive play.<sup>53</sup> It is from this founding violence that a mythology is born that will justify the conserving violence necessary to maintain the Order of Things. What remains to be seen is the application of this theoretical understanding to the actual narcotic narrative. It is perhaps here that one can see most easily the usefulness of first providing a reinterpretation and re-imagination of the narcotic narrative. Ultimately, and as I argue in chapter six, the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* are no longer so simply separated – indeed, the concept of the drug, and especially in the instance of cocaine, has become the little needed and ambivalent excuse to wage war on other nations. Perhaps then, what has occurred and yet is a result of the narrative now under analysis, is that the concept of cocaine, cocaine-as-*pharmakon* has become the surrogate victim, the *pharmakos* for a new *raison d'état*.

### The Transformation of the Origin

As was noted in the previous chapter, the addictive potential of cocaine was first realised while it was still a legitimate drug of pharmacopeia. The first instances of addiction, furthermore, were articulated through the medical paradigm. Indeed, even the first habitués remained within the medical regime – their treatment by medical science represents an extension of the sovereignty of the medical episteme over the use and abuse of cocaine. However, the narrative of cocaine was soon to exceed the borders of the medical. This is not

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<sup>53</sup> Girard provides a further analysis of these doubles in Girard 2004: 95 – 107.

to say that the medical discourse could no longer be used to articulate the narrative of the drug. Rather, with the increasing number of illegitimate uses of cocaine, as a recreational substance for instance, both legal and moral systems of understanding could be used to articulate the drug and the user. When these latter means of articulating the drug of cocaine superseded those of the medical, that is when, I argue, we see the birth of the *narcotic* narrative of cocaine. The process by which this transformation was undertaken was not sudden. In spite of this though, there are a number of paradigmatic examples that reveal the narrative of cocaine, and its transformation from a drug to a narcotic. Accordingly, this chapter highlights two such instances – the burning of Bill Way in America and the sacrificial expulsion of Brilliant Chang in Britain. In the first example, I argue that the use of cocaine vis-à-vis the predominance of rationality became a retrospective *justification* for Way's actions. In the second example, with the transformation from drug to narcotic complete, I argue that the illegitimate use of cocaine became an *explanation* for Chang's expulsion. Ultimately, the transformation from drug to narcotic would lead to the narrative of the narcotic of cocaine sacrificially inventing itself in the name of the larger systems of difference that its use had dedifferentiated. The final consequence of this sacrificial invention, as one of the foundational moments in the invention of the narcotic narrative, would be the narrative's constant need to reiterate these foundational moments, in order to constantly legitimate the mythology that kept the illegitimate user of cocaine apart from society.

The sacrificial invention of the narrative of the narcotic of cocaine did not occur apart from larger discursive undercurrents shaping both societies. To summarise the first example then, it must be remembered that there was an *ontological* distinction between the rational white doctor and the "Negro cocaine fiend." However, the advancement of the Civil Rights Movement and the birth of the black American subject dedifferentiated that distinction. This caused a crisis of degree within American society by revealing the mythology for what it was – no longer was the ontological distinction between white and black powerful or legitimate. This crisis of degree was quelled by the sacrificial substitution of a number of different surrogate victims, one of which was the cocaine "fiend." By showing that cocaine addiction could affect both white and black people, the distinctions made necessary for the Great Chain of Being to remain legitimate could no longer function; if both white and black people could become addicted to cocaine, then that commonality called into question the many biological differences that the Great Chain of Being relied upon in order to make those distinctions in the first place. Fiends were thus guilty of bringing into doubt the distinctions upon which the



system relied in order to operate. However, and equally, they were also innocent in that in both instances their addiction was conceptualized as an affliction – it was a disease to which they were prone, much like young white women were considered prone to various nervous conditions in Britain at the turn of the last century. While their sacrificial exclusion would not ultimately quell the crisis of degree brought on by the Civil Rights Movement, their sacrificial expulsion did become one such means of articulating the crisis of degree affecting American society.

### **Procedural versus Substantive Rights**

The distinction between the white rational doctor and the “Negro cocaine fiend” has already been explored. The process of dedifferentiation between the white and black population of America has not however. In 1865 the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution ended slavery but did not guarantee civil rights or citizenship. In 1868, nonetheless, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment granted African Americans citizenship. Finally in 1870 the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution guaranteed equal voting rights to all men irrespective of race. In contrast to this, when the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (163 U.S. 537: 1896) was brought before the United States Supreme Court, it upheld racial segregation (or the “separate but equal” clause) as constitutionally legitimate. In spite of this, and with Northern troops still occupying Southern States, the Freedmen’s Bureau placed a number of black leaders in positions of power, most notably Norris Wright Cuney who became chairman of the Texas Republican Party.

With the withdrawal of troops from the South, and the Compromise of 1877, these positions of (black) power became heavily contested. What needs to be noted, in the context of this study, is that the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments allowed for the *possibility* of equality. It was this possibility that disturbed the Order of Things that had previously, throughout America’s years of slavery, come to constitute the ontological distinctions between black and white, especially in the South. While it would not be until 1954 that *Brown Vs. Board of Topeka* (347 U.S. 483) would overturn the “separate but equal” clause, the myth of white superiority justifying the system of differences that had thus upheld the ontological distinctions within American society could no longer be upheld. Indeed, it was because this myth had been revealed as a myth, as a retrospective legitimating *story*, that a crisis of degree emerged.

While these politico-legal moments are important in themselves, the consequent dedifferentiation of racial categories is of primary concern to this study. Foregrounding this analysis, however, is the thought that what is of primary concern to this study is an analysis of the narrative of cocaine, and that narrative's various interactions with western modernity. When cocaine is used as a focal point to illuminate far deeper tensions, then those tensions need to be understood in their own right. However, they do remain secondary to the larger analysis, and are treated as such.

Accordingly, the dedifferentiation of race, it must be remembered, occurred from *both* the "white" and black" perspective – it was not simply that black people were legally empowered with fundamental rights, but that white people were obligated to grant and *allow* those rights to come to fruition and be lived. This dedifferentiation, and indeed the resulting crisis of degree, can be seen in operation in the following brief exchange from a monologue entitled *Like one of the Family*, first published in the newspaper *Freedom* (*op. cit.* Collins 2006: 29, original emphasis):

Hi Marge! I have had one hectic day ... Well I had to take out my crystal ball and give Mrs. C ... a thorough reading ... Well, she's a pretty nice woman as they go and I have never had too much trouble with her, but from time to time she gripes me with her ways ... Today she had a girl friend of hers over to lunch and I was real busy afterwards cleaning the things the away and she called me over and introduced me the woman ... Oh no, Marge! I didn't object to that at all. I greeted the lady and then went back to my work ... And then it started! I could hear talkin' just as loud ... and she says to her friend, "We *just* love her! She's *like* one of the family and she *just adores* our little Carol! We don't know *what* we'd do without her! We don't think of her as a servant!" And on and on she went ... and every time I came in to move a plate of the table both of them would grin at me like chessy cats.

Difference asserted through language, between "we" and "they," is made powerful in the process of daily interaction. Indeed, as McPhail (2002: 61) comments, "In American society, racism emerges out of a linguistic system that defines social reality between African Americans and whites in terms of negative difference." For the African American their blackness is always made tangible and felt; for the white American, their whiteness is the unquestioned norm.

Consequently, "[t]his is not a politics of exclusion but one of containment. American non-whites are *like* us, they are *connected* to us, but they are *not* us, such views suggest"

(McPhail 2002: 29). With the advancement of black legal rights and privileges, a tense racial atmosphere was born – *legally*, there was no difference between a black and white citizen. *Ontologically*, however, a subtle discourse of implicit racism continued to be made manifest in the most innocent of places. Importantly though, this subtle racist logic, due to the new legal model, was to undergo a transformation. When racism was explicit and indeed legally guarded in, for instance, the justification of slavery, such a justification relied on negation – slavery could be justified for those that were subjugated *were not* like us. Not only were these beings not like us, but also they were *lower* than us, and therefore, their enslavement was perfectly “natural” within the social Darwinist model. Indeed, as Dred Scott argued at the time, slaves “had for more than half a century ... been regarded as beings of an inferior order and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations ... [indeed] so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect” (*op. cit.* Love 2004: 19). With the abolition of slavery, and with the legal emancipation of the black American subject, no longer could this *explicit* racial discourse continually be justified. It is for this reason that the new racial discourse of acknowledgement, containment, *but not* exclusion was legitimated – the black American subject was now *like* their white counterpart, but was not equal. This was not a one-to-one relationship, but a means of containing the established system of differences in a new guise.

For those who held on to the traditional beliefs consecrated historically by the discourse of slavery, even this rhetoric of similarity was too explicit.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, it is the transformation from a discourse of explicit to implicit racism that was to cause the crisis of degree that would need to be sacrificially quelled; to be *like* those who were traditionally seen as different was too far a dedifferentiation of the ontological categories that had sustained the myth of racism thus far. No longer, in following McPhail’s (2002) analysis, could the “Negro” be excluded as the ulterior other – containment symbolised by the rhetoric of “like” was the only racist discursive strategy that could be pursued in the face of legal equality. While it is this project of containment that would become the target of the more “modern” Civil Rights Movement, as pursued by Martin Luther King Jnr. for instance, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was the dedifferentiation that was a result of the legal abolition of slavery and the emancipation of the black American subject that would cause the racial crisis of degree in American society.

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<sup>54</sup> For a further analysis, see Chinn 2000.

Consequently, and in following Girard's theoretical model, the dedifferentiation wrought from the legal emancipation of the black American subject caused the very distinctions which had previously justified slavery to be brought in to doubt. Not only this, but the very legitimacy of the mythology that had justified this difference could no longer be sustained. What was needed then was a mechanism that would re-establish the difference necessary for the American Order of Things to continue – the sacrificial substitution of a scapegoat would restore the difference necessary for the continued operation of the system.

## **Race and Murder**

Considering the actual history, length and breadth of the American Civil Rights Movement, any examples that this study highlights will be of comparably little consequence to the larger historical narrative. Furthermore, it needs to be noted now that the death of Bill Way would not and indeed could not fulfill the requirements of a sacrificial murder. It is therefore only in the following section of this chapter that an actual sacrificial expulsion vis-à-vis the narrative of cocaine is revealed. However, the example of Bill Way remains important, for it condenses many of the methodological and historical assertions explored above, while at the same time revealing the transformation that the narrative of cocaine underwent in its movement from a discourse concerned with a drug to that of a narcotic. Accordingly, the task of the primary example below is to reveal the systems of difference that were being dedifferentiated, the way in which difference was reasserted, and the role that the narrative of cocaine played in this history. With this in place, the study can then look to actual acts of expulsion that cemented the narcotic narrative of cocaine as an active force in the history of western modernity.

As was previously noted, in order for the ontological differences needed to sustain the racial system of differences in America to remain potent, there needed to be different *species* of human being. By denoting specific tropes by which these differing species of human being were presumed to be prone, an ontological hierarchy could be sustained which legitimated the order. The illegitimate use of cocaine, and its consequent effects on the moral senses was one such means of sustaining the mythology of difference. For instance, and to re-quote an example in light of the above, in 1903 at the "Hampton Negro Conference" it was reported that "[t]here are 300 coloured people attending the conference, in addition to the students, whose regular classes are suspended to admit their attendance at the meetings ... Dr. J. W.

Prather of Baltimore, who, in the course of an elaborate report on the diseases which the negro is prone to, called attention to the alarming spread of the cocaine habit among the blacks.”<sup>55</sup> The illegitimate use of cocaine is conceptualised as a disease, implying that its use was pathological and contagious. In a discourse concerned with the rational self-determination of the individual, being prone to a contagious disease undermined the individuality of that person, refocusing their individuality in the context of the race that they were seen to represent. In another example, from 1902, it was reported that there was a “Cocaine Evil Among the Negroes” in which

The alarming growth of the use of cocaine among the negroes of Mississippi has caused the suggestion to be made that medical laws should be enacted for the suppression of the evil, which is demoralising the race in the South ... Physicians say that is the habit among the negroes is not suppressed and radical steps to this end taken very quickly it will mean the utter ruin and final extermination of the race in the South.<sup>56</sup>

Again, the articulation of the “Negro” is made through the lens of race, and hence implying the existence of species of human being. The concern continues the theme of disease, but now that concern is also become a normative problem. Again, this is a function of the rationalist discourse that is used as the hidden justification for these statements – the disease of the illegitimate use of cocaine causes what little moral standing the “Negro” has to be eroded. *As a consequence, and in order to stop this “utter ruin” the need for (white) rational medical science is needed to prevent the spread of this disease.* This has the function of legitimating medical science in the face of this degeneracy, which also continues the logic of the “white man’s burden” by positing rational medical science, a domain of the white species, as the saviour of these moral afflictions. It is for this reason “that medical laws should be enacted.” It is important to note that at this point, the illegitimate use of cocaine *is still* articulated from the domain of the medical regime – the medical episteme still maintains sovereignty over the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate uses of cocaine, and indeed people, even in the face of the dedifferentiation caused by the use of cocaine itself.

With the emergence of a race-based discourse, the narrative of cocaine becomes biopolitical. This biopolitical aspect of the narrative will become extremely significant in later chapters, so it is necessary to briefly review how biopolitics, as a discursive strategy,

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<sup>55</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1903.

<sup>56</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1902.

operates. As Foucault (1978: 137) has shown, “[i]t is as the managers of life and survival, of bodies and race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men to be killed.” Medical science is one such manager. As such then the concept of biopolitics is used to denote “all the specific strategies and contestations over problematisations of collective human vitality, morbidity and mortality; over the forms of knowledge, regimes of authority and practices of intervention that are desirable, legitimate and efficacious” (Rabinow and Rose 2006: 197). Foucault left the specificities of this analytical category rather vague,<sup>57</sup> however in line with Rabinow and Rose (2006: 196 – 198) it seems that such a biopolitical reality must be concerned, minimally, with three separate discursive elements. The first of these concern “one or more truth discourses about the ‘vital’ character of living human beings, and the array of authorities considered competent to tell that truth.” In the above example, it is assumed that the “Negro” by virtue of their membership of a specific race, will be prone to certain diseases, irrespective of the individual themselves. In the second instance, a biopolitics requires “strategies of intervention upon collective existence in the name of life and health, initially addressed to populations that may or may not be territorialised upon the nation, society or pre-given communities, but may also be specified in terms of emergent biosocial collectivities, sometimes specified in terms of categories of race, ethnicity, gender or religion, as in the emerging forms of genetic or biological membership.” Again, this becomes apparent in the examples above. Thirdly, and finally, it requires “modes of subjectification, through which individuals are brought to work on themselves, under certain forms of authority, in relation to truth discourses, by means of practices of the self, in the name of their own life or health, that of their family or some other collectivity, or indeed in the name of the life or health of the population as a whole.” It is for this reason that strategies of internment remain within the medical regime during this time – the psychiatric clinic is one such arena where an individual can work on himself or herself, in the name of rationality or society.

The emergence of a biopolitical conception of race served to affirm the “vital characteristics” of each race, with the aim of bestowing on those higher up on the ontological Chain of Being the qualities necessary to remain sovereign over the distinctions the chain made. Problematically however, the legal emancipation of the “Negro race” bestowed upon African Americans fundamental rights which heretofore they had not had. The recognition of these rights, however, meant that certain characteristics which had thus far defined the

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<sup>57</sup> Perhaps Foucault’s closest analysis occurs in the latter half of *Society Must be Defended* (2004).

differences between races were now called into question. Unlike in the time of slavery, when the “Negro” was considered below the level of human, the acknowledgement of the “Negro race” also implicitly asserted their humanity. The acknowledgement of this humanity brought into question the myth that had thus far justified the “Negro’s” subservience – it was for this reason that a crisis of degree emerged. In other words, both collectives were now claiming their own humanity, the prize for which was Constitutional freedom and legitimacy. Referring back to Girard’s tripartite model, the subject (the “Negro race”) was now contesting the very same object (constitutional freedom and civil rights) as the model (the white race) as a function of both being seen, biopolitically, as a race.

The fears of the further degeneracy of the “Negro race” gaining poignancy, legislation could be passed which would begin to entrench the illegitimate consumption of cocaine within the legal system. In this regard, and as noted in the previous chapter, the 1906 Pure Food and Drugs Act represented the first *federal* attempt at forming a coherent legislative infrastructure against the drug of cocaine. This Act did not however *directly* limit the consumption or supply of cocaine beyond any state laws that had preceded it (Musto 2002: 253). The Act “imposed a national labelling requirement, one which means that manufacturers were henceforth required to state the presence of cocaine in their products” (Spillane 1999: 37). As noted in the previous chapter, these products were to be marked henceforth with the literal trace of the *pharmakon* – “POISON.” Even though this new constraint came from the legislative sphere, it was justified through the medical – what constituted a poison was still firmly the decision of the medical regime. As Spillane has noted, the Act “was merely one legislative product of a much larger effort aimed at regulating the manufacture of drugs and medical products ... The true measure of its influence was the capacity to shape public opinion and to control the flow of information regarding the drug industry and product safety” (Spillane 2000: 126). Spillane has further identified three main sources that were adept at shaping this public opinion, indeed justifying the new law: “muck-raking journalists,” “the federal government,” and “physicians” (Spillane 2000: 126). It is through these three sources that the new Act was to become entrenched.

As previously noted, the transformation of cocaine from drug to narcotic did not occur in isolation from other substances that were also deemed problematic. Alcohol would soon come under the spotlight with the prohibition movement, while worries over the illegitimate use of opium had existed for some time. We see the continuation and similarity in the various discourses on drugs very clearly in Kobler’s (1973: 199) analysis of Congressman Richmond Pearson Hobson’s Congressional Speech, “The Great Destroyer”:

He [Pearson] claimed that alcohol killed five times as many people as all of the wars ever fought, and that it was the cause of feeble-mindedness and “sexual perversion” among women. A blatant racist, Hobson opined that, unless “the Great Destroyer” were itself destroyed, Asians (“the yellow peril”) would overrun the earth. “Liquor will actually make a brute out of a Negro,” Hobson pontificated, “causing him to commit unnatural crimes. The effect is the same on the white man, though ... being further evolved, it takes him longer to be reduced to the same level.”<sup>58</sup>

The evocation of racial imagery not only serves to delegitimize the position of the “Negro” but is, by virtue of the binary structure of western modernity, also an attempt to legitimate the sovereignty of the “white man” through an implicit acknowledgement of his rationality. It is because of this rationality that the “white man” is not subject to the same diseases, both morally and bodily, that the “Negro” is. These, and other statements like the above, were then justified through an implicit recognition of the ontological Great Chain of Being, even while the differences that sustained this system were progressively being eroded.

The erosion of difference would lead to a substantive crisis of degree in which the differences needed to tell apart the different species of human being were no longer potent. The mirroring of their legal statuses not only delegitimated the legitimating myth of racial hierarchies, but also created a sacrificial crisis in which a new Order had to be sought. To prevent the threat of reciprocal violence, what was needed then, was a surrogate victim, a scapegoat-as-*pharmakos* upon whose death a new system of differences, and thus a new Order could be built and retrospectively legitimated through myth. While the illegitimate consumption of cocaine could not as yet make the addict an ideal scapegoat, the use of cocaine would contribute to the emerging sacrificial crisis by contributing to the elimination of difference between the two species of human being, as analysed above. If white rational doctors and “Negro cocaine fiends” could both be made subject to the drug, then their ontological statuses as different would be called in to question.

As was previously noted, the example of Bill Way does not reveal to us the actual sacrifice of a fiend in the name of a new order, as a sole function of their illegitimate use of cocaine. That would only occur much later. However, what the example shows is the *transformation* that the narrative of cocaine was undergoing, from that of a drug to that of a narcotic. The example also reveals the manner in which the accusation of the illegitimate use

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<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.* Goode, E. and Ben-Yehuda, N. 1994a: 15.



of cocaine began to become a means, a *strategy*, by which the ontological status of person could be brought into doubt. It is only once we understand that transformation that we can then turn to actual instances of sacrificial exclusion vis-à-vis the narrative of cocaine, as shall be done in this and the following chapter. The article is from *The New York Times*, and was printed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, 1908:

NEGRO SHOOTS 21 MEN IN A SOUTHERN TOWN ... KILLED, HIS BODY BURNED ...

Monroe, L.A. Aug. 24. – Half-crazed, either by whiskey or cocaine, Bill Way, a negro from Pine Bluff, Ark., dashed down the main street of Monroe to-day, with a double barrelled shotgun, firing in every direction. Citizens returned the fire and the negro finally fell dead after receiving a score or more of wounds. Twenty-one persons were injured in the fight. When the negro fell his body was dragged into the street and later taken to a public square and burned in the presence of several thousand people ...

... Four of the twenty-one citizens who were wounded by the negro are in a serious condition, while the injuries of the other seventeen are of a minor nature. It was feared for a time that a mob might wreak vengeance on other members of the race, but the authorities took prompt precautions and quiet was maintained ...

... The body of the negro was placed on a pile of rubbish and about ten gallons of coal oil poured over it. Mayor Forsythe, despite his injury, went to the scene and pleaded with the mob, but his entreaties were in vain.<sup>59</sup>

Bill Way is obviously guilty. He has injured 21 men. For this reason he cannot be a surrogate victim or scapegoat, for his guilt is not negotiable. However, what concerns this analysis is the *consequences* of his actions, on the one hand, and the *justification* for his crime on the other, and how these two considerations reveal to us the narrative of cocaine's transformation from a drug to a narcotic.

In the first instance, the consequences of his actions are disproportionate to his crime. Not only is he shot and killed, but his dead body is dragged through the street, thrown on a pile of rubbish, and burnt. Those who committed this act did not simply wish to mete out justice, even if this was "illegitimate" justice in the eyes of the law, but wanted to completely eradicate his very being and presence. On the one hand this was a product of those far deeper racial discourses discussed above – he was already seen as less human by virtue of being a "Negro." On the other hand, perhaps those who burnt his body wanted their justice to be seen as an example to others. What remains true, however, is that without a race-based discourse

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<sup>59</sup> Unknown Author. *The New York Times*. August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1909.

in which the “Negro” was seen as ontologically inferior, it is safe to assume that this form of justice would not have occurred. Indeed, the pyre burning of “the Negro” had already its own history in the form of the various atrocities committed by the Klu Klux Klan. The burning of his body, however, served to reiterate the sovereignty of the distinction between the white and black race by violently reinserting difference between the two. This is important to note, for the violence had a cathartic effect on the social order by strengthening the differences that had been brought into doubt by the presence and power of Bill Way. It is for this reason that his body needed to be burnt – his very presence, and the power it once possessed, had to be eliminated.

In the second instance, it is very important to note the *justification* for the violence of Bill Way. It must be remembered that the story is told in a newspaper. The story, the myth, is therefore retrospective to the actual violence. That myth begins with the words “half-crazed, either by whiskey or cocaine.” Bill Way’s irrationality is used as an explanation for his crime, and that irrationality is further demonstrated by Way’s illegitimate consumption of cocaine or whiskey. Whether it was cocaine or whiskey that Way consumed can never be known. What *is* important however is the rhetorical function that the statement plays as a justification for his crime. On the one hand then, this report represents an extension of the rational discourse described above – it is because he is “half-crazed” that he commits the crime. That irrationality, however, is a product of his abuse of cocaine or whiskey. We see here then the beginning of cocaine’s rhetorical function in the narrative of the narcotic; the focus on the consumption of cocaine, considering his ontological position, provides a *reason* for his committing of the crime. The actual reason Bill Way went on a rampage is unknown, but that is not mentioned – what we do know, however, is that by virtue of his position in society his actions are justified through what the “Negro is prone to.” No longer are his actions reasonable but illegitimate, and a function of the very species to which he belongs.

The narrative of cocaine then, at this point, is in a state of flux. It is still articulated *from* the point of view of the medical. However, it also begins to operate as a *reason* for the continuation of ontological differences in society. When it becomes a reason, in and of itself, for the continued justification of difference that is when the narcotic narrative is born, for no longer does the discourse originate from the medical regime. As a consequence, it is laws that are needed to quell its use. As will be shown in the following chapters, it is because the illegitimate use of cocaine becomes the justification for difference that it has remained such an important concept in western modernity. When that justification for difference becomes too strong, however, when the similarity that the *pharmakon* engenders becomes poisonous

to the social order, then a *pharmakos* is needed to reinstate difference. Without revealing the original mythology however, each sacrificial turn simply throws the narrative back towards itself. As Praeg (2007: 22) notes, “there is only the endless and inescapable iteration of founding violence” when this occurs.

### Nationality and Brilliant Chang

While the above example points to the beginning of the transformation of cocaine from a drug to a narcotic, the birth of the narcotic narrative can be seen in operation in a very different example, originating in Britain during World War I. As I hope to show, the dedifferentiation of specific aspects of British society, which were a consequence of the war effort, led to a sacrificial crisis that was quelled, in part, by the expulsion of such figures as Brilliant Chang. That does not however mean that Chang’s expulsion, in its singularity, served as a means to restore difference to the order under question in its entirety. Rather, the example serves to demonstrate the methodological considerations developed in this and the previous chapter, and speaks specifically to the narrative of cocaine. It is acknowledged that there may have been more fundamental changes in British society, and indeed far more prominent surrogate victims. However, considering the importance of this example to the later narrative of cocaine, its singularity is extremely useful in revealing the transformation that the narrative was undergoing.

Considering this too, it must be noted that the conceptual framework developed in this chapter is not a search for origins, or a philosophical quest for foundationalism masquerading as anthropological fact. As noted by Derrida in a number of texts, foundationalism is a quest undertaken by a metaphysics of presence in order to legitimate that metaphysics retrospectively. Derrida is perhaps most explicit about this in *Of Grammatology* (1976). It is not that there are no signs “before” an event. Rather, it is this performative “before” which is troubling. That performativity, rather than being the product of a logos which conceptualises time and space as a continuum, although written into a metaphysics of presence as an essential mechanism, is actually mythological. In the same manner, an analysis of the sacrificial victim is not intended to highlight a singular victim so that we might attribute the founding of *all* order to it, but is rather an analysis of the mythologisation of this process which has legitimated, retrospectively (and never consciously during the act of violence) those acts of violence as sacred. Foucault, too, makes a similar statement when he argues that

metaphysics is dead – it is not that there is *no* metaphysics (for that would be a metaphysical claim), but rather that metaphysics itself has a certain narrative within western modernity. Understanding this reveals the mythology by which a metaphysical claim (or indeed metaphysics itself) holds sovereignty. In the same manner, by revealing those pivotal moments in the narrative of cocaine when it encountered western modernity, I hope to show the *a priori* assumptions and presuppositions which mask and which *make* the concept of the narcotic so powerful in the modern world.

As such, the example of the sacrificial expulsion of Brilliant Chang can usefully be thought of as the culmination of three analytically distinct events. As shall be explored below, the first was the context of the War itself, which from 1914 to 1918 disturbed the ontological distinctions that had heretofore defined gender roles in Britain. This was a product of the war effort. The second, occurring in 1916, concerned young women specifically and which resulted in a specific moral panic over femininity, itself a function of the dedifferentiation of the ontological distinctions of the first event. The third, finally, only occurred in 1922 and concerned Chang himself, and the fear of the foreigner that had its roots in the logic of the wartime mindset. The sacrificial expulsion of Chang can be seen as a consequence of the two prior events.

## **Gender Trouble**

With the advent of WWI, the need to increase the productivity of the nation became paramount to the ongoing war effort. This emphasis was felt especially keenly in the manufacturing sector, with many factories being retooled so as to make weapons, armaments, and the other products necessary to continue fighting. Before the war, however, the heavy manufacturing sector had predominantly been seen as the sole preserve of men. Nonetheless, with the very men that once staffed these machines away at the front line, women were drafted in to continue and even increase production. This was to have two consequences. Firstly, for the first time it gave many women an expendable income. Secondly, it brought into question the mythology of difference which had previously structured economic and social differences between men and women in British society – women were not only working, but they were working jobs that were traditionally seen as definitive of masculinity. As a consequence of the war effort then, women were not only gradually being emancipated from their homes, but their very presence in heavy industry called into question the

foundation upon which British masculinity had been articulated. This has been extensively explored by a number of authors.<sup>60</sup>

What is important to note, from the perspective of this thesis, is that the emancipation and employment of British women disturbed the gender specific systems of difference that had played a role in structuring society thus far. British masculinity, it must be remembered, was in part defined by their productive labour capacity, while women were seen to occupy a supporting role. By reconfiguring these differences, the mythology that had defined gender relations was called in to question. With the increased tension and hardships of the War years (and the years of reconstruction following the War), a sacrificial crisis was engendered by the dedifferentiation of gender roles, which would be quelled through the expulsion of a surrogate victim that itself was made prominent by the War – the foreigner.

Even though the increased economic and social activity of women brought into question the legitimacy of the differences that defined gender roles, the economic emancipation of women was still articulated through a patriarchal discourse. For instance, “Little Mother,” in the *Morning Post* wrote that

There is only one temperature for the women of the British race and that is white heat. With those who disgrace their sacred trust of motherhood we have nothing in common ... We women pass on the human ammunition of “only sons” to fill up the gaps, so that when the “common soldier” looks back before going “over the top” he may see the women of the British race on his heels, reliable, dependant, uncomplaining (cited in Kohn 1992: 46).

The War discourse thus made all forms of production, whether by producing armaments or producing children, an extremely important enterprise. This production was legitimated through the discourse of nationalism. The rhetoric of nationalism was to have two effects in this instance. On the one hand, it brought into sharp relief the *reason* the men were fighting – they were fighting for all that Britain held dear. This included their womenfolk, who were expected to occupy the traditional gender roles to which this rhetoric subscribed. On the other hand, nationalism relied upon and justified the fear of the foreigner. As shall be seen, when women began to consort with foreigners, this engaged both of the above concerns. Problematically however, one of the reasons women could lead these independent lives was a product of their economic independence, itself a product of the war effort.

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<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Smith, H. 1996; Hayes, N. and Hill, J. 1999. Hartley, J. 1997.

The above context provided the discursive parameters that led, in the first instance, to a moral panic concerning the relationship between young British women and Chinese foreign nationals, and later, to a concern of the use of drugs by Soldiers and British prostitutes. The economic freedom that the war effort brought to British women also dedifferentiated the traditional gender roles of society. No longer, in other words, were men and women different by virtue of the discourse of productivity that had thus far maintained the border and indeed difference between the two sexes. As a consequence of this economic emancipation, women had the means and power necessary to engage in the public sphere. However, placed within a patriarchal war discourse, women still required the protection of men. The war effort also made prominent a specific articulation of nationalism that brought with it a fear of the foreigner. When women began “consorting” with foreigners, such as was seen to be the case with the cocaine girls, this was to bring the women into conflict with the patriarchal war discourse described above, causing a moral panic. This dedifferentiation caused a crisis of degree; if women were both working men’s jobs and sleeping with foreigners, then the very system of differences used to (negatively) articulate the sovereignty of British masculinity and indeed nationality was no longer potent. Continuing from the narrative highlighted in this and the preceding chapter, the *explanation* for this slippage, embodied by the cocaine girls’ presence in society, was cocaine. It was thought that it could only be because they were intoxicated, through their illegitimate use of the drug, that they would even consider consorting with foreigners. By being women, the cocaine girls were seen as naturally weak and prone to excess, and were thus being preyed upon by the foreign men with whom they were consorting. This would cause, on the one hand, cocaine to be made illegal, and on the other, set the scene for the eventual expulsion of a representative of this conception of the foreigner, Brilliant Chang.

### **Cocaine Girls and DORA 40b**

The cocaine girls, and the moral panic that emerged concerning their presence and illegitimate consumption of cocaine in wartime British society came to prominence at a very specific time – the exact same time as the war effort was most strained. As Marek Kohn (1999a: 6) has argued, “[i]t is possible to specify the moment when cocaine turned from miracle to menace [in Britain]: a phase about six months long, starting at the end of 1915, and culminating in a few weeks during which concern turned to moral panic.” At that point, when

cocaine became seen as a narcotic, its illegitimate consumption would be made illegal through an already existing legislative infrastructure, that of the Defense of the Realm Act (DORA) 40b. Cocaine girls, “young, thin, underdressed, perpetually seized by hysterical laughter, ogling, [and] foolish” (Kohn 1999a: 144), came to symbolise worries not only over the epistemological status of cocaine and its consumption, but also far deeper concerns over the dedifferentiation of gender roles, as explored above. As such, their presence became a means by which larger moral concerns over “youth, stimulant drugs, illegal nightlife, dancing and hedonism” came to be articulated. They were constructed as hypersexual and uncontrollable, simultaneously victims of the West End and predators of it. In the face of wartime austerity, this hedonism also brought into question traditional conceptions of what constituted a “good” woman, and indeed the very purpose of the war.

As Kohn notes, their hedonistic lifestyle “was more than an indulgence; it was a reaction to a profound crisis of values, and the conviction that any purpose, national and personal had been shown by the war to be meaningless” (*ibid*). On the one hand, this reaction can be seen as the product of the war itself. With death a constant feature of everyone’s lives, questions over the very purpose of life must have been asked. On the other, the cocaine girls were simply taking to logical conclusion the conception of femininity that had been modified by the war effort. With the economic freedom to indulge in a hedonistic lifestyle, and with the very meaning of life being constantly called into question, young women sought to revel in the face of conservatism. Problematically however, revelling in the conservatism of piety at the moment when austerity and traditional conceptions of morality were highlighted by the war effort, caused a panic to ensue. As a consequence, their hedonistic lifestyle began to reveal the mythology that had justified the war effort as meaningless. The reaction, as shall be analysed below, was to rearticulate the sexuality of young women into a patriarchal and moral discourse. This would have the effect of creating the narcotic of cocaine, which was seen as the tool by which this hedonistic life was undertaken, and would spur on a need to protect these young women from what was seen as the facilitator of this revelry, the foreigner. The enactment of DORA 40b, and the effect it would have on articulations of British masculinity, still needs to be discussed.

In the first instance then, the cocaine girls transformed cocaine into a narcotic through its use. This is because the act of consumption was wholly illegitimate in the eyes of wartime society. Cocaine, as such, became seen as a *reason* why these women indulged in such a lifestyle. Cocaine, in other words, was the tool that led these women down the path of sin. In order to protect these women from themselves, and indeed to reinstate the legitimacy of

austerity and piety necessary for the war effort, the law itself claimed sovereignty over the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate forms of consumption of cocaine by making the drug illegal. Cocaine's epistemological status as a narcotic, then, was both a function of its illegality and its illegitimacy. This need was however spurred on by the Chinese perceived involvement in the trade and distribution of cocaine. Indeed, it was often assumed that the Chinese were the source of the narcotic, and specifically opium – in the exact instance of cocaine however this assumption would be further strengthened in later years by the existence of Brilliant Chang, but at this point was justified by the existing narrative about, and control, of opium.

While these concerns were in themselves important, cocaine also became associated with servicemen, bringing the drug into direct conflict with the war effort. As Kohn (1999a: 113) has argued, “cocaine turned into social menace once it signified foreign threat as well as sex, hedonism, young women, and moral peril ... The involvement of servicemen gave the law a purchase over the dealers.” At the epicentre of this new worry were Canadian soldiers, “who had a reputation for ferocity in battle and unruliness off duty” (*ibid*). It was they who “increase[ed] demand in the emerging local market” (*ibid*). Cocaine was now not only being used by women who were already prostitutes, but was causing conflict and addiction in the troops. This concern was voiced by a number of newspapers at the time. For instance, as *Umpire* stated, cocaine was a “Vicious Drug Powder – Cocaine Driving Hundreds Mad – Women and Aliens Prey on Soldiers ... London in the Grip of a Drug Craze ... Secret ‘Coke’ Parties of ‘Snow Snifters’” (cited in Kohn 1999a: 115). This was further highlighted by Captain J. B. McMurray who stated that cocaine when “[t]aken in repeated small doses would become a habit. The effect of acquiring the habit eventually led to insanity...The reaction left the man sullen, morose, bad tempered and totally unfit for duty” (cited in Berridge 1978: 296). Indeed, as Berridge further notes “[f]ear that the drug would undermine the *efficiency* of the army dictated the course of events which led to cocaine’s inclusion under the DORA regulations.”

In order to mitigate the perceived effects that cocaine was having on British society, and in accordance with public opinion, its illegitimate uses were made illegal under the already existing infrastructure of the DORA framework. DORA 40b made it an offence “for anyone except medical men, pharmacists and vets to be in possession of the drug, to sell it, or to give it away. It could only be supplied on prescriptions which could only be dispensed once” (Berridge 1978: 299). It is important to note that cocaine’s illegality is articulated literally and rhetorically by the state – the drug had now become a narcotic when it was used



in those spheres demarcated as illegitimate by the state. Interestingly it was later shown that the panic over cocaine itself had been just that, a panic. As Berridge (1978: 300) documents,

Nine months after the regulations had come into force, there had been only a minute number of prosecutions – seven for technical infringements, six for cocaine offenses, and nine, mostly involving Chinese people, for smoking opium.

Indeed, Sir Delevinge (who was the author of Regulation 40b) himself admitted that he had “justified DORA 40b on the basis of *preconceived notions* of the drug” (Berridge 1978: 300, emphasis added). The committee concluded that “[w]e are unanimously of the opinion that there is no evidence of any kind to show that there is any serious, or, perhaps, even noticeable prevalence of the cocaine habit amongst the civilian or military population of Great Britain” (*ibid*). This is not to say however that the law against cocaine was abolished, for that would have undermined the sovereignty of the state and the legitimacy of law. As Nancy Holland argues (2003: 87), “[m]aintaining the power of the state requires not only a specific form of rationality, but also a specific form of knowledge: ‘concrete, precise and measured knowledge as to the state’s strength.’” DORA 40b was brought about by the intense media hype surrounding the use of cocaine and opium by women, foreigners and servicemen. This however was a consequence of the larger war discourse, and for that reason alone the law would remain. As Berridge concludes (1978:300), “[r]eactions in the press and in the medical profession were favourable, although there was some feeling that even stricter regulation would perhaps have been desirable.”

In the second instance, cocaine girls brought into question the legitimacy of British masculinity by cosorting with the Chinese. This is because the Chinese, and Chinese masculinity specifically, was conceptualised through a specific paradigm. In outlining this understanding, Kohn (1992: 57) argues that

It did not especially perturb the British that the Chinese among them liked to gamble, or that they smoked opium. What they feared was the ability of the Chinese to attract white women; the dangers of the other vices were seen to lie mainly in their capacity to aid seduction across the racial divide. Nor did it matter whether, as individuals, the Chinese were good, bad, or indifferent. The principle theme of the British discourse upon its Chinese communities in the first quarter of the twentieth century was the intrinsic evil of sexual contact between races, and its issue.

These concern over the relationship between drugs and the Chinese had their origins in the narrative of opium. Cocaine however was seen as a tool with which the Chinese could transcend British masculinity, and with which they could prey on British women. As Kohn (1992: 167) sums up,

Whereas the sexuality of the black man was ... seen as threatening, it was construed as a straightforward animal phenomenon. An Englishman might not like it, but at least he knew what it was about. The sexuality of the Chinaman was alien in the sort of sense more recently found in narratives about beings from other planets. Perhaps the erotic allure was produced by drugs, or perhaps drugs were a symptom of a greater and more mysterious threat.

Accordingly, while British masculinity was conceptualised at the apex of the Great Chain of Being, Chinese masculinity was so foreign that it could not even be placed on the Chain. In conjunction with this, British women seemed to be entranced by Chinese men. If this sexuality could not be understood, then it needed to be protected against. This would serve the function of reinstating the sovereignty of British masculinity in the face of the unknown.

Thus, as a consequence of the dedifferentiation of gender roles brought on by the war effort, the fear of cocaine, and the mysterious and yet powerful sexuality of the Chinese, a crisis of degree became apparent. No longer, in other words, could the sovereignty of British masculinity go unquestioned. While the moral panic concerning the use of cocaine was to recede just as quickly as it had begun, and indeed just a few months after it had arisen, the sovereignty of British masculinity remained in doubt. This was only further emphasised after the War, when the reconstruction of Britain began – the men returning from the front line were injured, demoralised, and often broken. What was needed was a scapegoat, someone who would confirm the legitimacy of British masculinity, while at the same time confirming the narrative of nationalism that was still very important to the reconstruction of Britain. Brilliant Chang, I argue, fulfilled this role some seven years later in 1922.

### **Brilliant Chang and Sacrificial Expulsion**

Concerns over femininity and economic emancipation did not simply disappear after the War. As the *Tatler* noted at the time,

It's women, women everywhere; and as Mr George Robey would say, berlieve me – berlieve me not, but its mighty few of them are really looking very war-worn. On the contrary, as everyone who runs has read, never have there been such weeks as these as Armistice for the doing of all those things it is pre-eminently feminine to do – dancing, shopping, love-making, marrying, sight-seeing, theatring, and the rest ... They say the night clubs are opening in rows, and dressmakers say they're dizzy with the orders for dance frocks that keep on pourin' in. And they can't just have enough niggers to play jazz music, and I hear are thinkin' of hiring out squads of "loonies" to make the mad jazz till there are more ships 'viable to bring the best New York black jazz "musicians" over.<sup>61</sup>

The continued economic and social freedom of women created an existential worry over the perceived ontological status of the British man and his claim to legitimacy: “[t]he flower of British manhood was dead; young womanhood, drugged and dance-crazy, was consorting with ‘sickening’, ‘under-sized’ aliens” (Kohn 1992: 167).

A new discourse of protectionism arose during and after the war, and it is through this discourse that the sovereignty of British masculinity would be reinstated. The lens of sexuality, as a means of delegitimizing the foreigner was not a new strategy – the fear of the “Yellow Peril” and the Chinese use of opium was already entrenched in British society (Berridge 1988: 61). The strategy, therefore, already had poignancy and power. What was required was its adaption to the narrative of cocaine. The result, I argue, was the sacrificial expulsion of Brilliant Chang, who stood as placeholder for the fear of foreigners and their ability to manipulate white women.

The refraction and constant reinforcing reiteration of what it was to *be* British resulted in the minutia of differences becoming monstrous. Indeed, the once arbitrary differences that were invoked through differing conceptions of nationalism and nationalities became monumental. The Chinese were, on the one hand, seen as the antithesis of British masculinity. However, this did not prevent them from attracting British women. Importantly though, this attraction was not seen to lie in superior physical attributes, but on the Chinese's ability to entice and attract British women through devious means, the use of drugs being but one. The use of drugs, for instance, *forced* the weaker sex to become attracted to these men against their will. Through the lens of British masculinity, which conceptualised women as “weaker” and more prone to “neurasthenia,” the “chinaman” became seen as a sexual

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<sup>61</sup> Unknown Author. *Tatler*. 15<sup>th</sup> January 1919.

predator targeting the inherent weakness of white women. For instance, one reporter argued that

Many girls have a *latent pathological infatuation* for coloured men, who are often in a position to give them a lavish supply of furs and jewellery, and introduce them into opium dens and bogus night clubs.

This colour fascination constitutes a danger in regard to which girls should be warned. The morals and civilisation of the Yellow man and the European are fundamentally different (cited in Kohn 1992: 60, emphasis added).

Thus, in white patriarchal society, which had come to be defined as “the national,” the Chinese were to be seen as actively parasitic not only on that discourse, but upon those weakest members of society, women and especially “girls.” This parasitism required an active reaction by the white male, not only in the name of the white male (as a function of patriarchy), but also in the name of everything that it was to be British (as a function of nationalism).

Brilliant Chang, a restaurateur, was brought to the forefront of the narrative of cocaine in 1922, as a result of the suicidal death of Freda Kempton, an actress and socialite. It was alleged that he had supplied the cocaine that aided in her death. As *The Daily Express* described him,

He was not the “Chink” of popular fiction, a cringing yellow man hiding his clasped hands in the wide sleeves of his embroidered gown. This man’s evening clothes had been made up not far from Savile-Row. His long, thin hands were manicured, his manners were too perfect to be described as good. The picture he made as he stood there framed against the dark stairway, smiling around the room with that fixed Oriental smile which seems devoid of warmth and humanity, was so typical of the novelist’s ideas of dopedom that he seemed like a vision conjured up by the surroundings.

“Everything going strong!” he laughed, as he stepped down. A young girl ran up to him, held her arms out, he clasped her closely to him and they danced. Not only did he dance in perfect style, but he also revolved in an atmosphere of general approbation.

Who are these smiling yellow men? They are to be met wherever men and girls dance when the normal night owls of London have gone home to bed. Are they students out for a rag? Are they wealthy Chinese businessmen? Are they ... what and who are they, and why are they so popular with frail white women? (cited in Kohn 1992: 129 – 130)

The “mysterious threat” of the Chinese is made powerful. It is unknown just why he is so popular with such beautiful white women, but it is assumed that he maintains some unknown sexual quality that is not compatible with traditional conceptions of British masculinity, and is using cocaine as a tool by means of which to weaken and arouse the women. In this description he is external to the British Order of Things by virtue of his race. However, he is also at the very heart of everything British by being surrounded by young, beautiful British women. His status is ambivalent, as are his perceived crimes. The ambivalent position of Brilliant Chang as both in, and yet external to, the British Order of Things, and indeed his ambivalence with regards to the crimes for which he was accused, allowed him to become supplement to the sacrificial crisis. The demonization of Chang continued with another article written about him:

Weird designs adorned the walls, great silken cushions in an infinite variety of colour littered the floor, which was carpeted with a covering into which the foot sank almost to the ankle. In the centre of each room was a huge divan bed ... sometimes one girl alone went with Chang to learn the mysteries of that intoxicating beautiful den of iniquity above the restaurant. At other times half-a-dozen drug-frenzied women together joined him in wild orgies (cited in Kohn 1992: 166 – 167).

While he remained accused of supplying the cocaine that aided Freda Kempton’s death, he was never found guilty of this charge. Suspicions had been aroused though, and the police hounded him in their attempts to find him guilty of at least something. They had, after all, legislation against the illegitimate use of cocaine in the form of DORA 40b, which as noted, had been enacted in 1916, even though it was to be replaced in 1920 by peacetime legislation. Chang was continually harassed by the police, and eventually left the West End to seek a quieter life. However, such was the stigma against the man that the Chinese community also rejected him. Eventually he was deported from Britain, the Recorder of London declaring that “society must be purged” of such beings.

Brilliant Chang was literally expelled from British society, as a consequence of an existing legislative framework, the suspicions over his role in supplying cocaine that led to Kempton’s death, and the suspicion that he was plying young white women with cocaine. His ambivalence, however placed him in an ideal position to operate as a scapegoat for the deeper disruptions in society. While his expulsion would not quell these disruptions (no single

expulsion could), the act of expelling Chang reinstated the sovereignty of British masculinity, for a brief time, over British women. It was British men, in other words, who would decide who, and who was not, allowed to be associated with British women. This served to once again entrench those differences between the sexes that were needed for British masculinity to define itself. Looking back to Girard's model, Chang's status was ambivalent and his expulsion helped to restore difference in society.

In the narrative of cocaine he too served an important function. Cocaine, when illegal and illegitimate, had become a narcotic beyond the borders of medical science. Chang's expulsion, which was premised on his interaction with cocaine, served to entrench the narrative of cocaine, the narcotic narrative, beyond the borders of the legitimate. The sacrificial invention of the narcotic narrative can be seen in operation here – it required sacrifice to confirm cocaine's new position in society, from a discursive perspective. Cocaine, when used beyond the borders of the medical, was now illegal, immoral, and illegitimate. It had become a narcotic, which Chang's expulsion helped serve to confirm.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, then, we have witnessed the transformation of cocaine from a drug to a narcotic, in certain instances. This does not mean however that there are not other examples, or that this transformation, at the times under analysis, occurred across every instance of the narrative of cocaine. This transformation was a result, *a priori*, of cocaine's placement vis-à-vis the underlying metaphysics of rationality. When encompassed by medical science, cocaine's legitimacy was a function of that regime. When, however, its addictive potential became realised that too was narrated through medical science. When cocaine became not only illegitimate but illegal, then we see the birth of the narcotic narrative. The tension between this narrative and the deeper narrative of rationality, as I hope to show, has always been operational and still defines our interactions with the drug.

Methodologically it was shown that the *pharmakon* minimises difference, which can be poisonous to a system of differences. The *pharmakos*, however, creates difference. The two must also thus be seen as processes, the former increasing the entropy of a system, the latter decreasing it. As I hope to show in the following chapters, the link between these two concepts is not simply semantic – the treatment of drug users, both historically and in the contemporary world, often relies on their expulsion. Moreover, they act as *pharmakos* for a

whole range of problems of which their status is ambivalent; one only has to think of “crack mothers” being blamed for failed economic policies to realise this. Before such an analysis can begin however, this study turns to the case of heroin, and the jazz years in North America.

## Chapter 3: Narcotic Instruments

### Introduction

Without the paternal metaphor [God] holding things together, one became the artisan of one's own body, fiddling around, experimenting, creating new parts or treating the psyche like an organ, a sick organ. One became a maniacal bricoleur of one's own body.<sup>62</sup>

In the previous two chapters this study has traced, chronologically, the ambivalent epistemological status of cocaine, its adoption by medical science, and its eventual entrenchment as a narcotic. While these previous chapters illustrate to us the nascence of the epistemological narrative of cocaine, as a function of its interactions with western modernity, the birth of the drug-using *subject* has only received cursory attention. This chapter thus speaks directly to the transformation that the illegitimate drug-using subject underwent, from fiend to criminal. As I hope to show, this transformation was articulated not only through causal notions of disease and contagion, as had been the case, but also through far deeper discourses affecting society. The transformation of cocaine and the cocaine-using subject, in other words, did not occur in isolation from larger movements that were shaping various societies. Rather, I would argue, it was within and because of the chronicle of modernity that the fear of the narcotic body refracted much larger concerns to do with identity, belonging, and ultimately, being. The narcotic is, in this reading, not just another mirror whereby we might view the march of modernity's fears. Rather the narcotic narrative invokes a specific set of causal claims to do with disease, treatment, and the surveillance of the abnormal. Over and above this, as Lenson (1995: 180) has argued, the interaction between modernity and the narcotic also invokes a specific concern with the larger transcendental drama that has haunted the western theatre of modernity:

The approach of mainstream medicine – pitting a curative substance against a disease, or more precisely, against the *symptoms* of a disease – is reminiscent of all western dramas of good versus evil, and as such admits no grey area or separate peaces [sic]. It interprets the body as a battlefield, neutral and passive, on which Armageddon is played out over and over again. Will you be cured and join the saints, or die and be stricken from the Book of Life?

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<sup>62</sup> *Op. cit.* Lenson 1995: 179



It is fruitful to note the manner in which Lenson articulates the above analysis. The binary structure of western modernity is ever present – “there are no grey areas.” The logic of western modernity always seeks to create dichotomies, between the good and the bad, the legitimate and the illegitimate, and the legal and illegal. In this process, it also prioritises one side over the other. It must be remembered, however, that this prioritisation itself relies on a legitimating mythology in order to be powerful – it is the deconstructive strategy’s purpose to reveal the process of prioritisation at work in the binary concepts. Considering this, the purpose of this and later chapters is not only to reveal the process of prioritisation at work in the narrative of cocaine, but to reveal what has been hidden by that prioritisation. Specifically with regard to this chapter however there is also a causal claim to be made. As Foucault has shown us (2003: 184 - 186), with the birth of medicine the *concept* of disease is born. When the discourse of medicine changes, so too does the concept of what constitutes disease. This conceptual meandering is not simply descriptive however. There is an implicit normativity that supplements the concepts, giving meaning to both the healthy and the ailing subject.

As Foucault repeatedly shows, the concept of disease and a litany of “illness metaphors” (Sontag 1978) have always helped articulate the narrative of western modernity, and indeed rationality. One of the steadfast means of articulating addiction has been through the concept of disease, both of the social and the personal type.<sup>63</sup> On the one hand, this points to the continued extension of the medical discourse in the articulation of the narcotic. On the other, however, it points to a steadfast means by which this strategy is used to delegitimize the narcotic and the subject in the eyes of rationality. As shall be shown, a diseased individual no longer occupies the same ontological position upon the rational Chain of Being. The distinction between the healthy and the sick can also be juridical – people are judged for their state of health, especially when it could have been otherwise. In most instances this holds true for drug addicts. It is important to note that while the juridical matrix used to describe the relationship between an individual and a disease may change over time, following the path that different conceptions of health and disease undertake vis-à-vis rationality and productivity, the actual logic of the matrix is always there – there are no grey areas. Indeed, it is from this juridical matrix that the legitimacy of the mental prison once gained currency (Foucault 1977: 104 – 135). While there has always been a relationship between the narrative of cocaine and that of disease, the juridical aspect of this relationship is

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<sup>63</sup> The confluence of the metaphor of disease and the narcotic can be seen, for instance, in the title of David Musto’s central text (1987), *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control*. The earliest direct articulation of this confluence can be found in Ernest Bishop’s (1921) book, *The Narcotic Drug Problem*. Indeed, one of the central chapters is entitled “the Rational Handling of Narcotic Drug Addiction-Disease.”

made especially apparent in America during what I have termed “the jazz years.” Spanning approximately the years between 1940 and 1970, jazz became the soundtrack to the crisis of degree that would eventually lead to the emancipation of “the Negro.” Integral to the articulation of this crisis was a specific conception of disease and addiction – as Lenson notes, the concept of disease would provide “a way of preserving moral strictures against drugs in the absence of any common ethical discourse” (Lenson 1995: 160).

As Foucault has shown, while the concept of disease has been transformed from a concern with the retribution of the deities to a concern with the objectivity of rational medical thought, both exhibit a causal structure.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, in western modernity the causal understanding of disease finds its justification in the emerging scientific enlightenment of western medicine made powerful by the metaphysics of a Newtonian universe in which a mechanistic notion of causality is the fundamental integer. Consequently, the idea of disease-as-caused would not only force modern medicine to become symptom based, but would also renew the epistemological emphasis on the “causer” or originator of whatever ailed society. The narcotic, both illegitimate and illegal, would often fulfil this role.

For Derrida, the condemnation of the narcotic in western modernity is realised in two instances. On the one hand, the narcotic engenders a world of simulacrum or false representation. This representation is not necessarily “false,” metaphysically, but offers an alternative to the current metaphysics of presence and as a consequence, a competing mythology. As such, the use of the *pharmakon*, in this reading, creates competing epistemological and ontological mythologies or realities. To allow these competing forms of representation to exist would be to undermine the sovereignty of *the* metaphysics of presence by revealing the truth that the order hides. The use of the narcotic, then, is condemned in the name of the *sovereignty* of the metaphysics of presence that masks that Truth. On the other hand, and following from this, where a metaphysics of presence is concerned with the productivity of the subject, the use of narcotics offers one a “short-cut” to the transcendent, to pleasure in itself. No work or hardship is required; it is an award without competition. In a metaphysics concerned with the value of pious work and just rewards, drug-use cheats the system and undermines the logic of that system (Derrida 1993: 228 - 229).

The sovereignty of this metaphysics of presence can be seen even in such well thought out arguments as Nozick’s experience machine (1974: 42 – 45). Suppose we are to “unplug” from reality by immersing ourselves in a completely simulated reality. Not only

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<sup>64</sup> Of course, *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973) is the paradigmatic text in which Foucault explores these themes. However, parts of his analysis can also be found in *The History of Madness* (2006: 463 – 512).

this, but we can *choose* how this reality might feel – there can be no pain, disease, disappointment or stress. The experience will be one of utopia. Nozick asks whether, firstly, we *will* choose this simulated reality, and secondly whether we *should*. The conclusion he reaches, ultimately, is that we would neither want nor should want to choose this reality – “we want to *do* certain things ... we want to *be* a certain way, to be a certain sort of person” (42). Consequently we are *supposed* to choose the *real* experience over simulation, even if this real experience is fraught with danger. Nozick’s claim is not simply descriptive – it is how we are *ought* to act. While this is not the place to critique the actual argument, the centrality and status of Nozick’s argument as legitimate reveals to us that a critique of the simulacrum is far deeper than a simple fear of the unreal. The real is good and just, albeit difficult. Narcotic use, by short-circuiting this entire system, is “devoid of meaning,” and therefore, because of the binary structure of modernity, should be condemned. The mythology requires that there be no grey areas.

While this critique will be more adequately dealt with in the following section of this chapter, the fear of falsity is also historically entrenched within modernity. Arising out of a Christian pastoral praxis the “false prophet” (or in the case of Plato the Sophist) is juxtaposed against the pious work of the meek, self-suffering devotee. Indeed, as Socrates answered in the *Phaedrus* (260 a),

If that is the arguments that come to speak oratory should give testimony that it is an art. Now I seem, as it were, to hear some arguments advancing to give their evidence that it tells lies, that it is not an art at all, but *an artless routine*. “Without a grip on truth,” says the Spartan, “there can be no *genuine* art if speaking either now or in the future.”<sup>65</sup>

Socrates’ concern is with the truth, and with the genuine endeavour of truth production. For him, sophist oratory is a form of mimesis, and therefore false. Consequently it is the properties of the real and true that become the essential commandments necessary for true reflection, and subsequent acceptance into the transcendental arena of heaven. The self is sick *a priori*; it is towards God and heaven that we must *work*. Foucault shows that this process should begin at the very beginning, with the child’s (and the parent’s) schooling:

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<sup>65</sup> *op. cit.* Derrida 1981: 78, emphasis added.

Thus the Christian School must not simply train docile children; it must also make it possible to supervise the parents, to gain information as to their way of life, their resources, their piety, their morals (Foucault 1979: 211).

Not only would this mythology work to conceal and therefore maintain the sovereignty of the Roman Catholic Church – for it was only through the church that one could reach God – but it would also ensure that everyone is already distant from God, and would require them to work hard in order to guarantee their everlasting soul.

Foucault has explored this analytical terrain rather extensively. As he notes, the pastoral ethic is a “power that individualizes by granting, through an essential paradox, as much value to a single one sheep as to an entire flock. It is this type of power that was introduced into the West by Christianity and took an institutional form in the ecclesiastical pastorate: the government of souls was constituted in the Christian Church as a central, knowledge-based activity indispensable for the salvation of each and everyone” (1999: 41). Work, as a function of piety, becomes the necessary condition for redemption and thus inclusion in the western transcendental myth of heaven.

These archaeological considerations would have an essential effect on the narcotic. Not only was righteous, sombre and sober behaviour glorified, but because of the binary epistemology that structured the universe, oscillating between damnation/redemption, inactivity/activity, and laziness/productivity, that selfsame epistemology guarded against and condemned anything that was not of the same analytical category. The use of narcotics, the wilful and conscious escape from the universe of God, the revelry in false joys and sensations, became the retributive petard upon which not only the user, but also the narcotic itself could be hung. It is this essentially Manichean story that would come to narrative the relationship between the state, jazz, and narcotics.

Narcotics, jazz clubs, musicians, and hedonistic ventures have long been associated with one another, as was previously highlighted. As I shall argue, this can be seen as a function of the difference between the rational and irrational being made prominent in these spheres. At times these assumptions are correct and explicit causal chains have been established. However, at other times the presumption of association has been the mechanism by which raids, condemnation, and demonization have occurred – the charge of drug use is as much a strategy of condemnation as a note on the consumptive habits of individuals. Furthermore, this is not to say that this process of articulating the narcotic has not been without paradox – as I hope to show, this paradox became especially pronounced during the

jazz years. This is because, on the one hand, the association of jazz music and narcotics was detrimental to the entire jazz scene. Traditionalists both in and outside of the jazz community railed against the use of narcotics as destructive of the moral values of the entire jazz movement and its confluence with the emancipation of the black American subject. On the other hand however the association of narcotics, jazz music and musicians provided the “hip” and “hepster” with a locus of identity unavailable in any other configuration. Jazz music, and all that was “wrong” with it allowed them, for the first time, a space and name where they could *be*. Cast in the crucible of American culture and justified by the memory of the Founding Fathers, it was feared that the contagion of the narcotic would eat away at the pious morality of a God-fearing nation.

Paradoxically however, for those who had yet to be included in the American Dream, jazz and narcotics offered a redemptive sphere. A new taxonomy arose, caught between those who *could* and those who *would not* confess to their sins: those who wanted back in and those who did not, those who wanted to return from exile and those for whom the condition of life in America was one of permanent exile. As briefly hinted at in chapter one, the need and the ability to confess to one’s sins vis-à-vis the narrative of cocaine (and now the narcotic) was a function of an ontological ordering in society in which some were allowed to confess, and others by virtue of their very being, could not. Consequently the confessional matrices established during this time would allow those who would revoke their sins to once again be included in the Great American Dream – Malcolm X becoming the best known example.<sup>66</sup> However, for those who could not or would not return to larger society, for those for whom the rejection of the mainstream was constitutive of their jazz identity, these confessional matrices became the ultimate grave upon which to dance.

The metaphysics of presence, articulated through piety and productivity *qua* rationality, was not to relinquish these offenders so easily however. A Cartesian duality crept in, borne from a reiteration of the logic of sacrificial expulsion analysed in the previous chapter. The user’s mind became a victim of the user’s body, creating an essentialising discourse in which the “hip” or “hep” was known solely through their body. Problematically however this causal conflation also infected, directly, the discursive formation of jazz music itself. Jazz music became delegitimized as a primal and simplistic sound, made for bodies and not minds. It was, as shall be explored below, archetypically irrational. This was to have

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<sup>66</sup> The story of Malcolm X is well known. At first a petty criminal and drugs pusher, he later became seen as an emblem of Black freedom and emancipation. For a complete overview of his life, see Michael Benson’s *Malcolm X* (2005).

two consequences. Firstly, the essentialising differences that had led to the ontological category of the “Negro” (vis-à-vis the “white man”) were exhumed and became potent once more. Consequently, an understanding of innate and ulterior differences of “race” became a means of articulating jazz deviance. What the narcotic was to the physical body, jazz became to the social body – a disease of American culture, both literally and figuratively. Following from this, the body became the renewably contested terrain not only upon which condemnation could be cut, but also for those that rejected the sovereign claims of this critique, the final domain where a new identity could be forged and embodied. As such, it is not surprising that the body plays such an important role in jazz music and culture. Not only do the archival accounts (as shall be explored below) always stress the significance of the body, but it also seems that for those who rejected the American dream, the body became the last means of expressing their identity – their belonging in and through exile.

With its genealogical roots revealed, a paradoxical moral template becomes observable. For those resisting the liberation of the black American subject the causal confluence of the narcotic, the deviance of jazz and the subversive pleasures of the body became conjoined. This resistance was articulated in the causal language of the fear of contagion and the metaphor of disease. This liberation, in other words, was a cancerous growth upon the traditional Order of Things. Paradoxically however, rather than subvert the embodied formation of a modern American black identity, it is this critique that provided the discursive parameters wherein that deviant identity might be forged. The jazz club became more than a material space, it became a concept. In this guise the jazz club came to stand as more than simply the location of a certain form of music and leisure. It also came to be understood as emblematic of a new way of being that was constructed not so much on its own terms as it was founded on the rejection of everything that it was supposed not to be. A paradox of differentiation emerged in which the more the concept of the jazz club was condemned, the more strongly the parameters that articulated the jazz club were defined. The very people that resisted that liberation then, paradoxically supplemented the formation of the constituent identity of the modern black American subject, as a subject.

As a consequence of this mythology of difference, the dialectical structure of western modernity became supplementary. Methodologically, the fear of the poisonous nature of the *pharmakon* created, in part, the elixir of life itself, the liberated narcotic body. By constantly being excluded from the American order of things, that exclusion played an integral role in creating for the black jazz aficionado a new locus of identity. This new identity, however, rather than escape from the traditional order of things, thrust them into conflict with it. As has

been previously noted, there cannot be more than one mythology that serves to legitimate an order. If there is, then competition must be stamped out in the name of the sovereignty of that order.

In the first section of this chapter then, I provide an analysis of the birth of the contagion of the *pharmakon* through heroin's confluence with "negro" jazz music. This confluence arose out of a very specific contestation of what constituted American jazz music and indeed for whom and by whom it could be played. The unique sound that emerged represents the conclusion to a contested soundscape, a soundscape that was directly influenced not only by the act of the consumption of narcotics but also by the emergence of the concept of the narcotic. Consequently it is here that the *concept* of the jazz club is made apparent to mainstream society. Indeed, it is also here I argue, that the concept of the narcotic becomes prevalent in larger American society. Secondly, I argue that this new moral template provided the discursive parameters or architecture for the narrative's subsequent years, articulated through a narrative of opposition, itself a function of the binary logic of western modernity.

Finally, as has been noted briefly in the previous chapter, with the culmination of what some have termed "the first drug war"<sup>67</sup> the production, distribution and use of cocaine really did decline (Buxton 2006: 51 – 67).<sup>68</sup> Indeed, this decline was so pronounced that cocaine, as a narcotic substance and as a discursive object seemed to "disappear"<sup>69</sup> – in the archives there is comparatively far less concern with the narcotic until its "rise" again in the late 1960s. However, this is not to say that the socio-discursive narratives concerned with the now normatively laden concept of the *narcotic* (and its interaction with western modernity) also disappeared; on the contrary, between the ending of the Second World War and the late 1960s the rise of the fear of the *spread* of the *disease* of the narcotic was born. For this reason, even though the narcotic of cocaine became "hidden," the discourse of the narcotic flourished in its main appellation as heroin, and because of this, it is heroin itself and not cocaine that will provide the example in this chapter.

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<sup>67</sup> Jonnes 1996. See also Jonnes 1995: 1157.

<sup>68</sup> For a statistical analysis of this decline, see Baynham, S. 1998.

<sup>69</sup> See Block 2001: 316. As Marcel de Kort notes, there is an important distinction between high-level and low-level trade. High-level trade, which was most prolific at first, involved the channeling of legitimate cocaine to illegitimate markets, while low-level trade was the smuggling of cocaine through whatever routes possible. As legitimate cocaine production decreased, low-level trade increased in complexity, eventually forming the trade networks that are used today (De Kort 1999: 123 – 145).

## The Jazz Vernacular and Rationality

In order to understand the later confluence of jazz music and the narcotic narrative, it is first necessary to provide a brief archaeological examination of the founding moments of the jazz vernacular. Jazz music, as a separate analytical category of western music finds its inception at the same time as the rediscovery of cocaine – approximately 1885 (Lopes 2002: 11). American jazz (or what would retrospectively become known as “hot” jazz), however, emerged from an “ideological debate” between the European and American musical vernaculars. This debate revolved around “the nature of popular performance and the role of the vernacular [of jazz] among peers who shared a common music culture ... The professional class of musicians in the United States would eventually divide along these two distinct paths” (Lopes 2002: 13). This division was both descriptive and normative – descriptively the European vernacular concerned itself with the “music tradition of classical, opera, and dance music,” while the American vernacular was meant to represent and “to appease the tastes of less cultivated classes, and of course, to secure a living wage” (Lopes 2002: 14). Normatively however, the European vernacular, with its austere history of composers, directors, and conductors was seen as superior. This difference translated not only into different styles of music, but ultimately, into different socio-political spaces or domains – from the places of performance to the listeners themselves, the American jazz scene presented a competing narrative to that of classical jazz (Lopes 2002: 24). This would ultimately cause a crisis of degree by revealing the mythology that maintained the difference between the two. Moreover, in the same manner as the example from the previous chapter, the dedifferentiation of different types of styles, races, and beings would lead to the sacrificial expulsion of a surrogate victim in the name of the difference between the two. By locating where the distinction was made, it is possible to reveal which narrative was sovereign, and which became illegitimate. Over and above this, the logic of this expulsion can also be seen as one such strand in the larger narrative of the American Civil Rights Movement.

While the differences between the European and American vernaculars would remain relatively benign preceding and during the two World Wars (for, the most part, due to the emphasis on national production brought on by the war efforts), the social and economic costs of these two lengthy conflicts began to make previously minuscule differences monstrous (as seen for instance in Britain, and as shown in the previous chapter). In searching for a new post-world war identity, music and the concept of leisure time became



extremely important to the national *Zeitgeist* (Pieper 2009: 25 – 29). Accordingly, the difference between the European and American vernaculars became a means of not only reasserting national differences and an identity, but in the case of America specifically, became a means of articulating many underlying differences that had become prominent with the return of both white and black troops. As Lopes (2002: 52) notes,

While fundamentally a critique based on racist ideology expressed in moral, aesthetic, and class terms, the critique of jazz was aimed at both black and white musicians as they pursued the black vernacular in popular performance. It was also aimed at the large number of consumers, particularly the young, flocking to hear and dance to jazz music. The condemnation of the black jazz vernacular, in terms of dance, rhythm, and sound – an ideology in which the black middle class was trapped as willing accomplice – set the stage for professional musicians to present themselves as the legitimate cultivators of this music.

The contestation over the legitimacy and styles of jazz music became a means of articulating far deeper concerns over race, class, and the role of the black subject in a post-war America. As previously noted, black people now had procedural rights and duties enshrined in the legislative framework. However, with the return of black troops, troops who had sacrificed in equal measure to their white counterparts, more substantive equality was being demanded. This is potently summarised by James Weldon Johnson (1930: 283), who seems to have predicted the coming crisis of degree:

Forces are going out that are reshaping public sentiment and opinion; forces that are going far towards smashing the stereotype that the Negro is nothing more than a beggar at the gates of the nation, waiting to be thrown the crumbs of civilisation. Through his artistic efforts the Negro is smashing this immemorial stereotype faster than he has ever done through any method he has been able to use.

The status and legitimacy of American jazz music became one such area of contestation. Simply because it did not have the same style and rhythm of European jazz, it was felt, should not mean it was to be seen as a lesser form. However, this was not to be the case; and the strategy by which this difference would be articulated would be the familiar distinction between the rational and irrational. European jazz was considered a mental affair, while American jazz became seen as a primal one. This strategy of critique, then, was to be supported by an already existing discourse in which the “Negro’s” body was essentialised,

and became the focal point of their being. This locus of critique would however be given a modern form by refracting it through the debates over the legitimacy of different forms of jazz.

The emergence of the use of the fear of the narcotic as a means of articulating “hot” jazz became especially prominent with the popularisation of bebop. Bebop was at first described as “hot jazz overheated with overdone lyrics full of bawdiness, references to narcotics, and double talk” (cited in Lopes 2002: 210) or perhaps, as “a new school of discordant, offbeat jazz which has mushroomed into as big a music cult as swing. Its devotees ape the eccentric appearance of bebop’s inventor, Gillespie: horn-rims, goatee and beret” (*ibid*). On the one hand bebop took to the extreme the synchronic note structure and improvisation of traditional jazz music. On the other however, bebop performers and the beboppers themselves seemed strange and alien, even to jazz aficionados – it seemed as if they were infected by the music. Their strange mannerisms, their emphasis on the sign-value of certain consecrated objects (such as the zoot suit) and indeed the strange way of playing and listening to jazz began to raise narcotic suspicions:

That beboppers used and abused drugs and alcohol was not completely a lie either ... Now, certainly, we were not the only ones. Some of the older musicians had been smoking reefers ... jazz musicians, the old ones and the young ones, almost all of them I knew smoked pot, but I wouldn’t call that drug abuse ... Dope, heroin abuse, really got to be a major problem during the bebop era, especially in the late forties, and a lotta guys died from it (cited in Lopes 2002: 210).

These mannerisms were on the one hand totally alien not only to jazz music, but also to American culture and society. Not only this, but with the rising suspicion that bebop was merely a veil for rampant and illegitimate drug use, sexual deviancy, and hedonistic activities, the beboppers became outsider both to American society and traditional jazz music. This process of exclusion paradoxically provided a means for inclusion into a competing order – one that had not *a priori* rejected them by virtue of their race and class. With larger society setting the discursive parameters of what constituted a legitimate identity, of what it meant to belong and be American, the beboppers sought to construct their identity beyond these borders, by negation. The *pharmakon* whether seen in its literal use as heroin, or by the strategies of critique that assumed its use dedifferentiated a diverse group of people, allowing them to form a synthesised identity irrespective of colour or creed (the traditional

mechanisms of differentiation). This, however, would be problematic to traditional conceptions of American identity and culture, which kept apart these people, races, and classes. By dedifferentiating the mythology of difference that had heretofore structured American identity, the *pharmakon* brought the legitimacy of that mythology into doubt. It is for this reason then that the beboppers could form a cohesive social grouping. It is also for this reason that they were condemned. The *pharmakon* was operating as both poison and elixir, depending from where it was articulated.

As a consequence, for instance, “[p]ublic authorities and others would use jazz as trope to position both jazz music and swing music as threats to the social order” (Lopes 2005: 1471). The identification of bebop, and the bebopper as threats to social order also allowed that order to rejuvenate itself through their sacrificial exclusion, and by the social order claiming sovereignty over the distinction as to what constituted legitimate forms of being. However at each turn this scapegoating, while sacrificially excluding bebop from the American Dream, became inverted by the bebopper. The inversion gave rise to a paradox of differentiation, in which each attempt to sacrificially exclude the bebopper by critiquing and delegitimizing that identity strengthened the very selfsame identity. The sacrificial mechanism imploded in upon itself – rather than restore the Order of Things at the exclusion of the nefarious other, the nefarious other was strengthened by this exclusion. This process was still to come however. As one commentator at the time argued, “it is the musicians themselves, the vendors of jazz, who in many cases make their own lives difficult ... They gaze indifferently at the uninitiated through drooping lids, muttering, ‘It’s cool, Daddy-O’” (cited in Lopes 2002: 211).

In this vein Rothenberg (1990: 43) notes that, “[a]t certain moments in history, oppressed people have been able to exert control over the process of defining difference with a view to reconstructing difference in what they perceive to be their own interests.” Problematically however, the formation of an ideologically and musically distinct group – the beboppers – “signified rebellion against dominant norms while also affirming those norms” (Lopes 2005: 1468). The beboppers themselves were, then, caught in a paradox. To escape the oppression of larger society they constituted their identity through the rejection of those dominant norms that they felt defined society. This created a space within which their identity could be constituted. However, at each turn of this creation they themselves affirmed the norms that society rejected. They became, at once, the freest and the most oppressed of

people.<sup>70</sup> As such Paul Lopes (2005: 1468) argues, “the jazz trope represents a double consciousness of romantic rebellion and dangerous deviancy in which the story of jazz almost always ended in tragic consequences. The ultimate tragedy of the jazz life in the popular imagination acted to reaffirm dominant norms against a rebellious and deviant world in urban America.” The “romantic rebellion” is the first paradox of differentiation, the creation of an identity premised on the exclusion of those norms that were also excluding the bebopper. If it were not for that rejection, no space would exist where the bebopper could simply be. However, the “dangerous deviancy” alludes to the affirmation of those negative tropes that society rejected and the bebopper embraced. They self-implicated themselves in their very identity, and thus became the target of various social, legal and juridical prejudices which have continued to this day.

This problem, which might be termed double negation, has often been articulated in contestations over racial and social identity in America. Indeed, W. E. B. Du Bois (1905: 5), as Lopes notes above, defined the political aspect of being within, and yet apart from a legitimate American identity. As he argues,

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spat upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face.

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<sup>70</sup> The concept and problem of race has been a central debate in much of the literature concerning the formation of the American nation. While this study touches on the concept, and as noted in the introduction, it does not engage directly with the vast literature that exists. This is done to maintain focus on the much more subtle discursive narrative of the narcotic, a narrative that once again could become hidden if one were to fully engage with the problem. However, and equally, the problem of race cannot be ignored. To overcome this problem I have chosen to use jazz as a means, a lens perhaps, through which to view the “race problem” in America. This lens allows the confluence of race and the narcotic to be seen, without losing either in the vast discursive problem of race itself. Indeed, it is for this reason that I have used extensively Paul Lopes’ work. Not only is he a paradigmatic author in the field of jazz music, but has also, through these works, engaged extensively with the problem of race. In writing this chapter, a number of purely “race based” works were consulted. Foremost of these were Ronald Bayer’s (2003) *R. Bayer, Race and Ethnicity in America: A Concise History*, Roy Brooks’ (1992) *Rethinking the American Race Problem*, Kevin Johnson’s (2003) *Mixed Race America and the Law: A Reader*, and Audrey Smedley’s (2007) *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a World View*.

Double consciousness is, for Du Bois, both phenomenological and ontological.

Phenomenologically double consciousness is represented by the self-objectification of subjectivity. One becomes an object to oneself through the constant gaze of others. It is that gaze that gives rise to the abnormality of one's own subjectivity, and it is for this reason that one is both inside and outside of one's own body. One wants to feel normal, but one can never be normal. One can at best appear normal – to others and to oneself. Ontologically double consciousness is expressed by Du Bois as “two warring ideals in one dark body” (Du Bois 1905: 5 – 6). On the one hand there is the pride of being an American. On the other there is the knowledge that so long as one is a “Negro” one can never fully make claim to that identity. The “Negro” is simultaneously inside and outside the Order of Things, an ontological dissonance expressed through the narrative of race.

There is an objectifying dualism at play in this double consciousness. Rather than make the argument that the dissonance between the subject and object is ontological, Du Bois makes the argument that this separation is *juridical*. For Du Bois, there is no essential “fact” as to what it is to be a “Negro.” The separation is made, rather, through the positioning of the ontological type of the “Negro” *in relation to* larger society. The “negro” is *condemned* to this position – the “Negro” *becomes* a body, not *is* a body. As I hope to show, the transformation from subject to object, from mind to body, is the product of a Cartesian metaphysics that itself relies on the distinction between the rational and irrational. Ultimately, as I argue below, the juridical deferment of the body over that of the mind condemns the essentialised “Negro” to a subservient position in society.

The distinction made by a Cartesian metaphysics is clearly visible in a number of popular writings from the time. Zora Neale Hurston, a Harlem Renaissance writer argued in *What White Publishers Won't Print* (1950: 171), “[i]f the average man could recognise that the Negro was ‘just like him,’ he would have to recognise that he was just like the Negro.” Thus she concludes that “indifference, not to say scepticism, to the internal life of educated minorities is what characterises this different indifference” (*ibid*). She most beautifully sums up the phenomenological and differential being of double consciousness in a brief narrative:

Sometimes it is the other way around. A white person is set down in our midst, but the contrast is just as sharp for me. For instance, when I sit in the drafty basement that is The New World Cabaret with a white person, my color *comes*. We enter chatting about any little nothing that we have in common and are seated by jazz waiters. In the abrupt way that jazz orchestras have, this

one plunges into a number. It loses no time in circumlocutions, but gets right down to business. It constricts the thorax and splits the heart with its tempo and *narcotic* harmonies.

This orchestra grows rambunctious, rears on its hind legs and attacks the tonal veil with primitive fury, rending it, clawing it until it breaks through to the jungle beyond. I follow those heathen – follow them exultingly. I dance wildly inside myself; I yell within, I whoop; I shake my assegai above my head, I hurl it true to the mark *yeeeeooww!* I am in the jungle and living in the jungle way. My face is painted red and yellow and my body is painted blue. My pulse is throbbing like a war drum. I want to slaughter something – give pain, give death to what, I do not know. But the piece ends. The men in the orchestra wipe their lips and rest their fingers. I creep back slowly to the veneer we call civilisation with the last tone and find the white friend sitting motionless in his seat, smoking calmly.

“Good music they have here,” he remarks, drumming the table with his fingertips.

Music. The great blobs of purple and red emotion have not touched him. *He has heard only what I have felt.* He is far away and I see him but dimly across the ocean and the continent that have fallen between us. He is so pale with his whiteness then and I am *so* colored (*ibid*, emphasis added).

The Cartesian distinction between mind and body is the mythology that defines each character’s position: “He has only *heard* what I have *felt*.” There is an *a priori* difference between the mind and the body, in which the mind (and rationality) is prioritised. In this scene the prioritisation is reversed for a brief time, while the band plays. However, as soon as it stops, as soon as the woman returns to herself, she *becomes* “*so* colored.” The music, these “*narcotic melodies*,” is the *pharmakon* that dedifferentiates the Cartesian split, reprioritisation the sensuality of the senses over the rationality of the mind – it creates similarity in the face of difference. In this instance however, the dedifferentiation is only temporary. When the *pharmakon* was a drug, with its own narrative, and when the dedifferentiation became a *lifestyle*, then that which was dedifferentiated had to be permanently excluded by whatever means necessary. As shall be shown, this was what the beboppers, those accused of being associated with the narcotic, had to face.

Accordingly, the ghost of the Cogito has always been the stable-mate of the narcotic; they are intricately linked. Indeed, in a metaphysics of presence the Cogito supplements the epistemological strictures by which the mad are judged. Without rationality one cannot be sovereign over oneself. The *pharmakon*, by inverting the order of priority and supplanting the body for the mind, creates a form of madness, which itself is condemned. As such the *pharmakon*, by allowing slippage between ontologically distinct arenas reveals the distinction

that legitimates the mythology of the Cogito. It is my argument that in the case of the beboppers, and considering the moral impetus to maintain and glorify rationality, their sensuality was not tolerated because it conflicted with the hidden myth of the Cogito. The bebopper, rather than escape society, provided the perfect example of what could and should be condemned. The “negro,” already not sovereign over their own subjectivity, was now essentialised as simply a body, an object. As objects they were not rational. As narcotic users they were diseased. It is that logic which created the possibility of their condemnation. In order to understand this process, however, it is necessary briefly to delve into both Foucault’s (2008) and Derrida’s (2001) critique of the Cogito, to understand the semiotic and archaeological aspects of this claim.

### **Madness and the Cogito**

The narcotic has always occupied a central place in the western preoccupation with rationality and its founding discourse of the Cogito. Equally, it has also paid much attention to the “Negro.” Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1902; 1975) attests to this. In the chapter “The Natural Context or the Geographical Basis of World History” the “Negro” is constructed as the human spirit in its most primal form. The “Negro,” as such, is both radically subject to the forces of nature and sovereign manipulator of them. As Slavoj Žižek ironically noted, “Negros” becomes seen as “mindlessly brave cowards” (2007: 1). With the advancement of the human spirit to increasing manipulate nature for its own ends, the spirit is withdrawn from nature and the self is born. It is at this point that the potential for madness is born, for the increasing distance between the human spirit and nature allows for the possibility of a return to nature, which is now seen as madness. The return is construed as an exile from advancement. This madness, then, is a withdrawal from progress and a return to a more primal spirit. In a discourse that takes as *a priori* the need for advancement, as is at the heart of western modernity, this exile is normatively problematic. The withdrawal becomes seen as an exile into the self, of the self.

The Cogito follows a very similar logical path. The Cogito, after all, is the affirmation of the I by returning to the self, through the mechanism of radical doubt. The individual is born at the moment of withdrawal, for it is here that we find the I. Nature is doubted, and relinquished, in the name of the self. As Derrida highlights, and as shall be explored below, this withdrawal from the self, in order to find the self, is paradoxical. This is

because the pursuit of clear and distinct perceptions is itself an activity of madness. The birth of the self is made in the name of rationality, but is pursued through the strategy of madness. Madness, so conceived, becomes the implicit supplement to rationality even though this madness is retrospectively hidden by the legitimating mythology of rationality. As a consequence, when those forms reveal the mythology of rationality, and the distinction over which it claims sovereignty (between the rational and the irrational), that sovereignty is no longer potent. Just like the sovereignty of law, at the founding moment of the distinction, there is nothing other than the brute prioritisation of one option over the other. The “Negro,” by making claim to this ontological heritage, dedifferentiates the difference, revealing the mythology for what it is – brute force.

Madness, in the history of the Cogito, becomes inscribed into the history of subjectivity and the pursuit of rational doubt. This is why Derrida entitles his critique of both Foucault and Descartes “Cogito and the History of Madness” (2001). The analysis is also useful in revealing the mythology that makes powerful the distinction between rationality and irrationality. Here Derrida offers two forms of critique of Foucault’s argument. The one might usefully be termed procedural, the other substantive. The procedural critique is focused on Foucault’s attempts to bring “[a] history not of psychiatry, but of madness itself, in its vivacity, before knowledge had begun to close in on it” (1961: 349. *Op. cit.* Derrida 2001: 39 – 40). Derrida leaves Foucault with a potent conditional. If one is to allow madness to speak, how might we understand this madness? We are forced to either *be* mad, in madness’s true state, or to remain silent. Either way, we cannot *communicate* or understand madness in itself. The substantive critique, on the other hand, targets directly Foucault’s understanding of madness itself.

Derrida begins the critique by arguing that “the Cogito escapes madness only because at its own moment, *under its own authority*, it is valid even if I am, even if my thoughts are completely mad” (2001: 67, emphasis added). This has been explored above. Madness, at this point, is not interred by rationality as Foucault would argue, for the difference between madness and reason *has yet* to be asserted. The Cogito, at this point, does not question whether it is mad or not (or both). It questions the authority of its own voice. Descartes realises this, however, which is why “he pulls himself out of madness” (2001: 72) by establishing the validity of his clear and distinct perceptions through an objective observer, God. Without that objective observer the difference between madness and rationality cannot be established for they are of the same type. The Cogito is *both* rational and mad, rational through its doubt, mad in its return to the self, the fundamental basis of thought. For



Foucault, madness *becomes* at the point when madness is excluded from the Cogito; for Derrida, madness gives birth to the Cogito, universal doubt is in itself mad. Descartes, in Derrida's reading, takes madness to its logical limit in an attempt to think beyond the limit. Madness becomes, rather than the other to philosophy, one of its constitutive elements.

The concepts of the *pharmakon* and the "Negro" (as a concept) do not escape the logic of this argument. The *pharmakon*, for Derrida, is an exile, a movement from the inside to the out. The "Negro" too, for Hegel, is an exile. The "Negro" *returns* to nature. If the Cogito is a return, through radical doubt, to madness and to the self, then madness becomes the *pharmakon* of rationality. Both are supplementary to each other. In the episteme of western modernity, the "Negro" is the embodiment of this return, the representation of a return to madness *qua* primitive state. This mythology is only powerful because of the underlying concern and need of western modernity for progress. Consequently, both the *pharmakon* and the "Negro" occupy a similar conceptual position in relation to the Cogito. Problematically however, and in line with Foucault, while madness may not have been interned immediately *in* the Cogito with the proclamation of the sovereignty of rationality, madness, the *pharmakon* and indeed the "Negro" were exiled from the Cogito lest they reveal the founding moment of the mythology. They were exiled for or because of their existence *in* the Cogito, an exile that reveals the founding moment of the Cogito. Thus "[i]t is only one step from here to make madness a sin, a step that was soon cheerfully taken, as Foucault demonstrates" (Derrida 2001: 63). Rationality would now forever have to claim sovereignty over the distinction that gave birth to it. To do so would mean prioritising, at every turn, the legitimacy of the rational over the irrational by reaffirming the mythology that hides its origin.

This claim, considering the archaeological method from which it is derived, is juridical. As Derrida (2001: 62 – 63, emphasis added), in tracing Foucault sums up, "[m]adness ... is *confined* to the interior of the exterior and to the exterior of the interior. It is the other Cogito. I cannot be mad when I think and when I have clear and distinct ideas." Importantly though, the distinction between the mind and the body becomes normative at the instance of diffraction – there is another Cogito, an implicit Cogito, that hides behind madness. Derrida (2001: 63, emphasis added) highlights this normativity thus:

Descartes, by inscribing his reference to madness within the problematic of knowledge, by making madness *not only a thing of the body but an error of the body*, by concerning himself

with madness only as the modification of ideas, or the faculties of representation or judgement, intends to neutralise the originality of madness.

It is here then that we see the birth of the further distinction between the mind and the body, as a direct product of Descartes's *Meditations*. If the mind is the locus of rationality while the body is the locus of the primal senses and madness, and if rationality is superior to irrationality, then the mind is superior to the body. So long as the mind is seen as the originator of identity, then that individual is legitimated as individual *qua* the metaphysical heritage discussed above. If, however, it is the body that becomes the locus of attention, then that individual is necessarily placed below those who are seen as rational. This, I argue, *justified* the continued system of differences in America. This system, however, was narrated through such phenomena as music and jazz. When the bebopper, both white and black, revealed the logic of the mythology that justified the system, in their very being, then their presence was condemned in the name of the metaphysical heritage of rationality. As shall be explored below, this came to special prominence in the form of the "hep cat," the white bebopper.

In relation to the *pharmakon* it is my argument that if the use of the *pharmakon* exiles one's mind from one's body, then the body will be predominantly used to articulate judgements of the narcotic user. It will become the focus of critique. For instance, in the above quote from Zora Neal Hurston, the music is *felt* by the "Negro" while merely listened to by the "white man." This is a descriptive claim. Normatively however to transcend the body and have clear and distinct perceptions one must condemn and sacrifice the body. This is done in the name of the mind, and consequently, rationality. This is modernity's normative claim and the justification for the juridical nature of the Cogito. In the case of narcotic users, as a function of the exile of the *pharmakon*, they revelled in the sensuality of their irrational bodies. This placed them in direct conflict with the austere rationality of the mind and proper personhood.

### **The *Pharmakon* and the "Negro"**

The *pharmakon* both invokes and celebrates the body. Inversely, for some, this celebration of the sensual was seen as an attempt to banish rationality from modernity. For instance, the book *Young Man With a Horn* (Baker 1938: 1) opens with the following words:

In the first place maybe he shouldn't have got himself mixed up with Negroes. It gave him a funny slant on things and he never got over it. It gave him a feeling for undisciplined expression, a hot, direct approach, a full-throated ease that never did him any final good in his later dealings with those of his race, those whom civilization has whipped into shape, those who can contain themselves and play what's written.

This "full-throated" ease is situated in direct contrast to "those who can contain themselves and play what's written." The protagonist, at that point of touch, at the point when he was "mixed up with the Negroes" negates the rationality of his mind and becomes a body – a sensual body. It is the fear of "mixing up" systems of ontological differences and his presence among others of "his own race" that is cause for concern. The mixing up of the body and mind disrupts the Order of Things, as does the mixing of white and black.

The jazz vernacular, and bebop in particular, served as potent metaphor for the larger crises that were occurring in American society with regards to race and class; as Lopes (2005: 1469, emphasis added) notes, "[w]hat originally was mostly a trope of rebellion and authenticity within the jazz art world generated in the fields of literature, film and journalism a parallel trope of danger, *pathology*, and tragedy." As such, in accordance with Kevin Phinney (2005: 10; 13; 16) jazz music served as a barometer for the larger feelings and crises in American society. Even though there were "new patterns of thinking about race and cultural differences ... racial segregation in its various manifestations remained a reality for the African American community" (*ibid*). The American jazz and bebop vernacular, in this reading, became a place where a repressed identity could be formed. This would become a costly exercise however, for at the moment when difference was created, it also affirmed those negative assumptions upon which the discourse of difference relied in order to be legitimate. Indeed, one early article carried the logic so far that it invoked animalistic metaphors in order to describe the jazz listener, even though this article was, ironically, in support of jazz; so deep were these ontological assumptions that often the complicity of the jazz listener was made *a priori*:

Even the facial contortions of our young have been adopted. There is the soulful, but bored expression of the cud-chomping cow, occasionally giving way to the rapturous look of a dog scratching fleas, which seems to characterise an especially hep ente-chat of Le Jitterbug.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ruark, R. *The Evening Independent*. August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1947: 10.

The fear of contagion, bodily contagion, also became apparent. As one author in *The Literary Digest* argued, “[t]he [jazz] groups that play for dancing, when colored, seem infected with the virus that they try instil as a stimulus in others” (cited in Lopes 2002: 49). Again, it is the body that is used as the means of articulating their acts. Following this, as the Program Director of KPBC radio station in Los Angeles noted after banning the airing of bebop, “Bebop ... tends to make degenerates out of our young listeners” (cited in Lopes 2002: 210). The double consciousness of the bebopper now becomes apparent. For instance, one bebopper declared that

I argued that to forsake one’s race to better one’s condition was no less worthy an action than to forsake one’s country for the same purpose. I finally made up my mind that I would neither disclaim the black race nor claim the white race; but that I would change my name, raise a moustache, and let the world take me for what it would (cited in Evans 2000: 81).

While the existence and concept of “negro” jazz was in and of itself extremely controversial, perhaps the most disputed manifestations of this discourse was that of the white “hep-cat.” As Baraka (1963: 188. *Emphasis added*) argues,

The white beboppers of the forties were as far removed from society as Negroes, *but as a matter of choice*. The important idea here is that the white musicians and other young whites who associated themselves with this negro music identified the Negro with this separation, this nonconformity, though, of course, the Negro had no choice.

The white hep-cats, by choosing to construct their identity in opposition to society rather than through it, exiled themselves from the system of differences that defined the meaning of their being and their whiteness. In order to do so, they adopted the full arsenal of hip totems and artefacts – they spoke with the slow slur of the drunken jazz player, wore the zoot suit of the “hip cat,” and, it was often reported, were fond of “skinning up” a “reefer” (smoking marijuana) or spiking heroin. Their existence, however, problematised the larger system of difference that maintained the distinction between white and black. Their incorporation into what was predominantly thought of as a “black” realm, even more so because they did this willingly, brought to light not only the difference between the two “realms,” but highlighted the mythology which maintained the distinction between the two. Rather than separate entities, the existence of the white hep-cat revealed the mythology of the separation for what

it was, a mythology. As such their very existence dedifferentiated and revealed the myth of racial difference. While their incorporation into the jazz trope was not a problem for the “negro,” it was extremely problematic for the sovereign discourse of white rationality. What was needed was a strategy of delegitimation, to show that “their minds had undergone a slow poisoning.” If they were no longer rational, if they had now become a body, then their consequent condemnation would only serve to further legitimate the distinction between white and black, rational and irrational. The *pharmakon* of the narcotic could be blamed for this exile, and itself condemned as being parasitic on the system of differences which had caused these young white men and women to fall from the grace of rationality. The *pharmakon*, then, was to have two effects. On the one hand, it was to dedifferentiate the difference that legitimated the racial mythology by being used, in part, as a means of articulating this new space of non-difference. On the other, and when this occurred, it was used both as an explanation and a means of condemning those who had revealed the racial mythology for what it was – the illegitimate and illegal use of narcotics became a moral and juridical concern.

### **Jazz Doubles and Synchronic Exclusion**

The Cartesian metaphysics that had thus far defined the parameters of western modernity situated the body, and those whose identity was articulated through the body, in an ontologically inferior position to that of rationality. One such means of articulating this inferiority was through the lens of disease and contagion – in the instance of bebop specifically it became a worry that the music and lifestyle would infect the youth, causing degeneracy before such time as they had become rational human beings. The emergent fear of infection would be made manifest, firstly, in jazz music directly, and secondly, in the system of differences that had structured “race relations” until now. It was feared, in other words, not only that the music would infect the youth, and even more dangerously, young white women, but that the resulting mixing of bodily fluids would cause a primal degeneracy, a nefarious subversion of the great white and rational mind. Indeed, as Stefan Kühn has documented in *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism* (2001) it was this reasoning that would be taken to its logical limit in the form of social Darwinism and eugenics. Familiar narratives emerged because of this fear, engendering numerous strategies formulated to protect the young and the weak and which

were used to legitimise the sovereignty of the rational mind. Paradoxically however, for those that willingly excluded themselves from the larger system of differences, these strategies of condemnation provided the means by which their identity could be expressed. Rather than accept or internalise the essentialising discourses which made “the Negro” and all of their pursuits morally deviant, it was this “moral deviance” which helped define the borders, indeed were constitutive of, what it was to be hip or hep – the “squares” gave rise to hipness as much as they helped define the perimeters of their own square being.

While this was to occur most visibly in the case of bebop, its predecessor, American jazz, had been born and defined by being excluded from the legitimacy of the European jazz vernacular. This rejection, as noted, was at once both descriptive and normative – American jazz music was not only seen as different from the traditional modes of expression forged in the halls of Europe, but, due to its emphasis on improvisation and synchronic note structures became seen as a “playful” but ultimately inferior expression of the genre. Further divisions occurred, that were in part, driven by racial discord. American jazz, at its beginning, attempted to ape the European vernacular in all forms, including the make up of its musicians and the audience it attempted to attract. The heralding of the first black composer, Paul Whiteman (Fitzgerald 2002: 74) and his consequent success, not to mention his use of black musicians, disturb the system of differences which posited that black musicians could not create original pieces of work. Over and above this, a new point of diffraction also occurred in the genre in which a distinction was made between a more traditional conception of American jazz, and what would become known as swing. It was swing that would, in some sense, give birth to bebop by moving the performances out of the music halls and concert venues and into the basement bars and clubs. However, it was with the rise of bebop that the largest distinction occurred. Indeed, it was bebop that created the most controversy in American society, especially when the white hep-cat became integral to the scene.

### **Bebop and the *Pharmakon***

The birth of an ideologically and musically distinct group, the beboppers, “signified rebellion against dominant norms [racial, musical, ontological] while also affirming those norms” (Lopes 2005: 1468). As noted in the first section of this chapter, with the rise of the beboppers, two distinct paradoxes of differentiation emerged. On the one hand, the rebellion received its discursive parameters from larger society. The beboppers were as much defined

by themselves as by larger society's rejection of them. At each turn then, rather than undermine the bebopper's social project, society's rejection of their values helped to strengthen those self-same values. On the other hand, the rejection of these norms also essentialised the beboppers. Rather than affirming the difference of their new grouping, they helped to affirm the general stereotypes as to what constituted the "Negro." The resulting antagonistic relationship between society and the bebopper was a product of a Cartesian metaphysics. The beboppers exiled themselves from society through their emphasis of the objectivity of their own being. Making an object out of oneself was at all times important – the zoot suit, the dance, the narcotic all defined the parameters of what constituted hip or heppness. This objectification was at once both a product of the essentialising discourses affecting the "negro" and the constant affirmation and reappropriation of those discursive constructs of what constituted "the native." Problematically however, because of the oppositionary logic of western modernity, this conscious affirmation of the sign-value of the body in its various displayed guises delegitimated the project. Beboppers became articulated, especially in the eyes of white middle-class society, as an animalistic and inferior being, defined through their bodies and their drug use. At once then, there was both a juridical and moral distinction between the hip and the square, between the rational mind of white middle class suburbia and the inner-city hedonism of the bebopper.

It was not only white, rational society that contested the beboppers extremism; many jazz musicians felt that the bebopper project was actually undermining the project of jazz and emancipation. The project of emancipation that the beboppers were undertaking, rather than providing an alterative system of differences, was beginning to be seen as actually simply reaffirming the very stereotypes that prevented jazz music being seen as legitimate. For, instance, Bob Livingston noted that

For a long time now the public has scorned jazz, possibly because they felt that the average jazz musicians was a drug addict. Now is the time to wake them up to the truth about jazz musicians and now is the time to educate our future musicians and see to it that they do not make the mistakes that some of today's musicians have made ... Use of narcotics by jazz musicians will only make the public scorn our music that much more (cited in Lopes 2002: 211).

This is not to say, however, that some jazz musicians did not use narcotics – Louis Armstrong was infamous for his use of his "close friend," marijuana, while Charlie "Bird" Parker was more likely than not a confirmed heroin addict (Lopes 2002: 76). As to whether

the use of narcotics influenced their music in any radical way, or was as prevalent as the reports suggest is suffice to say, mere speculation, and beyond the borders and intent of this analysis. Some jazz musicians soon realised that jazz's association with narcotics was highly detrimental to its legitimacy. Some took radical steps in an attempt to dispel the association. As Lopes (2005: 1478) notes,

In *Metronome*, critic Barry Ulanov (1951a, 1951b, 1951c) had a three-part series on narcotics; critic Jazz Tracy (1954) began a series titled "Narcotics and Music" in *Down Beat*; and critic Nat Hentoff (1954) announced the formation of Narcotics Anonymous in *Down Beat*. The same year saw a Los Angeles musicians' union – Local 47 – announce that any member convicted of a narcotics violation would be suspended, whereas musicians in New York City were faced with the loss of their cabaret cards for convictions. *Metronome* and *Down Beat* began presenting personal stories of modern jazz musicians' struggles with narcotics.

The role of the narcotic in jazz music became highly contested. For the bebopper, its lore was one means by which their identity was articulated. For the "traditionalist" the narcotic was problematic as it undermined the legitimacy of jazz music. At this point however the very notion of what constituted a narcotic was also contested. The use of heroin, for instance, was condemned in most instances, while the use of marijuana was accepted in some circles within the jazz community. Both however were legislated against during this time, and indeed both had been demonised by Harry Anslinger, America's first drug "czar." His interaction with the narrative of the narcotic will be further discussed below, and in the following chapters.

The suspected illegitimate and illegal use of drugs became the terrain upon which jazz, and especially the bebopper, could be critiqued. Moreover, those who were considered to be jazz listening addicts became the perfect scapegoats by means of which the distinctions between the rational and irrational could once more be legitimated. The crisis of degree caused by the bebopper, in other words, would be resolved by their exclusion. For instance, one commentator from the time argued "Jazz is so clearly a music for dissidents that it has seldom been welcome in any conservative or autocratic country like Russia. Its roots in fantasy can be seen in the names of some famous musicians: Duke, Count, Lord, King, Bird, Lady, President" (cited in Winick 1961: 63). As was feared by the traditionalists, jazz music and the narcotic had become associated with one another. Indeed, jazz music itself became seen as a *pharmakon*, a mechanism engendering an exile from all that was good and rational. Jazz music, and especially the bebopper, would "accelerate the erosion of traditional values"



(Kamin 1975: 275). With the erosion of these traditional values, and with the normalisation of jazz music, it was feared that society would begin an inevitable moral slide into the realm of the bebopper. As one author thought,

... the illiterate gangsters of our younger generation are definitely influenced in their lawlessness by this throwback to jungle rhythms. Either it actually stirs them to orgies of sex and violence (as its model did for the savages themselves), or they use it as an excuse for the removal of all inhibitions and the complete disregard of the conventions of decency. Aside from the illiteracy of this vicious "music," it has proved itself definitely a menace to youthful moral and an incitement to juvenile delinquency (cited in Frith 1998: 129).

The familiar critiques of sexual deviancy, ontological degeneracy, and epistemological primordialism infected the jazz vernacular. Problematically however, for some jazz was not simply a form or genre of music. Jazz music became symbolic of the synthesised identity of the modern black subject, the sound track, as noted, to their emancipation. The beboppers, however, by taking to the logical conclusion the central tenets of jazz, overemphasised this new ontological order, condemning themselves to the very stereotypes they were attempting to escape. Their disturbance of the Order of Things was simply too radical. At a semiotic level, the existence of the beboppers both revealed and undermined the mythology of rationality. Problematically however, it was the concept of rationality that was used to undermine the bebopper. The irrational and illegitimate use of the narcotic, whether real or presupposed, defined this oppositional structure. On the one hand, the use of the narcotic became a definitive means of articulating one's identity, of being hip or hep. On the other, the use of the narcotic legitimated the juridical condemnation of the bebopper as simply another manifestation of the irrational "native." Sensuality and spirituality became the contested domain upon which a new system of difference was to be created.

### Synthesised Identities

As noted, for the jazz musician and bebopper, language itself and a specific style of rhetoric was one of the definitive tropes of the identity. For instance, Louis Armstrong, when asked if he would go to Russia to play jazz, is quoted as saying "Yes sir. I believe I could warm up them cats. They ain't so cold but what we couldn't bruise them with the happy music" (cited in Pinfold 1987: 111). The article, however also ridicules Armstrong's lack of

knowledge of international affairs – “Strong on such subjects as jazz, reducing diets and happiness, Armstrong admitted he’s weak on international affairs. When someone told him the four Foreign Ministers were in session in Geneva, he said: ‘Well I ain’t heard a four piece band in a longtime. I’d like to dig ’em” (*ibid*). The normative assumptions of a Cartesian metaphysics creeps in even in these most harmless of conversations – Armstrong “is strong” on emotional topics, topics concerning feeling and ultimately the body, and laughably weak on those “real” rational topics, such as the meeting between four Foreign Ministers. The language of the articles inserts a distance between Armstrong’s knowledge and the normatively superior knowledge of the intended reader. This distance is not just difference in itself, but a means of judging the jazz player. Ironically enough, bebop was described by Armstrong as “nothing but mistakes ... Those kids come to a passage they don’t dare tackle so they play a thousand notes to get around it ... It’s jujitsu music. Nothing but squeezing and twisting notes.”<sup>72</sup> Armstrong is caught in the two paradoxes of differentiation noted earlier. On the one hand, he realises that bebop, rather than create difference, affirms the stereotypes and prejudices of larger society. Equally however, his language and means of articulating his own worldview is ridiculed. He himself affirms the common ascriptions and lack of legitimate knowledge of the “native.”

The discursive parameters that defined the bebopper were not only articulated personally, but were forged from external pressure and condemnation. For instance, *The Milwaukee Journal*, on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1950, printed an article entitled “Bebop Blamed on Education: Need of Religion Told.”<sup>73</sup> The article argued that

The effects of education without religion are seen in the conduct of the “bebopper” ... Msgr. Goebel last Tuesday asked principals of catholic schools to ban the activities of the “beboppers,” whom he said could be detected by freakish dress, gang threats and unorthodox conduct. Teen agers thus described, he said, represent a type of training that might be given to a “high breed animal.” “If you reduce training to a naturalistic level, and have education without God, you will have an overexpression of man’s lower nature,” he declared.

Hegel’s Cartesian assertions are obvious here. The return to nature symbolised by the “negro” is at once both an exile and escape. That return, however, is judged in the terms of the logic of the hidden myth that conceals the origin of the Cogito. In the same manner as the

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<sup>72</sup> Unknown Author. *The Milwaukee Independent*. Nov 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1949.

<sup>73</sup> Unknown Author, *The Milwaukee Independent*, Nov 18<sup>th</sup>, 1950.

narcotic, the bebopper has to be excluded, even at the most literal textual level, through the inclusion of the inverted comma, to mark that one is writing about but is not that which is so defiled. Again, the “animal” is radically different from the austere and rational white man who is God-fearing, hard working, and everything that the transcendently legitimated Great American Dream asks him to be. The conflation of the bebopper and that target of a new temperance, the narcotic, became so entrenched that “the general public makes such a direct connection between jazz music and drugs that it was recently occasion for a major news story when a prominent jazz musician announced that he was *not* taking drugs” (Winick 1961: 240). What the article fails to engage with, however, is the very reason why the beboppers self-consciously excluded themselves from society.

The transcendental aspirations of the Great American Dream were premised on a fundamental ontological taxonomy justified through a Cartesian metaphysics. The “Negros” was seen to inhabit the bottom of this taxonomy. Because of this, their right to the Great American Dream was at best distant, even if their legal status had been modified. Beboppers, by asserting their own version of the Dream garnered for themselves an identity and future. With competing versions of the Dream, however, the Great American Dream itself became revealed as a mythology that itself relied on the racialised systems of rationality and difference in order to sustain itself. In order to re-legitimate *the* Dream, any other competing versions of that mythology had to be sacrificially excluded and ridiculed. Moreover, by claiming sovereignty over itself and other versions of the Dream, the original American Dream would once again be legitimated as the sovereign narrative. Accordingly, by reworking and thus highlighting the essentialised paradigm of the “native,” of which the bebopper was its latest incarnation, the mythology of the Great and Singular American Dream was legitimated. This reworking reasserted the primal metaphysical difference of Cartesian doubt – jazz and black people were once again positioned as objective and non-rational bodies. Consequently, and considering this, they *had* to be governed for they could not do it themselves. It was for this reason that the bebopper had to be hounded, and the illegitimate and illegal use of drugs further demonised.

## **Hip and Square**

The affirmation of the hep or hip identity not only used language but many other forms of signification by means of which to articulate a unique and political identity. The

zoot suit is perhaps the most famous but a number of other stylistic devices were employed in order to define the hep from the square. One newspaper reported that

The flapper of the Terrible Twenties is due for a comeback in the Fabulous Fifties. Newest indication is the return of the short evening dress, a favourite of the jazz age now gaining general acceptance in the bebop era. Along with the single bob, the shorter skirt and the “bunny hug” coat, it is a sign of the times.<sup>74</sup>

While some have argued that these modes of dress singled out the bebopper for condemnation and harassment by the authorities, which it did, for others it was precisely because of these measures that the mode of dress was adopted. The body became the symbol upon which identity could be hung. The overemphasis of this process by the beboppers was a product of the larger discursive parameters within which they were inserted. Having nothing more than sensuality and the body by which to define themselves, that body became the political symbol of resistance. Problematically however, the garments that adorned the body, while being a means of expressing identity, also became the focus of critique.

The music came to define the bebopper as much as the bebopper came to define the music. This articulation of the jazz identity was unapologetic – “As for the music that makes these youngsters behave as they do, Benny Goodman makes no apologies for it. What is more, he staunchly defends it as the true American spirit in music. He regards it as something that has emerged out of our habits, our climate, institutions, and people” (cited in Lopes 2002: 124). The romanticised rebellion of the white hepster is perhaps the most paradigmatic articulation of the process and politics of the definition of the beboppers’ identity. One white bebopper, “Bix” Beiderbecke, on hearing Armstrong play, “realised immediately that Armstrong’s music was true hot style, that by comparison his own playing was faltering and ‘corny.’ Bix Beiderbecke was too fine a musician to be simply an imitator. But he boldly decided to absorb negro style which white musicians scorned to play” (cited in Lopes 2002: 139). Absorbing the style did not simply mean playing an instrument in a specific way – true beboppers *lived* their style.

The condemnation of the jazz musician and club, as well as the white hepster, reached its pinnacle when it was assumed that young white women were becoming enmeshed in bebopper culture. For instance, one article reported a “Jam Spot [was] Raided as ‘Thrill Club for Jazz-Struck Young Girls:’”

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<sup>74</sup> Unknown Author, *Lewiston Evening Journal*. Sep 28<sup>th</sup>, 1949.

More than 50 Minneapolis musicians and their friends were snatched by detectives from a jam session at the Harlem Breakfast Club last month and thrown in jail to languish there until the following noon. The charge: the club is a “thrill” place for jazz-struck girls and their “reefer smoking” musicians friends! ... [The Breakfast Club] was the last and only place white and coloured musicians could get together for “sessions” ... and always has been a common meeting place for musicians of all classes and races to express their feelings without interruption from those who neither care for nor understand this type of music (cited in Lopes 2002: 145).

Just like Chang had once been condemned for “preying” on white women, so too now was the subversive drugged up “Negro.” Once more, these raids were conducted under the auspices of protection, and made from the standpoint of the realm of sovereignty of white male rationality. The basement jazz club, in bringing together different races and different classes, revealed the mythology that sustained the American system of racial difference as impotent. Once revealed, in other words, the mythology had no power by which continually to define the difference between people. The police raids and subsequent condemnation of the public can usefully be seen, then, as a juridical attempt not only to re-establish those differences which had structured American society, but as a direct attempt to reinstate the sovereignty of the distinction needed for the racial system of differences to continue to function.

Realising that jazz’s association with the narcotic was creating, or perhaps more accurately, exacerbating a negative jazz ideology, many spokespeople of the jazz profession took the issue to heart. For instance, in *Down Beat*, Lionel Hampton argued that “ALL musicians do NOT smoke weeds, nor do ALL musicians drink! I know that is going to get a lot of yokels back on their heels, but they need it. Why the profession has to keep taking black eyes because a few cats here and there believe in living their lives, is a little beyond me” (cited in Lopes 2002: 144). Of course, this is not to say that the jazz profession was completely void of the use of narcotics and alcohol. Rather, what needs to be noted is the juridical manner in which these accusations made manifest specific technocratic measures aimed not only at increasing the mechanisms of surveillance aimed at the jazz musician’s control, but also, legitimated this control. The private life of the jazz musician had become public; and the narcotic was functioning as the mechanism by which that life could once

more be delegitimated in the eyes of rationality. Indeed, soon not only the beboppers were assumed to be users and purveyors of narcotics. For instance, *Down Beat* reported that

The idea that weed which is supposed to have first taken hold of the low-down musicians playing in Harlem dives is now spreading to the bigger bands where instrumentalists now use it to emit the wild abandoned rhythms which comprise swing music is said to be arousing intense interest at J. Edgar Hoover's headquarters. Whether it is true or not the FBI is convinced that there is a good deal to the rumours which they have heard and they are planning on investigation (*ibid*).

Problematically however for the white hep cat it was precisely this type of surveillance that made the jazz club and lifestyle dangerously glamorous. For black musicians, the association of jazz music and narcotics was detrimental to their careers. However, the association drew in the bored white middle class, giving it new audiences. Caught then on the one hand between the want and need to express their identities within the soundscape offered by jazz and bebop, and on the other, being demonised as drug peddlers of the era, the jazz musician's life became fraught with danger, so much so that they almost expected to be eventually arrested for some or other charge. For the bebopper, however, the threat of arrest only made more romantic their deviance.

### **Narcotic Metaphysics**

As noted in the previous sections of this chapter, there are two constitutive paradoxes of differentiation that emerge in the narcotic narrative during this time. While at times chronological they also display a unique logic. Before this logic can be understood in itself it is necessary once more to briefly overview the two paradoxes of differentiation. In the first, the bebopper's expulsion from society also simultaneously defined the discursive parameters of their identity. Their identity, then, was premised on exclusion. Through this exclusion an ontological space was opened to which not only was the bebopper expelled, but to which many beboppers happily went. Thus, the paradox of differentiation is that at each turn of exclusion, at each attempt to rid society of the bebopper, a space was opened in which the bebopper could strengthen their identity. Rather than excluding the bebopper, the exclusion created the bebopper. While this first paradox of differentiation was beneficial to the bebopper, indeed was constitutive of their identity, the second was not. In the second

paradox, once the space for the bebopper had been created by their exclusion, beboppers created an identity for themselves. This identity, however, was premised to a larger degree on what society was not, as a function of the first paradox. Thus, when society emphasised rationality, the bebopper emphasised sensuality. Instead of listening to music they danced to it.

Problematically however, rather than differ from society, this oppositional logic affirmed the self-same stereotypes that had led to the stereotypical placement of the “native” at the bottom of the ontological taxonomy. At each turn, rather than create an ultimate and austere difference, a radically new identity, the bebopper simply reaffirmed why they had been excluded from society in the first place. This oppositional logic was a product of the trace of the Cogito that worked unseen just behind the stage of identity. The mind, rationality, and the entire methodological oeuvre associated with those two former aspects were still understood to be normatively superior. The bebopper, by emphasising the precise opposite, the body, sensuality and so on, became normatively inferior through the creation of their very identity. Thus a paradox emerged in which beboppers created for themselves their own exclusion and judgement at each attempt to define their new identity. As noted, this oppositional logic was at once both epistemological and juridical; the “native,” so long as they reaffirmed the stereotypes of what constituted a native, would be judged by those stereotypes.

Consequently, two mythologies arose. On the one hand, the Great American Dream was justified through pious work and a rational mind. On the other existed the bebopper’s dream of the immediacy of sensuality and the simulacrum of narcotic use. Problematically, the existence of competing mythologies revealed them as just that, mythologies. Like competing truth claims reveal the fact that there is no absolute truth, contending mythologies reveal mythologies as mythology. In order to reassert the truth and therefore primacy of the mythology of the Great American Dream, the mind/body distinctions of the Cogito were emphasised. Through the exclusion, the Great American Dream asserted the right, which was no more than the power, to make and legitimise differences. In this way, the bebopper’s attempts to assert their own identity forced them back once more to the bottom of the ontological hierarchy.

## Conclusion

As noted, a number of paradoxes of differentiation manifested themselves during this time creating, most symbolically, a jazz identity that had as one of its constitutive elements its rejection by mainstream society. In other words, it was only because of the difference between the jazz identity and the mainstream, between, for instance, the zoot suit and the straight-cut collared shirt, that the juridical legitimacy/illegitimacy of the suit became powerful, and importantly, was deployed and critiqued both at an epistemological and an ontological level. There were then *strategies* of delegitimation/legitimation deployed, *simultaneously*, within the narrative and which became constitutive of the narrative. The *pharmakon*, as ever, made each narrative supplementary to the other – the critique of jazz musicians as “dope fiends” delegitimized the musicians in the eyes of the public while at the same time creating a shared identity, an ontological “home” which helped form and cement the jazz musician as a musician, and as musicians, in their own right. It is by fighting the charge of narcotic use that they became jazz musicians as an analytical type. Importantly though, and as noted, this logic is supplementary. Therefore it is not only that the jazz identity was wrought from larger society’s critique of that form, but also society, as that which was *not* the jazz musician, became articulated and understood as a coherent concept. As shall be analysed in the following chapter, this gave rise to different lifestyles, and ultimately, the new and burgeoning middle-class. Furthermore, the trace of the other is always present within a supplementary logic – the fear of the narcotic not only cemented the mainstream, but also became constitutive of its identity. Thus, and paradoxically, the further they attempted to distance themselves, the further they attempted to insert walls and disclaimers between the narcotic user and the non-narcotic user, the more the concept of the narcotic crept in. The difference between the two types, between the legitimate and the illegitimate, between the mainstream and the jazz musician, is also always deferred – the trace of the other is realised conceptually, but remains hidden. The fear of the narcotic other, in other words, is always deferred to those groups that are deemed illegitimate, even if the trace of this illegitimacy creates the difference necessary for meaning to be made.

The jazz trope, then, highlights most clearly the fear and loathing of the narcotic and the user. The jazz identity was wrought from this opposition, using the opposition as a means of creating identity. In the same manner, this logic can be seen to be repeated, indeed (and as shall be argued in the following chapters) is iterable at the moment of the deployment of a western metaphysics. As such, the trace of the narcotic will always haunt modernity, not



because it is the ulterior other, the ultimate demon, but because it, as a concept, is invoked at the very instance that modernity is invoked – rather than the nefarious demon, it is modernity's *pharmakos*. Understanding this complex interaction necessitates not only an understanding of modernity, but also a need to seek new ways in which to articulate the narcotic.

## Chapter 4: Hollywood, Consumption and Cocaine

### Introduction

In the previous three chapters the methodological foundation of this study has been explored. As a consequence, the chapters have focussed to a large degree on the various transformations that the narrative of the narcotic, and indeed the narrative of western modernity, has undergone. However, these transformations also have consistently pointed to the importance of the actual users themselves. Accordingly, this chapter seeks to directly confront the manner in which the modern narcotic user began to be articulated in America, with a view to furthering the conclusions of the previous chapters. As such, it is the argument of this chapter that the illegitimate and illegal consumption of narcotics became a potent means of articulating and legitimating pre-existing differences in society. This was on the one hand to provide potent strategies of critique by which the narcotic user could be healed or condemned. On the other hand however, who was to be healed and who was to be condemned became a function of the ontological hierarchies structuring society. For this reason this chapter takes into account the radical transfiguration that the mythology of the Great American Dream underwent, and the consequent birth of the individual. While the previous chapter used the example of heroin, this chapter returns to the narrative of cocaine.

In order for cocaine to be pharmacologically active, it must be consumed. However, the event of consumption is not without its own narrative, and indeed, without its own changing meanings.<sup>75</sup> It is my argument, set specifically in North America, that the need and drive to consume certain consecrated items during the 1960s and 1970s both forced and was a consequence of a radical re-imagining of the American Dream. As a result the narrative of cocaine and the narrative of consumption became embroiled in a tense relationship that ultimately helped define both. To view this relationship, this chapter focuses on articulations of Hollywood and cocaine, specifically because it was here that the act of consumption became especially prominent.

Analytically I argue that the re-imagining of the American Dream placed individuality and consumption at the very centre of a new mythology. This was not however individuality *and* consumption, but individuality *through* consumption – the generative act of the

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<sup>75</sup> For an overview of this analytical terrain, see Steven Miles' paradigmatic *Consumerism: as a Way of Life* (1998) and Peter Stearns' *Consumerism in World History: the Global Transformation of Desire* (2001; 2006).

formation and display of a legitimate identity became a function of the possibility of consuming certain rarefied goods and products. Problematically however, the need to be a consuming individual in the face of rampant consumption created a substantive paradox of differentiation – individuality became lost at the very moment it was created. This is because the narrative of consumption made rare certain goods. For these goods to remain rare they could only be consumed by those who had reached the very pinnacle of the narrative; individuality was a function, in part, of the possibility of the singular consumption of very rare products. However, in the face of mass production, and thus consumption, many once rare goods became easily available and economically attainable. Ironically, affordability made mass consumption possible, but also made the attainment of individuality through that consumption much more difficult. Consequently, ever more rare and ever more unattainable goods and products needed to be consumed in order to articulate one's identity as unique. As Arendt (1961: 199, emphasis added) argues, "A good part of the despair of individuals of mass society is due to the fact that these avenues of *escape* are, of course, closed as soon as society has incorporated all the strata of the population." In the face of this mass consumption, cocaine became one such rare product that could be used to revitalise one's individuality. Its price and illegality cast the narcotic as a rarefied good, whose glamour was emphasised by its perceived use by the famous stars of Hollywood. Methodologically then, by operating as a *pharmakon*, it offered an exile from mass consumption, and a return to individuality. As a consequence, the narcotic and its consumption was, as shall be explored, legitimately illegitimate. It is for this reason, among others, that cocaine became the drug of choice for the middle-class, the carnal supplement to the re-imagined Great American Dream.

The pull of the temptation to become a truly unique individual through exiling oneself from the consumption of the masses represents a fundamental reorientation of the central tenets of the Great American Dream and a fundamental collapse of the order of things. As shall be argued, the narrative of the American Dream was transformed from a concern with family values, God, the Founding Fathers and the piety of work to a concern with the glory of consumption. However, in later years, as shall be explored in the following chapter, many advocated a return to those values upon which the American nation had been built. In both instances, however, the narrative of cocaine played an integral role in the differing articulations of what constituted a legitimate Dream. The mythology of the American Dream reoriented itself, leading not to the death of God, but to the rise of the god of consumption. A new religion took hold of middle-class America, replacing the church with the shopping mall, prayer with consumption, and redemption with Calvin Klein. Consequently what emerged, I

argue, was a new discourse or “hyperreality” (Baudrillard 1988) in which the sign-value of representation, as a means of articulating one’s individual identity, superseded all other traditional values. Amongst those items that became consecrated, cocaine and its consumption became especially potent. At once sought after and yet recognisably illicit and illegal, the consumption of cocaine, at first, defined the individual as having reached the pinnacle of this new individuality. Indeed, its illegality contributed to its glamour – not only could cocaine be difficult to obtain, but it could reveal the consumer as so individual as to be seen as beyond the auspices of the state. This was a consumer who could not be held back, by religion, law, or social convention.

Following Baudrillard, it will be shown that a space was opened where the hyperreality of consumption was paradoxically one of simulation, where simulation itself became the valuable product. Cocaine stood as a product of consumption not only because of its epistemological status, but also because of its very psychological effects. Cocaine, in other words, not only made people *look* good, but made them feel good too, emphasising those psychological traits which were being glorified by the new American Dream. However, with the birth of the hyperreality of conspicuous consumption, the exile offered by the narcotic to a new individuality could no longer sustain itself. As such, an ontological frustration became apparent, heralding in the pursuit of ever new and more potent forms of simulation and exile. In other words, at every turn or attempt to create difference, rather than create that difference, the act of consumption dedifferentiated the difference the individual sought through the very act of consumption. This is what is meant by the consumptive paradox of differentiation, which is the analytical backbone of this chapter. Indeed, as I argue later in this chapter, it is this paradox of differentiation that would ultimately give birth to the “crack epidemic” that was in turn to create the war on drugs.

The need for consumption *qua* identity would also invoke a new discourse of “expenditure,” which would serve to place a cost on all forms of productivity. This “expenditure” would be “reappropriated into presence – it is the economy of repetition. The economy of truth” (Derrida 2001: 311). In other words, truth would now be contested not through the paradigm of God, tradition, or values, but through cost. Truth itself, following from this, would be held accountable in the name of productivity. The immediacy of the productive present became the new value by which consumption was legitimated. Made possible by financial credit and lay-byes, for instance, the act of consumption superseded the need slowly to accumulate wealth and wisdom. The immediacy of the present, however, was also to create a profound crisis of values. Caught between the desire for the present and the

legitimacy of the past, a crisis of degree emerged between the two competing mythologies in which only one could be sovereign. As a consequence, many strategies of delegitimation were employed in an attempt by both to claim sovereignty over their distinction, between the values that had once guided a nation, and the values that were now looking to the future. Ultimately this would lead, I argue, to the sacrificial expulsion of the “crack” addict as a means of legitimating the mythology of traditional values. Before that expulsion could occur however, the strategies of delegitimation, using the narrative of the narcotic as one such tool, had to gain currency. This is the topic of this chapter.

When the consumption of cocaine had reached its zenith however, and when it began to be seen once again as wholly illegitimate and illegal when used beyond the borders of the medical, the user and addict also needed to renounce their use of the narcotic. As noted in chapter one, the renunciation of that use and consumption, the confession, was itself defined by broader understandings and differences within society. In chapter one, the white doctor habitué and the “Negro cocaine fiend” were treated very differently, due to their respective positions and legitimacy in society. The logic of this distinction may have been forgotten, but was not lost – certain individuals, this time by virtue of their economic capital and worth, had open to them far more possibilities for confession. The lower-class predominantly black “crack” addict generally only had one – the jail cell. This, as will be discussed in the next chapter, is in part reflected by the disparity in incarceration rates between white and black males serving sentences relating to narcotics.

As has been explored before, Foucault’s methodological oeuvre is usefully thought of as a “tool-box” (Hall and Link 2004: 14 – 32). One such concept that Foucault developed and which this chapter can use is that of *exomologesis*. Exomologesis – the full and outright confession of one’s private sins in public, often through or accompanied by the self-mutilation of one’s body – is an important practice and concept in Foucault’s work concerning the transformation from the sovereign spectacle of power to the internalised discipline of power.<sup>76</sup> Here the concept lends itself to an analysis of the redoubled self (as a function of the rise of The Individual). Foucault, in his words, describes the concept and indeed the *process* of exomologesis as consisting in “rubbing out the sin, restoring the previous purity acquired by baptism, and this by showing the sinner *as he is in his reality* – dirty, defiled, sullied” (1988: 42, emphasis added). Nancy Holland (2003: 83, emphasis added) furthers this; “[t]his process of exomologesis was often characterised as a self-

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<sup>76</sup> Seen, for instance, in the opening paragraphs of *Discipline and Punish* (1979).

martyrdom, undertaken not to create one's self or to know something about oneself, *but to destroy that self.*" The destruction of the self can be seen as a form of sacrifice in the Girardian sense – one exiles a previous self in the name of a new self. The old self is ambivalent in its status, and its expulsion restores order by restoring difference. As Foucault has shown repeatedly, the concept of sin is a discursive invention. Thus, while the logic of the exomologesis remains intact, the reasons for its deployment can change over time, both within society and within the individual. Exomologesis, however, is also biopolitical in its operation – it reduces the individual to a specific type, with certain traits and virtues, which is then expelled.

Considering cocaine's epistemological status as a narcotic, and the context of rampant consumerism, the act of cocaine's consumption promised an exile from the logic of mass consumption while at the same time reducing it to that logic. When cocaine's illegitimacy was re-established however, beyond the borders of legitimate forms of consumption, the user and addict would be forced to confess to their sins of consumption. Continuing from the logic briefly explored in chapter one, two discursive options became apparent – what have become known as medicalisation and criminalisation. While both have been analysed as separate institutional measures (Benoit 2003: 269 – 294), and indeed, until very recently, have been predominantly conceptualised as such (*ibid*), it is my argument that they both display a complimentary *logic* that substantiates the further Foucauldian distinction between the offender and the delinquent. This is not to say that the criminalisation or the medicalisation of the user is somehow the same. Rather, it points to a similarity in the manner in which they function. Both, as shall be explored, operate by creating a distance between the user and society. Once that difference has been recognised, they serve to reincorporate the individual back into society by forcing the individual to work on themselves – whether that be through group therapy or brute isolation, both serve to make apparent the sins of the individual, both to them and larger society. These similarities and distinctions will be further discussed in this and the following chapter.

### A Brief History of Consumption

While the consumption of cocaine, as a function of the re-imagination of the American Dream, is the analytical target of this study, a brief foray into the various analyses of consumption needs to be provided in order to paint the context. Indeed, a concern with the

representation of life, the *lifestyle*, has its own analytical heritage. Analyses of this form of representation and its eventual explosion in the form of consumerism have their theoretical roots in the work of Georg Simmel (1900; 2004) and Thorstien Veblin (1899). However it was not until Max Weber [original reference 1978] argued that societal relationships could be formed and sustained through articulations of lifestyles rather than simple labour market positions that the attendant concepts of sign-value and cultural capital became analytically useful. Weber's analysis was preceded, however, by the analyses of consumption of Warner (1949) and Rainwater, Coleman and McClelland (1978). With the "turn" towards post-modernism, critiques of cultural structures and strictures became important, spearheaded by the work of DiMaggio (1987). Finally, analyses of the breakdown or disintegration of these formal structures occurred, both with the work of Baudrillard (1988) and Featherstone (1991; 2007). Nonetheless, this study primarily focuses on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977; 1986). Considering the larger argument that the narcotic of cocaine was popularised through a very specific but ultimately self-defeating temptation it is the critique provided by Bourdieu's work that sets most neatly the analytical parameters for this chapter. Before such an analysis can begin however, a brief history of the consuming individual in America needs to be undertaken.

### **The Individual and Consumption**

As noted, the narrative that gave rise to a renewed emphasis on the importance of individuality was a product of a reorientation of the mythology that justified the American Dream. In this reorientation The Individual became the new focus of that narrative of the Dream. Importantly, this conception of individuality was articulated through the act of consumption. To be an individual, in other words, required that one be a consuming individual. While concerned with the value of production during and just posterior to the War years, consumption and profit were soon to supersede the pure act of production. Production, in other words, was no longer concerned with the manufacture of goods in the name of the nation (as it had been during the War years), but was made solely in the name of profit. Indeed, it was also during the 1950s that the nationalistic rhetoric linked to the production of the nation changed. The new concern, in contrast with the creation of a nation, was with the creation of a consuming individual. Conspicuous consumption, as a fundamental integer of identity, gave birth to the new middle-classes for whom consumption became constitutive of

their identity. The middle-classes became as much a product of consumerism as they were active participants in it – they became re-productive of consumerism. Indeed, Daniel Bell (1972: 15) argues that

Just as in the economy of growth of what economists call *discretionary income* – income above that necessary for the fulfilment of basic needs – allowed individuals to choose many varied items to exemplify a different consumption style (swimming pools, boats, travel), so the expansion of higher education and the extension of a permissive social atmosphere has widened the scope of *discretionary social behaviour*.

Landon Jones (2008: 41) in *Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom Generation* notes that it is here that the concern with “life-style” emerges. Whether it be a new car or washing machine, those artefacts became a means of articulating one’s position within the larger Order of Things. Specifically however, it was the sign-value of the object, rather than the object itself, that made it valuable (*ibid*). This new concern with the enactment of a lifestyle was made possible, in part, by the expansion of credit and the instalment plan. With the extension of credit, it became suddenly possible to define oneself beyond one’s means, to bask in the sign-value of objects that were not normally affordable. As a result, through one’s ownership of these consecrated objects, it became viable to define oneself through the cultural capital that these objects possessed within the emerging consumer orientated system of differences. In America specifically Jay Stevens (1987: 41) notes that

[w]hat the sociologists found was a race immersed to the point of worship in the fruits of corporate technology: the washer-dryers, the glossy cars that resembled rockets, the barbecue pits with their matching patio furniture, sales of which bounced from 53 million in 1950 to 145 million in 1960 ... while income increased a healthy 21 per cent, consumer debt zoomed up 55 per cent. In the planned communities of Levitt and Sons it was possible to buy a house for sixty dollars a month, no money down.

The portrayal of one’s individuality through the sign-value of those objects which one consumed was not without its problems however. Indeed, there were a number of further considerations that became potent as a result of the mass production of goods: rarity, prestige, and their lack of availability for instance. Consequently, a paradox of differentiation emerged – on the one hand, one’s identity was in part constituted by the products which one owned.



On the other hand however, with the extension of credit and rapid advancements in mass production, many once revered objects were now also easily available and affordable. Consequently, one simply consumed objects that others also consumed. Individuality became lost at the moment it was created.

As a result, simulation and iteration also crept in at the very moment that difference was established. The resulting conformity, a product of “the other directed” citizens of the “middle-class” was analysed extensively by David Riesman (1950) in *The Lonely Crowd* and by Mills and Jacoby’s (1951; 2002) in *White Collar: The American Middle Class*. The birth of the middle-class also had a specific historical genealogy. Beginning just after world war II, as Stevens (1987: 143) notes, at first it seemed “natural that a generation weaned on depression and war should have been attracted to material success and teamwork, but this didn’t explain the zeal with which they eradicated all that was distinctive or unusual from their lives.” This was not to continue for long though. Soon the need to express a unique identity led to new considerations – “the game was the same, except that fashion had become high fashion” (Bell 1972: 21). As a result, the individual would need to consume ever more rare and consecrated items. The differences that had structured society became dedifferentiated at the very point at which difference was made. One always had to seek a new form or item of consumption, chasing, and being chased, by the act of consumption. Cocaine, by being illegitimate and illegal, and yet glamorised by the Hollywood starlet, became one such object. The Cold War further legitimated this narrative of identity. The Rights and Freedom of the Individual to consume, as one of the metaphorical justifications for the Cold War, became part of the very mythology of this new system of differences.

### **Counter-Culture and Consumption**

The rampant spread of consumerism and the consecration of the Individual as the new integer of the American Dream originated, ironically, in the rejection of the values which had become entrenched in American society during World War II. As Theodore Roszak notes in *The Making of a Counter-Culture* (1969), publications such as *Mad* “brought into the malt shops the same angry abuse of middle class America which comics like Mort Sahl and Lenny Bruce were to begin bringing into the night clubs of the mid-fifties” (1969: 146). Coupled with the popularisation of Rock ‘n’ Roll and the invention of personal radios, the youth began to question and reject the austere and conformist attitudes of the previous generation.

Supplemented by such movies as *The Wild One* (1953) and *Rebel without a Cause* (1955), the imperative to escape the epistemological straightjacket of conformity became ever greater and more pressing. Rejection of “the system” and the counter-culture movement became one such means by which a new identity could be forged. As Daniel Bell (1972: 36, emphasis added) argues,

What the counter-culture embodies is an extension of the tendencies initiated sixty years ago by political liberalism and modernist culture, and represents, in effect, a split in the camp of modernism. For it now seeks to take the preachments of personal freedom, extreme experience (“kicks,” and “the high”) and sexual experimentation, to a point in *life-style* that the liberal culture – which would approve of such ideas in *art* and *imagination* – is not prepared to go.

The individual became the new locus of identity, in contrast to the conformity of the post-war years. However, as yet, this individuality was still concerned with its own status, and not with the rampant need to consume.

It was then, during the 1950s and 1960s that a unique environment was created. The need to be an individual however, even at this early stage, encountered a tension between conformity and individuality that would later be magnified by consumerism. In the words of Linder (cited in Stevens 1987: 147), the rebellious suburban youth was caught in a “double-bind” in which he was “forced from without to conform, and from within to rebel, [therefore] he makes a compromise: he rebels within the limits set out by the social order he has now permitted to be erected around him.” While growing their hair long and wearing torn jeans were minor political statements in and of themselves, those torn jeans were mass-produced and marketed. Accordingly, this rebellious nature ultimately failed to provide a critique or alternative to the system of differences that had come to structure American society. However the new pursuit of individuality did call into question the legitimacy of the mythology of the American dream, itself justified through the transcendental markers of God, country and community. This was to have a profound effect on the narrative of the American Dream – “[w]hat was not realised was that society itself had lost its cultural moorings” (Bell 1972: 21).

While the “non-conformists” lacked the teleological and mythological ambition to provide a substantive critique of their parents’ conformity, the rise of the “hippie” movement did. Finding its *raison d’être* in the rejection of the Vietnam War and the real politik that it stood for, the movement became vast and incorporated a number of discursive features, as

best explored by Stevens (1987) in *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream*. Considering this, perhaps what is of most concern to this study is their use and the politicisation of LSD or “acid.” The “prophets” of this movement, Aldus Huxley, Timothy Leary, and Allen Ginsberg (among others), proclaiming the mantra of “turn on, tune in, and drop out,” retrospectively legitimated a mythological narrative which could justify the political and spiritual rejection of many of those core American themes, conformity being but one of them. Rather than communities they asserted tribes, rather than consumerism they asserted “free love” and rather than a belief in an Almighty God, they believed in the power of the unconscious (to which LSD was seen as the key). The unconscious not only became the new God, but its pursuit, going to the Other Side beyond “the doors of perception” became a driving light and justification for the use of drugs. While some attempted to continue the “scientific work” of this project – bolstered by the CIA’s forays into the use of LSD as a form of “truth serum” (seen, paradigmatically, in operations ARTICHOKE and MK-ULTRA),<sup>77</sup> for many LSD became as much a social undertaking as a scientific one.

Ultimately the spiritual and indeed metaphysical reorientation of the universe, in part provided by the use of LSD and in part provided by a new mythology, created a new system of differences through which one could assert one’s identity. Problematically however (and what would serve as the authorities’ ultimate justification for their policing of the various communes), this re-engineered identity was based, to a large degree, on the willingness to use powerful narcotics. While cocaine features very little in this project, the use of LSD, marijuana and mescaline do. By the end of the 60s however, the transcendental dream of the “hippy” movement, rampant consumerism’s only competing mythology, had died. Consumerism, by default, claimed sovereignty over the American Dream. As a result focus fell on Hollywood as a paradigmatic instantiation of the rarity and glamour sought by the consuming individual. Indeed, the glamour and wealth of the Hollywood starlet became more than something simply to emulate. They themselves became people to idolise. When those idols began using cocaine, themselves attempting to seek something more rare and meaningful in the discourse of consumption, the consumption of cocaine was brought to the public’s attention. While not always legitimate, the consumption of cocaine became seen as one path whereby individuality could be conclusively asserted. The consumption of cocaine, in other words, became a means of articulating a specific form of identity.

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<sup>77</sup> For a definitive analysis of the history, objectives, and consequences of MK-ULTRA, see Judith Nagib’s excellent *MK-Ultra: A Tale of One Family, the CIA, and the War on Drugs* (2000).

## Hollywood and Consumption

Hollywood, not to mention its films and stars, was one such prominent place where the narratives of consumerism and cocaine became intertwined. Indeed, Hollywood films themselves were, and are, often a useful means by which deeper discursive undercurrents can be viewed. For instance, Hollywood of the 1970s produced such landmark films as *The Godfather* (1972), *The Exorcist* (1973), *Chinatown* (1974), and *Star Wars* (1977). These films not only produced a specific conception of the self, society, and their relationship, but also foreshadowed the commercialisation of the film industry in the 1980s. With particular reference to drug use, the addict, and their treatment, Curt Hersey (2005: 468) argues that “[t]hey [Hollywood films] can be viewed as a discourse in a Foucauldian sense – creating meaning and marking the boundaries of how filmgoers should view and understand treatment [of drug users].” Furthermore, while films are no “magic bullet ... with the power to change public perceptions and beliefs” (*ibid*) instantaneously, they do offer a means through which those larger subjects of truth, meaning, and discourse can be contextualised. It is for this reason that the films and Hollywood itself is a useful locus for historical analysis.

Hollywood films, by and large, “privilege certain viewpoints through representational strategies and by leaving out alternatives” (Hersey 2005: 468). This privileging, at a textual level, creates certain “chronotopes” (Reeves and Campbell 1994: 109) or presuppositions that construct individuals in a specific way. While film depictions of heroin have remained largely unchanged, representations of both marijuana and cocaine have altered over time (Shapiro 2002: 133). This points, minimally, to changing medical views of cocaine as a drug, and as a narcotic interacting with other discourses. One of the earliest depictions of cocaine was in a movie entitled *For His Son* (1912), in which the main protagonist is eventually confined to a psychiatric clinic for his addiction. As noted in chapter one, this conforms to the logic by which cocaine addiction remained confined to the medical. In 1928 the movie *The Pace that Kills* (later renamed *Cocaine Fiends* (1936)) depicts cocaine as a “gateway” drug that would lead to opium and heroin abuse, and ultimately, death. This articulation of cocaine conformed to the hierarchy in which opium and heroin were seen as the worst types of narcotics. More modern depictions of cocaine began with such films as *Easy Rider* (1969). The film follows the journey of the two protagonists as they embark on a journey funded by a cocaine deal – they are presented as rugged, confident men, individuals for whom no challenge is too great. The drug itself, while portrayed as illegal, is also the tool which makes the journey possible. This is precisely what the consuming individual was seeking – cocaine

was the facilitator. In 1972, *Superfly* looked at the drug trade from a black priest's perspective. That perspective was largely sympathetic. However, many argued that this was simply "blaxploitation:" the movie, while sympathetic to the use of cocaine, relied on the age-old stereotype of black men being drug dealers in order to make meaning. *Scarface* (1983) is perhaps "the most extreme example of cocaine as symbolic of that aspirational grab for the American Dream" (Shapiro 2002: 139). Again, cocaine is the facilitator of this individual greatness, even if the lead actor dies in a hail of bullets at the end.

It was only in the late 1980s that Hollywood directly confronted the growing problem of cocaine – this was in response to the growing problem of "crack" however. While the consumption of cocaine remained constrained to the middle-classes, and while it continued to be used as a tool by which the mythology of individuality and consumption could be justified, its use remained legitimately illegitimate. However, with the rise of the fear of the lower-class "crack" addict, this changed abruptly and is reflected in the Hollywood films of the time. For instance, one of Hollywood's first confrontations of the problem of cocaine was benignly entitled *Clean and Sober* (1988). However, in the early 1990s a number of "crack" related movies were released, with such titles as *Boyz 'n the Hood*, *Jungle Fever* and *New Jack City* (Shapiro 2002: 139). As will be explored in the following chapter, the rhetoric followed the narrative precisely, and the fear of "crack" would eventually become the justification for a real war on drugs.

While cocaine remained the preserve of the elite, and even when it was used by the middle-class (as depicted, for instance in *Blue Collar* (1978)), Hollywood movies used it as a tool for articulating individuality. In a discourse enshrining that individuality, cocaine became seen as facilitator. This, in conjunction with the opening of new trade routes and increases in production, allowed cocaine's use to expand across America. It had a justification, and it was available. However, as noted above, while cocaine facilitated individuality through its sign-value, when it became easily available, that path of individuality would encounter the same paradox of differentiation that other forms of consumption had. Dedifferentiation occurred at the moment when difference was needed though. This is further explored below, and provides the discursive foundations for the next chapter, and the explosion of "crack."

## Hollywood and the Self: “The Temptation to Exist”<sup>78</sup>

As has been noted above, the analytical terrain of consumerism, the American Dream and the narcotic is vast. For this reason this study limits analysis to that of the specific transformations that the narrative of cocaine underwent vis-à-vis Hollywood and consumption. Indeed, Daniel Bell (1972:11) has argued that “[t]he relationship between a civilisation’s socioeconomic structure and its culture is perhaps the most complicated of all problems for the sociologist.” With this complexity in mind, this study advances Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of tastes (as briefly discussed earlier) as a means of engaging both with the *discourse* and the *act* of consumption.<sup>79</sup>

Central to Bourdieu’s work is the conception of cultural capital which “consists of a set of socially rare and distinctive tastes, skills, knowledge, and practices” (Holt 1998: 3). Cultural capital, much like economic capital, is gained by those who are successful in the social sphere – cultural capital is a form of critical knowledge which allows the subject to garner legitimacy for themselves through the sign-value of various objects which they consume and/or own. As such, it is the ability to recognise and apply “taste” to a social setting which garners one cultural legitimacy. For instance, the knowledge and ability to choose a good red wine over another, and as a consequence, the *display* of one choosing and drinking that red wine. Moreover, cultural capital exists through its “embodiment in practical knowledge; objectified in cultural objects; and institutionalised in official degrees and diplomas that certify the existence of the embodied form” (*ibid*). The resulting rituals, artefacts and totems form the material basis for a generative social psychology, the “habitus” through which truth and meaning is made, displayed, and normalised. Ultimately then, “[t]he habitus organises how one classifies the universe of consumptive objects to which one is exposed, constructing desire towards identified consecrated objects and disgust toward objects that are not valued in the field” (*ibid*: 4). The ability to negotiate what is good and valuable in a particular cultural setting, and what is not, allows an individual (through their habitus) to garner for themselves cultural legitimacy and position in the social hierarchy. Through this display of taste difference is created, minimally, between those that have and do not have the ability to recognise the cultural capital embodied by certain consecrated items. Thus, in relation to the larger consumerist discourse the perception of taste is itself sociologically ordered:

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<sup>78</sup> Titled borrowed from E.M. Cioran and Richard Howard’s 1998 book, *The Temptation to Exist*.

<sup>79</sup> Bourdieu, P. 1986. Pp 241 – 248. See, also, Bourdieu, P. 1977.

[w]ithin the field of consumption, tastes and their expression as lifestyles are stratified on the basis of the objective social conditions that structure that habitus. Thus, the field of consumption is stratified so that there exists different lifestyles organised by class position (*ibid*).

Girard's tripartite model of desire is also useful in the analysis of consumption – after all, the desire to consume certain consecrated objects is another form of mimesis, a foundational element of Girard's theoretical framework.<sup>80</sup> In this analysis, the upper echelons of society, such as those paraded by the discourse of Hollywood, provide the model for the middle-class, who both in turn provide the model for the lower class. When those in the middle-class obtain the means to indulge in the self-same objects as those in the upper-class, the distinction between the two is dedifferentiated, creating a crisis of degree. Indeed, in a consumerist society it is these differing levels of consumption that often create the very class-distinctions that they signify. The same process is at work between the middle and lower classes, as shall be explored in the following chapter. The dedifferentiation, as a product of consumption, further strengthened the need to consume ever more rare and consecrated objects, objects that would now become sacred to the system of differences (Vandenberg 2006: 266 – 267).

Cocaine's cultural capital, as noted, was a function of its rarity, cost, illegality, and glamorous portrayal. This does not mean however that cocaine was the only tool by which the larger narratives of individuality and consumption could be articulated. Nor does it entail that cocaine and its consumption was considered legitimate in all cohorts of society – far from it. The cultural capital that cocaine embodied was only powerful for a very specific segment of the population. However, this segment of the population was also seen as the paradigmatic example of individualist and consumerist discourses. As such, the application of this two-pronged analysis to the narrative of the narcotic of cocaine brings together both the reality of the drug itself and the changing discursive concept of the *pharmakon* – as Ronald Siegel (1984: 38, emphasis added) has noted, “[a] user consumes both the drug *and* the image of cocaine.”

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<sup>80</sup> Kathleen Vandenberg in “René Girard and the Rhetoric of Consumption” most adequately explores the application of Girard's framework to the concept of consumption in *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* (Vol. 12 – 13, 2006: 259 – 272).

## Simulacrum and Cocaine

The cultural capital that legitimated cocaine was forged from a specific understanding of the drug itself, the Great American Dream, consumption (within the emerging neo-liberal paradigm), and the subject. While the Great American Dream, and its founding transcendental signifiers, would find its *resurgence* in the era and rhetoric of Ronald Reagan, Hollywood films and reports from the era choose to use cocaine as one means of articulating the sovereignty of the individual. Thus, for instance, while cocaine was often portrayed as glamorous, as sexual, and as a definitive object of neo-liberal success, there are relatively few instances when the narcotic and its effects are viewed in an entirely negative light (at least until 1988). Moreover, while the white businessman became viewed as a recreational user, the black lower-classes are viewed as purveyors and delinquents of the narcotic – the films of the era “present a consistent view of middle-class Caucasians’ addiction while ignoring or negatively stereotyping addicts from different races and socio-economic backgrounds” (Hersey 2005: 477).

Justification for cocaine’s use was not only derived from the films themselves, but also from the various media reports that were written at the time. For instance, one Hollywood director of the time is quoted as saying,

It’s the `70s drug . . . I think our generation is now more into productivity than creativity . . . It comes with growing up a little. To take psychedelics, it takes three days - one to prepare, one to drop and one to recover. Who has that kind of time in this town? Coke is really easy - a toot here, a toot there. Of course, you have the occasional lost weekend when you do maybe a gram or two. But it’s a neat drug - makes you feel good, you can function on it . . . It’s getting bigger all the time (cited in Siegal 1984: 40).

Cocaine’s use thus contributed to a specific articulation of the mythology of the American Dream. Both discursively and psychologically, cocaine made people “feel great” at the very same time as feeling great was an important aspect of one’s individuality. Cocaine, in other words, was supplementing the mythology that justified difference. Problematically however, when that difference was dedifferentiated, as a function of the logic of consumerism, cocaine’s role would be reversed, becoming a means of articulating various strategies of critique, rather than legitimacy.



The emergence of the cultural capital of cocaine occurred in concomitance with the re-orientation of the larger socio-economic narrative of the US, in which the commodity and its consumption superseded those traditional transcendental signifiers – God, County, Family, and Freedom – resurrecting The Individual as the key trope in its mythology.<sup>81</sup> With regards to this emerging episteme, Baudrillard notes that “the commodity form has developed to such an extent that use- and exchange-value has been superseded by ‘sign-value’ that redefines the commodity primarily as a symbol to be consumed and displayed” (cited in Best 1997: 80). Furthermore, “Baudrillard claimed that the semiotic system inscribed in the entire system of commodities took on an autonomy of its own, that a political economy and the era of production were finished, and that a new, dematerialised society of signs, images, and codes had emerged that was governed by a process of ‘radical semiurgy’” (*ibid*). Girard (1987: 307, emphasis added) noted a very similar transfiguration:

... where individuals are no longer defined by the place they occupy by virtue of their birth or to some other stable and arbitrary factor, [where] the spirit of competition can never be appeased once and for all, [where] [i]ndeed it gets increasingly inflamed, everything rest[ing] upon comparisons that are necessary unstable and insecure, *since there are no longer any fixed points of reference.*

This semiotic bias had the effect of shifting the emphasis from those previously steadfast transcendental signifiers (cemented in the myth of the Founding Fathers) to those that could be incorporated into the new mythology of neo-liberalism and consumption – *the individual, as locus and basic integer of consumption, became exalted at the same time as the need to display the sign-value of consumption became the means of articulating that identity.* Those items and products that increased sign-value of the individual would be transformed from mere product to justificatory totem. As a consequence, and as Feuerbach notes, “sacredness is held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness.”<sup>82</sup> Finally then, for Best (1997: 79) there has been “a movement from the society of the commodity to the society of the spectacle to the society of the simulacrum in which there has been a commodification of reality” and a “reality of commodification.” So long as cocaine remained within the reality of commodification it would be legitimately illegitimate.

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<sup>81</sup> This assertion can be retrospectively legitimated by analysing Reagan’s rhetoric of return, as shall be done in the following chapter.

<sup>82</sup> Feuerbach: Preface. Cited in Best 1997: 79.

The radicalisation of the sign-value system would, according to Baudrillard, necessitate the implosion of the subject/object distinction. This is because the subject, in defining their subjectivity, would have to make an object out of themselves through their consumption of those commodities that became constitutive to their identity. Consequently, the subject becomes as much an object of display as a subject of thought. This, again, fitted in with perceptions of cocaine's ability to legitimate the consecrated individual.

There are three specific consequences that can be drawn from this implosion. Firstly, while each axiom (subject/object) acts as supplement to the other, they both exceed themselves in their deployment – the individual is *both* subject and object, while also being more than either singular axiom. Secondly, the resulting collapse of the subject/object distinction would negate or eliminate any forms of “spectacular power” (in the Foucauldian sense), instead replacing it with the “dead power” of Baudrillard's simulacrum. However, as Best (1997: 106) notes,

[j]ust as a feudal mode of production can co-exist with capitalism, so for example, can disciplinary or ‘spectacular’ forms of power co-exist with the ‘dead’ power of simulation. What we see today is not discipline *or* simulation, the society of the spectacle *or* the world of the panopticon, but a complex interplay of various mechanisms of social control that include discipline, spectacle, simulation, and the classic overt violence of the state.

In other words, the two supplementary axioms exceed themselves in their deployment as a function of the discourse of consumerism. Thirdly, and as shall be explored in the following section of this chapter, the birth of the objectivity of the subject (an objectivity founded in the sign-value of consumer goods) gives rise to a double consciousness of being both a subject and being perceived as an object. In this new conception of “the self” the body is regulated both from within the self and through the gaze of others – this is the operation of modern disciplinary power. The temptation offered by the sign-value of the new system of commodification, however, would also engender a frustration in those that had the surplus wealth, time and education to question the function of this disciplinary power. Indeed, as Bell (1972: 24) argues, “[t]he crisis in self-consciousness arose from the loss of religious certitude, of belief in an afterlife, in heaven and hell, and the new consciousness of an immutable boundary beyond life and the nothingness of death.” This echoes the feelings of the cocaine girls; it is not a coincidence that the narrative of cocaine often becomes prominent when meaning is lost and difference dedifferentiated.

## Cocaine and the Need for Meaning

Hollywood, its actors and its glamour stood at the pinnacle of the narrative of individuality. When cocaine became entangled with this larger meaning, its use would be legitimated in some circles. This had occurred before, as noted in the previous chapters. The legitimacy of the consumption of cocaine during this time once again points to the radical transformations that the narrative has undergone throughout its history. Indeed, it is because of these transformations that a discursive analysis of its narrative provides an extremely useful means of revealing how it has been articulated by various systems of meaning. Accordingly, Shapiro (2002: 133 – 134) has argued that

[i]n line with the prevailing views of opiates in modern-day society, cinema's take on the use of these opiate drugs has been invariably negative – morphine or heroin use follows an inexorable path to the living hell of intractable addiction ending in death...The depiction of cocaine has been much more ambivalent and fluctuating. Partly this is because medical views on cocaine over the decades have similarly swung between praise, neutrality, and condemnation.

Shapiro's emphasis on the *changing* narrative of cocaine, a narrative that has changed not only in line with "prevailing views of opiates" but also with those larger discursive structures of society points to an instability highlighted by this larger study. Ultimately I argue this a function of the sacrificial invention and iteration of the concept of the narcotic-as-*pharmakon*. The consequence is, of course, that if we wish to deal effectively with the problem of cocaine in the modern world, we must first understand its foundational moments.

As a further justification for this analytical strategy, Shapiro argues that "[f]rom an aesthetic perspective, much of mainstream Hollywood as movie-making has been about promoting the Great American Dream" (*ibid*). The Great American Dream would also rearticulate the very notion of the self. In this view, the re-imagined Great American Dream created a concept of the self with "a view of success founded on being the best, the loudest, the brightest, the richest, the most aggressive and powerful" (*ibid*). Immersed in the narratives of individuality and consumerism, this created a fertile breeding ground for the legitimacy of the recreational use of cocaine. Shapiro concludes that

[t]his, at the experimental and recreational phases, is the illusion created for the cocaine user ... In the 1970s, use of the drug was increasing dramatically through the general population in

America ... People bought not so much a drug, but an image, the coke spoon, the rolled up bank note, the symbol of what the drug meant, the personal statement its use made, the status, the gourmet trip (2002: 134).

A number of key tropes and means of articulating (and justifying) the use of cocaine emerged during this time, which as always, have their history not only in the narrative of cocaine but also in other drugs, such as opium and heroin. The tropes that were emphasised, however, were specific to the larger narrative within which cocaine was being used to create meaning. In the specific instance of Hollywood, for instance, cocaine's use as a "classy," "sexy" and "rich" activity was often highlighted. As such, there are numerous examples of the manner in which cocaine was articulated. For instance, *The Lakeland Ledger* reported that "Cocaine," says a former user, 'is the sex drug. I always used it as an aphrodisiac.'<sup>83</sup> *Newsweek*, on the other hand, published an article in which it was argued that

the drug, made from the South American coca leaf, produces feelings of intense sexuality, psychic energy and self-confidence ... 'speed kills, but coke heightens all your senses,' says a University of Tennessee co-ed. 'Orgasms go better with coke' (cited in Streatfeild 2001: 209).

Cocaine's perceived scarcity, and its illegality, also contributed to its allure. For instance, some jewellers took the sign-value of these paraphernalia to their logical conclusion and began creating various forms of jewellery – gold razor blades, silver spoons, and gold-leaf replica \$100 bills – which could proudly be displayed by and on the new consuming subject. While this had the effect of increasing cocaine's sign-value, it also gave the impression that the primary users of the narcotic were successful white middle-class people while the primary dealers were unscrupulous young black men.

It is possible also to demonstrate the manner in which the illegality of the narcotic contributed to its sign-value. For instance, Jerry Jenson, West Coast Regional Director of the US Drug Enforcement Agency commented that "[e]veryone knows someone using cocaine who seems just fine – usually someone they look up to, and they don't believe there is anything wrong with it ... *They are idols*, and there's no secret some of them are users."<sup>84</sup> In attempting to delegitimize the drug through its placement as illegal, those who did not need

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<sup>83</sup> Purnell, J., and Podolsky, D. "A Lethal Aphrodisiac: Drugs, 'Kinky Sex Blamed'" published in *The Palm Beach Post*. March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1980.

<sup>84</sup> Deutsch, L. *Cocaine Turns on the Chic Set*. Published in the *Herald-Journal*, Dec 10<sup>th</sup>, 1978. Emphasis added.

to take the law/state seriously, such as those living in Hollywood, used the narcotic's illegality as a redoubled claim to their own legitimacy. Thus cocaine became "like wearing jeans and boots," (*ibid*) its cultural capital legitimating it as a safe, clean and high-paced drug with no or very little side effects. Inserted into a larger discourse of consumerism and revelry in the sign-value of objects, cocaine not only became legitimate, but symbolic of a specific conception of an idealised society and self – fast, confident and individual *beyond* the state's borders.

The consequent discursive entanglement between the (socially) legitimate (legally) illegitimate status of cocaine also had the effect of focussing media attention on its use, which once again increased its sign-value. For instance, *The Spartanburg Herald-Journal* began an article in the following manner:

Los Angeles (AP) – The party swings. Beautiful people, some as famous as their host, flash toothpaste-ad smiles and drop the names of their latest films. The clink of ice in glasses melts to the murmur of anticipation. The host, gold chains flashing around a razor-blade necklace, demurely serves up the evening's special treat on an elegant silver tray ... The goody at this in-crowd gathering is a delicate white powder laid out in neat little rows – cocaine.<sup>85</sup>

Larger publications were equally adept at not only publishing, but also legitimating the use of cocaine. As Shapiro (2002: 138) reports,

*Esquire* put a gold coke spoon on its front cover. *Newsweek*, in 1971, described cocaine as 'the status symbol of the American middle class pothead.' A *New York Times Magazine* headline read: 'Cocaine: the champagne of drugs'. Leisure Time Products advertised Chicware sterling silver cocaine accessories in *High Times* and patrons of the Beverly Hills Head Shop could pay over \$2000 for a coke spoon. The *Hi-Life* magazine cover for January 1979 announced: 'Hollywood Goes Better with Coke'.

Perhaps it was the one of the most circulated publications of all, *Time*, which summed up this discursive convergence most astutely: "[l]ong known as the 'society high,' cocaine is now being used by everyone from affluent suburbanites to drug-savvy ghetto kids ... Cocaine's

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<sup>85</sup> Deutsch, L. *Cocaine Turns on the Chic Set*. Published in the *Herald-Journal*, Dec 10<sup>th</sup>, 1978.

proponents, who included Freud, swear by the drug, insisting that it produces a sense of euphoria, increases sexual sensations, reduces fatigue and stimulates creative powers.”<sup>86</sup>

A normative narcotic system of differences emerged, with heroin being seen as dirty and dangerous, and cocaine as a clean, relatively safe drug. This would also have the effect of justifying, and being justified by, presuppositions of the ontological status of the users. Again, heroin users were condemned (and seen as condemned), while cocaine users were seen as fast-paced and successful individuals. Indeed, Stuntz (1998: 1795 – 1842) has argued that, at an epistemic level, narcotic users can be divided into “upscale” and “downscale” users. Those “downscale” users were not only easier to coerce into becoming dealers, whether that be through bribes, poverty, or continued national disenfranchisement, but also easier to police. “Upscale” users, such as the “Wall Street drug dealer look[ing] like many other successful young female executives. Stylishly dressed and wearing designer sunglasses” (Kerp 1987: unknown pagination) were not only harder to identify and ultimately police, but a different species altogether. This difference was created, in part, by their differing abilities to grasp those consecrated items, and thus cultural capital, of the times. The discourse informed the practice as much as the practice informed the discourse. This created a positive feedback loop in which cocaine became reproductive of a set of differences in which users were white, middle-class, and successful, while the dealers were, for the most part, foreign, dirty and dangerous. The divergence of a legitimate and illegitimate realm was justified through the drug’s articulation; had cocaine not been seen as the embodiment of specific forms of cultural capital, the drug would not have been able to occupy the ambivalent position it did.<sup>87</sup> Ultimately, as shall be explored in the following section of this chapter, the differentiation of drug users was to be played out through the existing distinction between the delinquent and the offender. Indeed, the legitimately illegitimate consumption of cocaine had never escaped western modernity’s binary structure. As one author, writing at the time, noted “[t]he social structure today is ruled by an economic principle of rationality, defined in terms of efficiency in the allocation of re-sources; the culture, in contrast, is prodigal, promiscuous, dominated by an antirational, anti-intellectual temper” (Bell 1972: 13).

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<sup>86</sup> Unknown Author. *Time*. July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1977. Emphasis added.

<sup>87</sup> For a further sociological engagement with these cultural ambiguities, see Bell 1972: 11 – 38.

## Hollywood and the Self: the Paradox of Differentiation

Hunter S. Thompson, author of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream* (1998: 1), begins this infamous book with a quote by Samuel Johnson: “He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man.” A number of pages later the central protagonist, Raoul Duke, comments that

Now off the escalator and into the casino, big crowds still tight around the crap tables. Who are these people? These faces! Where do they come from? They look like caricatures of used-car dealers from Dallas. But they’re real. And, sweet Jesus, there are a hell of a lot of them – still screaming around these desert-city crap tables at four-thirty on a Sunday morning. Still humping the American Dream, that vision of the Big Winner somehow emerging from the last-minute pre-dawn chaos of a stale Vegas casino (1998: 57).

In this instance the experience of the American Dream is one of simulation. The “pre-dawn chaos of a stale Vegas casino” shadows Baudrillard’s assertion (1993: 128) that “[g]ambling itself is a desert form, inhuman, uncultured, initiatory, a challenge to the natural economy of value, a crazed activity on the fringes of exchange. But it also has a strict limit and stops abruptly; its boundaries are exact, its passion knows no confusion.”

The protagonists of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* went to the city to “find the American Dream” (58). What they found however were ever increasing concentric rings of simulation, feeding the subject, the city, the narcotic and the American way of life. This hyperreality, for those entrenched within it, was more real than life itself. It was simultaneously a turn to the self and an exile from that self. The “Big Winner,” perversely, had also become the biggest loser in the narrative. The casino became a stage or theatre that refracted acts of simulation, torn between the cruelty of simulation and the simulation of cruelty. It is this paradox that shall be explored below.

As explored above, the rise of the rampant consumerism of the 1970s and early 1980s was a product of both economic and social forces. As too was the rapid rise in the use of cocaine. The resulting ontological hierarchy was to have two effects – the consuming individual would be glorified if that consumption followed a specific pattern. The consumption of cocaine became one such means, a consumptive strategy, by which an individual’s ontological position of superiority could be confirmed. Secondly, the reorientation of the ontological taxonomy in America, justified by the new American Dream,

served to reinforce the logic of difference that justified racial differences in America. At once then, the discourse of consumerism both changed and reinforced society. With regard to the first, this “major transformation of Western values” (Ehrenreich 1989: 226), what became important was not only the products that were consumed, but the performative rites associated with those products – one did not simply buy a Ferrari, but drove and used it in a specific manner. The emerging tension, between the *concept* and the *act* of consumption, is best articulated by Ehrenreich (1989: 227):

So how was the middle class able, within a few short years, to throw itself into the consumerist binge without losing its sense of identity – the fragile autonomy from the levelling force of the consumer culture? The short answer is that it was *not* able to. The binge was experienced as a capitulation every bit as profound as the switch from relatively autonomous careers in the professions to get-rich-quick trajectories in the business world. But the short-term answer was that the middle class was able to construct a new identity around conspicuous consumption, redefining it not as surrender but as a pious form of work.

This redefinition, then, retrospectively justified through the Founding Myth of piety, allowed consumerism to be legitimated and inserted within the grand narrative of the American Dream while at the same transforming it. The resulting implosion, however, would bring to the fore a paradoxical configuration, an ontological frustration, as briefly touched upon, between what it meant to *be* and how one was to perform that *being*.

A new economy of differences emerged in which the consumption of goods and indeed the products themselves became ever more minutely differentiated. For instance, the difference between cars became minuscule, no longer solely as a form of transport, for “now there was a fresh segmentation among the imports with Mercedes and Audi for the affluent, Toyota for the masses” (Ehrenreich 1989: 227). While these minute divisions became ever-increasingly normative, the need to defer one’s identity through the creation of difference created a paradox of differentiation. While the creation of difference through particular products and lines may have given birth to different brand names, everyone, through the consumption of these products was ultimately similar in their act of consumption. Thus the pursuit of difference, the pursuits of the sign-value of various objects, created similarity at the very point when it was meant to generate individuality. Problematically however, the assertion of the difference needed to constitute one’s identity was now intricately enmeshed with one’s ability to consume certain products. Indeed because one’s *status* was now defined



through one's consumption, this unconscious realisation was to create a "schism" or "frustration" which cut to the very core of the displayed identity. With the birth of "upscale" and "downscale" markets, "[t]he change [in these markets] reflected the growing middle-class zeal to distinguish itself from the less fortunate, and at the same time it made such distinctions almost mandatory for anyone hoping to inhabit the social and occupational world of the successful and 'upscale'" (Ehrenreich 1989: 227).

## Identity and Cocaine

The paradox that emerged was not only material, but also conceptual and semantic. To maintain a potent habitus required that one fully buy into the discourse of consumerist neo-liberalism. In this system of differences, a product's meaning and worth was based not only on its ability to increase productivity and efficiency, but also on the object's ability to signify the user or owner's taste and class, or more accurately, their position within the system of differences. As such, the cultural capital engendered by the consumption of certain consecrated goods became a means of articulating one's identity at the same time as that identity became a (Girardian) model for the continued legitimation of the act of consumption itself. Thus, in the instance of the narcotic, not only was cocaine a singular object but it also became known through a whole plethora of other understandings articulated, for instance, through the narcotic's various street names – All-American drug, Aunt Nora, Barbs, Blow, Coke, Dream, Foo-foo dust, Her, King's habit, Peruvian lady, Snow, Tardust, Witch and Zip to cite but a few.<sup>88</sup> Difference, then, while forever decreasing in the world of the signified was expanded in the realm of the signifier by forever making objects more different, more classy, and more meaningful.

The temptation of cocaine, that *pharmakon* which would set one on the path to the ultimate form of difference by satisfying the temptation to exist, loomed large in the minds of those that could afford it and were willing to indulge. *The force of habit had now been transformed from a concern with production to a concern with re-producing individuality.* The insertion of the narrative of the narcotic into the structure of western modernity during this time created a paradox that can be articulated in two forms. The first concerns directly the *pharmakon*. While the *pharmakon* creates similarity *amongst* those who consume it, the

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<sup>88</sup> There are many, many street names for cocaine, which are constantly evolving, transforming, and changing. For a contemporary dictionary of street names, that is regularly updated, see <http://www.casapalmera.com/articles/street-names-of-cocaine/>

*pharmakon* also creates difference *between* those who revel in its use, consumption and the consequent simulacrum of being, and those that do not. The deferred expulsion at work here relates to the fact that consumption of the *pharmakon* creates *both* difference *and* similarity – similarity emerges *inter-alia* those who revel in the domain of simulacrum deployed by their use of the *pharmakon*, difference emerges *inter-alia* in the domains of the “real” and the “simulacrum.” The second form of the paradox is the pragmatic instantiation of the first: those who engaged in this ultimate form of differentiation and who attempted once and for all to define their *individuality* through the consumption of the *pharmakon* also simply become one among many. The temptation of cocaine created an allure that led many to seek this path of expression while at the very same time eliminating the path as a form of individual expression.

The resulting (and paradoxical) birth and death of subject, in articulating their individual identity through the mirror of consumption echoes the double status of ambivalence of the *pharmakon* itself. The logic of this ambivalence is of the same nature however. At the point when conspicuous consumption became an elixir, a potent form of cultural capital, that very self-same consumption, because of mass production, signalled the death of the subject. Logically then, and as has been noted, at the point of differentiation the trace of dedifferentiation (as a function of the binary logic of western modernity) crept in, poisoning the very system of differences that were acting as an elixir.

This paradox would have two important consequences, not only for individual identity but also for the larger economic system. Firstly, the paradox led not to a decrease in the rites and totems of consumption but to more. At each point, each time the individual attempted to assert their identity, this identity was premised on the further consumption of those objects that embodied the cultural capital necessary for that construct. Consequently, the only option left to the *upwardly* mobile was to increase those rites and practices of consumption, even if that meant that those differences through which one’s identity was to be constructed would become ever more diminutive. Secondly, the need to differentiate between people and objects was not only a means whereby an identity might be articulated, but became the very means through which the self could be lived. Caught then between the “fear of falling” (Ehrenreich 1989) and the need to assert one’s identity, any object or chemical could become a means by which that difference, the difference constitutive of identity, could be supplemented. The iteration of the act of consumption eventually led to the very act’s *raison d’être* being undone. Indeed, as Ehrenreich (1989: 247) has argued,

When more is not enough, but only serves as a springboard to further excess, then we have entered a state analogous to physical addiction. It does not matter that the “more” is often structurally decreed, that the costs of a decent way of living elude the frugal as well as the self-indulgent. The driving need is still the same.

The temptation of cocaine, with its consumption as one of the greatest signifiers of the rites of the consumer (the rolled note, the mirror, and the gleaming white power for instance) was one of the logical conclusions of this frustration. As noted, cocaine was the ultimate “yuppie” drug in which the “yuppie” took to its logical conclusion the act of consumption. Yet its use by the “middle-class,” the generic consumer, also raises a number of critical questions, questions that are most clearly invoked at this stage in the larger narcotic narrative.

Daniel Bell (1972: 22) argues that “[i]n the old days, individualism flourished or was made possible through an escape *from* society, often into rebellion or bohemian worlds.” However, with the rise of consumerism, conspicuous consumption and ultimately conformity, the escape offered by individualism was no longer possible. This is not to say, however, that the escape was still not sought or necessary – addiction, to consumerism or consumption, was still rampant. The consuming individual was then caught between the need to escape and the impossibility of doing so. The individual was however left with one avenue of escape – an escape from himself or herself. The paradox of differentiation, the dedifferentiation of difference, revealed the mythology of consumerism for what it was. Consumerism, when it reached its logical limit, was revealed as meaningless beyond the need constantly to acquire new objects. The escape from oneself, however, offered an ideal substitute; one could still be an individual, but that individuality would be premised on the rejection of the mythology of belonging, rather than succumbing to it. This logic is not a break, but a continuation of the narrative and allure of the narcotic explored in the previous chapter.

The escape to the self, from the self, was at once both a function of a conscious realisation of the meaninglessness of rampant consumption and cocaine’s addictive potential. The use of the narcotic had now been justified as legitimately illegitimate; bolstered by the cultural capital of the concept of the narcotic, the use of cocaine became one means, for a time, whereby one might express individuality. However this soon became the norm. As a result, an *aporia* of identity emerged, the need to be an individual became a form of conformity at the very point when that individuality was no longer possible. This *aporia* created a *need* to consume in the hope of finding a place where one might eventually find one’s own “space.” Cocaine and indeed consumerism, however, is addictive. The driving

need to become an individual through the exile offered by the *pharmakon* would have the effect of dividing society. Perhaps not for the first time, but perhaps most visibly, the consumer who wished to express their identity through the ultimate form of difference had also to break the law – indeed, it was the breaking of the law which created the essential difference. When the craze for cocaine was eliminated however, either through the essential paradox of its consumption or when the discourse legitimating its consumption changed, those beyond the law *qua* its consumption would need to be reincorporated into society. To do so, however, would require that they confess their sins, in order to be once more incorporated into the larger order of things. The addict, however, no longer simply consumed the narcotic of cocaine because it was a means of articulating their identity. To relinquish the hold that cocaine held over them now required external pressure, a place where one might work on the self in the name of society. Problematically however, and as noted above, the discourse of consumerism and the mythology of the new American Dream had served to further legitimate a specific ontological taxonomy. The difference between the white doctor and the “Negro fiend” would once again become potent, as a logical system, and it was medical science that would once again provide the discursive justification for that confession.

### Exomologesis: the Sacrifice of the Self

As previously noted, one instance in which Foucault provides an analysis of the birth of the spectre of disciplinary power is in the form of the confessional. While the modality of the confessional may have changed radically over time, as Foucault’s analyses bears witness to, it is the juridical function of the act of the confession itself that concerns this study. One of the most potent spectacles of this rising regime of truth is that of the act of exomologesis: the literal or metaphorical whipping of oneself to, in other words, publically condemn oneself. This condemnation was made first in the name of the state. However with the rise of the consuming individual exomologesis becomes performed in the name of the sovereignty of the self as a function of the birth of The Individual. It is for this reason that the location of exomologesis can change, while the logic remains the same. Its potency is contingent on the larger systems of difference. It is, much like the narcotic of cocaine had become, a means of articulating a specific identity. In order for such an act to become powerful, it is not only necessary that the subject believe in their wrong doing, but that they publically affirm that belief. This is achieved through their self-sacrifice in which there is “a dramatic self-

revelation at the moment of *reconciliation* of the penitent” (1992: 213). Thus, as Foucault argues, at the moment of exomologesis the act of discipline has become internalised – the spectre of power no longer has to, nor needs to, play out in the courts of the kings.

In order to understand the need for self-sacrifice, we must understand how this conception of self had been transformed in the contemporary world. Foucault wrote that his later work was dedicated to “a way of thinking more radically the philosophical experience” (McGushin 2005: 623). Ultimately for Foucault this would engender a new critique of the subject, seen, for instance in the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* (1978; 1979). The philosophical turn to the self, however, has not been without some tension – the debate between Simon Critchley (1999) and Vincent Descombes (1991) attests to this. Central to this debate and this chapter, is the tension between the *concept* and the *determination* of the subject both at a philosophical and “pragmatic” level (McGushin 2005: 626). On the one hand, the concept of the subject is seen as one that is classically academic – “[i]t is an academic problem detached from the everyday life not only of non-philosophers but also of philosophers themselves, when, at the end of the day, they take off their tweed coats, exit the dusty stacks and return to the ‘real world’” (Desmond 1991: 122. *Op. cit.* McGushin 2005: 626). The *determination* of the subject, however, as Critchley views it in his rather post-Hegelian universe, *also* excites responsibility, consideration and indeed (in line with Foucault) “*The Care of the Self*” (1978). The fundamentally ethical turn would invoke a new truth discourse, in which longevity, good health and a rational mind would become extremely important. The addict, however, would be construed as unhealthy, and in some sense irrational. It was therefore the job of medical science to work upon the individual, and allow the individual to work on themselves, in order for them to once more be reincorporated into society.

What is interesting from this study’s perspective, however, and considering the use of discipline as a form of self-sacrifice, is the *logic* by which the confession occurs. Placed within the ontological hierarchy described above, differing means of confessing emerged. The differing ontological statuses of different addicts meant that those further down the Chain of Being were automatically assumed to be guilty. Guilty, at the very minimum, of not being rational. For those who were considered innocent until they revealed their guilt, their confession would be more effective. For those whose guilt was already assumed, the power of the confession would be much harder to attain. The act of confession itself, over and above this, displays a specific logic. The practice of exomologesis, as a consequence of the confession, is at once both a death and a birth, the individual creating difference (and thus

heralding the death of the old) through the seeping out of the vilified in the form of the original contagion, blood, and the birth or resurrection of a new subject through the healing of those wounds. The practice of exomologesis positions the subject as a self-proclaimed *pharmakos* – their status is ambivalent until such time as they declare their guilt, but the act of exomologesis provides a justificatory strategy through which that guilt can be rearticulated. The rebirth of the individual, in the act of exomologesis, is always deferred at the point of birth, for in order for that birth to occur one must supplement the birth with death. The individual is forced to self-sacrifice what they most resolutely believe in for the rebirth to occur. If the confession was for specific acts, the subject would be known as an offender. If the confession was for their very lives, the subject would be known as a delinquent. This classification itself was a product of the ontological hierarchy that structured and made meaningful different species or races of subjects.

Accordingly, the demarcation between the offender and the delinquent is explained by Foucault (1979: 251) as follows:

The delinquent is to be distinguished from the offender by the fact that it is not so much his act as his life that is relevant in characterizing him. The penitentiary operation, if it is to be a genuine re-education, must become the sum total existence of the delinquent, making of the prison a sort of artificial and coercive theatre in which his life will be examined from top to bottom.

Because the offender is held accountable for their *acts* and not their *life* they can still enter into a confessional matrix through which those acts can be condemned by the subject. For the delinquent, however, the spectre of discipline becomes biopolitical, requiring, at the very least, the resumption of their life and their rebirth, not necessarily through an act of exomologesis, but necessarily through an act of retribution. The distinction would have a further consequence, segregating society into a new taxonomy dispersed, in its most radical form, between the recreational offender and the criminal delinquent. This contrast will be reflected in the difference between this chapter and the next. Here, the offender falls under discussion, while the delinquent will be discussed in the following chapter. Ultimately, these two ways of being would have the effect of creating two different networks tasked with containing the user of the *pharmakon*. In the case of the narcotic offender, for those who could confess and thus be drawn back into society the *self-help* clinic became the means, justified through the larger discourse of medicalisation. The delinquent however, in their very

lives, could not be brought back into society without questioning their right to life, and thus the penal institution became their home, justified, in this instance, by the larger discourse of criminalisation.

The offender, as a function of their ontological status, maintains the *possibility* of being allowed to confess for their sins. The delinquent, however, is *a priori* considered guilty by virtue of their very being. What is needed therefore is their lives. This understanding of the potency of the act and logic of the confession can be placed within the larger methodological considerations of this study. As noted, the *pharmakon* creates difference by creating similarity. In the above time frame, the use of cocaine offered a means by which individuals could differentiate themselves from larger society, as a function of the discourse of consumption. However, at the very same time, the difference that the use of cocaine created was dedifferentiated at the point when it became just another accessible means of articulating individuality. To recreate difference, sacrifice was needed. As it was the individual who had now become the fundamental integer of the new mythology, it was there that the sacrifice had to occur – self-sacrifice or exomologesis. By confessing to one's sins, not only was the individual reincorporated into the legal framework that held together society, but also once again reinstated as legitimate. The act of confession would be problematised by two considerations though. In the first instance, as noted above, society was already stratified ontologically, which precluded or made it very difficult for some to confess to their acts. What was needed was a confession to their lives, as shall be shown in this and the following chapter. In the second instance, it must be remembered that the American economy had also undergone a process of privatisation. As a consequence, the medical regime had also become stratified between the private and the public – the private self-help clinic would now only serve those who could afford it.

Importantly then, in the discourse concerned with the offender, the user or “addict” is conceptualised from within a medical network, a network which allows, *a priori*, that the user may be *cured* – the offender's acts can be changed through the practice of exomologesis. In the delinquent discourse however, the user or “addict” is articulated as criminal, in which state their lives are conceptualised as permanent – they must therefore be removed from society and worked upon in those institutions tasked with the fundamental reorientation of life, such as the penitentiary system. Both are a function of the existing ontological differences and assumption in society, which themselves have an ultimately metaphysical justification in the difference between the rational and the irrational, between the mind and the body. The medicalisation discourse did not and indeed has not however gone uncontested.

Numerous problems and benefits have been debated by a number of scholars (as shall be highlighted).<sup>89</sup> Chief among them is, in the case of medicalisation, the extremely high relapse rate in most systems,<sup>90</sup> while in criminalisation it is the “breeding ground” of the prison and the porous borders which often perpetuate and increase the narcotic “problem” that are highlighted.<sup>91</sup>

## The Discourse of Medicalisation

The medicalisation discourse was the first to be tasked with re-appropriating the cocaine user – this was seen in chapter one. However, as is shown by the archives, the *emphasis* on curing the addict slowly changed to one of criminalising the delinquent. This is not to say that all forms of medicalisation disappeared, or that all cocaine users would now be jailed. Rather, as I hope to show in the following chapter, the ontological status of the cocaine addict vis-à-vis the medical regime was reconfigured from one concerned with their help, to one concerned with their criminal record. This would reach its paradigmatic conclusion in the case of the “crack whore,” who was at the very bottom of the ontological hierarchy structuring American society. The changing emphasis, then, was not simply the result of the “failing” of one form of engagement or another, but the result of larger discursive shifts affecting American society. Over and above this, while medicalisation was at first government sponsored, private clinics soon became the first port of call for those who could afford them. Finally, however, a debate over the effectiveness of this intersection of government and the private economy emerged, causing, for a brief time, both discourses to run concurrently – however, the critiques and attitudes against medicalisation became dominant, leading to the disbanding of (free) public intervention in the lives of the user or “addict,” and the resulting criminalisation of the user and addict. As always, this transformation was itself a product of deeper changes in attitude and government policy – productivity, efficiency and cost would become the primary concern in treating the addict.

For instance, in *The Tuscaloosa News* of August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1983, it was reported that

Griffen O’Neal, the 18 year-old son of actor Ryan O’Neal, has been put in a private drug rehabilitation center in Hawaii because he “had to have help,” his sister says ... Griffen and

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<sup>89</sup> For a general overview, see Karch 1998. See, also, Gillespie, D., Glatt, M., Hills, D., and Pittman, D. 1967: 155 – 170.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, Benoit 2003: 269 – 294.

<sup>91</sup> For a more detailed discussion see Watkins, B., Fullilove, R., and Fullilove, M. 2000: 52.



Ryan had a fight in May at the Bel Air home of actress Farah Fawcett, with Griffen losing two front teeth, the magazine said. Two weeks later the Malibu police booked Griffen after neighbors reported him “tearing his room apart,” and Griffen spent three days behind bars.<sup>92</sup>

While Griffen may have entered into the criminal discourse for a brief time, his ontological and economic status allows him to enter into the medicalisation discourse. It is from here that his confession would be made, “he had to have help.” As shall be explored in the following chapter though, for those who had no recourse to either a superior ontological status, or economic wealth, their addiction would be treated as criminal. While the ontological categorisation of citizens would be based, in part, on racial and economic differences, some could transcend both by being idols. For instance, on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1980, *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported that Fergusson Jenkins had been convicted of the possession of cocaine, but he was not charged. This judgment was justified through the use of character witnesses, who argued that the possession was “totally out of character” and that he had done very good work with the community.<sup>93</sup> His status as a famous baseball player, and his history of good works positions him at the pinnacle of the ontological order – his confession is therefore not even required. This case is however an exception rather than the norm, but shows the power that one’s ontological status could have vis-à-vis the narrative of cocaine. Other idols also entered rehabilitation centres. Again, *The Pittsburgh Post Gazette* reported, on 30<sup>th</sup> of April, 1987, that Mets pitcher Dwight Gooden had received 28 days of treatment after testing positive for cocaine.<sup>94</sup> On the other hand, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1986, *The Milwaukee Sentinel* revealed that Michael Ray Richardson had been sent for rehabilitation, to be paid for by his club.<sup>95</sup>

There are numerous other examples of famous and wealthy people being sent for rehabilitation. Many instances of rehabilitation were also kept secret for fear of embarrassment. However, there are also numerous examples of people lower down the ontological and economic hierarchy being criminalised for their use of the narcotic. On the one hand this demonstrates the ontological taxonomy at work. On the other it demonstrates the tension between the medical discourse and that of criminalisation, which would receive

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<sup>92</sup> Unknown author. Actor’s Son in Private Drug Center. Published in *The Tuscaloosa News*, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1983.

<sup>93</sup> Unknown Author. Jenkins is Convicted of Cocaine Possession. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1980.

<sup>94</sup> Unknown Author. Silent Gooden Leaves Drug Treatment Center to Cheers. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1987.

<sup>95</sup> Unknown Author. Nets’ Richardson Confirms Need for Drug Treatment. *The Milwaukee Sentinel*. January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1986.

its legal justification in 1988 with the passing of a law that will be discussed in the last chapter. Again, it is important to note that the different statuses of these users can be articulated through the Foucauldian distinction between the offender and the delinquent. This distinction will become especially important in the following chapter.

There was also a transformation in the medical discourse itself, which was a function of the burgeoning emphasis on cost and productivity. As Robert Nye (2003: 116) argues,

Thomas McKeown noted that medicine was far better organized to deliver high-tech services for acute care than preventive medicine for the masses, and that, in any case, medicine deserved far less credit for the historic increases in life expectancy than the profession was wont to claim (McKeown, 1979). A remarkably rapid transformation was underway in the public perception of doctors from life-saving scientists to greedy monopolists, making heroes into villains and a doctor into a businessperson like any other (Stevens, 1998, p. xiv).

This is seen in media articles from the time too. For instance *The Sentinel* reported on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1978, that a new government sponsored program was intended to reincorporate “newly released prison inmates, former drug addicts and high school drop-outs, welfare mothers, the mentally handicapped and alcoholics.”<sup>96</sup> As noted, all of these “social misfits” were grouped together, their ontological statuses being perceived as a collective sharing certain essential traits, rather than as individuals. The beginnings of a critique of these social reforms, a critique focused primarily on *cost* (as was the main importance within the neo-liberal regime) also emerges later in the same article: “Though the costs [of the project] may seem high, they are far less in the long run than what would could be the cost of other social services.” Ironically, at this point the article argues that “rehabilitated human lives cannot be measured in dollars” even though the main emphasis of the program was to make employable those that “were considered totally unemployable before enrolling in the project” (*ibid*). The logic of cost structures the article, even when it attempts to highlight the humanitarian need for rehabilitation.

The public medicalisation discourse also came under criticism for its cost. For instance, it was argued that

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<sup>96</sup> Unknown Author. Job Program Rated Success Despite Fact Many Jobless. *The Lodi-Sentinal News*. February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1978.

The price *you* pay to support drug rehabilitation programs in Pinellas County this year is \$842, 000 ... The bulk of the budget goes to cover personnel services (salaries and the fringe benefits to 59 full and part-time employees). In addition, \$7, 000 is budgeted for equipment; \$58, 000 for supplies and \$129, 000 for other expenses including rent, utilities and insurance.<sup>97</sup>

Neo-liberalism makes the minute details and differences monstrous, categorising, in stale economic terms, the cost of these lives. Thus, when *The New York Times* of July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1976, reports that “Phoenix Hotel Buys Hotel as Center to Cure Addicts,” its price of \$1.3 Million is mentioned in the first sentence.<sup>98</sup> The criminalisation of the user, as will be discussed in the following two chapters, supersedes that of the medical in the late 1980s, even beginning to question the privatised network’s legitimacy and worth. It is here that we can begin to view that process. As *The L.A. Times* reports on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1979, in an article entitled “Drug Rehabilitation for the Wealthy,” “They are the white-collar junkies, drug abusers who don’t need to mug or burglarize to maintain their habits (not when embezzling is more convenient).”<sup>99</sup> The tension here is obvious – these are people who are buying their way out of criminality. Finally then, for instance *The Miami News*, on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1986, reported that “Without More Money the Drug Fight is Lost.”<sup>100</sup> the spending, however, is now conceptualised in terms of national security. The *raison d’état* of the narcotic narrative had begun.

## Conclusion

The consequent rise of the use of cocaine was a product of its sign-value in the new economy of differences. This created an ontological and existential temptation to use the *pharmakon* to articulate difference and authenticity. This individualism was expressed in terms of consumption. But this consumption, moreover, was also structured in a definite way. Certain objects possessed more sign-value than other objects. The consumption of these consecrated objects provided the cultural capital necessary for one to articulate one’s subjectivity. However, because these objects were now being mass-produced, the miniscule differences between objects became massive. The cultural capital signified by these differences was also affected; it became harder and harder to signify one’s identity through

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<sup>97</sup> McKnight, J. Drug Program Costs You. *The Evening Independent*, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1975.

<sup>98</sup> Horsley, C. Phoenix House Buys Hotel as Center to Cure Drug Addicts. *The New York Times*. July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1976.

<sup>99</sup> Krier, B. Drug Rehabilitation for the Wealthy. *The L.A. Times*, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1979.

<sup>100</sup> Unknown Author. Without More Money the Drug Fight is Lost. *The Miami News*, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1986.

the consumption of various items. A new means and a new exile from this economy of differences; the *pharmakon* was uniquely positioned to offer this escape. Cocaine, already embodying the necessary sign-value within the system, because of its price and perceived scarcity, became the drug of choice. Uniquely, at this point, the consumption of cocaine also existed beyond the normal parameters of consumption precisely because of its illegality. Its redemptive quality thus became cemented through its cultural capital. It not only became the preserve of that unique mirror on the Great American Dream, Hollywood, but was further justified by its use by rock stars, politicians, and various other prominent members of society. It became, in other words, and as signified by one of its street names, the “All American” narcotic.

Problematically however, the consumption of the *pharmakon*, rather than definitively exile one from the consumerist discourse, threw one much deeper into it. The temptation of the *pharmakon*, even though it was a form of escape, had not escaped the discursive parameters of consumption itself. The individual was redoubled back into the discourse, the very border becoming the centre. Considering that consumption had become the mechanism whereby one’s very subjectivity was articulated, the redoubling of the subject back into the discourse, at the moment of escape, caused an existential frustration. No longer, in other words, was it possible to demarcate the difference necessary for the consumer discourse to operate unaided. Those who were, paradoxically, both at the very centre and border of the discourse, those who revelled in the use of the *pharmakon* became the sacrificial target. Uniquely, because the mythology that legitimates this difference was justified through the transcendently legitimated individual. It was to be the economy itself, however, that would supersede all of these considerations.

## Chapter 5: Reagan's Pharmacy

### Introduction

The advent of “crack” cocaine, considering its history and the politics surrounding it, represents one of the most normatively laden embodiments of the narrative of cocaine. As a case in point, it is because of this normative burden that this study has chosen to demarcate it from the rest of the text through the use of inverted commas. The use and politics of “crack” is often an extremely emotive subject, and therefore to maintain the analytical distance necessary to reveal the mythologies which created this normative burden, one must continuously be self-conscious of one's own position vis-à-vis that history and politics. Indeed, many authors, when writing on “crack,” have felt the need to insert an “obligatory disclaimer”<sup>101</sup> in one form or another. This is done, for instance, to “ease our loving parents' troubled minds, and to undermine less-loving misunderstandings of our motives, our politics, or our indictment” (Reeves and Campbell 1994: 1). Methodologically however the obligatory disclaimer is problematic, for it attempts to insert a distance between the text and the subject. So too does the inverted comma's surrounding the noun “crack.” The difference, however, is that while obligatory disclaimer inserts this difference at *a priori*, at the beginning of the text, the textual demarcation of “crack” forces one to be ever more self-reflexive of its normative burden, at the very moment at which it is spoken. Both create an analytical distance between the text and the subject matter; the former however becomes implicit within the text while the latter makes explicit, and thus conscious, the distance. As will be argued, rather than divorce the text from the subject, the very concept of “crack,” at that moment of demarcation, becomes supplement to the logic of the written text – the concept of “crack” infects the text. One must always be conscious of this. Indeed, it is this fear of the contagious nature of “crack,” both semantically and politically, which is the subject of this chapter. The contagion of the concept and narrative of “crack” did not however occur apart from history. It is for this reason, once again, that the narrative of cocaine and “crack” must be placed within the context of western modernity.

The advent and “explosion” of the use of “crack” did not occur in isolation from the history and politics of America, but rather in part because of them. Arising most prominently in the 1980s and early 1990s, “crack's” abuse became the focus and justification of the

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<sup>101</sup> See, for instance, Jonnes 1999; Reeves and Campbell 1994: 1.

Reagan administration's war on drugs. This study argues, however, that one of the very reasons the use of "crack" became so prominent was a result of the profound economic and social changes that were a product of Reagan's administration. In order to understand this transformation, and in following from the previous chapter, I argue that the new American Dream once again became rearticulated. Again, this justified a renewed emphasis of the ontological hierarchy structuring American society, with profound consequences mostly for black urban youth. As was previously noted, the paradox of consumption created a crisis of degree – the individual at the moment they became individual also became one amongst many. Furthermore, with the rise of mass consumption and mass production, the ontological distinctions between the middle and upper-class, and the lower and middle-classes began to dedifferentiate. Objects that were once the sole preserve of the economically powerful now became available to everyone. In part as a function of this, the mythology which legitimated conspicuous consumption and the importance of the individual reached its logical conclusion; what was revealed, however, was the meaninglessness of the enterprise in the first place. As such, what was needed, and what Reagan attempted to do, was to reassert the importance of those self-same tropes which the mythology of individuality had attempted to hide – the importance, among others, of God, country, and community. To claim sovereignty over the distinction between these two mythologies required new strategies of legitimation. At the same time, however, as noted above, the ontological hierarchy that had heretofore structured American society had become dedifferentiated, as a function of the mythology of consumption. In both instances then what was needed was a scapegoat, someone who could serve both to show the mythology of consumption to be meaningless, and as a consequence, show the importance of the central tropes which Reagan's reasserted mythology was attempted to replace as sovereign. The need for a scapegoat, I argue, was perfectly filled by the "crack" addict. Both inside and outside of the community, both guilty of consumption and yet victims of it, politically weak and yet graphically strong enough to make good news stories, the expulsion of the "crack" addict would serve to reinstate the sovereignty of the mythology which structured America's differences. It is perhaps for this reason that their expulsion was so radical; their expulsion was fulfilling more than one sacrificial role.

To understand the logic of this expulsion requires us to understand the contestation of mythologies that would lead to the "crack" addict's exile. These mythologies are revealed most clearly, I argue, in the many speeches that the Reagan's made concerning the use and abuse of "crack." This is not to say there are not other ways of articulating this, the penultimate transformation of the narrative of cocaine, but rather that considering their

importance and power, it is here that the “crack” crisis can most clearly be seen. As a result, I argue, it is necessary to view this crisis and the resulting justification for the identification and expulsion of the *pharmakos* through the lens of what I shall argue is Ronald Reagan’s retrospective rhetoric. Caught between the mythology of the past and the reality of the present, Reagan’s rhetoric displays the logic of a forward looking teleological narrative which finds its legitimacy and hope in the past – its *redefinition* and *reappropriation* is one of a number of transcendental signifiers which Reagan interpreted as having guided, both epistemologically and theologically, the Founding Fathers. “Crack” cocaine stood as complete antithesis to these signifiers, and therefore, as barrier to the rejuvenation and reassertion of the new American Dream. Furthermore, while the advent of “crack” brought to the fore those now familiar themes of drug scares – the use of drugs by foreigners to pursue their own devious ends, the attack of drugs on the moral fibre of the youth of the nation, and the “rape” of weak white women – it was these very selfsame tropes which would be used as a means of legitimating the expulsion of the “crack” addict.

From a temporal perspective the sacrificial crisis that became apparent in American society was a product of a contestation between the immediacy of the present and the legitimacy of the past. This temporal disjuncture was transformed into competing mythologies. This is extremely important to the narrative of cocaine, for rather than create a *deferred* sacrificial crisis, as explored in chapter two, it created a *referred* sacrificial crisis. The difference and importance is explored below. However it is important to note now that this logic would ultimately guide the need for America to *rejuvenate* both the economic and mythological systems of difference that structured society. The rejuvenation, at its peak, would take on the rhetoric of war, as shown in Reagan’s speeches. Couched in the language of real politik, the war on drugs became a war at home, which would be played out “on the streets.”

Of course, such an undertaking could not have occurred unless the concept of what constituted an enemy had already been established. Again, as I argue below, this can be seen in the rhetoric employed by Reagan. The *pharmakos* of this contestation, the “crack” user, became the victim as well as the enemy – the young black male would now have to pay the price of his ontological position with his life, economically, politically, and sometimes literally. Indeed, the “crack” user was both guilty and innocent – guilty of their use of “crack” but innocent of a history that had positioned them on the lowest rung of the economic, social and political ladder. Nonetheless they became a political spectacle (Reeves *et al* 1994: 181 –

183) when they were paraded for the cameras, their being and presence the very justification for the continued war.

Such a violent manifestation of state power could not remain completely hidden; the oscillation of public opinion concerning the war at home and on drugs points not only to a contestation of mythologies, but a contestation of the ontological hierarchy ultimately being used to justify the war. On the one hand, Reagan justified the war by attempting to reassert the transcendental importance of God, Country, Family and Freedom. On the other however, the emancipation of black people, women, and homosexuals had come too far to simply rescind in the face of the reassertion of conservative values. This was to have two further consequences. Firstly, there was an implicit recognition, at least for Reagan and the New Right, that the modern crises in society were a result of the failing of the traditional metaphysical universe exemplified by the dedifferentiation of society and the displacement of the Great White Male as sovereign entity. Their discourse, therefore, was one of a yearning for the return to the pious myth of the Founding White Fathers. Secondly, and as Girard has made very clear, the contestation of mythologies could only be settled through sacrificial exclusion that would assert, and thus legitimise, one against and over the other. It was the ritual and celebration of this death, the visible triumph of one over the other that would lend power and legitimacy, indeed sovereignty, to the new mythology. Those symbolic totems of the present system that were to be excluded had to be *radically* and visibly exorcised, that is, by whatever means necessary. As has been explored before, the sacrificial crisis made momentous minuscule differences - the “Negro cocaine fiend” of a bygone era was made monstrous in its reincarnation as the “crack whore” of the present. The resulting need to control these monsters justified ever more powerful technologies of power – increased surveillance, forced removals, police brutality, amongst others. As will be argued then, a new governmentality of the narcotic user emerged, itself justified retrospectively through the mythology of difference which placed the user as the pathological other to rational belief and progress. This was the beginning of a transformation of the narrative of cocaine in which the *pharmakon* itself would become the *pharmakos*; cocaine, in and of itself, would become scapegoat to society’s problems.

In order to do so, I argue, two mythological inversions would have to occur. In the first, the present would have to be deligitimated. The present, in other words, would have to be seen as unsatisfactory. This state of unease was a function of the discourse of consumption – rampant consumption was shown to be meaningless beyond its own borders, and therefore, what was needed was a new mythology that would guide the American Dream. That new



mythology was offered by the past; this is the second inversion. Thus, the mythology of the past was resurrected as a means of condemning the present. With the present condemned, new economic, social and political policies could be justified that would look to the past for their inspiration. Problematically however, by reasserting the sovereignty of the past, the racial system of differences that was justified by that mythology once again became legitimate. As noted in chapter one and two, this system of differences contained within it an ontological taxonomy in which the white male was placed at the pinnacle while the black women was at the very bottom. By reasserting the sovereignty of the past, the racial system of differences that had once structured society also became prominent. However, the project of black emancipation had come some distance. What was needed was a justification for the renewed emphasis on racial differences. By making a causal link between poor black people and “crack” cocaine, once more the irrationality of the “native” could be reasserted, not only justifying their place in the ontological order, but legitimating forays into their lives in the name of the sovereignty of state.

Methodologically, the two inversions would be supplemented by the logic of the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos*. The *pharmakon* created difference by creating similarity; this logic allowed causal chains to be established between black people, crime, poverty, immorality and irrationality. This was a product of the re-legitimizing of the mythology discussed above and therefore can be seen as a part of the first inversion. The *pharmakon* made these tropes similar, but it also made them different to the society which Reagan and others were articulating as paradigmatic – good, wholesome, middle-class America. However, middle-class America was also in the midst of a sacrificial crisis brought on by the rise and fall of rampant consumerism and the competing discourses and legitimacy of the past and the present. By emphasising the difference between this domain and that of the “crack” addict, the difference created would provide a renewed ontological hierarchy and justification for the re-emergence of the various transcendental signifiers highlighted by Reagan. The sacrificial expulsion of the “crack” addict, the *pharmakos*, would serve to define the borders of the nation. As a consequence the difference between what America was, and was not, was cemented. The *pharmakos* had served its purpose. The cost of the expulsion, however, has now become problematic. This is highlighted in the following chapter.

## The Fear of the Present: the First Inversion

The rhetoric of Ronald Reagan displays a supplementary logic. It is this logic that displays a persistent attempt to *reassert* the primacy of a number of key (and often transcendental) tropes. In line with this, Reeves and Campbell (1994: 73) have argued that

Ronald Reagan's rhetorical appeals attempted to renew popular faith in the ideals of capitalism by affirming traditional American values and their manifestation in myths such as those of the individual, the community, and the American Dream. If successful, this merger of myth and theory would allow him to instate his version of the market economy and effectively redirect the course of American government and society. Reagan realised his aims through the use of rebirth rhetoric that resonated with American populism and religious fundamentalism.

For instance, in 1977, Reagan addressed the American Conservative Union, stating that, “[o]ur cause must be to *rediscover, reassert, and reapply* America's spiritual heritage to our national affairs” (cited in Erickson 1991: 73. Original emphasis). His use of the prefix demarcates his speech acts as a *reclamation* and a *reappropriation* of the past over the present. Linguistically it must be noted that in the first instance the prefix denotes a turning away from a present point, strategy or context. This is the first inversion. In the second instance, however, the prefix denotes a return to the present via the reappropriation of the past. This is the second inversion. The transformation is therefore a move to a new present by highlighting the problems of the present (and therefore legitimating the past). For example, to *reassert* a claim there is, firstly, an implicit recognition that the present state of affairs is unsatisfactory and must therefore be moved away from – the present pushes away from itself. Secondly, however, to *reassert* a claim is to peer into history, to decide at one point or another that this previous claim was *better* than the one of the present. Consequently, the claim prior to the past claim supersedes the first as normatively superior, suspending the present – the present is re-imagined in the context of the past. The project of reclamation then, not only revives the present, but also situates the past above that of the present through a conscious act of judgement.

Reagan, in addressing the congregation assembled at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, prayed the following: “About him we may wonder as others have: As a child, did he play on some street in some great American city? Or did he work beside his father out in the American heartland? ... We may not know of this man's life, but we know of his character.

He is the heart, the spirit, the soul of America” (cited in Erickson 1991: 55; 57). For Reagan, as he emphasised above, it was in the narrative of the return, to those places and times where the steadfast relationships of the nuclear family existed under the light of God that America would rediscover its identity and destiny. This sense of rediscovery was on the one hand pragmatic, and is represented by many of his policies. On the other however, these speech acts function as a legitimating strategy through which these policies become seen as necessary or inevitable. Equally however this nostalgic re-invocation of the past is also marked by a profound sense of loss. Esmond Wright (1996: 518) notes,

In the 1970s came the industrial restructuring that swept over America’s manufacturing centers, and enveloped the Rust belt, or ‘smokestack America.’ That old industrial base eroded in the face of greater foreign competition, and as a legacy of inefficient labor and management practices. In the recession of the early 1980s between June 1981 and January 1983, 4.2 million jobs were lost.

Faced with spiralling unemployment and the immense loss of national pride that comes with the downfall of one’s primary industries, Reagan needed to reassert the “original” spirit which had helped build these industries the first time. The use of the Unknown Soldier, as a son of the nation, provides a means by which the original spirit of America can be grasped and made tangible. The soldier is dead, as is that spirit, but this does not mean that they cannot be resurrected in a mythology tasked with the reorientation the American Dream. Through this resurrection, the original myth that had built America is reasserted and made sovereign in the face of the present. Consequently, Reagan began to position himself as the new messiah, the New Great White Man, which through God had special access to the truths of yesteryear to become the re-Founding Father.

### **God, Family, and the Black Man**

There were a number of seemingly insurmountable problems in the present that would lead Reagan to seek the rejuvenation of society through the reassertion of the past. The ongoing Cold War for instance, the humiliating loss of the Vietnam War and the spiralling crime rates in America’s urban centres not only prompted many of his more radical policy decisions but also prompted Reagan to seek a Grand Answer to these problems. His solution to these thoroughly immanent ailments found their focus, firstly, in the reemphasis of the

importance of the nuclear family and the power of God. These two interrelated themes were powerfully summarised by him in a Mother's Day speech, in which he argued:

In our families, and often from our mothers, we first learn about values and caring and the difference between right and wrong. Those of us blessed with families draw our confidence from them and the strength we need to face the world. We also first learn at home, and again, often from our mothers, about the God that will guide us through life (cited in Ersickson 1991: 54).

The Nuclear Family played the central role of being the core integer upon which Reagan's new economic system would be based; as Rapp argues,

"Family" (as a normative concept in our [American] culture)...is a socially necessary illusion which simultaneously expresses and masks recruitment to relation of production, reproduction, and consumption – relations that condition different kinds of household resource bases in different class sectors (cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 185).

For Reagan, the problems that plagued the society of the present were not only the result of a languishing economy and international turmoil, but also the result of America having lost its spiritual path; the loss of the importance of the nuclear family was one such indicator of this. The emerging tension between the past and the present was often articulated through what Reagan perceived as a battle between Good and Evil, between God and Satan, the "West" and the "Rest." Problematically however, and is explored in the following section, such a dialectical metaphysics not only created a sacrificial crisis, but allowed a normative construction of humanity and "the citizen" to emerge – these were not *just* nuclear families, but a nuclear family of specific conception: white, middle-class and heterosexual.

The ontological taxonomy Reagan was legitimating, however, would not go uncontested. As a consequence of the dialectical construction of society, between the past and the present and between the right and the wrong, a "backlash politics" became apparent. As Reeves and Campbell (1994: 185) conclude,

... the antifeminist and antigay backlash of the Reagan-Bush pro-family agenda treats the nuclear family as a healthy norm and marks off alternative household structures headed by single parents, same-sex couples, or two working heterosexual parents as somehow "dysfunctional," "unnatural" – even un-American.

Because of the Manichean structure of Reagan's universe, those aspects or types of family and God that were not included in these conceptions were seen as normatively inferior. As such they were cast in active, perhaps even parasitic opposition to the re-emerging mythology emphasised by his rhetoric. In this manner the emergence of this dialectical framework became the *a priori* structural fabric upon which the opposing tropes of (internal) "friends" and "enemies" could emerge – the logical supplements necessary to conduct a war at home. As always, this dialectical framework was a function of the structure of western modernity. Problematically however, such an obvious articulation of the difference between the rational and the irrational – the good and the bad – began to reveal the mythology which maintained the sovereignty of the distinction between the two. What was needed was a justification, a strategy, by which the mythology could be shown to be sovereign; difference was needed, and would come in the form of the "crack addict."

The assertion of the legitimacy of the past order of things, the dialectical framework it relied on, and the ontological hierarchy it justified brought to the fore the "race issue." This is potently summed up by Wright (1996) who argues that "[i]n 1968, the Kerner Commission, which had been set up to look into the causes of the urban riots of the 1960s, warned that America was 'moving toward two societies, one black, one white – separate and unequal.' Twenty-five years later, a report on the state of black America might arrive at a similar conclusion" (cited in Wright 1996: 520). By reasserting the mythology of the past, Reagan was implicitly justifying the racial differences that had once structured society. While it cannot be directly asserted that Reagan was "racist," this is not to say that the supplementary logic of his rhetoric did not invoke a primal difference between races that manifested itself in the various institutional measures directed by him.

As has been noted in the introduction to this study, one of the primary means by which this thesis critiques present understandings of the concept of the narcotic is by showing the repetitive history that the narrative (which the concept relies on) has undergone. These moments of iteration, in other words, and as shall be dealt with in the following two chapters, have never been escaped. On the one hand, this has made this study repetitive. However it is precisely because it is repetitive that the final conclusion, that we have yet to find a new way to deal with the concept of the narcotic, can be made. By reiterating the mythology of the past, with its attendant racial discourse, Reagan encountered a problem. One cannot invoke the origin without also invoking the politics of the origin. This origin, as was shown in chapter one and two, was racially stratified. Each time Reagan invoked the origin then, he

also invoked a whole spectrum of assumption and priorities, which also had a specific normative baggage. While on the one hand this would provoke a “backlash politics” discussed above, it was also to invoke and make powerful the ontological hierarchy that defined white and black. As a consequence of making this racially stratified ontological hierarchy powerful once more, the black urban “crack” addict, when the time came, would be considered guilty until proven innocent, as a function of that discourse and the differences it took as *a priori*. It is at this point then, and in continuing from the analysis of the previous chapter, that we find the birth of the narcotic *offender*. As Reeves and Campbell (1994: 185) further argue,

In the 1980s, in large part because of how the Reagan administration waged its war on drugs, the pathology of delinquency was literally inscribed on the body of the young, urban, black male whose very life was a punishable offence requiring disciplinary modes of exclusion

The American nation now began to once again to be divided into different populations and species. As a consequence, the biopolitical spectrum of users and addicts would become extremely important to the manner in which individual users and addicts were articulated.

The dialectical structure of Reagan’s universe, caught between the transcendental signifiers of yesteryear and the immanent reality of the violence that bloodied America’s streets,<sup>102</sup> propagated a paradox of differentiation. This paradox of differentiation would find its origination in Nancy Regan’s “Just Say No” anti-drug campaign. This was ultimately a function of the Reagans’ Manichaeism, in which those who did not reproduce the mythology of the transcendental American Dream were seen as in active opposition to it. As such, the “Just Say No” campaign, while not directly targeted at “crack” users at first, did substantiate a discourse which directly sought out and targeted those who stood farthest from the mythology of the new American Dream, namely poor, black, urban youth. For them, however, the double consciousness of their own reality, torn between being American and yet not being included in America, superseded the campaign’s purpose. Rather than offer a justification for not using narcotics, the consequence of these social policies had now, perversely, become the effect.

The Manichean universe that emerged through Reagan’s rhetoric would also give rise to the fear of the “foreigner.” As has been analysed before, the concept of the foreigner was

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<sup>102</sup> For a clear analysis of the concept of street crime vis-à-vis media representations, see Beckett 1994: 425 – 447.

as much a discursive tool of condemnation as a means of justifying an inward looking mythology. The polarisation of the western world into the homogenised entities of “the West” and “the Rest” not only created an oppositional plateau which would govern many debates, but legitimated a radical distrust in all things “foreign.” For instance, in a graduate speech at Notre Dame University, Reagan argued that

For the West, for America, the time has come to dare to show to the world that our civilised ideas, our traditions, our values, are not – like the ideology and war machine of totalitarian societies – just a façade of strength. It is time for the world to know our intellectual and spiritual values are rooted in the source of all strength, a belief in a Superior Being, and a law higher than our own ... when it’s your time [to] explain to another generation the meaning of the past and thereby hold out to them the promise of the future, [I hope] that you’ll recall the truths and traditions of which we’ve spoken. It is these truths and traditions that define our civilisation and make up our national heritage (cited in Erickson 1985: 48).

The resulting institutional consequences of this binary thinking can be seen not only in the dramatic rearticulation of America’s foreign policy (at least during Reagan’s early years)(Peterson and Rom 1988: 24 – 32) but in the country’s immigration policies too. Finding its historical roots in McCarthyism, the mythology that Reagan was reasserting also took as *a priori* the danger and parasitic nature of the foreigner. What was foreign, however, was not necessarily external to the state – the fear of the internal foreigner, the subversive parasite, would come to demand the need for a new governmentality. Not only would this legitimate various institutional responses that were often considered draconian, but would invoke a “siege paradigm” (Reeves *et al* 1994: 91) in which a number of negative chronotopes (Reeves *et al* 1994: 109 – 110) would emerge that retrospectively legitimated his policies. Through the sacrificial expulsion of these negative chronotopes however, the renewed moral boundaries derived from the transcendental signifiers of the Founding Fathers could be reasserted.

The resulting orientation of the mythology that Reagan attempted to legitimate might be understood through two lenses. On the one hand, Reagan’s rhetoric points to a *reassertion* of the origin, which had the result of making history normative. Importantly, this revitalised historical narrative was conceptualised as real, true, and right. On the other hand, the effect of asserting these transcendently legitimated moral boundaries was to create a difference between what was legitimate and what was not legitimate. Importantly though, it was from

the realm of the moral that the distinction was made. Accordingly, and as shall be demonstrated below, the “crack” user became the necessary supplement for the creation of this universe. In other words, without such concepts and beings as “crack” addicts, there would be no means of demarcating the differences upon which the mythology was relying in order to be sovereign. It is then the *logic* of the origin, exhumed by Reagan, which gave birth to the distance that justified the “crack” addict’s place both in and beyond society. This is the first inversion, the moment when the past and origin came to be used as a means of dictating the present. The strategy by which this exclusion could occur, as ever, was the use of “crack” cocaine. The logic of the *pharmakon* was to lead to the identification and expulsion of the *pharmakos*.

### The Resurrection of *Différance*: the Second Inversion

The sacrificial crisis that spurred on the Reagan administration to a reappropriation of the founding myths of origin may have been a function of the dedifferentiation of the ontological taxonomies that had given shape to American society in the present. However it was the reappropriation of these founding myths that could resurrect the difference of the past. This logic is captured by Girard in *Violence and the Sacred* (2005) when he argues, firstly, that “the sacrificial crisis is the loss of [the cathartic function of violence], as well as of all cultural distinctions,” (2005: 98) and secondly, that “[s]acrifice is here visualised as engendering religion” (2005: 94). Finally he concludes in a lengthy conditional:

If this is true, the generative violence constitutes at least the indirect origin of all those things which men [sic] hold most dear and that they strive most ardently to preserve. This notion is affirmed, through a veiled and transfigured manner, by the many etiological myths that deal with the murder of one mythological character by other mythological characters. That event is conceived as the origin of the cultural order; the dead divinity becomes the source not only of sacred rites but also of matrimonial regulations and proscriptions of every kind; in short, all of those cultural forms that give man [sic] his unique humanity (2005: 98).

The origin thus becomes the means by which a renewed system of differences is legitimated. Through an essentially Manichean framework, Reagan’s rhetoric points to an attempt to instill the values of the past as superior to the values of the present. However, as noted above, the American Dream, as a function of consumerism, was itself embroiled in a sacrificial crisis.



Moreover, elements of substantive equality for racial and sexual preferences were by now too far entrenched to be simply revoked and excluded. A tension emerged, not only between the mythologies of the past and the present, but between the origin's ontological order and that of the present. To quell this dual crisis, a scapegoat was needed which would serve to entrench the sovereignty of the origin, and its mythology, over the crises of the present. The *pharmakos* would thus have to be an essential part of these differences, and yet distant enough for their sacrificial exclusion not to invite legitimate retribution. The "crack" addict, by being conceptualised as predominantly black and crime prone, was already supplement to the origin. However, their use of the narcotic of "crack" could be used as a strategy of condemnation that would not invite retribution. When they were excluded, it was because they were seen as *a priori* parasitic on society. The resulting sacrificial expulsion that occurred then could not be, and indeed was not, a direct exclusion, but rather a referred act of foundational violence. This concept stands in contrast, although not in opposition, to a deferred act of sacrifice. The difference is analysed below.

### **Referred acts of Sacrificial Expulsion**

There is a fundamental difference between deferred and referred acts of foundational violence or sacrificial expulsion that is not simply linguistic. As for *deferred* acts of founding violence, Praeg, in *The Geometry of Violence* (2007: 41) argues that the Rwandan genocide of 1994 was a deferred act of foundational violence as it invoked a "retrospective myth of persecution." As Girard (1987: 79) has noted, a deferred act of foundational violence occurs when the generative function of founding violence is not correctly mythologised. Consequently not only is there a failure to legitimate the violence itself (and those who perpetrate it), but because of this illegitimacy, the generative function of that violence cannot be completed and therefore another or repeated acts of violence are necessary to dispel the continuing sacrificial crisis (that is, until the violence can or is legitimated and a retrospective mythology is born). The failure to mythologise the sacrificial exclusion of the *pharmakos* always reveals the sacrifice for what it is, a sacrificial manipulation. Furthermore, without a legitimating mythology the original act of founding violence can never be ritualised thus leaving the society or group without the transcendental signification of the original act ("The Revolution") nor the rites and festivals which would reinvigorate the group from time to time

through the active celebration of the origin of that transcendental signification (commemorations of “The Revolution”).

Considering the narrative of cocaine analysed in the previous chapter however, there are some constitutive differences that make the application of the concept of a deferred act of sacrificial violence problematic to the history both of cocaine and America. Firstly, the sacrificial expulsion discussed in chapter two *was* successful, at least in the case of Chang, in creating a mythology that would ultimately lead to the transformation of cocaine from a drug to a narcotic. Equally, in considering the mythology of the origin Reagan was reasserting, that mythology was still legitimate and had currency. Problematically however, between the disappearance of cocaine explored in chapter three, and its sharp re-emergence in Hollywood in chapter four, the foundational events of cocaine’s narrative had largely been forgotten. It was not that there was an ineffective mythology by which the origins of the acts of sacrificial violence in the narrative of cocaine could be remembered, but rather that there was *no* mythology. This is not to say that the narrative of the narcotic had not continued and been transformed; the analysis in chapter three most definitely points to its continued logic and transformation. However, in the exact example of cocaine and its narrative, the disappearance represents a major disruption. This was, on the one hand, a function of the epistemological structure of the narrative of the narcotic. As has been noted, heroin was seen as far more dangerous and subversive than cocaine, especially during the 1970s and 1980s. On the other hand, it was a product of successful social and political policies. Consequently, the acts and rituals needed to constantly reiterate the legitimacy of the founding moments of cocaine as a narcotic had been forgotten. When the “crack” addict was excluded from society, although mirroring the exclusion of Brilliant Chang and others, any rites associated with the act had been forgotten.

Secondly, while I argue in this chapter that Reagan’s *rejuvenating* rhetoric resurrected ontological taxonomies which had over time been incrementally critiqued and disbanded (the emancipation of the black American subject standing as paradigmatic), the rhetoric did not bring back, directly, the fear and loathing of the “Negro cocaine fiend” in its *original* incarnation. Rather, the “crack whore” of the present became scapegoat to the larger failings of Reagan’s rhetoric and social policies as they were ideally placed *beyond* the limits of the surveillance and care of Reagan’s voting demographic – predominantly white middle-class adults. While the expulsion of the “crack” whore of the 1980s followed a similar logic to that of Brilliant Chang, for instance, it is only through a retrospective analysis, such as this one, that we realise the similarity. At the time, this was probably not known, and certainly not

acted upon. Any sacrificial acts in the narrative of cocaine could therefore not be of a deferred nature, for there existed no memory of the origin event.

The linguistic justification for the difference between a *deferred* and *referred* act of foundational violence is derived from a comparison of the root meaning of the words “referred” and “deferred”. The Oxford English Dictionary articulates referral thus:

**Referral, n. 3.** *Med.* The attribution of pain to a specific site, esp. one distant from its real origin; *the transmission of pain from the site of origin to or into another site.*<sup>103</sup>

The referral is a means by which the repetition of the narrative of the narcotic, and cocaine specifically, can be articulated beyond the need for memory. Unlike the transitive defer, which is “[t]o put off (action, procedure) to some later time; to delay, to postpone,”<sup>104</sup> in which the object, action or procedure is the same but the temporal and spatial dynamics are different, in a referral the application of the object, action or procedure is different, but the temporal and spatial dynamics are the same. This is because there is no conscious memory of the original act or violence. The referred act of sacrificial violence can only ever occur in the present, because of the present. The attribution of pain occurs because of the origin, but does not rely on the origin in order to make meaning. A deferred act, however, while occurring in a different time, relies on memory in order to make meaning.

Thus, for instance, in the case of the Rwandan genocide, the founding violence was of a deferred nature because not only was there a failure to correctly mythologise the foundational violence, but the resulting sacrificial crisis and blood shed was aimed at “finishing the work of 1959” (Praeg 2007: 41). It is, in short, the same work and reasons, the same need, but played out in a different temporal dynamic. This is the *iteration* of the sacrificial moment. In the case of the “crack” user, however, it was not that the founding violence of the cocaine narrative had not been correctly mythologised, but rather that this originating violence had ceased to be forceful in contemporary social memory. The resurrection of the origin had once again made potent specific differences in society. However, in the case of the narrative of cocaine, the original acts of sacrificial exclusion had all but been forgotten. The fear of “crack” was therefore seen as a new problem, something that was attacking the very soul of what it was to be American. In fact, however, the expulsion of the “crack” addict had a long history in its various guises in the narrative both of

<sup>103</sup> OED online. Ref: Referral. Emphasis added.

<sup>104</sup> OED online. Ref: Defer.

cocaine and the narcotic. By retrospectively analysing the narrative we can view the similarities in logic.

The sacrificial crisis that began to take hold of American society was transmitted and referred to or displaced onto the body of the “crack” user. The “crack” user had become the bodily incarnation of all that was wrong with society. The sins of the “crack” user were, however, ambivalent. While the Reagan administration demonised the “crack” user as a *pharmakos* for the crisis of degree within society, it was that selfsame administration that had led to the prevalence of “crack,” and the exile it offered in the first place. While the “crack” user *was* guilty of the use of a narcotic, it was also the very same people who were being excluded from the social and economic realm that displayed the highest usage. At once they were both victims and products of the system. Ultimately this would legitimate the state’s pre-emptive strikes into the lives of these people – they were, as mentioned, guilty until proven innocent. As such, the inner city ghettos became seen as the American nightmare, the carnal supplement to the American Dream. The expulsion of the “crack” addict, then, became a means of legitimating the origin, while at the same time it was the justification of the origin which had led to the renewed emphasis on the disparities in American society.

### The *Pharmakon*’s Geometry

In order to understand how the political spectacle of “crack” cocaine became so prominent, it is necessary to briefly review the political processes that led to Reagan’s power. Reagan not only performs the author function (Reeves *et al* 1994: 73) in an analysis of “Reaganism” or “Reaganomics,” but through the repetitive deployment of his name, the proper noun becomes synecdoche to these larger concepts. While this analysis is not an attempt to indict a single person, the author function performs the role of providing the locus of analysis, the parameters through which an analysis of the socio-political and economic systems under discussion might be brought to light. This is supported by Robert Reich (2008: 11) who argues that

[o]thers want to credit or blame Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, or the predominance of conservative leaders in general over the last several decades. Politicians are important, but they cannot effectuate economic and social change unless the preconditions for change already exist, or unless extraordinary circumstances allow it. By the time Reagan came to power, the

economy had already started to shift. Deregulation, for example, unleashed many of America's industries before Reagan took office.

Furthermore, as Tomas and Mary Edsall (cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 73) argue, "while Reagan's role [in producing a radical shift in voter allegiance] was indisputably critical, he was more a principle agent within – rather than the prime mover of – a sea change involving forces substantially more profound and extensive than the fortunes of two political parties or of their candidates." As noted, Reagan's speech acts, his public orations and rhetoric, can be used as a lens or magnifying glass through which the socio-discursive shifts which not only preceded the emergence of "crack," but also infected the ontological drama being played out on "the streets," can be made visible. However, this is not to say that Reagan was solely responsible for the rise of the *pharmakos* of the "crack" user, even if was the Reagans who were the "*chief definers of the cocaine problem in the network news during the 1980s*" (Reeves *et al* 1994: 72). The sacrificial crisis, this "ideological turmoil," which preceded the expulsion of the *pharmakos* has its roots in the economic and socio-political problems that Reagan inherited and confronted directly. This is the link between this and the previous chapter.

The resurrection of the transcendental signifiers of God and family were a product of the political contestation that swept Reagan to victory (Kymlicka 1998). As Reider further argues, "[t]he effort to dismantle the South's caste system catalysed a politics of massive resistance that rebounded to the Republicans' benefit" (cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 77). Partly as a product of the crisis of degree that emerged through the discourse of consumerism, and partly as a product of American's seeking new meaning, the New Right became a powerful force in contemporary politics by constructing a reality in which the present was shown to be inferior to the past, despite the progress that had been made. Accordingly, by identifying those arenas in which progress had led to what was framed as the moral degeneracy of the country, they were able to gain political power. For instance, the New Right felt that abortion would not only dismantle the nuclear family but would essentially amount to "playing God." Statistically however, the "lower-class," those already marginalised from the economic system were during this period far more likely to have an abortion. The Religious Right, equally, found political justification and motivation in what they felt was the secularisation of the political landscape (seen, for instance, in the Supreme Court decisions to ban prayer in public schools and recognising the sexual reproductive rights of women). Both, considerations, however, became key to Reagan winning the presidential election of 1981.

The rise of a conservative agenda in America was premised not only on what they felt America was, but also what it was not. In this Manichean worldview, the oppositional logic of, for instance, Good and Evil provided a clearly defined normative and moral framework through which the logical limits of each grouping might be known. The religious right were especially important in making this distinction normative. Guided by literal interpretations of Christian doctrine, the implicit product of such a framework was the *a priori* rejection of feminism, the pro-abortionist agenda, and the secularisation of the education system. The reassertion of the dominance of the mythology also gave structure to the ontological taxonomy contained within the origin, which had been exhumed. Thus, for instance, Edsall and Edsall have argued, in the case of the latter, “the Christian school movement was a reaction to social and cultural conflict that prominently included, but was no means limited to, issues of race” (cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 81). The resulting policies were not then “new,” but renewed. The renewal, as noted above, was a return to those foundations that had informed America’s inception and growth – the founding myths. However, this reappropriation of the founding myths was, in and of itself, an highly contested terrain – the sacrificial crisis that emerged, and by which the “crack” user was expelled, was not only a result of the dedifferentiation of society, but also a result of the resulting contestation over the differing (and inherently normative) ontological structures which *ought* to be made real in society.

### **Reaganomics and the Lower Class**

Supplemented by the logic of the origin, and its implicit transcendental signifiers, the mythology helped legitimate new economic and political measures, which would become known as “Reaganomics.” As Reeves *et al* (1994: 85 – 86) argue, “[t]he escalating antitax crusades, the heightening status anxieties of white males, and the mounting moral hysteria of the Religious Right are all inextricably linked: for all are essentially panic responses to the collapse of the Fordist/Keynesian economic order during the 1970s – an order that had regulated and sustained the postwar boom in the United States.” “Reaganomics” is primarily characterised by supply-side economic policies (Roberts 1984); that is, in contrast to the concrete foundations of Fordism and the like supply-side economics is based on short-term radical investment strategies which assume the creativity of capital investment and its ability to create its own demand. The dynamics of such a system necessitate the rolling back of

governmental controls and intervention, the decrease in state expenditure and bureaucracy, and the resulting aggressive increase in privatisation-orientated policies. As capital is thought of being “creative” (a creativity which finds its historical justification in the “rags-to-riches” parables of the Great White Men that had “built” America) and of creating demand (through the creation of markets which did not previously exist but were conceptualised as necessary once a need for them had been invented), taxation is altered in order that those in higher economic brackets are taxed *less*, (*ibid*) with the belief that not only would this spur economic creativity in the entrepreneurial sector but that the proliferation of capital would ultimately have a “trickle-down effect” (*ibid*) through the creation of new markets and thus skills opportunities, especially for those less fortunate. From an employment perspective not only would this have the effect of continuing the exaltation and cycle of Great White Men – entrepreneurs like Donald Trump who had moved from the streets to the penthouse – but would recast society in an ideological spectrum in which those who were less “creative” were not only less wealthy, but lacking in some “God-given” ability to seek their own ends in the New American Dream.

Problematically however, such an economic system would also have the effect of decreasing workers’ rights and protection (*ibid*), with workers essentially becoming a migrant pool of skills resources that could be used as convenient but with no social reparations and with very few lasting benefits. Consequently, the Great American Dream vertically differentiated between those with economic potential and those without. With the reappropriation of the founding myth, however, these economic differences also became moral. Moreover, they also became racial; with black people generally occupying the lower strata of the economic system, a causal chain was established in which it became assumed that by virtue of their economic standing and ontological heritage, they would be crime prone and disease ridden. Thus at one extreme, the Great White Man was the self-determined guardian of this normative social fabric. On the other, the potent metaphor of the “crack whore” became symbolic of the neo-liberal economy of differences. However, the “crack” user was as much a product of the economic system as a product of this logic. In order for the Great White Man to exist a radical difference in the ontological spectrum *had* to exist; the “crack” user, as the diametrically positioned antithesis to this was paradoxically also intrinsically supplement to the very logic of the system. Statistically this is explored in the following section of this chapter.

Ironically then the “crack” user was at the very heart of the justification for the new system of differences, while at the same time being the external other to that system. This

centrality was both mythological and literal, for it was they that were seen to occupy the inner-city ghettos and slums. However, and in following from the logic of racism explored in chapter three, this racial discourse could not be of an explicit nature; the American Civil Rights Movement had gained far too much momentum and legitimacy for the ontological hierarchy of the origin to be articulated in the same manner as it had been once. There could be no talk, in other words, of “Negros” or “natives.” As such “Reaganism” aimed to “civilise” its implicit racism (not to mention those who were considered “uncivilised”) by replacing the ontological primordialism of biological discrimination with a more subtle narrative of “interests.” For instance, rather than use the biological classification of “race” or “ethnicity,” divisions would be made according to the implicitly normative threshold of “welfare dependency.” Welfare dependency, however, in a system that exalted the self-determined creativity of the individual, provided the normative framework upon which not only difference, but also condemnation could take root. Considering, too, the hierarchical nature of the vertical axis, those who were considered closer to the ideals related by the transcendental signifiers of the founding myth were paradoxically more highly “evolved” in this capitalist version of the Great Chain of Being. This can be seen, paradigmatically, in Republican Patrick Buchanan’s speeches. For instance, he argued that,

The real root causes of the crisis in the underclass are twofold. First, the old character-forming, conscious-forming institutions – family, church, and school – have collapsed under relentless secular assault; second, as the internal constraints on behaviour were lost among the black poor, the external barriers – police, prosecutors, and courts – were systematically undermined ... What the black poor need more than anything is a dose of the truth. Slums are the products of the people who live there. Dignity and respect are not handed out like food stamps: they are earned and won ... (cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 97).

The poorer classes became homogenised and seen not as a result of the economic difficulties of the time, but as the cause. As a strategy of delegitimation, the charge of being economically parasitic was justified through claims concerning, for instance, welfare dependency. However, this strategy was further justified by making causal links between poverty, crime, disease, and drug use. As such, these causal links became a means of justifying increased surveillance, police brutality, and institutional racism.



Accordingly, in true Girardian fashion, the result became postulated as the cause, the ontological inversion providing the moral impetus for the “crack” user’s expulsion. Indeed, as Mike Davis has shown,

[t]he increasing proletarianisation of the American social structure has not been matched by an equal tendency toward homogenisation of the working class as a cultural or political collectivity. Stratifications rooted in differential positions in the social labour process have been reinforced by deep-seated ethnic, religious, racial, and sexual antagonisms within the working class (cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 80).

The resulting referred sacrificial exclusion, as an iteration of the logic of exclusion, both of the narcotic of “crack” and all those who came into contact with this contagion was made manifest through those biopolitical tropes which have been used consistently in a metaphysics of presence to expel and indeed exile the unwanted. In this manner a pathological view of *delinquency* and a conception of the exiled as diseased and as parasitic was instantiated, culminating in (and uniquely to this discourse although, equally, a product of it) the rise of the “welfare mother” who personified, by virtue of her very existence, the sins of a nation.

### The Expulsion of the Presence of “Crack”

The expulsion of “crack” would then be justified through a number of strategies. These strategies, however, would themselves need to be legitimated through their own narrative. The process by which these strategies would gain currency would begin most obviously with Nancy Reagan’s “Just Say No” anti-drug campaign in 1982. It must be noted however that her campaign was *not* directly aimed at the use of “crack,” precisely because at this point in time its use was relatively isolated. However, her speeches and the campaign did begin a specific discourse that would ultimately serve to legitimate the strategies used to condemn the “crack” user. An analysis of her speeches, therefore, provides a useful insight into how these strategies were developed through the rhetoric that was employed. It was in other words, because of campaigns like hers that the “crack” crisis would later become so prominent in the public’s eye.

The words “Just Say No” were first uttered to a student at Longfellow Elementary School in Oakland, California. While at first benign, they would come to be representative of

the Manichaeism that would reassert the truths of the past. Indeed, at first the distinction was no more sinister than between “us” and “them.” However, inserted in a political, economic, and social system that was now redefined by the origin, the distinction between “us” and “them” would become the foundation upon which the eventual expulsion of the “crack” user could be legitimated.

While Nancy Reagan has often been criticised for the “Just Say No” campaigns’ over simplification of a very complex problem (Jenga 1995: 1503 – 1520), the resulting NIDA policies were (at least in those sectors of society that children a) went to school, and b) whose parents’ voting power mattered) relatively successful in decreasing the prevalence of drug consumption (Stuntz 1998: 1795 – 1802). Equally, while the resulting institutionalisation of the NIDA policies became a vast system of surveillance, internment, and ultimately, expulsion, the founding mythological tenets and justifications are displayed in the very first speech that Nancy Reagan gave on the subject, on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1982. A rereading of the speech in light of the above framework brings to light three analytical concerns. Firstly, it is through the speech that the present is banished and the past exalted – the speech provided a simply understood rhetorical justification for a romanticised inversion from the failings of the present to the transcendental security offered by the mythology of the Founding Fathers. Problematically however such a redoubling also invoked the differential framework of the reconfigured past which took as *a priori* the normative threshold between *opposing* entities – this was not simply a speech highlighting the difference between “us” and “them,” but the beginnings of a framework concerned with expulsion of the parasitic other. Again, this iteration was the result of a Girardian logic in which the consequence is transformed into the cause. Secondly, the reconfigured primacy of the difference between the transcendental and the immanent, between the past and the present, informed this rhetoric – to “Just Say No” was not to simply “say no” to the use and distribution of a narcotic, but to say yes to a very specific conception of life itself, framed within the transcendence of the new American Dream. Finally, and paradoxically, the difference that was caught between the negative reinforcement of the use of narcotics and the positive reinforcement of a specific conception of life, rather than legitimate the dominance of the transcendently articulated past, served to bring into sharper focus the thoroughly immanent problems of the present, such as the use of drugs and alcohol by the youth. Furthermore, while this paradox of differentiation did not necessarily increase the use of narcotics *within* the sphere that Nancy Reagan’s crusade was targeting, the rhetoric served to reinforce the diametric structure of society so that if one was

not to say “No,” but not say “Yes” either, rather than simply occupying the space *between* the two distinctions, one would be forced *into* the distinction.

The degree of difference, between the past and the present, often manifests itself in Nancy Reagan’s nostalgic reappropriation of those transcendental signifiers, rites and totems that have structured the very fabric of the imagined community. For instance, in the opening lines of the speech, Reagan reminisces that

As a mother, I’ve always thought of September as a special month, a time when we bundled our children off to school, to the warmth of an environment in which they could fulfill [sic] the promise and hope in those restless minds. But so much has happened over these last years, so much to shake the foundations of all that we know and all that we believe in.<sup>105</sup>

This nostalgic narrative of return is an attempt to “look back to a real or imagined past community as providing the ideal and desirable form of social control” (cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 156). However, as noted the very cause for the looking back to community emerges from necessarily problematising the gender and racial bias of the community so invoked. Furthermore, “[a]s in all forms of nostalgia, the past event might not even have existed. But its mythic qualities are profound” (*ibid*). While Ronald Reagan would reappropriate the past through his use of (often religiously themed) parables and fables from which he would draw what he felt were moral lessons from the past, Nancy Reagan invoked the nostalgia and lessons of the past through a much more direct comparison. Her speech follows,

Today there’s a drug and alcohol abuse epidemic in this country, and no one is safe from it - not you, not me, and certainly not our children, because this epidemic has their names written on it (*ibid*).

For her, *today* has been poisoned by an *epidemic*. The disease, an “epidemic,” of drug and alcohol abuse, has infected the social body. The allusion to the notion of an epidemic inscribes the use of drugs as pathological and therefore contagious. This causal link, as noted, would later become a potent means of delegitimizing the “crack” addict; the consequence would become the pathological cause.

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<sup>105</sup> A copy of the original speech is available at <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2004/reagan/stories/speech.archive/just.say.no.html>

The redoubled *telos* which Nancy Reagan invoked would find its most potent articulation in a rising biopolitical concern, not only “for the children” but, through its implicit Manichaeism, their antithesis, the vaguely defined “they” (whom it can be safely assumed was the drug user or drug dealer). For instance, in the speech she argues that,

They take and take, until finally every time a drug goes into a child, something else is forced out - like love and hope and trust and confidence. Drugs take away the dream from every child's heart and replace it with a nightmare, and it's time we in America stand up and replace those dreams (*ibid*).

The epistemological and ontological inversions are intricately articulated here. Firstly, drugs *take* from the child in the present those symbolic items that have defined childhood in the past. Secondly however, the problems of the present replace the dreams of the past. The child is seen as a “little pitcher” in which a finite amount of “love and hope and trust and confidence” can reside; the drug can push out these transcendental signifiers and replace them with a “nightmare.” In this rhetoric the child becomes the contested terrain, the body upon which the mythologies of the past and the present do battle. However, the “child” is not every child, but a child who is given birth to by the “we” – white, middle-class America. For Nancy Reagan then, her positive articulation of life and indeed the future cannot be held without the eradication of the problems of the present.

The mythological contestation, articulated through the rising concern for both extremes of the normative spectrum, is clearly invoked at the end of her speech:

So, to my young friends out there: Life can be great, but not when you can't see it. So, open your eyes to life: to see it in the vivid colors that God gave us as a precious gift to His children, to enjoy life to the fullest, and to make it count. Say yes to your life. And when it comes to drugs and alcohol just say no (*ibid*).

The concept of the drug has now become the placeholder for all that the great life is not. The use of drugs threatens to replace the “vivid colors.” It is for this reason that the children must be protected, by whatever means necessary. Derrida’s concern with the simulacrum of drug use explored in chapters two and three is made tangible here. The importance of the real is asserted over the simulacrum of drug use, the opposing forces conceptualised as in a transcendental battle between good and evil. At stake were the very lives of these young

citizens, the biopolitical status as citizen confirmed in their ability to re-affirm the transcendental signifiers which Reagan stood for. Yet the biopolitical concern was not only for the youth; the drug dealer, too, had to be reconceptualised as the hidden supplement which made the distinction between good and bad powerful.

Through this distinction the renewed ontological order, as a product of the origin, would be legitimated. Difference, in other words, was made possible and potent by highlighting the curse of the drug. This framework not only guided the larger socio-economic turn of the US, but also served as a means through which the fear and loathing of those that could not meet the self-standardised parameters of the larger system, such as the “crack” user, could begin to be articulated. There is then a parallel emphasis on subversion – the decay of the inner cities was a constant reminder of the failings of the newly invoked neo-liberal paradigm. Those who lived there, however, were seen as the cause rather than the product. Problematically however, the mythology that was used to sustain this order also always *reinvoked* that which it was attempting to expel, at the precise moment of that expulsion.

A new paradox of differentiation arose, in that each attempt by the Reagans to reassert the transcendental signifiers of yesteryear necessarily also invoked the immanent realm of that which they conceptualised as the antithesis of this dream, namely the present and “crack” cocaine. As a result, rather than “change attitudes and just simply dry up their markets” (*ibid*) the trace of the American nightmare began to run through the new American Dream. The problem that “crack” presented, rather than be eliminated through its discursive expulsion was made more tangible at the point of that expulsion. This paradox instantiated a vicious negative feedback loop, in which, at the razor's edge of the expulsion of the *pharmakos*, each cut, each invasion, each whipping, would have to become ever more violent and ever more spectacular.

### **The Anti-Crack Rhetoric**

While the modern war on drugs will be analysed in far more detail in the following chapter, it is necessary to briefly highlight its inception, which was first outlined by Reagan on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 1982. While it was Nixon who first deemed it necessary to wage a war against drugs in 1971, it was Reagan that brought clarity to the subject (Deitch 2003: 183). The speech exhibited the many tropes that have been analysed above, but also served to

confirm that anti-narcotic legislation would become a priority for the government. As Reagan noted,

We live at a turning point – one of those critical eras in history when time and circumstances unite with the sound instincts of good and decent people to make a crucial difference in the lives of future generations. We can and will make a difference (cited in Erickson 1985: 48).

The “turning point” is caught between the legitimacy of history and the problems facing “the lives of future generations.” It was in the present that the war needed to be waged, but that war was to be justified by the past with the aim of consolidating the future. In spite of this the problems of the present and the legitimacy of the past served to create a moral panic that was to produce some absurd regulations. As Streatfeild (2001: 312) notes,

[t]he anticrack rhetoric was to have other costly consequences. Congress, swept up in its own polemic, was the scene of heated debates about what to do with these heinous drug dealers who were enslaving the youth of the country. Federal penalties for drug dealing went up and up. In 1988 Senator Jesse Helms (Republican, North Carolina) lobbied for a law dictating that, since crack was a hundred times more addictive than cocaine (no one knows where this statistic came from), possession of it should merit a penalty a hundred times greater. Unbelievably, it was passed. Today the penalty for possession of 5 grams of crack (worth about \$350) is a mandatory five years in jail – equivalent to that for possession of half a kilogram of cocaine (worth about \$10,000). And yet, as anyone who knows anything about cocaine will tell you, 500 grams of cocaine, when cooked up, will yield 500 grams – possibly even more – of crack

The discourse and fear of the “crack” user superseded the need to make just policy. Indeed, so powerful were the unjustified presuppositions as to the addictive potential of “crack,” as a function of the causal manner in which its meaning was made, that policy could be passed that was completely unjustified.

The expulsion of the “crack” user, when it occurred, itself relied on a number of metaphors that cut to the very heart of the new mythology that Reagan was legitimating, and which was being used as a strategy to condemn the addict. While “the streets” themselves would be one, the revulsion of the contagious “crack whore,” “crack house,” and the potent symbol of the “crack baby” began to dominate media reports from the time (Reeves *at al* 1994: 43), and served to create the difference necessary to legitimate the myth of the origin. The institutional sites and mechanisms that were tasked with maintaining this system also

underwent a radical overhaul. For instance, as Massing notes, “the courts treat crack far more severely than cocaine, the effect of which is to imprison blacks for much longer than whites” (*ibid*). Not only this, for as he further notes, “[i]n Minnesota, for instance, first-time crack users convicted under a 1989 law received a four-year prison term, while first-time users of cocaine powder received probation; about 95 percent of those charged for crack were black and 80 percent of those charged with cocaine powder were white” (cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 41) This is further reflected in the many statistical analyses,<sup>106</sup> in which the US prison population doubled (from 329,821 in 1980 to 627,402 in 1989)(cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 135). In 1990 the US not only had the highest incarceration rate in the world, but black Americans made up half of that prison population. Moreover, half of those inmates were incarcerated on drug charges, resulting in “about one in four young black males in their twenties were either in jail, on parole, or on probation (compared to only 6 percent for white males)” (*ibid*).

There are other examples of the process through which the “crack” user was transformed from a reviled object to the *pharmakos* of a renewed socio-economic system. For example, one Mr. Wilson (1990) argued that should the institutional policies against “crack” fail, “we will have consigned millions of people, hundreds of thousands of infants and hundreds of neighborhoods [sic] to a life of oblivion and disease.”<sup>107</sup> These lives, not only diseased, were also worthless. In an ironic report concerning CBS’s infamous documentary, “*48 Hours on Crack Street*,”<sup>108</sup> John Corry argues that “drugs are a disease and waste of human life.” In the renewed metaphysics which gave meaning and legitimacy to the above statements, the causal association noted above meant that those who used “crack” were not only “a waste of human life,” but “diseased” and “sick” too. The charge of disease, however, was also conceptualised as pathological thereby cutting off any confessional matrices that might have existed to redeem and reincorporate the “crack” user back into society. This rhetoric constructs a series of normatively infused binary oppositions whose logic dictates that if one is not alive (alive, that is, by the parameters dictated by the larger metaphysics) then one is automatically “dead,” or perhaps, “the living dead.” Implicitly then, not only does the use of the *pharmakon* of “crack” transform the user into a living *pharmakos* for a larger system of differences, but this ontological drama is contested at the level of life itself. The *pharmakos* is as always both already living and dead, both at the borders of the discourse and

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<sup>106</sup> See, for instance, Stuntz 1998: 1795 – 1842.

<sup>107</sup> Cited in Lafott 2002: 299.

<sup>108</sup> For a more detailed analysis of this documentary film, see Reeves *et al* 1994: 35 – 48.

at its very heart. The living dead, as noted in the previous chapter, is also what Foucault would term a delinquent.

Perhaps one of the most cogent images the media used in the proliferation and justification of the expulsion of the *pharmakos* was that of the “crack” baby or infant – writhing, screaming, shaking and motherless these images were not only the hidden supplement to Reagan’s conception of the nuclear family, but a potent justification for the emerging war on drugs. The predation of “crack” on those who were seen not only as the weakest members of society, but the future and embodiment of the teleological narrative of the new American Dream, provided the necessary justification for the expulsion of the *pharmakos* that was directly guilty, the “crack” mother, through pre-emptive strikes “on the streets.” As French (1989) wrote, “[t]hey [the infants] are also victims of scourges that are increasing in some impoverished neighborhoods [sic] – drugs, principally crack, and infectious diseases like syphilis and AIDS.”<sup>109</sup> Another author, Barbanel, in an article entitled “Drug Use Pervades Life in a Shelter,” argues that there is a “Pervasive Fear of Violence and Disease,” and that “There, side by side, are predators and their prey, the mentally ill, alcoholics, men with limbs thinned by disease and malnutrition, others with muscles trained through exercise in prison.”<sup>110</sup> Again, the dichotomy is invoked, caught between the “predators” and the “prey” the author feels that she is bearing witness to something that is not of society, but is beyond society, is animalistic and brutal – a resurrected state of nature in which the *pharmakos* is at odds with the social contract of the Constitution.

As noted, the proliferation and repetition of the images of the “crack house,” “crack whore,” and “crack baby” found their narration through the trope of parasitic disease – the *pharmakon* and the fear of the contagion have never strayed far from each other. Not only this, but the resulting *raison d’état* that would legitimate, at an institutional level, the war on drugs, found its justification in the *controlling* of the contagion. As such, “[t]he vilification of the crack house as a sinister place of assembly has, of course, justified the most brutal and excessive of armed responses by the forces of decency and control” (Reeves *et al* 1994: 133). Even though there were (and are) many reports of the many links between narcotic use and HIV/AIDS,<sup>111</sup> for instance, the institutional response that arose is best described as an attempt to criminalise the user and militarise the state. Furthermore, with the classification of the *pharmakos* as inherently delinquent, delinquent because they were incurably diseased, no

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<sup>109</sup> French, H. *The New York Times*. February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1989: 1.

<sup>110</sup> For a further analysis see Barbanel 1988.

<sup>111</sup> See, for example, Watkins *et al* 1998: 42 – 58.



confessional avenue was open whereby these people might be drawn back into society. The necessary outcome then, the *logical* outcome, was the heavy-handed policing of these diseased territories; primordial, primeval, land-locked colonies. Indeed, the pollution and waste of the inner cities became the symbolic metaphor for the very people, if they were conceived of as such, that lived there.

The resulting “siege paradigm” not only strengthened the ontological dichotomy between “us” and “them,” but also served to homogenise the “crack” cohort to such an extent that even those that *ought* to have receive help were simply expelled from society. Harry Edwards, one time propaganda minister for the Black Panthers, argued that a “13-year-old kid selling crack in the streets,” should be dealt with by “turn[ing] him in lock[ing] him up. Get rid of him. Lock him up for a long time. As long as the law will allow, and try to make it as long as possible. I’m for locking ‘em up, getting ‘em off the street, put ‘em behind bars” (cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 142). The rhetoric of “the streets” provided the institutional site where the narration of the “crack” user could be located. The street, simultaneously public property and an aspect of “home,” simultaneously the arteries of the state and yet now also the main conduits along which “crack” flowed, became the institutional site where the “crack” user could be located and fought. Not only would the sacrificial crisis be decided on the streets in those final acts of violence, pre-empted by the smashing of doors but concluded with the expulsion of the “crack” user to the renewed leper’s colony of the penitentiary. The mythology of “the streets” further perpetuated the dialectical class distinction upon which the siege paradigm rested; the streets, as a place of community, of home, were typically a phenomenon and ideal of the black lower urban class. Indeed, much of the rhetoric of the “crack war” relied on this distinction; *48 Hours on Crack Street* being a notable example. The “streets” became a general metaphor for petty crime, drug dealing, prostitution and rampant immorality. Just as Hollywood (and the Hollywood sign) had epitomised the flagrant excess and goal of the Great American Dream of the past, the “streets” became the symbolic epitome of this “war”, and the anti-thesis to all that was right and moral.

The ultimate consequence of the reassertion of the Manichean framework epitomised by Reagan’s rhetoric, was the discursive emergence of the “crack mother” (and implicitly, the “crack baby”). In a mythology that exalted the Great White Men of business, the “crack mother” stood as the symbol of the greatest difference, the diametrically opposed *pharmakos* whose expulsion from the reasserted system of differences would finally legitimate that system. While the “crack baby” received a certain sympathy, its ontological status was configured vis-à-vis its economic “cost” to the system. Thus while the image of the “crack

baby” was deployed as symbolic portrait of the disease of “crack” in the larger media, the “crack baby” from the first instance of their life, their birth, was already conceptualised as guilty *even though it was a consequence of the system itself*. The existence, too, justified the transcendental signification of the nuclear family, acting as supplement to the larger mythology. The “crack mother” however, as the biopolitical antithesis of good wholesome American values, was condemned for being the self-(un)made predator, the autonomous and free-willed cause of this future economic cost. The birth of the “crack baby,” then, would serve as the ultimate justification for pre-emptive strikes by the state: if the purpose of this redefined model of statehood was to provide the retrospective moral markers which had guided its foundation, articulated through a precise economic model, then the “crack baby,” as a costly and yet worthless entity in the system, as well as that which produced it, the “crack mother,” had to be expelled from society *before* this cost could begin. The “crack user,” then, had to be expelled before such time as the mother (and as a consequence, the father) could give birth to this life of cost. As such, the reproductive possibility was enough to justify the state preventing that possibility by whatever means necessary.

## Conclusion

The narration of this normative framework was often publicised in articles that not only sought to justify the expulsion of the “crack” mother, but also those institutional responses which provided the mechanics of that expulsion (even if there were at least some articles in opposition to what was recognised as a media stereotype).<sup>112</sup> For instance,

When Awilda Lopez took her first hit of crack cocaine on the hardscrabble streets of Bushwick, Brooklyn, in 1988, she crossed the shadowy divide that separates tough urban poverty from mind-numbing neglect... Using her welfare cheques to get high, Ms. Lopez soon became more concerned about feeding her own crack addiction than her children. She disappeared for days at a time, leaving them with family members, friends, acquaintances, and ultimately no one, relatives said.<sup>113</sup>

The subjectivity of the “crack” user is articulated in relation to her failure to conform to the moral boundaries of the larger mythology – ultimately she slips beyond this limit, beyond the

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<sup>112</sup> Frank, D. *The New York Times*. November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

<sup>113</sup> Alvarez, L. *The New York Times*. November 27<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

city walls. The “hardscrabble streets” provide the institutional site, the podium upon which larger society’s gaze can be directed, and upon which the biopolitical reality of Lopes’ condemnation can be made manifest. In this universe the metaphors that are normally held as positive, feeding for instance, are inverted one last time, becoming the very reason for the “crack” users’ condemnation. In another article from the time (written against the minor debates for legalisation) the author argued that

If we can afford the savings and loan bailout we can afford the drug war. The only worthwhile question is, would legalization mean fewer pregnant crack addicts, fewer babies with damaged brains?<sup>114</sup>

The tainted memory of McCarthyism, of seeking out and expelling the internal enemy, infected the narrative of crack. As the American business leader, Peter Ueberroth argued, “We got to educate them so that they know what they are doing can terminate their life, mostly rearrange and disarrange their families, their children. It causes most of the crime. It’s un-American. We’ve got to stop it” (cited in Reeves *et al* 1994: 145). Finally, the expulsion was complete.

“Crack” has become such a potent metaphor for the pure poison of the *pharmakon* that simply writing its name may contaminate the text. The referred act of sacrificial exclusion of the *pharmakos* of the “crack addict” transmuted the pain of the mythological turmoil of the past and the present onto the diseased body of the “crack” user. Their bodies and their lives, then, became the locus of expulsion, the skin upon which, through their expulsion, a new mythology could be grafted. However, the ghost of the *pharmakon* could not so easily be expelled. In the following chapter I analyse the last instantiation of the narrative of cocaine, when the *pharmakon* became the *pharmakos* itself – the narcotic, its fear and loathing, became the very reason why the *raison d’état* of the war on drugs became justified. The birth of “Plan Colombia,” for instance, used the fear of the narcotic as a means through which the remote intrusion into another state’s sovereignty could be made legitimate. It is here that we see the final culmination of the narrative of cocaine, and indeed, its implosion. The rise of the “narco-terrorist” conjoined two feared discourses, making it the epitome of the discourse. At the same time however, the system which had sustained this order and ordering collapsed in upon itself. What remains to be seen then in the final

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<sup>114</sup> Rosenthal, A. *The New York Times*. December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1989.

analysis, is the force of habit, of custom, and how it gave birth to the mystical foundation of addiction.

## Chapter 6: Sacrifice and the War on Drugs

### Introduction

After closing the pharmacy, Plato went to retire, to get out of the sun. He took a few steps in the darkness toward the back of his reserves, found himself leaning over the *pharmakon*, decided to analyse.

Within the thick, cloudy liquid, trembling deep inside the drug, the whole pharmacy stood reflected, repeating the abyss of the Platonic phantasm.

The analyst cocks his ears, tries to distinguish between the two repetitions.

He would like to analyse the good from the bad, the true from the false.

He leans over further: they repeat each other ... The walled-in voice strikes through the rafters, the words come apart, bits and pieces of sentences separate, disarticulated parts begin to circulate through the corridors, become fixed for a round or two, translate each other, become conjoined, bounce off each other, contradict each other, make trouble, tell each other, institute an internal commerce, take themselves for a dialogue. Full of meaning. A whole story. An entire history. All of philosophy.<sup>115</sup>

This study has attempted to show that throughout the history of cocaine, the manner in which its narrative has been transformed has been a function of its interaction with western modernity. Central to these historical transformations has been the manner in which the *pharmakon* of cocaine, and its use, has been used as a strategy by which other discourses and people are made legitimate, or indeed illegitimate. Similarly, the expulsion of the ambivalent victim, known as the *pharmakos*, can either be good or bad, poisonous or remedial, depending on the status and position of those who are expelled. Both the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos*, in their interaction with western modernity, are imbued with meaning and a normative burden – the *pharmakon*, and its use, is seen as an exile from difference, while the *pharmakos*, and their expulsion, a return to difference. As noted, their epistemological status is a function of their ambivalence; they can be good or bad, depending on the manner in which they are articulated. Accordingly, and for analytical clarity, at each turn of the narcotic narrative thus far the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* have been kept separate. Indeed, as the reader may have noticed, they have themselves been configured in a binary relationship. Yet this is not to say that at times both concepts do not act as supplementary to each other; the

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<sup>115</sup> Derrida 1981: 169.

illegitimate and illegal use of cocaine can condemn a user to a whole raft of accusations not necessarily related to the actual consumption of a drug or narcotic. Indeed, at times their very position vis-à-vis society can be used as a justification for the manner in which that society is constituted; the expulsion of the *pharmakos* creates the difference necessary for the continued functioning of the community. As shall be shown in this and the following chapter, it is this sacrificial logic that western modernity has never escaped especially in relation to the narrative of the narcotic. Consequently, and as shall be argued for in the following chapter, it is because we have never escaped that logic that we must reveal and critique it. Through the act of revealing, we create the possibility of dealing more effectively with the narcotic and the narrative, and the various problems that they present to us.

In this chapter I analyse the last major transformation in the historical narrative of cocaine and indeed the narcotic – the war on drugs. However here the analytical division between the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* is no longer possible – the *pharmakon* has become the *pharmakos* for this new and sovereign narrative. In the narrative of the narcotic, in other words, the *concept* of the narcotic has become a means of identifying and indeed scapegoating not only a singular person or population but also entire nations and ideologies. Consequently, the identification and expulsion of the narcotic has been broadened and transformed from a means of expelling the fiendish drug dealer to a mechanism by which an entirely new system of differences might be built (most primitively, for instance, between those that do and those that do not supply narcotics to the rest of the world). It is upon this basis that the war on drugs became, and indeed is, an implicit aspect of the war on terror – a new system of differences premised on ideological, national and social disparities ultimately made and acted upon in the name of the sovereignty of the state that makes the distinction between the freedom fighter and the terrorist.

In order to understand this, it is necessary to trace out the history of the war on drugs. As I hope to show, the fear of cocaine, as a product of the narrative analysed in the previous chapter, became a means of justifying a literal war. However, this war was not conducted solely in the name of the prevention of the use, distribution, or manufacture of a narcotic. Rather, the charge and fear of the narcotic became a mechanism through which far deeper concerns could be brought to the nation's attention. Consequently, not only was the concept of the narcotic the reason for the war on drugs, but its supplement – at every attempt to expel the narcotic, the war on drugs made stronger the very concept of the narcotic. Understanding this has a radical consequence not only for policy but also for theory; each attempt to expel

the concept and substance of the narcotic must be self-reflexive of the fact that the act of expulsion also invokes the concept that it seeks to expel.

As the reader may have noticed, only cursory treatment has been given to the various laws, regulations and ordinances that have made up the formal narrative of the narcotic of cocaine. This was done for two reasons. Firstly, this thesis has attempted to stay true to a *discursive* analysis of the narcotic narrative. While this does not necessarily or automatically exclude an analysis of the various regulations that have come to serve the narcotic narrative, indeed far from it, emphasis has been placed on those archival or textual encounters that elicit the *a priori* justification for regulation. As such, in its more Foucauldian moments, this analysis is then a search for subaltern discourses and hidden meaning within a general, rather than chronological or total history (Gutting 1989: 249 – 256). Consequently, the resulting laws, their inception, and legitimacy, have often been assumed. Secondly, there have been various detailed analyses of the laws and regulations themselves,<sup>116</sup> their effects, consequences and total history,<sup>117</sup> which, in antithesis to this study, assume the *a priori* discursive environments which make such laws and regulations not only plausible, but possible. Ultimately, the analysis of the discourse of the narcotic narrative has been one of the central themes of this thesis; this selective reading, I hope, has sharpened focus on the centrality of the role that the logic of modernity has played in the larger narrative of the narcotic. Nonetheless, to minimise this analytical gap in the study, a brief analysis of the various laws and regulations will be undertaken at the beginning of this chapter.

With this in place, the chapter seeks to understand how the distinction between the legitimate and the illegitimate justified the war on drugs. It is here, in other words, that we see the literal manifestation of the sovereignty of the state demarcating what is, and what is not, legitimate. The process by which this demarcation is made powerful is analysed through the lens offered to us by Agamben's theory of the state of exception. As noted by Agamben, these "inclusionary act[s] of exclusion" (Tagma 2009: 412) make supplement the very thing the state is attempting to reject. Importantly though, the state of exception also exhibits the same logical structure as that of the *pharmakos* – namely, that in declaring the *pharmakos* as that which is the exception (thus including it *within* the discourse), the *pharmakos* is excluded. It is this paradox that has featured prominently in the preceding chapters of this study. In this instance, however, the paradox would have direct consequences for the very way in which we deal with the problem of the narcotic.

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<sup>116</sup> See, for instance, Streatfeild 2004, Scott, P. 1998, Webb 1999.

<sup>117</sup> See, for instance, Hargreaves 1992, or Rowe 2006.

Sovereignty, in both Agamben and Foucault's understanding, is made manifest internally through the system it creates (through its monopoly on violence) and externally through the state of exception it declares – it defines the borders of its own reach, its own logical limits, from both sides. The enactment of the sovereign's monopoly on violence is articulated, in the modern world, through governmentalised networks of discipline, control and surveillance – from legal punishment to the collection of statistical data on a defined population, these technologies of power form a matrix through which the microcosms of modern sovereignty are expressed.<sup>118</sup> Importantly for this chapter, sovereignty also makes rare and rarefies the external, the “other,” at its very inception. The declaration of the exception of the external threat or difference not only further legitimates sovereignty internally, but provides the sovereign with the power, as a number of authors have noted, to give and take life.<sup>119</sup> As explored by Halit Tagma (2009: 407 – 409), this sovereign and violent manifestation of the biopolitics of bare life, and its inverse, the withholding of death, has been a central characteristic of modernity's rearticulated and recalculated concentration camp – the terrorist holding cell. Indeed, it is the identification and declaration of “the terrorist,” and the consequent reorientation of the *raison d'état* that has become one of the definitive characteristics of the sovereignty of the modern state. Thus, as I hope to show, the declaration of that which is terrorist to the state not only helps define the limits of a sovereign's power *within* a state, but also becomes a powerful means through which external sovereignty can be articulated, ultimately through the highlighting of the difference between the sovereign and the terrorist. The identification and detainment of the terrorist, then, provides both the *de jure* and *de facto* means of expressing the sovereign power of the modern state.

Thus in the following section a historical examination of the various laws and regulations that have given structure to the anti-narcotic regime will be undertaken, with the aim of revealing the ever increasing complexity of anti-narcotic legislation. Again, it must be remembered that simply because the narcotic of cocaine came under direct juridical control, this does not mean that there were no legitimate uses for cocaine – medical science was, and still is, used in limited instances. As I hope to show, the logical structures revealed in the previous chapters have provided the discursive parameters for what could be thought possible vis-à-vis the larger anti-narcotic rhetoric. Indeed, one might conclude that the failure of the war on drugs was the product of modernity's inability to grasp the narcotic-as-*pharmakon* in

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<sup>118</sup> See, for instance, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978 – 79* (2008).

<sup>119</sup> See Norris 2005.



its entirety, to see the narcotic not as the product of some natural law, but of the very institutional measures tasked with its control. With this analysis complete, I argue that the new discursive conjoining of the concept of terror and the concept of the narcotic represents not the final note in the narrative of the narcotic, but the final note in the narrative of the *anti-narcotic* narrative. No longer, in other words, is it possible to situate the narcotic of cocaine as the antithesis of social reality. This is not to say, however, that other concepts and other substances cannot take the place of cocaine, but rather that there has been a discursive shift, a subtle and complex movement from a discourse concerned with the simulacrum of drug use to that of the simulacrum of life itself. Bare life, in other words, has once again come to the fore as the site of contestation.

### A Brief History of Anti-Narcotic Legislation

Legislation against the narcotic, and cocaine specifically, began long before the substance's rediscovery by western medical science. When the Spanish Conquistadors arrived in The New World, not only did they discover the Inca and their vast hoards of gold, but also the centrality and importance of coca leaf chewing to the culture. Almost immediately they began to use the leaves and their consumption as a form of leverage, so much so that the leaves soon became a type of payment, especially in the resulting labour camps surrounding the Potosi silver mines. However, upon receiving word of this, the Catholic Church banned the practice, also banning the consumption of the leaf under the auspices of it being a "pagan practice." This decision was reversed however when the Church began to extract a tithe from all of the monetary interactions surrounding the practice.

As noted in earlier chapters, with the discovery of cocaine as the first effective local anaesthetic known to western medical science, the *substance* became the darling of medical science at the same time as medical science was re-orientating itself as a legitimate regime of truth. As such, the substance became a *drug*, an important and legitimate weapon in the developing medical arsenal. However, with the rising number of victims (based *within* the medical regime), and with the first whispers of the illegitimate consumption of the drug (perpetuated outside the borders of the medical by the often metaphorical "Negro fiend") the drug's illegitimate consumption came to the attention of the strengthening temperance movement. It was at the same time, however, that the formal inception of the temperance movement gained legitimacy through the "temperance education" policy of 1882, which

made the policy guidelines a mandatory educational outlook in all schools, territorial, military, and naval institutions in the US (Crafts, W., Crafts, J., Leitch 1900: 72). While this would be countered by the formation of the Personal Liberty League of the United States the resulting opposition, which was fought primarily on ideological grounds and concentrated on the use of alcohol, also provided the discursive foundations for the first critique of the illegitimate use of cocaine. Before this critique gained momentum however, and as noted in chapter two, cocaine was still widely used within the medical sphere at the turn of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so much so that its use and distribution increased so dramatically that it became one of the foremost products of both Merck Pharmaceuticals, and later, Parke, Davis, and Co.

## Prohibition

As has been previously noted, the narrative of cocaine did not occur in isolation from other historical events and processes – the history of other drugs, narcotics, and prohibition movements all played a role in the development of the narrative of cocaine. For instance, in 1886, the British Report of the Royal Commission on Opium rejected claims that opium was harmful to India’s population, and that its use should be prohibited beyond the borders of the medical (Richards 2002: 375 – 420). Not only did the Commission not endorse comparisons with alcohol, but the report is now also considered to have set back measures to control opium’s use by up to fifteen years. Indeed, the Commission itself was instituted in response to questions over the use of opium; it is possible to see, even in these very early instances, the manner in which the *pharmakon* was being used to legitimate specific systems of difference. In 1909, however, The Shanghai Opium Conference and resulting Commission were convened (in part at the insistence of President Theodore Roosevelt), which was the first *international* attempt to regulate the trade in opiates and cocaine. Not only does this point to the vast expansion in trade routes but also to the spread and new fear of the illegitimate use of certain substances, a fear wrought from medical discourse. Thirteen nations attended this conference. It was considered far from successful even though the prohibition on the importation of “smoking opium” (the lowest and cheapest grade of opium) was ratified.<sup>120</sup> The new International Conference followed this Commission on Opium in 1911 that might usefully be seen as the continuation of the political project spearheaded by the US to

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<sup>120</sup> For a more detailed discussion see Willoughby 1976.

formalise the legal regulation of opiates and cocaine, at the point where those substances crossed borders. As a result, the Webb-Kenyon Act of 1913 provided a new geopolitical demarcation within the US, between those states that were “wet” and those that were “dry.”

The causal relationship between the illegitimate use of cocaine, the “Negro fiend,” “Chinamen,” and various “loose women” became established as one means of articulating the illegitimate consumption of cocaine beyond the borders of the medical. As noted, the first need for regulation was enacted through the formation and legitimisation of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the passing of the Pure Food and Drugs Act in 1906. Contained in the title is the Act’s *raison d’être*: the Act was an attempt to make pure (and thus legitimate) those substances that were still useful to medical science, but had become impure through their illegitimate use by those who occupied the lower rungs of the ontological hierarchy. On the one hand, the Act would begin to curtail the free trade in the drug of cocaine. On the other, the Act also represents one of the first sustained attempts to recognise the illegitimacy of the consumption of cocaine beyond the borders of the medical. However, the Act also served to define the informal and illegitimate market. Ironically then, not only were cocaine users led to their drug of choice by the inclusion of labels stating “poison” but the illegitimate market would be defined as much by itself as by its placement in opposition to that which was considered legitimate. Thus the first paradox of differentiation was to infect the narrative of cocaine. The formalisation of the illegitimate market and consumption of the drug was a function of the demarcation that made certain drugs, people, and forms of consumption legitimate.

Following from this, and with the drug of cocaine acting as the means through which the fear of emancipation (or more accurately, exile) of the “Negro” American subject was articulated, the Harrison Tax Act of 1914 effectively made opiates and cocaine illegal through the taxation and regulation of their manufacture and distribution. Now illegal and illegitimate, the narcotic of cocaine was the new means by which the substance would be articulated. At the same time the free trade in cocaine had ended, for there were now defined spheres of legitimate and illegitimate consumption. In the space of 54 years (from 1860 to 1914) cocaine had become redefined as an illegitimate and indeed illegal drug when consumed beyond the borders of the medical regime. This illegitimacy, however, was a function of use; when consumed by the poor, lower class black American, for reasons of recreation, its use could not longer be justified by the medical regime that had once made it a miracle. At the same time the Volstead Act of 1920 ratified the central assumptions of prohibition, banning the sale, distribution and consumption of alcohol across the US. As

noted by a number of authors however, the age of prohibition gave rise to, indeed even necessitated the “rum runners,” and would ultimately lead to the consolidation and enrichment of the American Mafia.<sup>121</sup>

In 1922, Congress ratified the Narcotics Import and Export Act, officially recognising cocaine not as a drug but as a narcotic. Not only this, but with the official placement of cocaine as a narcotic, legislation *against* its manufacture and distribution could be legitimated and made powerful. This Act was international in scope, not only regulating and effectively making illegal the import and export of those substances and drugs now classified as narcotics, but also placing effective limitations on the very small trade in narcotics (such as the medicinal use of opium in the production of morphine) to those nations who were considered “legitimate.”

### **The Role of the FBN**

Under the stewardship of Levi Nutt the Federal Narcotics Control Board of the Prohibition Unit was established in 1922 (Courtwright 1983: 62). Importantly though, this Unit fell under the federal mandate of the Treasury Department. Accordingly, there was an implicit acknowledgment that the economic cost of the narcotic was beginning to be counted. This was not an isolated event however, for it is at the same time that a new economic paradigm, as explored in chapters three and four, was emerging. No longer concerned simply with production, cost-based analyses of the various aspects of the population (as a function, at this time, of the War effort) became the new yardstick of governance. Concerns over the use of narcotics were not isolated from this transformation – the condemnation of the use of narcotics became framed within the new paradigm of economic stagnation and waste. At the centre of this new concern was the narcotic body. Distinguished from the normal citizen through the paradigms of cost and productivity, a conception of the “addict” emerged which was at once both diseased and alien. This “disease,” however, was not so much concerned with health, but with a lack of productive impulses. With the consolidation of the Porter Narcotic Farm Act of 1929, in which two specialised “farms” or “hospitals” (one in Fort Worth, Texas, and one in Lexington, Kentucky)<sup>122</sup> were established, the unproductive and

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<sup>121</sup> For a complete history of the American Mafia, see Reppetto 2008.

<sup>122</sup> For the original documentation, see Committee on the Judiciary: Hearings before the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Seventeenth Congress, First Session, on H.R. 12781, H.R. 13645, April 26, 27, 28, 1928.

costly “addict” was removed from society. Not only were these people removed, but they were given menial work in the hope that the work might “set them free.” With the juridical distinction between the “addict” and the normal citizen established, the implicit difference was legitimate and made official through the Porter Act.

The Act, and the implied distinction between the addict and society reformulated the difference between the two as normative. This difference, and the resulting discourse of criminalisation, created an institutional space that was filled by the formation of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN), the precursor of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). The FBN was established in 1930 and was led by America’s first “drug czar,” the notorious Harry J. Anslinger.<sup>123</sup> The FBN was also the first independent Federal Agency under the gaze of the Justice rather than the Treasury Department (thus confirming that the control of the addict was now a clearly defined criminal issue). Consequently, the FBN’s first task was to enforce the Harrison Act. The need for the formation of the FBN can be seen in part as a function of the narrative that the narcotic had undertaken – at first a victim, the emergence of the unproductive addict necessitated their removal from society in the name of that productivity. With the rise of the two world wars, the criminalisation of the user is thus justified through the rhetoric of productivity – to not involve oneself in the production of a nation was seen as treasonous and criminal. In the US, and under the leadership of Anslinger, a slew of Acts were passed, most prominently the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 and the Opium Control Act of 1942. The Food, Drugs and Cosmetics Act also brought under state control what constituted safe and unsafe consumption – consumption and production were not only normalised, but became framed within the narrative of productivity. As noted, it was at the same time that the moral critique of jazz and bebop began to make monstrous the essentialised body of “the negro.” The confluence of law and discourse merged, highlighting the use of the narcotic and the sensual body, firmly cementing the narcotic in the realm of the body, as opposed to the universality and legitimacy of the rational mind of Cartesian metaphysics.

As noted in chapter three, these Acts were primarily focussed on the narcotics of marijuana and heroin – cocaine, and its use, would only come to public attention in the late 1960s and 1970s. In the meantime however, the criminalisation of the narcotic user, bolstered and indeed made meaningful through the causal association of the “Negro,” jazz, and the narcotic, reached its first climax with the ratification of the Boggs Act of 1951. The Act established the first mandatory minimum prison sentences for the plethora of narcotic

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<sup>123</sup> Anslinger was a prolific author, in which his views are clearly articulated. See, for instance, *The Traffic in Narcotics* (1981), *The Murderers: the Story of the Narcotic Gangs* (1961) and *The Protectors* (1964).

offenses which were a result, to a large degree, of Anslinger's crusade against narcotics and especially marijuana.<sup>124</sup> Indeed, the number and scope of these offenses could no longer be defined nor policed by one institutional body and necessitated the formation of the *Interdepartmental Committee on Narcotics* in 1951.<sup>125</sup> The narrative of the narcotic was, at this stage, becoming much more than simply a burgeoning criminal discourse – the narcotic and its use became a potent means of differentiating and condemning various cohorts of society. Indeed, the declaration of being an addict now became both a moral and a criminal charge – to be seen as an addict was automatically to relinquish one's rights to a free and fair life. The “addict” was now seen as *a priori* criminal and sexually deviant, and whose habits were necessarily infectious. This was not a new transformation, but rather the re-emergence of a strategy of critique seen, for instance, in the narrative of opium.

Under President Dwight Eisenhower, Anslinger positioned himself as America's leading anti-narcotic guru, using his authority to push through the Boggs-Daniels Act of 1956. This Act not only increased the penalties for the possession and/or sale of marijuana and heroin<sup>126</sup> but also for the first time introduced the death penalty into the narcotic narrative for the sale of opium “to a person under 18 by someone over 18.” Life itself had become the contested terrain of the narcotic narrative. While the criminality of the user was now seen as *a priori*, it was the difference between the addict and the normal, perhaps even the addict's perceived parasitism, which justified these new measures. Consequently incarceration rates, especially of black males, rose sharply. Indeed, the passing of the Boggs-Daniels Act represents the pinnacle of the criminalisation discourse that had thus far guided American domestic policy (and was thus highly influential in larger international recommendations and policy formation). Much like today's terror discourse, the criminalisation of the narcotic user was made in the name of life itself, finding its articulation in the expanding criminalisation rhetoric. With the ratification of the Drug Abuse Control Amendments (DACA), the recently identified narcotics of amphetamines, barbiturates and LSD also came under direct Federal control (Franco 2009: 32).

With the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy, however, the alternate regime of medicalisation would once again find legitimacy, if only briefly (Meier 1994: 80). Consequently, not only were there vast changes in America's social, economic and political

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<sup>124</sup> This crusade began early in Anslinger's life, and is most potently articulated in his book *Marijuana: Assassin of Youth* (1937).

<sup>125</sup> For the original discussion, see the report, *Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs* (1951).

<sup>126</sup> Indeed, some have argued that the rise and fear of marijuana, rather than being broadly felt, was the result of Anslinger adopting it as his central focus and target, as shown by Anslinger's rhetoric.

policies and practices, but also a subtle change in direction that reformulated America's narcotic policies. Kennedy initiated the President's Advisory Committee on Narcotics and Drug Abuse, or what would become known as the Pettyman Commission in 1962. The Commission's primary recommendation was the disbanding of the FBN that under Anslinger had become a force unto itself – and Anslinger even more so (Valentine 2004: 34 – 35). Anslinger's policies, it was noted, were not only ineffective but were causing alarming disparities in the enforcement of anti-narcotic legislation and incarceration rates, bringing into question the legitimacy of those enforcing the laws. The Commission also began the process of re-enforcing the results of medical science, rather than the juridical whims of the FBN, as a more just way of dealing with America's narcotic use. Indeed, just prior to this policy shift, the World Health Organisation had begun to argue that narcotic users should be committed to health institutions, rather than jail cells.<sup>127</sup>

This is not to say that the narcotic had lost its place as the antithesis of good wholesome American values, especially in public opinion. Rather, it was that the Kennedy administration began to acknowledge that the economic and social costs of the criminalisation discourse perpetuated by the FBN had become too high, causing further social divisions and delegitimizing the respectability of the enforcement agencies through the notable disparity in narcotic arrests.<sup>128</sup> There was then a recognisable need to halt this discourse and to replace it with policies and a narrative that was more socially beneficial and less costly. Medicalisation legitimated the treatment of the user and heralded the beginning of policies and institutions tasked with the reincorporation of the addict into society.

The narrative of medicalisation was further cemented by President Lyndon Johnson who formalised the Community Mental Health Centers Act (CMHCA) of 1963 that formally rearticulated the concept of addiction as a mental illness rather than criminal behaviour. At an international level the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (declared on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 1961) highlighted the need for continued medical responses to the problem of addiction.<sup>129</sup> As shown in chapter four, however, the discourse of medicalisation was soon re-appropriated by the discourse of productivity. The tension between the discourse of medicalisation and criminalisation came to a head during this time – while the CMCHA was expanding the number and scope of community treatment centres, at the very same time the state also ratified further and stricter regulations against the narcotic offender, officiated by

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<sup>127</sup> For the original report, see the *U.N. Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs* (1961).

<sup>128</sup> For a more detailed examination, see Valentine 2004: 81 – 98.

<sup>129</sup> See *U.N. Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs* (1961).

the Drug Abuse Control Amendments of 1965 (Franco 2009: 32). The tension between the two discourses became highly politicised, as was shown by the debates revolving around the Rolleston Report of 1965 in Britain (Parssinen 1983: 183); neither sphere wanted to relinquish control over the sovereignty of the addict. However, the Narcotic Addict Rehabilitation Act of 1966 represents the pinnacle of the medicalisation discourse, one in which alternative treatments (such as methadone maintenance therapy) could substitute both addiction and the sending of addicts to jail.<sup>130</sup> This option, however, was only deployed when the addict was considered to be of sound enough mind – as always, the Cartesian metaphysics defines the confessional avenues open to the narcotic user.

## The DEA

With the spectacular rise of the use and abuse of drugs in the 1960s and 1970s, new forms of surveillance and more powerful legislation was needed. This was recognised with the passing of the Comprehensive Substance Abuse Act of 1970. Superseding and replacing all the previous regulations, laws and declarations, the Act cemented the new (and present) scheduling program of narcotics and other controlled substances by placing all of these in the analytical categories of “Class A,” “Class B,” and so on. This categorisation is based on a number of indices, most prominently, the “addictive potential” of the substance and its effects on the body, and is made with the express aim of limiting a substance’s availability and distribution through various legislative measures. The Act also ratified the formation of the DEA and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). As separate Federal Bureaus these are the central, highest, and most powerful narcotic regulatory institutes in the US today. The centralisation of the anti-narcotic institutions mandated that drug abuse, possession and distribution became a federal crime, with federal sentences, and standardised the legal framework applicable to the narcotic.<sup>131</sup> With this, the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 directed federal resources and funding to the new policies of intervention and control. Indeed, it is at the same time that *Time* magazine published an article declaring the narcotic “Public Enemy No. 1.”<sup>132</sup> Finally the formation of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA) served to consolidate the NIMH, NIDA and NIAAA under the auspices of one regulatory institution.

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<sup>130</sup> For original report, see *The Narcotic Addict Rehabilitation Act of 1966: A New National Policy* (1968).

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> For original article, see *The Nation: The New Public Enemy No. 1* (1971).



While the strategy of medicalisation still held some legitimacy, the new moral panic concerning (white) middle-class consumption of cocaine began to question the strategy's effectiveness. Indeed, and as noted, it was President Nixon who first declared a war on drugs in 1971 (Deitch 2003: 183). It was this declaration, and the moral purpose that it presupposed that would guide the Reagan administration during the coming "crack epidemic." Again, a tension emerged – while more funding and resources were being directed towards the regime of medicalisation, the Methadone Control Act of 1973 and the Heroin Trafficking Act of 1973 further increased the *criminal* penalties associated with both of those narcotics (Hanson, Venturelli and Fleckenstein 2006: 102). This tension was ultimately mitigated by differentiating between the user and the dealer – a consequence of the further differentiation between the primarily white middle-class user and the black lower-class dealer. Accordingly, the new (privatised) medical regime targeted the user in general while the strategies of criminalisation targeted the distributor. Problematically however, the consumer and the dealer were more often than not of different classes and races, a result of the larger economic policies of the state – racial disparities once more became predominant (and indeed still are today) in the penitentiary system.

While it was thought that the removal of the distributor would make more difficult the acquisition of cocaine, the reality was that the criminalisation of the distribution networks fragmented and thus made more difficult to police those self-same networks. Not only this, but with increased policing cocaine became more and more expensive – inserted into the discourse of consumption discussed in chapter five, policing increased cocaine's rarity and thus glamour. Thus a paradox of differentiation concerning the trade became apparent: the more the trade was policed and regulated against, the harder it became, *necessarily*, to be policed and regulated against. This is seen today in the measures narcotic distributors have taken to continue a supply into the US, with some even going so far as to build and operate home built submarines to transport cocaine and other narcotics across the border.<sup>133</sup> In response, counter-measures by the Federal government took on a distinctly military tone – Operation Intercept being one of the first.

As such, under both Presidents Ford and Carter the public and legislative rhetoric points to the establishment of an "anti-dealer" sentiment, justified through the now established rhetoric of the fear of the corruption of the youth, white women, and the sanctity of the nuclear family. At a legislative level, the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act was

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<sup>133</sup> For instance, see the BBC special report available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-14382410>

extended in 1974 and 1978 to create and extend the Department of Education's reach, projects, and funding.<sup>134</sup> The continued public backlash against these "soft" measures, however, became a decisive, indeed *the* decisive issue in the 1981 elections, the very same elections that brought Ronald Reagan to power.

## **The War on Drugs**

Under Ronald Reagan, and under the directorship of Carlton Turner, the new regime sought to "get tough on drugs" through various social and economic policies, inaugurated by Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" educational campaign. While it was Nixon who had declared the war on drugs, it was Reagan who cemented it in the popular imagination by contrasting the disease of addiction with the piety of hard work and good family values. The first Act legitimated by the administration was however relatively benign – the Drug Offenders Act of 1984 simply sought to further the medicalisation discourse through the expansion of the program of federal treatment centres (Shahidullah 2008: 97). However, the following Act, the Analogue or "Designer Drugs" Act allowed the immediate reclassification of any drug or substance – this, as Reeves *et al* (1994: 129 – 161) have argued, was a result of the "siege paradigm" influencing American public opinion. While the Act was intended to allow the administration to act swiftly against the emergence of any new narcotics, it was also a silent acknowledgement of the growing complexity of the trade. The Act also cemented the Reagan administration's authority, allowing the administration to effectively classify what constituted a controlled substance. The Crime Control Act of 1984 not only bolstered the anti-narcotic federal budget, allowing the war on drugs to become a federal expenditure, but also formally classified the narcotic user as criminal. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 allocated a federal budget tasked with the control of the emerging war against "crack," and ultimately came to define the tactics and modus operandi of the modern war on drugs (Conaboy 1995: 116). In order to make effective the changes the Act sought, states were compelled to increase the legal drinking age to 21 if they wished to receive federal highway funds, cementing the Act at the very centre of Reagan's policy agenda. This was followed, in the case of alcohol, by the placing of warning labels on all alcoholic beverages, very reminiscent of the first Food and Drugs Act of 1906.

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<sup>134</sup> For more detail, see Belenko 2000: 284.

Perhaps most controversially, the Reagan administration amended the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act in 1981. While the Act forbade military intervention in civil conflicts, the amendment allowed military tactics and resources, including the use of the navy and aviations wings to enforce anti-narcotic legislation (Hudson and Davies 2008: 51). When the war on drugs became prominent, this amendment provided the state with the power it needed to counter the “drug *threat*.” Indeed, when this occurred the position of the narcotic and the resumption of military intervention fed off one another – the anti-narcotic crusade legitimated the use of the military, while the use of the military legitimated the anti-narcotic crusade.<sup>135</sup> Further measures, such as the amendment to the Organised Crime Act of 1970 (the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organisations Act or RICO) allowed the state to criminalise those associated with the trade in narcotics while also increasing surveillance which bypassed civil legislation (Wander and Manna 2005: 192). While both of the above measures were taken to deal with other crimes, they would become prominent tools in the war against drugs.

At the insistence of the Reagan administration the war on drugs became a priority for domestic and international policy (the discursive aspects of which are explored in the following section of this chapter). Indeed, the amalgamation of these various policies actively encouraged direct and premeditated attacks on the various aspects of the narcotic trade (Horner 1996: 225). While in later years this would result in, and justify, such acts as the indiscriminate spraying of virgin rainforest with “Agent Orange,” it was the fear and loathing of the “crack house,” “crack mother,” and “crack baby” which spurred on and gave moral impetus for such acts. Indeed, it was the attempt to expel the internal other, the attempt to expel “crack” itself as the *pharmakos* of a nation which led to these measures. Consequently, such campaigns as Plan Colombia became seen as necessary to the very survival of the state. Indeed, such was the *internal* fear of the narcotic as a threat to the fabric of society that external forays into other sovereign states seemed legitimate and just. It is here, perhaps more than any where else that the war on drugs became seen as a “true” war, even if the enemy was ultimately at the very centre of the American psyche.

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<sup>135</sup> As noted, these measures find their inception in the Nixon years with the articulation of anti-narcotic programs in the narrative of military terms and ideology. The inclusion of the military in the anti-narcotic crusade represents the pinnacle of the state’s involvement, and signifies the founding of the sovereign through performative acts of violence. This violence, however, this *legitimate* violence, was seen as such precisely because it was the state that was conducting it. While much has been written on the many conspiracy theories involving the CIA and other federal organisations in the “War against Drugs” they are largely beyond the scope of this thesis. There is little doubt, however, that the abuse of the state of exception, the sacrificial expulsion of the *pharmakon* as a means of justifying and mythologizing the legitimacy and sovereign power of the state did occur.

The final piece of anti-narcotic legislation passed under Reagan's rule, the Omnibus Drug Abuse Act of 1988, had two effects. Firstly it further increased the mandatory sentences for narcotic distribution. Secondly, it also instantiated penalties for "crack" which were one hundred times more severe than those for powder cocaine, as noted in the previous chapter. This legislation effectively criminalised those living in the inner-city ghettos, while enforcing relatively benign penalties on the middle-classes (who were more likely to consume powder cocaine). Problematically however, it was precisely because those in the ghetto were attempting to stylise their lives according to a discourse that made potent the consumption of various consecrated items such as cocaine, coupled with "crack" cocaine's low street price, which was one of the reasons that made the narcotic's use so pervasive. The ontological hierarchy of the origin had made potent the difference needed for these Acts to become legitimate.

George H. W. Bush's engagement with the narrative of the narcotic was to continue both these legislative and moral discourses against the narcotic and user. The formation of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 1992 brought under its control the various services offered by the ADAMHA programs.<sup>136</sup> This amalgamation was to have two effects. In the first instance, it established the criminalisation discourse as the legitimate regime of truth through which to view the narcotic, partly as a justification for the continued war on drugs and partly as a means of justifying the increasing federal budget. In the second instance, SAMHSA re-invoked the Cartesian metaphysic and internment of madness by, firstly, conjoining madness and addiction, and secondly, by interning this madness in various "hospitals." This causal link between madness and addiction, however, was not unique; as explored, the link had been made important from the very beginning of the narcotic narrative.

Under the guidance of President Bill Clinton and under the command of the new drug czars Lee Brown and *General* Barry McCaffrey the war on drugs became both a civil and military operation. Indeed, while the war at home was now largely limited to the continued criminalisation of the narcotic user, America's foreign narcotic policy was defined through its military interventions. With the formation of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, the link between violent crime and narcotic abuse was formally acknowledged and legislated against, so much so that the two became interchangeable (Harr and Hess 2007: 161). This confluence, it must be noted, rose upon a tide of fear concerning

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<sup>136</sup> For original report, see the U.S. General Accounting Offices report as referenced in the bibliography.

the increasing number and violence of domestic crimes in the US. The Violent Crimes Act once again extended the budgetary limitations imposed by Congress and re-established specific bureaucratic measures with regard to the consumption, use, distribution and treatment of the various controlled substances that fell under the mandate of the Act (*ibid*). Legislation against narcotics was also expanded to include the chemicals and equipment needed in their manufacture – the Methamphetamine Control Act, for instance, was one of the first (Abood 2005: 169). This Act, while primarily civil, would be translated as a means of legitimately controlling a vast range of substances connected with the manufacture of narcotics, the effect of which was to legislate into being the surveillance of society at ever-greater levels. With increasing reports of anti-narcotic legislation abuse, primarily by the DEA and CIA,<sup>137</sup> the Clinton administration ratified the Drug Free Communities Act of 1997, which in truly Machiavellian fashion reinstated the rhetoric of community driven (and it was assumed) caring policies aimed at the reduction of narcotic use through the implementation of “soft” measures.<sup>138</sup> This Act was deployed in tandem with The Media Campaign Act of 1998, which saw a vast amount of anti-narcotic information, aimed primarily at the youth, disseminated through the media. However it was also at this time, and justified through the SAMHSA discourse, that a reversal of this Machiavellian impulse in the narcotic narrative officially occurred. With the deployment of the Personal Responsibility and Word Reauthorisation Act of 1996, the convicted narcotic offender was denied social welfare, or what was termed “disability for addiction.”

Under George W. Bush’s regime, a new narcotic became the focus of attention and worry – ecstasy. Under the auspices of this new concern the Ecstasy Proliferation Act of 2000, the Vulnerability to Ecstasy Act of 2002 (or as it is colloquially known, the Rave Act), and the Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act of 2003 were deployed, all of which increased penalties for the distribution and manufacture of a number of “rave” drugs (Mosher and Akins 2007: 224 – 225). Very importantly, it was also under Bush’s regime that the first formal connection between the terrorist and the narcotic was made. As shall be explored in the following section of this chapter, it was this link that legitimated the new discursive articulation of the war on drugs. By disbanding the formal militaristic approach to the war on drugs, the new approach allowed the state to conduct a “guerrilla war” against the narcotic. Furthermore, as shall be explored in the following chapter, under Obama’s control Federal narcotic policy has fallen ominously silent, other than a concern with Afghani heroin – this,

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<sup>137</sup> See, for instance, Gary Webb’s *Dark Alliance* (1999)

<sup>138</sup> For the original Act, see *The Drug Free Communities Act of 1997* (1997).

however, is as much a recognition of the failure of the war on drugs as an opportunity to explore more just means of dealing with the problem that the narcotic presents to us.

As I hope to have shown in this brief historical analysis, anti-narcotic legislation was, and is, determined to a large degree by general understanding and fears as to what constitutes a narcotic. It is then the *relationship* between the narcotic and the institutions tasked with defining it that makes the narcotic meaningful. This narrative is always changing, as seen in the vast number, and indeed vast difference, between the various regulations in the US that have spanned the last 130 years. Consequently, if we are to understand and legislate against the narcotic we must understand that it is in a very real sense these institutional responses that always have and always will define the narcotic. Although it has previously been thought that the narcotic has shaped legislation, this study has argued that it is actually the other way around, namely that institutions define the narcotic. Accordingly, understanding the relationship and its effects on our understanding of the narcotic is of paramount importance to its control. One might argue then, as I hope to show, that is only by being self-reflexive of the importance of this relationship that we might hope to generate a revised epistemology, and policy, that might effectively legislate for the narcotic. In other words, it is no longer possible to wage war on the narcotic, for that institutional domain will necessarily generate “more of the same,” and will ultimately continue to define the narcotic in a manner which cannot help us solve the problem which it generates.

### The Narcotic Supplement

In order to understand the manner in which the war on drugs transformed cocaine’s position vis-à-vis western modernity, it is necessary to understand the supplementary logic of the relationship between the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos*. Not only does the supplementary logic reveal the relationship between the two concepts, but acts as a theoretical justification for the real politik of the war on drugs and later, the war on terror. As has been noted, both the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* are only made meaningful through their relationship with western modernity; they are strategies by which the transformation of a system of difference can be articulated. Thus, and as has been noted extensively, the very meaning of what constitutes a drug or narcotic can change radically over time. There is no metaphysical certainty here. The legitimacy of the deployment of the concept, however, relies on the mythology that justifies the concept; the expulsion of the *pharmakos* must be retrospectively

justified through some mythology or story in order for it to be seen as legitimate. Without such a mythology the violence of the act is revealed, the sacrifice becoming plain murder. Even with the expulsion (in the example of the *pharmakos*) correctly mythologized, the duality of the concept is not completely eliminated, but is rather hidden. While this expulsion remedies the sins of the community by re-establishing the mythology that justifies the system of differences, it is only through this remedial expulsion that society once again becomes inclusionary. The concept of the outsider defines the insider. If the expulsion is not completed, or is not correctly mythologized, however, the logic is reversed and the expulsion becomes poisonous to society - the insiders become outsiders.

In this vein Derrida (1981: 169, emphasis added) has articulated the implicitly supplementary logic of the concepts of the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* in the following manner:

These two types of repetition relate to each other according to the graphics of supplimentarity. Which means that one can no more “separate” them from each other, think of either one apart from the other, “label” them, than one can *in the pharmacy* distinguish the medicine from the poison, the good from the evil, the true from the false, the inside from the outside, the vital from the mortal, the first from the second, etc. Conceived within this original reversibility, the *pharmakon* is the *same* precisely because it has no identity. And the same is (as) supplement. Or in difference.

The “original reversibility” is a product of both concepts’ ambivalent logic. What is important to note, however, is that it is only *in the pharmacy* that one can discern the singularity of either axiom. The pharmacy stands here for the institutions that define the “medicine from the poison, the good from the evil” – it is only in and through these institutions that the narcotic becomes discernable at all. Indeed, as Derrida has noted, “there are no drugs *in nature*.” The drug, as a concept, is solely the product of its relationship with the institution that defines it. As the narrative of the narcotic has shown, there is no ultimate metaphysical reality to the deployment of the concept of the narcotic; this is, however, not to relinquish the power that the concept nor the various juridical matrices tasked with the narcotic’s articulation have over us, but rather to reveal the mythologies which make such articulations legitimate. The reality of the *pharmakon*, its *institutional* reality, becomes apparent at the instance of its deployment, when the substance becomes a drug and when the drug becomes a narcotic. At that first point, at the point where a substance becomes a drug,

not only does the mythology that justifies this transformation legitimate the substance, but it also legitimates the discourse that could account for and make meaningful the transformation in the first place. Thus, for instance, when cocaine was adopted by medical science not only did this adoption make meaningful the use of cocaine in certain arenas, but served to further entrench medical science as a powerful regime of truth. When cocaine began to be used illegitimately, it was from this realm that those illegitimate uses were defined and declared. The inclusion/exclusion of the *pharmakon* mirrors the inclusion/exclusion of the *pharmakos* – the inclusion or exclusion can either be poisonous or healing, the poison or healing either inclusionary or exclusionary.

Consequently, both the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos* can be poisonous or remedial, depending on the manner in which the act of inclusion or expulsion is articulated and made legitimate. Both can also be used to manipulate a system of differences; when cocaine's use beyond the borders of the medical was considered illegitimate, so too were its users. When the *pharmakon* and its use becomes the means by which far deeper concerns and worries are articulated by a society, the *pharmakon* itself can be expelled. This, I argue, occurred as a result of the war on drugs – the *pharmakon* became the *pharmakos*, the scapegoat for far larger concerns over crime, citizenship, and the status of the foreigner. Consequently, the *pharmakon* as contagion, as a scapegoat for other social processes, becomes morally guilty of so much more than simply addiction.

If the *pharmakon* is to become the *pharmakos* of a nation then the juridical authority, indeed, the mythology that legitimates the expulsion of the *pharmakon* must construct for itself a legitimacy that is steadfast and unchanging. It requires, in other words, *the* mythology that binds a nation's citizens together, the sovereignty of the state. It was this transformation, I argue, which justified the war on drugs; it was envisioned that such a war would bring to an end, for once and for all, the perverse action that the *pharmakon* was having on the community. However, as has been shown in the previous chapters of this study, the narrative of the narcotic is never stable – the meaning of the *pharmakon* is always the result of a contestation of mythologies. In the example of the war on drugs specifically, the very notion of a war would be transformed from a legitimate mechanism with which to fight the drug trade to one that would become poisonous to America's foreign policy. This is because the mythology that had justified the inception of the war lost currency and legitimacy – it was realised, in short, that no matter how much money, and how many guns or troops were thrown at the problem, the trade in drugs would never be completely stemmed. This is not to say that the war on drugs did not help to decrease the trade in cocaine, or contribute to the



increased frequency and volumes of seizures of shipments. Rather, however, I argue that it soon became realised that the actual cost of the war far outweighed the relatively small successes that the campaign was making. For this reason, the war lost the legitimacy it needed to sustain itself. To understand this, there needs to be two considerations that are taken into account. In the first instance, the war on drugs was very much an enterprise of state. We must therefore understand where the authority and sovereignty of the state is derived from, and how it was manifested through the war on drugs. Secondly, we must understand how this power was mythologised and made legitimate in order that the various campaigns made by the war were justified. Methodologically both considerations can be explained through Derrida's (1989) critique of the "mystical foundations of authority." Indeed, it is this critique that will form the basis for the final chapter, in which the study deals directly with problem of justice and its relationship to the narrative of the narcotic.

### The War on Drugs and Difference

The history of the mystical foundations of authority, and ultimately, justice (western modernity's mythology *par excellence*) finds its most prominent articulation in the works of Pascal, Montaigne, Benjamin and Derrida. As Derrida (1989: 939), in citing Pascal argues,

One man says that the essence of justice is the authority of the legislator, another that it is the convenience of the king, another that it is the current custom; and the latter is the closest to the truth: simple reason tells us that nothing is just in itself; everything crumbles with time. Custom is the sole basis for equity, for the simple reason that it is received; it is the mystical foundation of authority. Whoever traces it to its source annihilates it.

In the same manner, Montaigne abstracts from this conceptual thought that the *duty* of those that follow the law is not to follow them because they are just, but because they are forceful:

And so, the laws keep up their good standing, not because they are just, but because they are laws: that is the mystical foundation of their authority, they have no other ... Anyone who obeys them because they are just is not obeying them the way they ought to (*ibid*).

These conceptual claims have radical consequences for the concept of justice, perhaps even going so far as to reveal the concept of justice within western modernity as a powerful

legitimizing *mythology*. Both the inception and maintenance of law, however, require an initial and performative act of violence. Consequently, the formation of law and the legitimacy of the sovereign are intricately connected: it is the monopoly on and of violence that *allows* the formation of law and which asserts the sovereignty of an entity above that of others. This is not to say that a law or a sovereign cannot *attempt* to be just, nor remain legitimate. Rather it is my argument (in following Derrida) that an *aporia* emerges between the violence of justice and the justice of violence – in order for a law to be just it must be radically new, applicable only in the instance of which it arbitrates, and yet if it is a law, if it becomes an institutional measure, it can never be radically new and is forced to arbitrate over much more than a singular case. Every law must set a precedent, and yet to be law, it can only ever be a precedent once. In other words, a law cannot be a rule if it is to remain just, but in order for a law to be a law, it must also be a rule.

The formation of law always (violently) occurs outside of the very system over which it will preside. Thus, as Derrida (1989: 939) concludes, justice can never occur in the present, if it is to be just, but must always be seen as *to come*, as something which we might strive for but can never necessarily meet in the present. At the moment in which law is made and deployed, at the moment when a statement becomes law, it only has recourse to its own authority – law, in the moment of its reality, authorises itself, follows itself, becomes a law unto itself. It achieves this by maintaining sovereignty over the violence that authorises and demarcates it, which, so to speak, upholds it.

In a system of just laws, or in other words, in a legal system in which the sovereignty of the law is not doubted, that sovereignty is mythologized and legitimated through its claim to justice. At all times the law must maintain its monopoly on violence, for if the law “is taken into our own hands,” the sovereignty of the law is undermined. Importantly though, the sovereignty of the law and its monopoly on violence, while justified through the mythology of justice, makes criminal other forms of law not because they are unjust, but because they undermine the original legal order’s sovereignty. The sovereignty and legitimacy of law relies on its ability to mask its violence through the mythology of justice. When there are competing claims to justice, both mythologies are brought into question and the violence of law is revealed. It is violence therefore, and not justice that *de facto* upholds the law, while the law is maintained *de jure* by the mythology of justice.

This does not mean, however, that a law or legal system is inherently illegitimate, but rather that its power is wrought from the law’s monopoly on violence. Furthermore, the consequence of this argument is not that a law cannot be just, but rather that the power of

justice is maintained, paradoxically, by the threat of violence. The legitimacy of law does then also require a belief in justice; it also, however, requires a fear of violence. In the same manner, the institutional legitimacy of the *pharmakon*, however it is deployed, is as much a function of violence as it a function of its mythology. For instance, when cocaine was a medical miracle its legitimacy was wrought from the power of the medical regime. So too was its declaration as illegitimate when used and consumed beyond the borders of the medical. As a result, when the use of cocaine, *as a narcotic*, was deemed wholly illegitimate in the eyes of medical science, this was a product of medical science claiming sovereignty over the distinction as to what constituted legitimate and illegitimate uses of the substance. Indeed, the continued legitimacy of medical science depended on the illegitimate uses of cocaine being excluded in the name of the sovereignty of the distinction. This is not to say that the narrative cannot be reversed or questioned – the re-adoption of medical marijuana for certain illnesses being a case in point (Boire and Feeney 2006: 240) – but rather that re-adoption will be contingent upon epistemological considerations concerning the substance's efficacy and appropriate use.

For Derrida (1989: 929), the force of law is always a “differential force,” a force that demarcates, cleaves, and makes difference:

... of the relationship between force and form, force and signification, performative force, illocutionary and perlocutionary force, or persuasive and rhetorical force, of affirmation by signature, but also and especially, of all the paradoxical situations in which the greatest force and the greatest weakness strangely enough exchange places. And that is the whole of history.

In the same manner, the force of the *pharmakon*, and the state of resolution offered by the *pharmakos* is not of an innate type or a *natural* power contained in the concepts themselves. Rather this force is a product of the *institutional* and juridical measures that give power to the concepts; it is the manner in which they are positioned and articulated which makes both concepts powerful. As a consequence, the legitimacy of those laws that expel the *pharmakon*, and which form a protective barrier between the narcotic and society, remain legitimate so long as the narcotic remains illegitimate. These measures, if correctly mythologised, appear as natural. To begin to critique a narcotic's epistemological status, then, requires that we first reveal the logic that has placed the narcotic in the position in which it is. Finally then, to even begin to ask questions concerning the manner in which we deal with the problem of the narcotic presupposes an entire history of philosophy, an oeuvre of laws and modes of

thought. It is this initial questioning that has been the task of this study, as noted in the introduction.

### The Political Economy of the War on Drugs

The emergence of a recognisably illicit economy of the narcotic has been outlined by this study. While at first there was an inhibited free trade in the substance of cocaine, with its epistemological transition to that of drug and later, to that of narcotic, ever increasing regulations helped define cocaine epistemologically as much as cocaine helped define the trade. The advent of the legitimately illegitimate sign-value of powder cocaine endeared it to the emerging consumerist discourse of the 1970s and 1980s. This sign-value allowed cocaine to embody a certain cultural capital wrought from the larger regime of truth of conspicuous consumption. With the advent of “crack” cocaine and with the emergence of the institutional polemic of the war on drugs, however, cocaine’s epistemological status beyond the borders of the medical once again shifted to the thoroughly illegitimate. By doing so, the literal economy of cocaine was placed beyond the borders of the state; the illicit trade was, even from the early years, a consequence of the sovereignty of the distinction that defined what was considered legitimate and illegitimate. As a *strategy* however, the charge of drug abuse could be used as a means of justifying the increased surveillance of recognisably illegitimate populations. The private life of the narcotic user was made public. The war at home and the war on drugs became enmeshed with one another, a means of controlling the illegitimate use of drugs within the social body, while justifying the seeking out and expulsion of the foreign supplier.

Accordingly, the sovereignty of the state was refocused through the paradigm of the narcotic. This was to have a biopolitical consequence however: “the ancient right to *take* life or *let* live [has been] replaced by a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death” (Foucault 1990: 138). With the emergence of man-as-species differentiated through an implicitly normative hierarchical infrastructure, as analysed in the previous chapter, the population of narcotic users became pathological precisely because they were “not normal” within the statistical measurement of the population. As Tagma (2009: 414) argues, “[a] normalising society, which governs itself according to self-referential norms and standards, is only made possible by an anterior force that, in the first place, makes possible the boundaries of the population.” The anterior force, in this instance, was the recognisably illegitimate and

illegal narcotic. The logic by which the war on drugs was justified is thus two-fold. On the one hand, the narcotic using subject is articulated as non-normal. On the other, the source of this non-normality was to be found in other countries generally south of the border. In order to reconstitute the order necessary for the continued functioning of society, it was required that the source of disorder be sought out and itself controlled. This would ultimately lend justification to the international war on drugs, led by America. A primary feature of the war on drugs in its modern incarnation, however, is that it is a war by other means – the war is conducted primarily through the provision of aid, arms, expertise and finance to other militaries in the hope that they themselves might control the source of America's narcotics. The following analysis acknowledges however that the war on drugs is an extremely large phenomenon, and the analytical terrain often contested. What follows then is a selective reading of that war, as a means of showing the continuation of the narrative of cocaine vis-à-vis the manner in which it is articulated.

### **The Financial War**

There are a number of examples of the financial aspect of the war on drugs. For instance, Plan Colombia, which has been variously presented as program of upliftment, as a counter-insurgency operation, a program of political stability, and indeed as part of the war on terror, has cost the US government approximately 641 million dollars of which 82.23 percent was directed towards the Colombian military.<sup>139</sup> While representing a decrease from 1996, in which 99.8 percent of the budget (approx. 15 million dollars) and 1997, in which 100 percent of the budget was earmarked for military use (approx. 89 million dollars), the spending has been further justified through the confluence of the war on drugs and the war on terror. Accordingly America's financing and training of foreign militaries has mostly doubled since 2001. Colombia, for instance, received 2476 trainees in 1999 while in 2001 received 6300 trainees and in 2003, 12947.<sup>140</sup> The resulting population of military personal, armed, trained and financed by the US represents a significant portion of military spending by the government. This system was, and is, also open to manipulation – on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1989, for instance, the US military commenced Operation Just Cause with the invasion of Panama, marshalling over 25 000 troops in the pursuit of General Manuel Noriega who, under the

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<sup>139</sup> Found in *Challenges and Successes for U.S. Policy Toward Colombia: Is Plan Colombia Working?* (2003) as referenced in the bibliography.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*

direction of the CIA, was allowed to continue a vast narcotic trading ring. However, when this information was publically revealed, the US government pursued and tried Noriega as a convicted drug trafficker.<sup>141</sup>

While these statistics may themselves be illuminating of the trajectory that America's foreign policy vis-à-vis the war on drugs has taken, it is the statistisation of the war on drugs that is of concern here. A cursory glance at the literature concerning the war reveals a constant need to provide information, indeed truth, through the paradigm of statistics.<sup>142</sup> This analytic governmentality, a rational art of government concerned with the accumulation of statistical facts *qua* knowledge, is a product of the mercantile regime of truth that dominates the governmental rhetoric of modernity. A tension emerges, however, between the right to classify life and the right to determine life: if the war on drugs has been financed by the US and if that finance is accounted for through the analytical lens of the statistic, then the individual and their life becomes nothing more than a number. This was to be transformed, however, when the war on terror employed such powerful technologies of surveillance that the concern for the individual would once again come to the forefront as a locus of analysis.

The war on drugs was, and perhaps is, not only a war to mitigate the effects of the narcotic on society; it has been a product of the various mythologies analysed in previous chapters. Indeed, "for a culture determined by war, home exists primarily as something to defend" (Lenson 1995: 8). However, unlike in Britain's narration of the "drug threat" *qua* threat to Empire and its continued operation (as articulated through, for instance, the *Defence of the Realm Act*) in which there was an external and discernible enemy, the narcotic enemy of the modern war on drugs has no such *implicit* epistemological category. Rather, *it is from within the institutional structures tasked with governmentality in the sovereign state that the enemy is born*. Thus, even though the war on drugs has been appropriated by the war on terror, the "siege paradigm" still exists – what has not changed is the logic of war while what has changed is the biopolitical realm which that logic inhabits (Reeves *et al* 1994: 129 – 161). The narcotic user, a primordial *pharmakos* of the war on drugs, in their ambivalence as both inside and outside, guilty and innocent, cannot be radically and effectively mythologised – the supplementary logic of the concept exceeds both axioms at every instance. In the same manner, the *site* of the war on drugs is equally difficult to place – "Drugs seemed to have an alien origin, but could still be present in the most intimate corners of domestic life: in our

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<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*

bathrooms, our cars, our offices, and among our families – just like communism” (Lenson 1995: 11).

### **The Backlash to the War**

Discursively, the backlash to the war on drugs is as important as the actual war itself. A number of critiques of the war have emerged, most primarily concentrating on the fact that even though distribution and manufacturing quantities have declined, the flow of narcotics into the US has not been seriously curtailed,<sup>143</sup> the cost of the war, both in financial and social terms,<sup>144</sup> and the misuse of the paradigm by a number of governmental institutions in order to further other more clandestine aims.<sup>145</sup> For instance, Fullilove *et al* (1998: 43) have argued that the War on Drugs has

[u]ltimately ... created a much bigger problem than the one it was designed to solve. It is entirely possible that out of a desire to provide a cost-effective, morally acceptable, criminal justice response to the nation's substance use and abuse, an effective engine for expanding and disseminating the devastation of the HIV epidemic has been created instead.

Another author, Ethan Nadelmann (2003: 94), executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance, has argued in his paper, “Addicted to Failure” that

[t]he futility of the war on drugs has long been obvious, but the evidence grows starker each year. Attacking the supply-side has yielded nothing: Drugs are cheaper, purer, and more plentiful than ever. Despite crop-eradication programs, there is substantially more opium poppy and coca cultivated today than there was two decades ago. Attempting to stamp out the supply of drugs is like pushing a balloon – cut off production in one country and another quickly fills the void.

There is a clear paradox of differentiation here. The intersection of the discourses of the war on drugs and the war on terror has led Watkins and Fullilove, in *Crack Cocaine and Harlem's Health* (2000: 130), to argue that “innocents killed in drug terrorism incidents are basically by-products of fights for market share in the drug business.” As noted in the

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<sup>143</sup> For a further discussion, see Rowe 1996.

<sup>144</sup> See, for example, Thomson, S 1998.

<sup>145</sup> This is paradigmatically explored by Webb 1998.

previous section of this chapter, the rhetoric of terrorism demands that the adage of “innocent until proven guilty” be reversed, allowing the articulation of the enemy to be both private and public, internal and external. Unlike, for instance, the fear of the foreign Oriental (as shown in chapter two) in which the enemy was clearly identifiable, the subversive action of the terrorist discourse is to make everyone a suspect, regardless of creed or colour – the *pharmakos*, now, is no longer external to the system of differences but has become the very pivot upon which difference is decided.

Accordingly Tagma (2009: 412) notes, “[s]overeign power, by ‘an inclusionary act of exclusion,’ decides which individual subject is to be admitted into the polis and which subject is to be cast outside. Agamben reminds us of a medieval short story of a ‘dangerous’ medieval werewolf that is kept at a strategic distance from the political community only to testify to the righteousness of the sovereign.” As noted in the previous chapter, the war at home created a werewolf in the form of the “crack” addict that could be resurrected to justify the return to the origin. It is not only through the sovereign power of the state that the “crack addict” is declared the exception however – without the concept of the “crack addict” or the terrorist, the state would not be able to display its own sovereignty and legitimacy. Paradoxically then, the state would *need* such concepts in order to exist – the “crack addict” is the hidden supplement which legitimates the war on drugs. Externally placing the international drug dealer apart from the state, as the werewolf, reminds the citizenry not only of the state’s sovereignty but also of its necessity wrought from the protection it provides. Similarly, the terrorist or drug dealer, far from being the conceptual other, is the supplement to the mythology and sovereignty of the state. Thus, “the entry of biological life [the Individual] into political calculations has always been the original activity of sovereignty” (Tagma 2009: 413).

While the fear of the foreigner, whether internal or external to society, justified the traditional war on drugs, it was the analytical lens of supply and demand that would provide the greatest source of critique. As the editorial of *The New York Times* surmised,

Mexico and Central America certainly need help to better fight the drug gangs moving narcotics into the United States. But it is clearly not enough. Washington has funded coca eradication efforts in the Andes for years. It has given the Colombian government more than \$5 billion since 2000. Thousands of police have died in Latin America fighting the traffickers. Yet



all the blood, tears and cash have had virtually no impact on the amount of drugs in the United States.<sup>146</sup>

While the fear of the foreigner justified the war on drugs, it also brought into stark focus the mythology of home that positioned the foreigner as dangerous. It was realised, in other words, that the demand for cocaine and other narcotics was as much to blame as the foreigner producing the substances. As the editorial continues, “[n]othing can be achieved unless this country curbs its own demand for illegal narcotics” (*ibid*).

### The Source and the Demand

Many of the arguments against the US war on drugs abroad concern the absolute devastation that this war has wrought on those for whom coca is perhaps the only, or at least the most abundant, cash crop. However, the rhetoric of “the peasant” also has specific ontological baggage, even more so in a neo-liberal, commodity- and consumption-based discourse. The ontological placement of the “peasant” below that of the US citizen justifies actions against the growth of their crops that could never be seen as legitimate had they occurred on US soil. Without recourse to those structures that form identity (such as the sign-value of certain consecrated objects), and that are used to symbolically portray identity, those that are articulated as peasant are placed within a lower position vis-à-vis the ontological taxonomy of western modernity, and ultimately, to those who have more access to capital. Their lives then, as foreigners and as more primitive humans are not of as great concern when the overarching moral crusade against the war on drugs wipes their fields clean of all productivity, and thus paradoxically, income, year after year. Indeed, their voices are rarely even heard, other than through authors who have a direct interest in these people’s plight.<sup>147</sup>

The war on drugs, as a governmentalised thematic, has been framed by a Machiavellian logic in which the *raison d’état* has superseded the interests of the population. This has occurred even though the war has been framed through such rubrics as that of “national security” and “national interest.” In a very similar manner, Edward Said, in *Orientalism* (2000), argues that this Machiavellian logic finds its modern narration in “imaginative geographies” (cited in Hartnett 2000: 251). As a discourse these imaginative geographies “strives not to be accurate regarding the object under consideration but, rather, to

<sup>146</sup> Editorial. *The New York Times*. February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>147</sup> See, for example, Streatfeild 2001: 409 – 431.

facilitate the political expediency for those who control the language ... as a central part of the project” (*ibid*). Hartnett, in this vein, further argues that

The drug war is a frightening example of such a politically enabling imaginative geography because its driving assumptions and arguments are so specious, so outrageously exaggerated and so consistently driven by racially loaded myths that they indicate a wilful refusal of fact (*ibid*).

For instance, the mythology of the gun-toting South American – exemplified by such *characters* as Pablo Escobar and the Ochoas brothers – is now not only outdated but presupposes a racialised difference which necessarily makes these characters “drug prone.” This mythology has been created, on the one hand as a political tool used to justify the expense of the war on drugs. On the other it has also been used to continually perpetuate the mythology that those who have anything to do with narcotics in the modern world must necessarily not only be foreign, but in active and parasitic opposition to the *telos* of the American Dream. It is their very lives that signify all that the War on Drugs is striving against. Again, this is not to say that these people are not guilty of some of the crimes of which they have been accused, but rather that their discursive placement serves to legitimate the mythology of biopolitical difference that was used to justify the war on drugs. Their crimes are not the only thing of which they are guilty; it is their very being which calls into doubt their status as innocent.

Indeed, as Tagma (2009: 413) argues, “[b]iopower, which Foucault sees as emerging in modernity, has always required a sovereign articulation of the boundaries of the population (that is, who counts as a citizen) and at what points the sovereign violence suspends the law to resolve crises.” Problematically, however, the terrorist and domestic drug dealer disturb the ontological system of differences that govern a society by being *part of* that society – the terrorist can be anyone, a friend or family member, in the same manner as the modern day drug dealer. This creates a crisis of degree for the Other is no longer other, the ontological taxonomy of modernity which depends by definition on excluding some and including others breaks down for the outsider is no longer outside. As such, “[d]uring such crises, where the boundaries of the population are radically questioned and undecidable, and where the healthy and efficient functioning of the economy is at stake, sovereign exceptional power is enacted” (Tagma 2009: 413). This sovereign exceptional power can be seen in the identification and expulsion of the scapegoat; there is no real justification for their expulsion other than the

community saying that they are guilty. The war on drugs, too, is a form of sovereign exceptional power when it is used as the justification that makes some *a priori* guilty. The war on drugs, in other words, has made the concept of the drug dealer what it is today.

Much like the terrorist, the narcotic user becomes *pharmakos* to the nation, even if it is only their mythology and not their actual being which is involved in the crimes against the state. The drug user, the “addict” and dealer are all constantly and consistently portrayed as responsible for crime within America and are therefore legitimate targets of state. This articulation of crime is the basis for a generative social psychology that is played out “on the streets” – their subjectivity becomes narrated, not only in contrast to normal society, but also in active parasitism. This is the narcotic habitus. Indeed, the only legitimate action created by this rhetoric is one of violence, of war and of destruction in order to protect the values that America has worked so long and hard to create and which are upheld by indubitable moral undercurrents. The generalisation of this maxim means that it is no longer individuals who seek the moral and political destruction of America, but whole countries, foreign entities which themselves display a recognisable logic. The war on drugs, then, rather than seeking to undermine or eradicate the mythologies that make the narcotic so powerful, actually relies on them in order to remain legitimate.

### **The Failure of Rhetoric**

The paradox can be clearly seen in the rhetoric that was employed by the war. For instance, Ethan Nadelmann, in *U.S. Drug Policy: a Bad Export* (1988: 3) further argues that

No doubt most people resist thinking about the drug problem in terms of the Prohibition analogy because the notion of repealing the current drug laws is not regarded as a viable policy option. Indeed, the very suggestion of such a suggestion quickly conjures up images of an America transformed into a modern-day Sodom and Gomorrah.

As shall be explored in the conclusion to this study, perhaps it is because of the power of the mythologies that are used to articulate the narcotic in the present that any different and future meanings seem so difficult to imagine. This is the epistemological space of the “unthought.” Before that unthought can be revealed however – the condition for the possibility of dealing with narcotics in a less sacrificial *and therefore self-defeating manner* – it is not only necessary to show the juridico-institutional structures at work but to show from where and

how this sovereign power is wrought. As briefly outlined in the previous sections, it is my argument that the *pharmakon* has become the *pharmakos* of the modern American state, a scapegoat upon which a whole range of *other* moral and mythological sins can and have been pinned by the community. The confluence of the narcotic and violent crime points to this – while it is in no way possible to argue that violent crime and the manufacture, sale and use of narcotics do not affect each other, the rhetoric of the discourse points to a political geography in which the narcotic becomes a *pharmakos* for *other* crimes. These crimes, accordingly, become articulated *in relation* to the moral teleology of the state. For instance, in South African airports, currency exchangers display a poster that argues unofficial currency exchanges contribute “to money laundering *and even* the drug trade.” Indeed, it is the fear of violent crime, the fear of contamination that, so the story goes, cannot but culminate in the state’s loss of its monopoly on violence, which engenders such mythologies.

David Lenson (1995: 169), in tracing the philosophical implications of the concept of consumption vis-à-vis drug use, argues that

[b]y tagging this antagonistic army with the name “drugs,” consumerism not only gains simplicity and exonerates itself, it also implies that the enemy is high and crazy, as if there could be no sane reason for the latter’s hostility. Gun-control legislation, however appealing to humanistic sentiment and liberal pacifism, is really a belated recognition of the fact that the state has inadvertently supplied and trained the other side in a civil war. As in all military conflicts – and both international drug traffickers and local street gangs are organised according to military models – neither side is likely to agree to unilateral disarmament.

From this, two conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the war on drugs, as much as it has been a crusade *against* the narcotic, has also *created* the narcotic in its modern appellation for it is this institutional and military structure, more than any other, which has served to define what constitutes the narcotic as well as its attendant objects and subjects. This paradox of differentiation, as explored by the authors cited above, has been manifest through the “backlash” politics that has come to define the war on drugs, and indeed the war on terror. Conceptually, however, this point can be taken further – it is not only that the present definition of the narcotic is a *result* of the war on drugs, but also that this definition has acted as the hidden supplement to the very concept of a war. The concept of the narcotic then, in its present manifestation, was *necessarily* entailed by the war. As such the war on drugs created, from its very first utterance, the necessary supplement of the narcotic which has served as the

ghost, the proper noun with no name, the concept and the instance, which has ultimately been the war's *raison d'être*. The war, in its founding moment, *created* the target which it would fight against. Consequently, if we are to recognise that the epistemological status of the narcotic was a necessary result of the narrative and mythology of the war on drugs, then if we are to attempt to "solve" or rearticulate the "problem" of the narcotic, not only must we disband the war on drugs but also reveal and critique the supplementary logic at war in the concept itself. This deconstruction of the institutional measures and the modern definition of the narcotic, as I hope to have shown, has a genealogical heritage that is far older than the modern war on drugs. This logic reaches back to the fundamental foundations of western modernity seen, for instance, in western modernity's reliance on Cartesian metaphysics. As Lenson (1995: 169) argues, "[i]n order to displace responsibility for arming and training every schismatic impulse in the private and public worlds, some external force must be found and blamed: Communism, while it lasted, then terrorism, then "drugs."

## Conclusion

The *pharmakon*, then, has been both an elixir and poison throughout its history. For those seeking a new system of meaning, an escape from the constraints of the old, it is an elixir. The escape, however, creates an alternative system of meaning that brings into question the legitimacy of the old by creating alternatives. It is for this reason that the existence of the *pharmakon* brings about discord and panic – its existence always highlights the political spectacle of social reality. Indeed, the mythology of the expulsion of the *pharmakon* has failed to garner legitimacy for itself and any legitimacy it may have had is slowly crumbling away – the war on drugs has become poisonous to American foreign policy when just a few years previously it was its *raison d'être*. With a mounting critique concerning the funding of foreign armies, the skewed incarceration rates, and the suspension of civil liberties in any instance when "drugs" are involved has shown the mythology that could sustain such tactics as illegitimate, and importantly, not sovereign. Without that sovereignty, and without the recourse to the monopoly on violence that it guarantees, there can no longer be a drug war.

This chapter, in a sense, offers a conclusion to the previous chapters for it is here that the narrative of the narcotic reaches its most brutal conclusion. The legitimacy of the war on drugs has begun to be questioned – indeed, as I shall argue in the conclusion, the war on

drugs can no longer sustain itself as a legitimate regime of truth. However, the question of the narcotic still exists in its fundamental form – what do we do, if we recognise that a narcotic is harmful, to stop its use, when attempting to stop its use through brute force simply exacerbates the problem? The following chapter deals with this normative residue of the critique offered so far by arguing that the very “problem” of the use of the narcotic arises from a specific epistemological vantage point and finds its genealogy in the self-same narrative that has shaped the narcotic. Therefore, if we wish to deal with the “problem” of the narcotic, we need to recognise that this problem has arisen in the very same discourse we are using to critique it. What is needed is a revised epistemological framework that, rather than tearing apart the conceptual reality of both the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos*, can contemplate both axioms at once. This framework, I argue, is offered to us by critical complexity theory. While it may not offer us a definitive “answer” to the “problem,” it does provide us with an analytical framework in which we can think seriously the narcotic not as a singular concept, apart from the world, but as a concept which has shaped this world, including our conception of normativity. It is only by understanding this that we can hope to move forward and begin to think the new justice of containing or minimising the need for the exile invoked by the *pharmakos*. It is only, in other words, once we have realised our mistakes that we can begin to construct a new policy framework that may deal more effectively and more justly with the narcotic and the user. The new framework, however, would have to be premised on a renewed understanding of what constitutes a narcotic, and its position vis-à-vis society. It is hoped that this study has served some purpose in opening up this space for debate from a philosophical perspective.

## *Conclusion*

### Introduction

The narrative of the narcotic has not yet reached its conclusion. Indeed, the narrative is not the sort of thing that can have a conclusion – it is an open and dynamic system advancing ever forward. For this reason alone, it is very difficult to provide a conclusion to this study. Yet much like the problem of the methodology, this study must have a conclusion to conform to the rigours in which it is made meaningful. Caught then between the need for a conclusion, and the impossibility of concluding, this chapter looks to what the future might hold for the narcotic. In one sense then this chapter offers a conclusion to the study. In the act of concluding, however, it also opens up the need for continued analysis. The inherent incalculability and complexity of the narrative of the narcotic demands this.

As I hope to have shown, the narrative of the narcotic, as exhibited through cocaine, has a past, a present and a future. While this analysis has been concerned primarily with its past, the present and the future are equally important. As mentioned in the introduction, one of the guiding presuppositions of this study has been to find a new and more just way of dealing with the narcotic, and all those who are affected by it. That need for justice, however, will always be in the future, *to come*. It is for this reason that this chapter looks to the future to answer the problems that presently face us. It is also for this reason that this chapter is primarily hypothetical – it is beyond the scope of this study to begin to engage with practical instances of combat and control of the narcotic when the study has been retrospective and theoretical. Such an analysis would require a completely new study, one that I can only point to, the space for which I hope is opened by this analysis. Such an analysis would be based upon the methodological considerations of this study however; both are equally important.

The concept of a future means and way of dealing with the narcotic narrative is premised on a re-examination of that narrative's history. That examination is largely complete. However, there are a number of epistemological worries that have been opened up by this analysis. For instance, if the foundation of the narcotic narrative was sacrificial in nature, can the narrative ever escape the supplementarity of that sacrificial invention? Can we, in other words, articulate the distance between the narcotic and society without recourse to the sacrificial nature of that relationship? Furthermore, does this almost inescapable sacrificial logic necessitate a certain violence of/to the narrative of the narcotic? Can we

escape that violence? And importantly, if we can, how do we? These are the questions that this chapter seeks to address, primarily at a philosophical level, but also with the weight of knowledge contained in previous chapters.

These theoretical worries are a product of a specific epistemological vantage point, one that is ultimately different to present understandings of the narcotic and its narrative. In order to understand this difference, however, the borders of each epistemology need to be clearly defined. It is in this vein that this chapter seeks to highlight and indeed close the borders of what shall be termed the past and present epistemological understanding of the narcotic narrative. Solutions to the problems generated by this epistemology, however, cannot come from *within* the borders of its understanding, for it is the very existence of the epistemology that generates those problems. The sacrificial nature of the narcotic narrative, for instance, cannot be escaped by redeploying the logic of sacrifice as a critique of that logic. What is needed then is a revised epistemological vantage point, one that is conscious of difference, and one that can ultimately contemplate an escape from the sacrificial nature of the narrative highlighted above. When one speaks of “escape” however, I do not mean to say that what can be suggested is an entirely new discourse and logical engagement with the narrative of the narcotic. What I am suggesting, at the very minimum, is a self-reflexive analysis of the sacrificial invention and renewal of the narrative. Such an analysis takes into account and makes important the logic of sacrifice – much like the violence of justice it is only when the mythology of the sacrificial exclusion of the *pharmakos* is revealed that we can see the violence for what it is, force and power. Stripping the narrative of its mythologies reveals to us the hidden force that makes powerful the very mythology. This is the task of a new vantage point that is offered to us, I believe, by critical complexity theory.

As noted by the introduction, critical complexity theory itself has a genealogy of which we must be conscious in its deployment. As such, in the first section of this chapter I will outline the central tenets of the theoretical framework, stressing the framework’s inheritance from deconstruction and discourse analysis. Critical complexity, I argue, offers us a self-referential framework through which we might not only critique western modernity’s logic, but also provide a basis for new analyses. In line with this, I offer three propositions, ranging from the theoretical to the practical, of how critical complexity might be applied to illuminate our thinking of the narcotic narrative. This is not an attempt to formulate new rules or laws, but rather to gauge the power of a new epistemology and its usefulness to such an analysis. While this study is tentative in offering these propositions, and with the full knowledge that the rigorous application of critical complexity theory to the narcotic narrative



would engender a far larger study, it is the space opened by these propositions that I hope will be found useful. In other words, this is a *demonstration* of the power of a new epistemological vantage point, and not a conclusive and sustained critique.

The case for complexity is therefore two fold. In the first instance, critical complexity theory provides a different epistemological vantage point from which to view the narcotic narrative. This is important, for it is only once there is a disengagement with the very rhetoric of the narcotic narrative that we can begin to see that rhetoric at work. *In other words, it is only once we distance ourselves from the inherent normativity of the narcotic narrative that we can see that normativity in operation as a political and discursive strategy.* The practical consequence of this is that we can begin to view the narcotic narrative as just another discourse in the world. This suggests the second reason for the deployment of critical complexity theory here: if we wish to “solve” the “problem” presented to us by the narrative of the narcotic, we cannot begin to untangle its discourse while at the same time judging that very discourse. We must become, to use a suave academic phrase, disinterested observers of the narrative’s various functions and manifestations. The phrase itself is misleading however – we must be interested in remaining impartial to the normativity that has been used when articulating the narrative of the narcotic. Such an operation requires that we no longer insert obligatory disclaimers into our analyses, yet at the same time, we must be aware of the reasons why the obligatory disclaimer can be used as a strategy to demarcate the text from the narcotic.

There is another normative mire which also needs to be negotiated however – the normativity of the narcotic itself. While I have stringently criticised the use of “the disclaimer” as a tool that creates unnecessary analytical distance between the signifier and signified and is ultimately a tool of a metaphysics of presence which seeks to hide one axiom of the *pharmakon*, while parading the other, one cannot ignore the action of the narcotic itself. Cocaine, when all is said and done, *is* addictive.<sup>148</sup> Cocaine can and does harm people,

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<sup>148</sup> The normative residue of addiction, is however, a very different question, and again seems contingent not on the concept itself but the institutional structures which make it meaningful. Addiction to narcotics for instance, is “bad” within a regime concerned with both productivity and longevity, while in the same system addiction to gym is “good.” Both display a similar logic, but what changes is the regime of truth that governs the normativity of that act. What is interesting to note is the genealogy of the concept – in a Newtonian universe in which cognition and sensation are differentiated, addiction falls within the latter and is therefore undesirable. Further back, the Latin verb *addicere* “suggests that the user has lost active control of language and thus consciousness itself, that he or she is already ‘spoken for,’ bound and decreed” (Lenson 1995: 35). With the rise of the phenomenology of the self, the old dictum of cognition over sensation has been largely eroded, allowing the concept to exist in society relatively benignly. A pious work ethic, for instance, can equally be thought of as an addiction, as is the constant accumulation of products (within a consumerist discourse at least). The normative differentiation, however, is marked by the oppositional logic of modernity – drug addiction is bad because it

social relations and is, at least sometimes, a direct cause of increased crime and violence in many forms. Cocaine's abuse and its consequences do place an unnecessary and perhaps preventable burden on social welfare systems. One might attempt to positively justify this by blaming the social systems at large, by indicating the neo-liberal paradigm, or attempt to mitigate the damage that cocaine causes by placing it in comparison with other drugs and narcotics (it is, for instance, true that alcohol and tobacco products account for many more deaths a year than all of the illicit drugs combined; Nutt 2006: 315 – 317). Yet none of these strategies directly engage the normativity of the narcotic – are narcotics good or bad, both or neither? In line with the larger argument of this thesis, and as I shall expand upon below, I argue that narcotics are, in the final analysis, negative. However, this is *not* an implicit negativity. It is my argument that if we wish to change the way in which the *pharmakon* operates in society we need to change the institutions that define it. Finally, in order to change those institutional, discursive and juridical structures, we need a new epistemological lens that is not grounded in the same logic as those institutions. For this reason, and considering the above, I have chosen to engage with critical complexity theory as a tentative step towards framing that new epistemological lens. What is required, in other words, is a critical engagement with this normativity *and not* the continuation of the simple assumption that the use of narcotics will necessarily make one crime prone, sexually deviant and irrational.

To summarise then, cocaine *is* a problem to society, not because of the simulacrum which it produces, not because of its parasitic nature, but because ultimately it may destroy the lives of some who use it, and indeed those closest to them. This is a critique based on pain and anguish, and not some recourse to the productivity or rationality of the supposed “ideal” citizen. To address this problem, however, we cannot simply make recourse to the criminalisation of the user, at either a practical or theoretical level. What is needed, and what is offered by critical complexity, is a disengagement with the politics of subjectivity and sovereignty. It is through this distancing that we might seek solutions that do not further add to the problem that we are trying to solve. The distance, then, is a necessary coefficient of the solution.

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places the narcotic user beyond the realm of productivity, making their body's non-productive and thus parasitic.

## The Past, the Present, and the Future

Throughout this thesis I have attempted to show that there can be no naturalistic definition of the *pharmakon* in its modern guise as the narcotic. Rather, I have argued, the concept is at all times derived from those larger institutional, juridical and discursive structures that have made the concept meaningful. Which axiom of the *pharmakon* is deployed, then, is a function of its relationship with the institutions that articulate it. Indeed, at times I have made an even stronger claim – the narcotic, *as a concept*, is nothing more than the institutional measures that define it. Ultimately this claim is derived from my analysis of the changing narrative of the narcotic from its re-invention in western modernity in the 1880s to the modern era. This analysis has not only revealed and displaced any naturalistic or traditionally metaphysical analyses of the concept, but has also revealed how the concept of the narcotic has become supplement, within the logic of western metaphysics, to various fundamental elements of modernity – the self, sovereignty, race, class, and gender to name but a few. From this, we might draw the conclusion that we can never escape the concept of the narcotic. While different substances can take on the mantle of the concept, the supplementary logic of the concept dictates that it is not only necessary, but also constitutive of the logic and reality of western modernity.

It is the matter of choice, however, which has come to haunt this study – at the very least, considering the methodologies I have employed, it is in no way possible to claim for myself or this study the guardianship of some objective, metaphysical or perfect knowledge concerning the narrative of the narcotic. From the very outset, my choices have been just that: selections, decisions, and ultimately the prioritising of one alternative over another. The knowledge that this study has generated, as a consequence, is at best contextual, contingent and irrevocably political. From the perspective of the regime of truth of modernity this is highly problematic – serious knowledge *should be* objective, deterministic, reductionist and analytically categorised or, as shall be more adequately dealt with below and as Edgar Morin highlights (2005: 5), compartmentalised. However, as I hope to have shown in previous chapters it is exactly this logic of modernity that has not only made the narcotic as a concept and a substance a “problem,” but has made this problem “unsolvable.” Consequently, if the knowledge that has been generated by this study cannot be ultimately grounded in some metaphysical realm then not only is there an implicit normativity attendant to my choices, but also a critical responsibility that comes with them. The revised epistemological framework through which I wish to go beyond the logic of the west’s narcotic modernity must therefore

*necessarily* be able to accommodate and account for this implicit responsibility and normativity. This is exactly what critical complexity theory offers us.

Before such a self-reflexive analysis can begin however, it is necessary to draw upon the narcotic narrative's past, to see what lessons we might be taught by its history. These lessons, I argue, can be distilled into four broad analytical arenas, resulting in a fifth analytical domain or epistemological vantage point. Chronologically they might be ordered and referenced thus: in the beginning there was the sacrificial invention of the narcotic. As a consequence, that sacrificial logic has been reiterated throughout the narrative. These are the first two methodological considerations. They are followed by the positioning and use of the *pharmakon* as a means and strategy by which other concerns can be articulated. It is this epistemology, I argue, which has guided policy formation in the western world vis-à-vis the narcotic. Moreover, and fourthly, it is only once we understand both the logic and the importance of the analytical placing of these interpretations of the narcotic (exhibited most tersely in the "obligatory disclaimer," at once depicting a logic and yet guarding against that logic) that we can begin to build a new epistemological understanding of the narcotic that takes into account the worries of this study as a whole: the problems of choice, of legitimacy and of justice. Finally then, it is with the justification of the past that we can look to the future. A glimpse of this future, I argue, is made possible through the lens of critical complexity theory.

### **The Past and the Sacrificial Invention of the Narcotic**

The sacrificial invention of the narrative of the narcotic seen for instance, in the history of cocaine, has come to define all of western modernity's subsequent interactions with that narrative. The ultimate consequence, of course is, and to re-quote Praeg (2007: 22. Emphasis added), that "there is only the inescapable iteration of founding violence ... This violence made us; we re-enact it to remain us; sometimes we return in order to interrogate the violence itself. But that's risky business precisely *because we are the violence that made us.*" Had it not been for this sacrificial invention, in other words, perhaps we would have a very different understanding of what constitutes a narcotic. We cannot however change the past. We must therefore directly deal with the logic of the narrative in our attempt to overcome the problems it brings to us.

Ultimately then we are forced to ask an important question: if the narcotic narrative was founded violently, and has been sustained violently, can we ever escape that violence? As much as this study would like to conclude that we could, at present it does not seem possible. This is not however because of bad policing, ineffective treatment campaigns, social stigma or personal degradation (although these are all, at one time or another, *consequences*), but because of the very logic of the narrative itself. The narcotic-as-*pharmakon*, by its very nature, will always lead us down a path to exile. That exile is always both good and bad. Unfortunately however, attempting to escape the power of the modern and sovereign state by entering into the simulacrum of the use of narcotics is always going to provoke an iterative response from the very system from which the escape is attempted. Not because of the escape itself, not because the state is “losing” another member of society, but because the very act of escape provides the possibility of alternative realities, competing mythologies of being. For the sovereignty of the mythology to remain just that, these competing mythologies must be eliminated at the precise instance they emerge. The sovereignty and the legitimacy of the mythology is, after all, premised on the notion that it is the *only* reality and mythology from within which to construct the meaning of our lives. So long as the *pharmakon* creates alternatives, as it must necessarily do, then there will be violent reprisals. We cannot escape this violence, but we can attempt to understand it.

Some might find this thought depressing – the violence of the past still plays a fundamental role in our modern societies, no matter how hard we try to hide it. The inescapability of the violence of the founding moment, however, also allows us the possibility for understanding (and perhaps even, in the future, justice). In other words, while we may never be able to escape the violence that is antecedent to every movement of the narcotic narrative, we can *reveal* the logic that makes the violence possible. In this act of revealing we shear away the mythology that makes that very violence legitimate – violence shorn of its mythology is also shorn of its legitimacy. This allows us, on the one hand, to critique that violence, to reveal it as nothing more than the brutal interaction of political forces. On the other, with the violence revealed, the possibility of a critique of the logic of that violence becomes manifest. Thus, while justice may always be *to come*, the first step on that path to the future is taken when we reveal the violence of the past for what it really is, brute force. We can never escape the violence of that first sacrificial moment. But we can make sense of it.

The necessity of the sacrificial reinvention of the narcotic narrative creates an obvious problem however – how do we attempt to deal more justly with that narrative when every

interaction is antecedent to the sacrificial logic of the very narrative? In other words, can we attempt to deal with the problem of cocaine without necessarily re-invoking and thereby reiterating the sacrificial nature of the narcotic's birth? Again, this does not seem possible. The sacrificial logic of the narcotic-as-*pharmakon* is endemic, indeed necessary but not constitutive of that narrative. Like the sacrificial invention itself, however, this is not cause for despair but hope – it is only when we understand and make visible the logic in operation that we can begin to think through the problems it presents to us. It is for this reason that justice, and especially a justice of the narcotic narrative, is something that will always occur in the future. It is towards this goal that we must strive even if that actual achievement of it might never be possible. It is only, in other words, when we are truly aware of the *aporia*, the need and yet simultaneous impossibility of justice (as shall be discussed below) that we can begin to search for it.

### **Past and Present Epistemologies**

As highlighted by the historical aspect of this study, there have been a number of different strategies of engaging with the narratives of cocaine and the narcotic. From disinterested observation to sacrificial revulsion, cocaine has occupied many different positions vis-à-vis western modernity. Understanding these different positions, and the places from which they were articulated, gives us an understanding (at least in the Socratic fashion) of knowing how *not* to shape present and future epistemologies and indeed policy standpoints. Unfortunately however, present manifestations of the narcotic narrative seem to be simply replicating previous judicial and legislative positions. This need for a new or revised vantage point is especially important to the continent of Africa which now stands at the crossroads of an ever-increasing trade in narcotics and the need for coherent and effective legislation.

Throughout this study I have drawn attention to the past – it is, as clichéd as it might sound, only when we have learnt the lessons of the past that we might hope to deal more justly with the future. Revealing, for instance, the sacrificial invention and iteration of the narcotic narrative has led to this need for a revised epistemological vantage point. Indeed, in this reading, it is the past that has dictated the present. It is because we have never truly quelled our fear of the fantasy offered by the *pharmakon* that we both deplore and are intrigued by it. Indeed, I am tempted to conclude that many writings on the narcotic have

been driven by this morbid curiosity, at the sight of the sheer destruction that can be a result of the choosing of the exile offered by the *pharmakon*. This, of course, is entirely improvable, but the tone of many writings on the narcotic leads one to at least consider the possibility.

The present ways and means of dealing with the problem of cocaine have their own historical narratives. As I hope to have shown, present legislation and understandings of the narcotic are constituted to a larger degree by past interactions with the narrative. There is then a genealogical record of our interactions with the *pharmakon* of cocaine. While this study has concentrated on the failings of those previous understandings of the narcotic narrative, there have been some (however minor) successes. For instance, the deployment of methadone maintenance clinics did, for a while at least, provide a more socially cooperative means of engaging with the heroin addict – “addicts,” who in the majority, were already marginalised from society either by poverty, crime, or social injustice.<sup>149</sup> Equally, the Narcotics Anonymous (NA) group, utilising a 12-step program modelled on the Alcoholics Anonymous program, has achieved some success in re-integrating “addicts” into their communities (Peyrot 1985: 1509 – 1522). The trade in cocaine has also consistently decreased in the last decade. The cost of that decrease, however, has outweighed the gain.

Perhaps the most notable feature of these small successes, and as has been highlighted by this thesis, is the understanding that brute criminalisation of the “addict” only further complicates the very problem that it is meant to alleviate. While we may understand the criminalisation discourse as a manifestation of the sovereignty of a nation-state, and while it is plausible to hypothesise that criminalisation is a product of that sovereignty protecting itself, the actual effects of the discourse have always been counter-productive. Equally however, being “soft on drugs” is mired with problems – extremely high relapse rates, expense, and not to mention the unwillingness of politicians to stake their careers on what is ultimately a moral problem. Importantly though, criminalisation and medicalisation are often seen as existing in a binary relationship; one must be for or against either of the discourses. While this compartmentalisation is a product of a specific understanding of legitimate knowledge, there is no reason whatsoever why both of these discourses cannot be deployed simultaneously. This is one aspect that will be explored in the three models of complexity below.

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<sup>149</sup> For a more detailed account of this and the “Swedish system,” see Grönbladh and Gunne: 1989.

## Future Epistemologies

An understanding of justice as something that is to come (Derrida 1992) necessitates a theoretical framework that can accommodate this future perfect state. Ideally, therefore, a new epistemological framework would be able to accommodate the lessons of the past, be self-reflexive of present understandings of the narcotic narrative, and be able to understand future changes and developments in the narrative itself. As a theoretical construct, critical complexity theory (as will be further discussed in the following section of this chapter) can accommodate, *a priori*, all three of these epistemological necessities. Indeed, it is the theory's understanding and sensitivity to initial conditions (the past), its concern with self-reflexivity (the present), and with entropy (the future) that makes it such a valuable analytical lens. Furthermore, critical complexity theory has also inherited some fundamental aspects of both discourse analysis and deconstruction, making it a valuable tool in the continuation of the logic developed by this study. The deployment of critical complexity theory, it must be added, is made as a choice. There are other ideas, models, and indeed epistemological vantage points from which to view the present-day narcotic narrative. In the precise instance of *this* study, however, critical complexity theory offers the smoothest transition into the more practical realm of understanding (such as exhibited by its use in policy formation and criminology). It is perhaps Richard Lee (2007: 11 – 12) who most potently summarised the need for, and movement towards, complex understandings of the world around us:

The categories through which we make sense of the world we live in, the groundings that give authority to explanatory frameworks ... all are undergoing a transformation. Furthermore, this upheaval is part and parcel of the exhaustion of the long-term processes reproducing the whole ensemble of the structures of the modern world, or modern world-system. That is to say, the crisis in the arena of cognition and intentionality, the structures of knowledge ... are inseparable from the crises in the arenas of production and distribution, the economic, the decision making and coercion, the geopolitical. In this transformation of the structures of knowledge – that is, in those patterns of what we can and cannot be thought that determine what actions can and cannot be deemed feasible in the modern world – the knowledge movements that have come to be known as cultural studies and complexity studies have played a fundamental role, both as a manifestation and determinant.



## The Case for Complexity

While there may be many other ways of interpreting the narcotic narrative in its present form, it is critical complexity theory that offers us the most useful methodological framework within which to analyse the historical consequences of this narrative. The use of critical complexity theory as a means of analysis is arrived at as a product of this study's previous, but also very specific, deconstructive/discursive engagement with the narcotic narrative. It is thus of paramount importance that before an analysis of critical complexity theory can be offered, an awareness of complexity's own history/genealogy be provided (especially in the context of this study). There are specific foundations, criticisms, and rejections that gave birth to the understanding and fundamental tenets of critical complexity theory, and it is these that need to be explored first. It is upon this basis, finally, that three propositions will be outlined with the hope of expanding, while concluding, the present enquiry.

### **The Complicated and the Complex**

Complexity theory is usefully described as “an economy of concepts based around this emergent or self-organising impulse, usually involving a series of what might be thought of as ‘question marks’ like non-linearity, self-organisation, emergent order and complex adaptive systems” (Thrift 1999: 34). Without a theoretical and historical basis however such assertions may appear meaningless. Both of those foundations can most usefully be derived from contrasting modern complexity theory with that which it critiques – modernism, particularly in its mechanistic or Newtonian manifestation

The Newtonian worldview, most graphically brought to life in the advances of the industrial revolution, held that the world was “invariant, infinitely divisible into space-like units, measurable in length, expressible as a number and reversible” (Urry 2006: 112). In this regime of truth there were thought to be absolute numbers, limits, units and borders. As such, legitimate knowledge was defined as being rational, specific and wholly quantifiable. Justified by the Cartesian episteme, the world was one of an order that was to be discovered through the rigorous and rational application of defined methodologies. It is not by chance but necessity that Descartes' *Meditations* display a specific logic that defines the world into the knowable and the unknowable, the deductive and the inductive, through the method of rigorous doubt. However, with the advancement of scientific discourse in general and of

physics in particular, this system of understanding reached its logical limits. Indeed, the very system of doubt that a Cartesian metaphysics had thus far relied on became parasitic upon itself. As is commonly cited, Einstein (among others) showed that the most fundamental presuppositions of Newtonian knowledge, rather than being concrete and certain, are relative, that time can be shifted, moved and altered and that space is dynamic (see, for instance, Urry 2006: 112 – 113). No longer, in other words, could we be certain about the definable limits of our knowledge, for the very universe was intrinsically indefinable beyond local interpretation. As Lee (2007: 17) summarises,

It is not just that new models of complex systems are being made available to social scientists, or that developments across the structures of knowledge are having similar epistemological consequences, but rather that the ontology itself underpinning the claim to legitimacy of knowledge constructed on the “scientific” model is undergoing a transformation.

While the relative and intrinsic complexity of the universe would become accepted in the hard sciences, the social sciences and humanities did not immediately accept the fundamental premises of such a metaphysics. Indeed, “social complexity” (Steward 2001: 324) would not become a rigorously defined analytical framework or methodology for a number of years. However, as will be explored in the following sections and as Steward notes (2001: 324 – 328), an apparent dissatisfaction with various theoretical frameworks crept into both the social sciences and the humanities during the 1960s (mirroring the dissatisfaction with the Order of Things as highlighted in chapter four). As such, new methodological frameworks were sought out and pursued in the hope of finding a new analytical lens through which to view an increasingly complex world. While many strategies were pursued, complexity theory offered an attractive option: at that time mathematical complexity offered the ability to understand relative phenomena while still grounding itself in the rigours of mathematical certainty (and thus the Newtonian episteme). While a number of “models” and theorems were developed and pursued (most notably by the Sante Fé School), it was the advancements made by various authors, such as Niklas Luhmann (1989), which gave rise to the field of understanding that has been termed *critical* complexity theory.

This historical basis is important, for critical complexity theory emerged from a specific need to engage with the world in a new manner. This need, tersely put, was to understand the increasing complexity in the logic of the world around us. It is also for this reason that this study seeks to apply critical complexity theory to the narrative of the narcotic.

As I hope to show in the three propositions below, one of the fundamental reasons we have not yet adequately dealt with the logic of the narcotic is because we hold onto the idea that the illicit trade in cocaine is somehow *different* to conventional analyses of other complex phenomena – the stock market or weather systems for instance. Not only this, but as is argued below, if we are not self-reflexive of the historicity and past changes in the narcotic narrative, then our present understandings will be inherently artificial. Thus, for instance, if we are not aware that the very act of interference (in, for instance, the interaction between border police and smugglers), far from reducing the phenomenon to a manageable particularity makes the trade in cocaine more complex by creating unintended consequences and feed-back loops that have the opposite effect of the stated intention. Also understanding how previous regimes of truth have shaped analyses of the narcotic trade allows us to critique those analyses' failings more adequately. By recognising these failings, moreover, we can begin to envision a new epistemological vantage point from which new and fruitful interventions might be made possible. It is in this revised epistemology that the relationship between cause and effect becomes paramount to a critical analysis of a complex structure such as the narcotic narrative.

### **Theories of Complexity**

Defining the use of critical complexity as a “new” analytical lens is however somewhat misleading. I do not intend to simply negate or replace those theories and structures that have come before this study. To do so would be to lose the valuable knowledge that has been generated. Rather, the use of critical complexity is done in the *absence* of an origin, the absence of which is a result of the deconstruction of the narrative of the narcotic that this study has undertaken. By displacing and destabilising the concept of the *pharmakon* by showing that it is manifest institutionally, rather than naturally, that naturalistic origin is no more. Equally, however, replacing modern modes of thought with the critically complex is not an attempt to imbue the concept with a new ontology or “postmodernism” – the status of deconstruction and of critical complexity theory are always equally as tentative, and neither make any claim to being a superior form of knowledge, or of generating metaphysical certainties. Both systems of thought are implicitly open, dynamic, and sensitive to their own initial conditions (Cilliers 2005b: 608). Furthermore, both systems are intensely self-reflexive of their own prioritisations, and as such, critically aware not only

of the inherent normativity of the concepts and phenomena they analyse, but of their own responsibility and influence in that analysis. Considering that difference and a concern with analytical justice are the *a priori's* of both deconstruction and critical complexity, it follows that the analytical symbioses of critical complexity theory and deconstruction are ideal for reframing the narrative of narcotic modernity.

Steward (2001: 324) notes that “[t]he nature of complexity, and especially social complexity, is still very open to debate and further research.” However, in tracing the history of social complexity, there are at least two primary theoretical models or “schools” that have emerged that may be elucidated through their different definitions. In the first, those that might be termed “reductive,” the association of complex phenomena with mathematical models is of primary concern. As such this description “relates to issues of calculability and reproducibility and fabrication” (Steward 2001: 326). Restricted or reductive complexity, in contrast to general or critical complexity, is furthermore a distinction made by both Cilliers (2001: 136) and Morin (2005; 9, 10). Restricted complexity, by definition, seeks to discover and articulate the underlying processes and principles that make, hinder, further perpetuate or destroy a complex system. It is reductive in this quest, for it seeks to explain emergent phenomena as the product of certain processes. Its intention then, rather than to analyse a complex system in its complexity, is to simplify and reduce it to its constitutive elements. An analysis of a complex phenomenon through the lens of the reductive paradigm is ultimately constrained by the knowledge available to the analysis – “[w]e may tentatively define the complexity of a system as the quantity of information needed to describe it” (Cohen and Stewart 1995: 20). Indeed, the tension between reductive and general complexity is perhaps most eloquently summarised by Lee (2007: 19):

Social analysts may (indeed must, I would argue) henceforth make the shift from fabricating and verifying theories to imagining and evaluating the multiple possible consequences of diverse interpretative accounts of human reality and the actions they entail. Herein lies an alternative for a unified historical social science to both the nomothetic and idiographic models of social scientific inquiry. For social knowledge is not universal, but knowledge for specific times, today, for our times.

General complexity, in contrast to reductive complexity, does not seek to reduce or to “solve” a complex system, but rather to understand a complex system in its own complexity. It is from within this domain or “paradigm” that critical complexity theory is born.

Accordingly, critical complexity theory has its foundations in the work of the systems theorists. In this regard, arguably, the paradigmatic systems-based analysis available to us is that of Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1974). It is Saussure's analysis which is also the starting point of both Cilliers' (1998a: 44 – 48) and Morin's (1992: 99) analysis of complexity, not to mention the fundamental focus of one of Derrida's earliest deconstructive texts, *Of Grammatology* (1976). It is from these earliest of analyses that the interaction between deconstruction and critical complexity theory can usefully be viewed. While deconstruction argues that the *Course* never ultimately escapes the very metaphysics of presence it critiques, critical complexity critiques the reductive manner in which the analysis details the system of linguistics it preys upon. Based on this interaction I believe it possible and desirable to use a systems theory framework, punctuated by the thoughts and strategies of deconstruction, to formulate a coherent theoretical lens through which to view complex phenomena such as the narrative of cocaine. This analysis is limited, however, by its own self-reflexivity, or its own attempts at theory making. As such, and in agreement with Derrida's conception of justice (1989: 961), every application of a theoretical domain or model resembles the application of law in the sense that, in order to be just to what it critiques, it must at each instance of its deployment be simultaneously the application of a general rule as well as the reinvention of that rule, be unique and original even though that reinvention will always be both iteration *of* and supplemented *by* the reinventions that have come before it.

### **Critical Complexity Theory**

Understanding the *need* for this new analytical justice, especially in the narrative of the narcotic, and in contrast to the “mutilating atomism” of modernity that Morin (1992: 3) highlights, a new epistemological space *ought* to be opened. This space is caught, on the one hand, between the shift from an analysis of objects to that of systems, and on the other, between the objective and rational quest to solve discernible problems and the revelling in the “mere” insolvability of complex problems. It is within this space that it is possible to confront both critical complexity theory and deconstruction. Before such an analysis can begin however, it is necessary to highlight the fundamental *a priori*'s of both general and

critical complexity theory and, in line with the rest of this thesis, deconstruction.<sup>150</sup> It must be noted though that “[t]hese characteristics are not offered as a *definition* of complexity, but rather as a general, low-level, qualitative *description* (Cilliers 2000c: 24).

There are a number of analytical themes that emerge and define critical complexity when it is placed in contrast to the logocentrism of modernity.<sup>151</sup> Firstly, and perhaps most fundamentally, it is assumed that a complex object or phenomenon cannot be reduced to an orderly set of analytical integers. This is because, and unlike a complicated system in which all aspects, functions and parts of the system can be known (however hard this may be, for instance, some modern technological inventions), a complex system *by definition* is not only more than the some of its parts, but all of those parts can never be known.<sup>152</sup> A complex system, then, cannot be reduced or known through its constitutive parts, precisely because it necessarily exceeds those parts/definitions. Secondly, because of the binary logic of western modernity, order and disorder are articulated as oppositional and at times parasitic. However, in a complex system it is the relationship between these features that make them both important organisational principles, mutual complementarities if you wish. It is the relationship between order and disorder that creates a system’s periphery. However, because of the pervasiveness of the logic of modernity and the logocentrism of writing, this feature is often difficult to describe (Cilliers 2002: 80 – 83). Furthermore, while the deterministic and generalising epistemological basis of rational science denies singularity in favour of the organisational promises of taxonomies and theories, complexity argues for the unique and essentially singular instantiation of each system and its relationship to other systems. As such, while self-organisation has become analytically useful across a number of disciplines, complexity theory does not attempt to articulate this self-organisation solely in terms of an external force (such as a “list” or “definition”). This is not to say, however, that the observer

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<sup>150</sup> The tools and strategies of deconstruction have been used throughout this thesis, and have never been “defined” within a discrete and “objective” methodology. It was, as noted in chapter 2, precisely because these tools and strategies cannot be defined, if one is to remain true to their *raison d’être*, that this analytical path was chosen. They have been deployed throughout the text to show my understanding of them, which, I believe, is far more true to their nature than simply providing analytical definitions. The same holds true for this, the final chapter. What is different however is that this chapter is attempting to show the confluence and ultimately, symbiosis of critical complexity theory and deconstruction, at least in this section. It is for this reason that the concepts, tools and strategies are taken out of context and discussed in and of themselves. Once that confluence has been established, they will be deployed in the analytical manner followed by the rest of this study.

<sup>151</sup> In order to aid analytical clarity, I shall first discuss critical complexity theory, then deconstruction, and then the confluence between the two. Continuing with the logic of complexity, however, it must firstly be noted that is the *relationship* between each of the analytical “nodes” or modes of thought that define them, rather than their individual manifestations. Secondly, it must be also noted that any separation is entirely artificial and of my own doing, and is done solely to gain the analytical clarity necessary within the mandate of this study.

<sup>152</sup> Indeed, it is the act of reduction that is the most problematic, and will be discussed at length in the following paragraphs.

and the observation cannot or do not have a profound effect on a complex system, nor that the very act of observation can change or undermine the system that is under observation. Because of this, the classic analytical lenses offered to us by modernity simply do not enable us to think through or articulate the complexity and dynamism of a complex system.

Critical complexity, in contrast to reductive complexity, takes as *a priori* three essential qualities of a complex system. Firstly, and as previously noted, it is assumed that a complex system is sensitive to the initial conditions that brought it about. Not only does this establish the relationship between the complex system, the larger environment and other complex systems, but it also establishes the non-predictive nature of the systems. As we can never have a complete knowledge of those initial conditions, nor the non-linear effect that they will have on the system as a whole, we can never, in the first instance, predict or gain insight into the results or actions that the system will generate (Cilliers 1998a: 2 – 3). It is only in retrospect that we realise the importance of the slip of that blade that cut von Fleichel-Marxow's finger. The second *a priori* shifts analytical focus to the relationships themselves: the relationship between the constitutive elements of a system and the larger environment are not only dynamic (Morin 2005: 11), holistic and non-linear, but because of this, it is the interactions themselves, rather than the parts, which constitute the system. Considering this, because of the complex system's susceptibility and sensitivity to the larger environment, those interactions and relationships evolve, mutate, and unfold in a non-linear manner that evokes various positive and negative feedback loops which make the system as a whole unpredictable. Finally, it is the non-linearity of these relationships that prevents us from formulating analytical rules or theorems to define and describe the complex system in its entirety (Cilliers 2000a: 9) – we can only, at best *choose* to concentrate on one aspect or temporary instantiation of the system. It is from this choice that the ethical mandate of critical complexity theory issues.

Critically, a complex system is sensitive to the passage of time: the process of entropy defines the system's relationships and borders, simultaneously allowing the system (at least when viewed through the conceptual lens of atomism) to evolve and/or devolve. Change, measured by time, is the constant parameter of a complex system. The culmination of this is the entropy of a system, the ceasing of change that is also the death of a complex system. From this it follows that where one *chooses* to enter the system, even if one only observes the system, will fundamentally 1) determine what one sees while also 2) necessarily altering at least some of the relationships in the system. This generates a certain normativity for not only does the notion of the impartial observer viewing objective matter cease to exist, but because

a complex system can never be known in its entirety the observer and the act of observation are intricately linked to that part of the system which one chooses to observe. For this study, it is the reinsertion of the temporal and the inescapably normative into theory making that is of critical importance.

Considering this theoretical basis, a description of the epistemological space opened by critical complexity theory is summarised by Cilliers (1998: 3 – 4) as follows:

1. Complex systems have a large number of elements. While reductive analyses can provide information when the system is comparatively small, a large system cannot be understood by conventional means.
2. Large numbers of elements, while being necessary, must also interact in a dynamic way. A complex system is always changing and is therefore *a priori* temporal. Interactions convey and transfer information.
3. These interactions are rich. Elements within the system influence and are influenced by other elements in the system. One cannot infer or predict the behaviour of the system as a whole by simply reviewing these interactions.
4. Interactions, in this vein, are non-linear, which necessitates that elements are exposed to change. This change occurs through different and deferred interactions that cannot be predicted. It is these interactions that are the precondition for complexity.
5. There is an aspect of space involved in a complex system. Elements closer rather than further away are more likely to interact more often with other elements. The influence of these interactions, however, can affect the system as a whole.
6. There are both positive and negative feedback loops in the system. A positive feedback loop increases stimulation, while a negative feedback loop decreases stimulation. Both are necessary to the functioning of the system.
7. Complex systems are open systems – they interact with the larger environment in a dynamic way through “open” or porous borders. The border of a complex system is also dynamic and can be hard to determine. It is, however, constituted by the difference between the environment and the complex system.
8. Complex systems are unstable in that they operate far from equilibrium. There has to be a constant flow of information within the system. The decreasing of this flow, entropy, is ultimately the death of the system.
9. Because complex systems are temporal they have a history and a memory contained in the relative interactions between elements. The past influences the present system.
10. No single element knows or can determine the condition of the entire system.



These ten features are not intended to operate solely in opposition to the ontology of western modernity, but to supplement previous advances in theory. Finally then, critical complexity does not assert its analytical superiority over the logic of modernity, but simply re-claims for itself the (repressed) self-reflexive difference always already at play in the logic of modernity.

As the reader may have noticed, a direct application of these ten descriptions of complexity would be somewhat difficult to simply “apply,” other than to the most tenuous of turns in the narrative of the narcotic. Rather, by taking these descriptions as the *a priori*'s of a future analysis, it is the epistemological space that is opened up by them that is important and that I wish to articulate, however tentatively, in the conclusion of this study. Furthermore, and as noted in the previous section, it is for this reason that I choose to narrate this epistemological space through the language of deconstruction, rather than “pure” critical complexity theory (even if the heart of critical complexity was assumed *a priori* in the analysis). Before such an analysis can begin however, it is necessary to show how the critical framework of complexity allows a deconstructive engagement with the narrative of the narcotic. In other words, this is not simply an attempt to “speak” the language of complexity, or to rearticulate or reduce complexity to just another analytical form of deconstruction (or vice-versa). Rather, I use the analytical tools offered by deconstruction as a means of engaging, firstly, with the framework offered by critical complexity, and secondly, with the textual analysis offered by the rest of the thesis. This occurs within the epistemological space offered by critical complexity theory. While the net result may indeed be the revealing of the confluence of deconstructive thought and critical complexity, the analysis is not undertaken to explore or represent that theoretical confluence. Rather, and as noted in the previous sections, we need this new epistemological framework and language not to solve the problems that the narcotic narrative brings to us, but to find out just why these problems are so difficult in the first place.

### **Critiques of Complexity**

There have been a number of critiques levelled at the various theories of complexity in general. Stewart (2001: 329 – 336) usefully presents these critiques as four strategies:

First, there are those that who attempt to use complexity theory in alliance with systems theory as a general and dominant metatheory for the social sciences. Second, the myth that all or most social processes can usefully be quantified in mathematical terms persists. Third, the metabiological, organicist (and organismic) model of social systems is often used uncritically. Last, theories or social complexity are parented by a limited range of social philosophies that are each subject to ongoing social debate.

Each of these strategies needs to be individually dealt with as a means of justifying the use of critical complexity.

A concern with seeing complexity theory as a new “paradigm” or metatheory is naturally only relevant to those forms of complexity that themselves argue for the need for an origin. This, of course, has occurred and is perhaps most notable in the work of popular science writers such as Capra (2005) and Urry (2005; 2006); these authors do have a tendency to portray complexity theory as a radically new discourse and means of understanding the world. This is not without some justification however; an analysis of the social through the lens of complexity can produce radically different results to those framed within the Newtonian discourse. However, this strategy of critique is far more relevant to those “reductive” instances of complexity – critical complexity theory takes as *a priori* the fundamental importance of sensitivity to local and conditional knowledge. This then precludes the formation of any metatheoretical constructs, for such constructs would necessarily be at odds with the very *raison d’être* of this form of analysis. Equally, however, one might argue that the strategy of focussing on local and conditional knowledge is itself an attempt to form a metatheory. This much is indeed true – it is after all a guiding strategy of the analysis. This strategy, however, is not some radically new paradigm. Indeed, it is simply the continuation of the very logic employed by both Foucauldian discourse analysis and Derridian deconstruction. It is therefore the continuation, rather than formation, of a new paradigm. A paradigm, I might add, that has been accepted for a number of years now, perhaps most frequently in the guise of “poststructuralism.”

The second critique is most often levelled at reductive complexity theories. By attempting to reduce complex social phenomena to mathematical equations, the epiphenomenal states and features of that system are necessarily eliminated. Again, however, the very development of mathematical models in order to analyse complex systems is a product of a specific, reductionist school of thought, most notably articulated by those

analyses originating from the Santa Fé Institution. *Critical* complexity theory, on the other hand, takes as *a priori* the impossibility of the reduction of complex systems to constitutive elements or mathematical models. Not only this, but methodologically, critical complexity theory is necessarily self-reflexive and critical of its own observation of complex systems. *There is then an inherent indeterminism within the act of theory making that precludes a reductionist and deterministic analysis of a complex system.* Both the latter (reduction and determinism) would be invoked by a mathematical understanding of a complex system, while the former (self-reflexivity) would necessarily preclude the latter.

With regards to the third strategy of critique, Stewart (2001: 333) argues that “[t]heories of complex systems, while thriving on many-leveled [sic] diversity, have a great weakness when applied to society, insofar as the society as a whole is regarded as a complex system with its own autopoietic strategy and exerting downward causation.” This is true *if* a) the analysis of the complex system is undertaken at the level of the entire system itself, and b) it is assumed that such an analysis is radically new or “paradigmatic.” However, while modelling a complex system may attempt to take into account all or most of the functions of the system as a means of generating outcomes and predictions, critical complexity theory only ever engages with that local aspect of the system upon which it is trained. Thus, for instance, while the propositions suggested below engage with the narcotic narrative, they do not attempt to engage with the entire narrative. They are, in other words, local, ethical and self-reflexive of the initial conditions that brought about the present conditions within a complex system. It would simply be false, indeed at odds with the very spirit of the analysis, to assume that any of the propositions could be used as a blanket model with its application in all times and places.

Finally then, the last strategy of critique (and entirely in contrast to the “paradigm” critique) is that complexity theory has its own (western) history and tradition, and rather than being something radically new, is simply the continuation of a specific logocentrism. This is especially applicable to reductive complexity. Complexity is a product of a specific discourse and logic. This *does not* however preclude it from being critical of its own roots (hence, most simply, the *critical* aspect of the very title). Simply arguing that complexity originates from “the West” and therefore is a) the continuation of a domination of other theoretical discourses, and b) subject to the same conditions as previous theories is at the very minimum contradictory and uncritical itself. Simply because a theory originates from a specific time and place does not preclude it from being critical of its own roots and power and therefore capable of transcending, or at least pushing to the limits, those limitations of origin. This has

been the dominant position for a number of years now, seen in such wide-ranging theories as modern feminism, post-modern philosophy and various formulations modern anthropology.

Critical complexity theory thus attempts to avoid these strategies of critique, not because it is not subject to them (in some aspects) but because it is itself critical of its position in the larger discourse of theory making. It is precisely for this reason, moreover, that I have argued that it is an ideal theoretical position from which to critique the narcotic narrative – it is only by being critical of our criticism of the narcotic narrative that we can begin to find new ways of handling the narcotic and its trade, policing, and control.

### Complexity, Integrity, Deconstruction

As has often been noted, critical complexity theory and deconstruction maintain a unique bond. Not only is this interaction important for the larger analysis, but important because it is from this interdependence that the questions of justice and ethics are raised and become meaningful. As Lee (2007: 18) beautifully surmises,

Values need no longer be, must no longer be, construed simply as a matter of individual ethics or morality in the creation of authoritative knowledge of human reality, but must hereafter be conceived as an integral part of a historical social science. Indeed, authoritative knowledge thus constructed would have no pretensions of universality (validity for all times and places) but rather offer defensible interpretations for particular times and places. Consequently, a social science for our times, of necessity singular and transcending disciplinary boundaries, must do two things. First, it must be premised on the indissoluble unity of the regularities of social relations, their structure, and change, their history. Second, it must recognize that the latter supposes the integration of values as integral to inquiry, not simply as a matter of the personal inclination of the analyst.

These two things engender a specific form a critique – any destabilising or deconstructive mode of thought offered to us must also always be subject to its own criticisms and modes of thought (Cilliers 1998a: 107). The deconstructive mode of analysis then, and its project of upturning the hidden roots of modernity, must equally be upturned – the affirmation of the unknown, and of certainty, must always be produced by a system of meaning which is itself never sure or stable. In contrast to the episteme of rationality and the logocentrism of modernity, both deconstruction and critical complexity theory are sensitive to their own

history and place within any critique – they are both the observer and the observed. This does not entail, however, that the strategies employed by deconstruction or critical complexity are somehow irrational or relative – that critique is itself a product of the very logic which deconstruction uncovers. As such deconstruction attempts to show that the rational and the irrational are products of, and authorised by, particular modes of thought – deconstruction shows that “these things have their history, their reasons for being the way they are, their effects on what follows from them, and that the starting point is not a given but a construct, usually blind to itself” (Johnson in Derrida 1981a: xv). In the same manner, the very word “deconstruction” has its own genealogy and is supplemented by its historical meaning, one that it should be intensely self-aware of. The consequence of these revisions, inversions, and forms of critique is the opening of an epistemological space *within* the text, *because* of the text, *within* history *because* of history. Deconstruction, as a strategy, does not stand outside of that which it critiques, but is the logical parasite that undermines the host because of that host’s strengths. In the same manner as critical complexity theory, deconstruction does not attempt to provide a new epistemological space apart from the text, but from within the text, based on the same “evidence” that the text uses in order to make itself meaningful.

Consequently, both the framework of critical complexity theory and the language of deconstruction might usefully be thought of as analytical strategies tasked with the exhuming of that, within the narcotic narrative, that has become hidden by modernity – the unthought. To simply say that a complex system is complex is not enough – the normative/ethical prerogative discussed earlier *demand*s that we attempt a serious and fruitful engagement with the problems presented to us by the narcotic narrative. As I hope to have shown, the narcotic narrative has become the carnal supplement to the logic of western modernity – both hidden and yet despised, it is the narcotic narrative that reveals to us the operation of modernity’s sovereignty and guiding *mythos*.

Accordingly, perhaps the most important analytical tool for this study, as revealed in the earlier arguments and chapters, is the logic of the (sacrificial) supplement. Derrida’s most illustrative example of the logic of the supplement is caught between specificity and generality (which is also highly pertinent to critical complexity theory). For Derrida, the specificity of an example is always also a generalisation. The example, in other words, provides us both with an ideal, but is also a general trope. This is what the logical mandate of the concept of the example dictates. To understand this, it is important to further note that deconstruction is not necessarily destructive, as some authors would have us believe (see, for instance, Ellis 1989). Rather it is, to borrow a phrase from Cornell (1992), a “philosophy of

the limit;” taking meaning to the logical limits or boundaries of a text to not only destabilise that text’s internal logic, but also to displace the text’s authority – this is what is meant by highlighting the *différance* within and beyond a text. To return to the example, in this reading then, deconstruction makes complex the simple, or more accurately, reveals the complexity that is hidden in simplicity. In doing so, deconstruction itself reaches its logical limit, showing itself always to be supplementary and supplemented. This is why deconstruction cannot be articulated as a definitional statement – the trace of deconstruction’s own genealogy is always implicit in the term.

As to whether deconstruction is a strategy of the postmodern or the poststructural, even though this debate is important for both Cilliers (1998a) and Morin (2007), need not be dealt with here.<sup>153</sup> What is important to note, however, is the genealogy of Derrida’s own thought with regard to deconstruction and its linkage with the thought of Cilliers and Morin. As noted, Derrida’s founding critique is positioned within and against Saussure’s structuralist account of a general model of linguistics in the *Course in General Linguistics* (1974) in which he reveals the logocentrism upon which the argument rests, and the preponderance of the authority of immediacy, the centre and the origin. This is not to say, however, that deconstruction does not contain or is not supplemented by structuralism – “[t]o deconstruct was also a structuralist gesture, and its fortune rests in part on this ambiguity” (Derrida 1995: 83). This ambiguity can be carried further, for while deconstruction is a critique of the metaphysics of presence (as origin/centre/immediacy/logocentrism) the subtle trace of that metaphysics runs through deconstruction, at the very least because it is also the inescapable origin of deconstruction. This thesis, too, has not somehow “escaped” the grip of the metaphysics of presence, even it is has become a critique of that metaphysics – it is because of this ambiguity that, in the same manner of deconstruction, indeed because of deconstruction, an epistemological space has been opened in which the *pharmakon* and *pharmakos*, and that which they represent, have become neologisms. Indeed, as I hope to have shown, it is the simulacrum of the *pharmakon* that has, ultimately, becomes the nefarious trace of/in western modernity. In the same manner, it might be argued, the

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<sup>153</sup> This is not to say that it is not important, but rather, considering the larger argument of this study, this debate is but a footnote. Indeed, one might argue that the need to assert the authority of the distinction is to once more fall back into the positivism of modernity, even if, at the same time, both distinctions attempt to draw away from that distinction. The distinction, then, is supplement to the debate.

*pharmakos* acts as the hidden supplement, generating order at the very point when disorder reaches its logical limit.<sup>154</sup>

Derrida (2004: 162) has famously argued that “[t]here is nothing outside of the text.” Derrida’s conception of “the text,” however, is far wider than simple words or books – indeed, the text is not simply epistemological or discursive – but is the very ontological foundation of meaning. The deployment of the strategy of deconstruction, in this reading, is a way of showing not only the sovereignty of meaning which demarcates the border (which creates, in other words, a meaningful system) but the contestation of that border’s limit. Conceptually, Derrida (2001: 365) articulates this ambiguity thus:

This field is in effect that of play, that is to say, a field of infinite substitutions only because it is finite, that is to say, because of instead of being an inexhaustible field, in the classic hypothesis, instead of being too large, there is something missing from it: a center which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions.<sup>155</sup>

There is not a centre then, but a field that is more likely to occur than not occur, an area where the strategies of deconstruction might become more visible and others where they might not.

Considering this, a rigorous application of deconstruction and critical complexity theory can seem rather precarious. Gone, for instance, are the metaphysical certainties of the binary logic of modernity and the impartial viewpoint of the observer. The ethical demand of critical complexity, equally, places a strain on analysis, for no longer can one simply view the world when one is always drawn into the world through that observation. In lieu of attempting to assert a new “theory” or a new order of things through which the complexity of the narrative of the narcotic might be viewed, I have confined this conclusion to the analysis of three propositions: one, concerning the normativity of the narcotic, a second concerning the narcotic’s policing, and a third concerning its regulation. These propositions are derived, on the one hand, from the lessons learnt from the analysis of the past narrative of the narcotic. On the other hand, these propositions now take the central epistemological and ontological tenets of deconstruction and critical complexity theory as real and serious. The areas which these propositions cover is in itself strategic – it is these areas that have most occupied this

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<sup>154</sup> Indeed, Derrida argues that the trace is “the simulacrum of presence” (1981: 24) which haunts the metaphysics of presence when confronted with its own *différance*.

<sup>155</sup> Derrida’s use of field in this instance is interesting. Foucault, in his *Archaeology* (1974: 40), spoke of “fields of dispersion” in which he hypothesises “could one not rather mark out the dispersion of the points of choice, and define prior to any option, to any thematic preference, a field of strategic possibilities?”

study and which have generated the most concern in my mind. This is not to say that this prioritisation is somehow metaphysical. The narrative of the narcotic is complex and contains an infinite amount of examples. Indeed, these propositions should also be taken as examples, as a means of engaging with the complexity of the narrative while at the same time generating an epistemological lens through which that narrative can be studied.

### The First Proposition: the Normativity of the Narcotic

Ethan Nadelmann, who was cited in the previous chapter, argues that “[i]n all of human history, no society has ever been drug free, nor will any be so in the future. Drugs are not going to disappear; the challenge is to mitigate the harm they cause” (2003: 94). This thought is important, for if we *accept* that the narcotic narrative cannot nor will not simply disappear, how *then* do we begin to think seriously the problem of the narcotic? This has always been the guiding question of this study; it is only now, however, that we are in a position to begin answering it. No longer, in other words, can we carry on attempting to completely eliminate the trade in narcotics – indeed it is this very quest that has made the narcotic trade so complex – rather, we need to begin to actively seek out new solutions to the problems presented to us by the trade and discourse itself.

The discursive analysis of the narcotic narrative has revealed six major disruptions. At each point, the normativity of the concept of the narcotic has shifted and changed – sometimes these changes have been catastrophic (as was revealed in chapter two), sometimes these changes have been subtle (as in chapter four). What has always been the case, however, is that these changes, these *events*, have not occurred in isolation *even if during the time they were seen as a radically new development or instantiation of the narcotic narrative*. Moreover, the normativity of the narcotic is not inherent, but is derived from those institutional arrangements that either legitimise or delegitimise it. This is why when cocaine was adopted as a medical miracle at a time when medical science constituted itself as a legitimate regime of truth, cocaine (as a drug) was also legitimated. The drug’s authority, then, was derived from its *interaction and relationship* with the regime of truth that articulated it. Its field of use was justified by the regime of truth within which it was found. As a complex interaction, however, the borders of such a relationship were never closed – a negative feedback loop, which occurred beyond the borders of medical science, created the “fiend” while a positive feedback loop created the medical victim. Both articulations of the



use of cocaine, the former beyond the borders of that system, the latter within it, were a result of that relationship and the authority that the medical discourse garnered for itself vis-à-vis other discourses.

This relationship constituted, in part, the larger system of differences that formalised the epistemological framework whereby such drugs as cocaine could be known. Thus, while doctors were seen as victims of their “experimenting,” an experiment that had simply been carried too far and which was justified *within* the authority of the medical regime, the “dope fiend’s” use of cocaine was seen as illegitimate as it had no justificatory discourse whereby that use could be legitimated. In both instances it is not the substance or drug of cocaine which defined this normativity, but its relationship to the larger regime of truth. The *différance* between the fiend and the victim became normative because of their difference – the latter normatively inferior, that is, illegitimate, because the act had no legitimate justification or authority. The use and abuse of cocaine by the “fiend” could not be articulated through the medical regime, only beyond and (because of the binary logic of western modernity) in opposition to it – this illegitimate consumption was parasitic on the formal system of differences that structured society. Because of this, what was not scientific or rational was “natural” – the Cartesian split became the metaphysical plain upon which the justification for the natural “tendencies” of the “Negro” to use cocaine on their bodies was justified. This *naturalism*, for instance, can be seen as the sovereign discursive justification for difference in an article penned by Dr. Edward H. Williams (1914. Emphasis added), who has already been quoted in the second chapter, in which he argued that,

As far as the thousands who have already formed the habit are concerned, there is little choice in remedies. Once the negro has formed the habit *he is irreclaimable*. The only method to keep him from taking the drug is by imprisoning him. And this is merely palliative treatment, *for he returns inevitably* to the drug habit when released.

In a time when the project of scientific enlightenment was taken seriously, this inversion and contestation of the *telos* of western modernity necessitated the parasitic drug of cocaine’s exclusion.

Foucault has shown repeatedly, madness can and is transformed through its interactions with sovereignty, authority, and the institutions that define it. This is perhaps my strongest claim – just like madness, and in following Derrida (1993: 1), there are no drugs in nature. We *create* madness, just like we *create* the concept of the narcotic. Both are solely a

product of the institutions that define them. Considering this, and perhaps counter-intuitively, it is here then that we must begin if we wish to seek a new epistemological arena within which to deal with the narcotic. Not only will this require a new language, a language that takes as *a priori* the relationship between the narcotic and the institution, but a language and epistemology that is self-reflexive of its own involvement in that relationship, as an observer.

Firstly then, if we wish to analyse the problem of the narcotic we need to deconstruct the normative residue that surrounds and stunts that analysis. While it may be hard, it is my suggestion that we view the narcotic, its trade and distribution as just another complex system, just like the weather, the stock exchange or the various other models that are commonly understood as complex. As Ed Vullimay (2010: xxiv) argues,

A suffering due not least to the fact that narco cartels are corporations like any other, applying the commercial logic and following the same globalised “business models” as the multiplicity of legal enterprises that have wreaked a different kind of havoc along the borderline ... The cartels are not pastiches of multi-national capital – they are pioneers of it, integral to it, and apply its rules and logic (or, rather, lack of rules and logic) to their market-place just as would any other commercial enterprise.

This is *not* a subversive attempt to advance the argument of legalisation – it must be recognised that the legalisation debate, as a discourse, is borne from the binary logic of modernity in which it is the opposite of, yet supplement too, the steadfast discourse of criminalisation. This simply continues the logic of the axioms of the *pharmakon*. A revised epistemological arena must be able to contemplate both axioms, *beyond* the axioms, at once (Derrida 1993: 8). The legalisation debate, then, must be placed in the context of the very discourses that make it a powerful option – legalisation cannot simply be held as the knee-jerk reaction to the pervasiveness and danger of the criminalisation debate.

This also presupposes a fundamental analysis and repositioning of the normative residue of the narcotic – the narcotic’s use in the modern world is as much a need for escape as a political statement about escape itself. For instance, in asking the population to “Just Say No,” those who have been systematically excluded from that system will “Just Say Yes” as a means of relocating and rearticulating what little sovereignty they have. This logic has been seen in this study time and time again. There is a *reason* poor people tend to use more narcotics beyond their supposed “predisposition” – they wish to escape from their condition. If we want to control their use of the narcotic we must *first* change their condition. There is,

simply put, no need for escape when reality is satisfactory. *The use of narcotics is ultimately a search for meaning in a system that has become meaningless. That is the exile and the seduction and the critique.* Thus, while the system of the narcotic may be complex, it is in our grasp to be self-reflexive of the political processes and power that make the narcotic and its use meaningful. Mitigating the damage caused by the narcotic cannot simply focus solely on the narcotic – the relationships, environment, indeed the very lives of the users need to be contemplated at the same time.

The power of the narcotic is a normative power and is constituted by the relationships that make the normativity meaningful. The ultimate paradox of differentiation, with regards to the normativity of the narcotic, is this: at each turn that one attempts to eliminate the narcotic by silencing it, it is given a stronger voice. If the state wishes to deal with the narcotic, it must face the discourse and drug-as-critique head-on. Generally, the starting premise of such an argument is that the current legislation and the economy of difference used to articulate the narcotic is outdated and outmoded. It is because (as shall be dealt with more adequately in the next section) the state has interacted with the narcotic that it has made the trade and discourse more complex. What is needed then is a fundamental re-examination of the discourse, of the institutions that control it, and the state sanctions against it. The trade in the narcotic has become more complex than simply demand and supply, precisely because those models have been used against it. Perhaps then, by bringing the narcotic under the auspices of the state once more, it can be legislated not against but with, its usefulness perhaps becoming apparent once more. Of course, as some have said, being soft on drugs is political suicide. But it is not political suicide to understand that certain institutions define the very normativity that makes the narcotic an instrument of political suicide – changing those institutions slowly, self-reflexively, and with care is, I believe, the only means whereby we might one day control the narcotic. This, however, takes as *a priori* the difficulty of the problem, the task of which is revealed by understanding the narcotic as complex.

### The Second Proposition: the State, the Border, and the Narcotic

There is a hypothesis in the study of narcotic trade routes known as the “hydra effect” (Bertram and Sharpe 1997: 46). Mostly deployed in moments of cynicism, it argues that the international narcotic trade is like a hydra – cutting off one stem or branch simply induces the growth of the trade in other areas. As a model, this hypothesis has its uses, although these

have not been adequately explored. Moreover, reading the hydra effect through the lens of complexity allows one to not only make it more nuanced, but releases its potential as an example of a new understanding of the trade itself. This is especially relevant to the practical policing of the narcotic. Simply put, understanding that the policing of the narcotic trade is the policing of something that is external to the state, and which is conceptualised as a threat to the sovereignty of the state, disperses and makes the trade more complex. It is the state then, the institution and sovereignty of the state, which has made the trade more complex. Numerous examples of this process exist (Pearsons 1991; Beckett 1994; LeoGrande 2000; Benoit 2003; Brown 2007). Indeed, the *Zeitgeist* of present-day narcotic trade analysis almost always takes as *a priori* not only that the war on drugs has failed, but that it has had the paradoxical effect of making the trade infinitely more difficult to police.

From this first hypothesis two conclusions might be drawn. Firstly, so long as the narcotic trade is conceptualised and treated as something external to the state, a paradox of differentiation will emerge in which that trade will *necessarily* become more complex. To assume that the state and its sovereignty are “internal” and that the narcotic trade is “external” creates a solid border, which undermines analyses directed at the trade and indeed the state.<sup>156</sup> The border, through the lens of critical complexity theory, needs to be seen as a form of deferred difference, a porous division that is caught between the *différance* of the state and the narcotic. Secondly, with this knowledge, combined with the conceptual framework of the *pharmakon*, it may be possible to legislate *actively* against the trade. To do so, however, will require the acceptance, firstly, that the narcotic and its trade is not apart from the state but fundamentally involved with and in it – the *pharmakon* is the carnal supplement to the modern conception of sovereignty, as is the trade in arms, ammunition, and indeed, the concept of terrorism. Secondly, any “war” against the trade in narcotics cannot be fought “passively,” but needs to be engaged with actively and directly – the legislation, at its most pragmatic point, needs to be able to adapt to the complexity of the trade, rather than simply legislate *against* it. As such, legislation and indeed justice needs to be seen as *to come*. The epistemological framework offered by critical complexity theory is an attempt to theorise the present in terms of the future.

Thus, as a practical demonstration, one might imagine a sovereign state that has three major points of entry along its borders, points A, B, and C. Because these points, ports for

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<sup>156</sup> The critique of the concept of the border has become a central theme of Critical International Relations. See, for instance R. B. J Walker’s *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (1993) or Didier Bigo and Elspeth Guild’s *Controlling Frontiers: Free Movement Into and Within Europe* (2005).

instance, possesses the necessary infrastructure to make the importation of goods easy and efficient, these points become the target of the complex narcotic trade, in the first instance.<sup>157</sup> The trade is, after all, a commercial enterprise like any other, and as such, will seek out the most efficient and cost effective means of transporting goods. Knowing this, if one is to concentrate and deploy “anti” narcotic patrols and legislation that focuses on these three points, that efficiency and ease will decrease drastically. One may be able to stem the flow of narcotics at these three formal points, but the dispersion and fragmentation of the trade that is a result will make policing the trade even more difficult, for now the narcotic will be crossing the state border at all those points that are *not* A, B, or C, which, by their nature, will be infinitely harder to police. It is, for example, easier to police a harbour than it is to patrol and police a larger stretch of marshland. As a result, while points A, B, and C will be easier to police, that policing will also defer the trade to areas that are necessarily harder to police. This is seen, for instance, in the concentration of efforts at border posts – while these posts are easier to police, that policing disperses the trade in such a way that the whole border becomes a point of entry.<sup>158</sup> The trade’s sensitivity to the relationships, as a complex phenomenon, necessitates this.

How might we use this knowledge effectively? One example, which might at first seem counter-intuitive, can be outlined thus: firstly, it must be recognised that drugs will always be with us; secondly, that the trade in narcotics can never be completely stopped or halted – the system is far too dynamic and sensitive. Knowing this, however, can lead to a more fruitful engagement with the trade. In maritime engineering, pieces of lead, known as sacrificial anodes, are placed on those metal components of a structure that come into contact with the salt-water (the hull and gearbox superstructure, for instance). These anodes, made of a softer metal, corrode first by “sacrificing” themselves to that corrosion, thus saving the larger structure from damage. It is recognised that while corrosion can never be ultimately halted or completely controlled (it is, after all, in and of itself an extremely complex chemical process), these nodes, and their relationship to the larger structure, control and mitigate larger or more extreme corrosion.

The logic of this model might be applied to border controls. Considering that the trade is strengthened and made more complex by policing, by creating a more dynamic and fragmented relationship with the state, this trade, counter-intuitively needs to be left to

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<sup>157</sup> For a harrowing overview of the use of these points, see Roberto Saviano’s *Gomorra: Italy’s Other Mafia* (2008).

<sup>158</sup> For a much more substantive analysis of these difficulties, see Ed Vullimy’s *Amexica: War Along the Borderline* (2010).

strengthen while the trade in weaker areas is regulated. This will have the effect of concentrating the trade in these few nodes. When the trade is at its strongest at these few points, *that is when* these nodes are actively policed – inhibiting the trade by firstly concentrating and then cutting off the strongest routes. These routes firstly, however, need to be cultivated. While it will not “stop” the trade, ultimately, it will undermine the system at its strongest point, and rather than dispersing the trade further, will undermine the system as a whole for a time. Again, this may seem counter-intuitive, but if we take as *a priori* the inability of the state to ultimately stem the flow of drugs, then these “sacrificial anodes” will not cause any more harm to the state, while at the same time, sealing these strong points, will cause much harm to the system of the narcotic trade. Equally, by at first encouraging competition, those small competitors in the illicit trade will be eliminated; concentrating the trade once again makes the system easier as a whole to police. Ultimately this will increase the entropic effect that policing can have on the complex system by undermining it at its strongest, rather than weakest, points. This process is also adaptive, for it makes use not of the state’s strongest points, but the narcotic trade’s. This is important, for it focuses attention on the relationship between the two elements, rather than their opposition, revealing their mutual inclusivity.

A more theoretical contemplation of the narcotic trade begins with an analysis of its relationship to the sovereign state. The narcotic trade, as noted, is supplement to the concept of the state – that meaning, as a concept, the narcotic trade is both external to and situated at the very interior of the state. At one level, this can be explained functionally – the sovereignty of the state is based on the accumulated legitimacy wrought from its citizenship. The state, by maintaining its monopoly on violence, has a duty to protect those citizens, and indeed itself, from any external forces which undermines that monopoly on violence, and ultimately, sovereignty (even if this is done for none other than Machiavellian reasons). The narcotic trade may thus be seen as an external threat. However, equally, the very *raison d’être* of the state is to protect its citizenry from external threats – if there were no external threats, one of the constitutive functions of the state would cease to exist. Therefore, the external threat is supplement to, and indeed implicit in the concept of the state – threats to the state are necessary for the state’s existence, even if the state articulates these threats as undermining its sovereignty. In reality its sovereignty exists *because* of the threat – the threat is the supplement to the sovereignty of the state as a function of its monopoly on violence. This is Agamben’s werewolf.

The narcotic trade, on the other hand, operates far from equilibrium and maintains a memory of its own narrative. It is important to note that at times of increased violence, both between the elements within the trade and between the trade and the state, the system as a whole moves towards further complexity. This is why, for instance, the new drug “war” in Mexico is extremely difficult to interpret – its logic is so complex and constituted by so many actors that an overall view of the trade is at best tentative. The system also has a memory of, or is influenced by, the past narrative. Moreover, the complexity of the interactions of the many actors of the present trade has resulted not only in increased violence, but a much more dispersed network of trade routes competing against each other (which is often the root cause of the violence). Because of the fragility of the trade and because of its sensitivity to the initial conditions of its inception, the trade is not predictable in any great way. It is for this reason that past models of the trade will be ineffective in controlling the modern trade – what is needed is an analysis of the present “Amexica” conflict on its own terms, and not the simple application of previous models to the violence (see Vulliamy 2010 for a further discussion). To re-formulate the predictability of the trade would require, then, both an understanding of the relationships between the actors *within* the system and also that system’s interaction with other systems.

Finally, it must be noted that these relationships will change over time. On the one hand, this makes the trade more difficult to understand. On the other, however, it allows for analyses to interact with that change, and suggest and provide new counter-measures that may prove more effective. What is needed, then, is an epistemology that is not only sensitive to the conditions of the complex system, but that is able to change with it. While this study is tentative in its exploration of the trade and its epistemology, it is hoped that future studies may be able to use the knowledge generated here as a foundation, a means upon which a new epistemology can be further expanded. That knowledge, however, is contingent and must be sensitive to its own observational platform. Perhaps the most valuable element in the “fight” against the narcotic is information itself. Equally, however, it must always be remembered that the angle from which one wishes to view the complex system will limit the observations and ultimately, the responses that can be thought possible. What is needed, then, is a broad analysis that is constituted by highly focused engagements with the trade at a local level. What follows is the final proposition that deals with the complex narrative of the narcotic and justice. As noted in previous chapters, medicalisation and criminalisation, as institutions, have deployed a specific biopolitical logic that has made the narcotic user into the

contemporary terrorist. What is needed then is an analysis of the *raison d'état* that is so focused on the fear of the narco-terrorist.

### The Third Proposition: the *Aporia* of Justice and the Narcotic Narrative

The shortcomings of both the discourses of medicalisation and criminalisation have been extensively analysed in previous chapters. In each I have also argued that as separate discourses they do not escape, but rather rely on and enforce the sacrificial nature of the narcotic narrative. I have also shown that while each discursive regime may have different effects and consequences on society, the logic by which they are deployed is the same – they are both, ultimately, a means of creating *différance* between what is considered “legitimate” society and the (illegitimate) narrative of the narcotic. This is a function of the sacrificial invention and iteration of the narcotic narrative. Consequently it is also this logic that makes both strategies so problematic.

The regime of medicalisation, on the one hand, allows the user of the narcotic to be re-appropriated back into society so long as they can and are willing to meet certain conditions; they are required, for instance, to not only renounce the narcotic and their use of it, but to perform an act of exomogenesis on themselves, self-sacrificing their body in the name of their mind. This is ultimately a function of the guiding Cartesian metaphysics of western modernity. Further examples have also been mentioned. The privatisation of the medical regime, for instance, introduces an economic border into the system, allowing only those who can afford to confess in the correct manner to be allowed back into society. This creates, for example, a chasm between the private medical clinic and the government run addiction centre – the former allowing a complete confession, the latter, in more instances than not, continuing the *différance* that is engendered by the exile of the narcotic, seen paradigmatically in the continued demonization that the addict must face. Both paths, however, are intensely biopolitical, drawing in and marking the addict’s body with the power and sovereignty of the state in the name of the state.

Criminalisation, on the other hand, removes the user and addict from society, placing them beyond the borders of what is considered normal and legitimate society through the various justificatory strategies that have been analysed in the previous chapter – strategies such as sexual deviancy and criminal tendencies being but two. Accordingly, in the narcotic narrative’s more Foucauldian moments, it is indeed true that the drug user is the modern



social leper. This is not to deny that these presupposed criminal acts and attitudes can and do occur, nor that these people are “blameless” for various illegal actions that have and are committed in the name of the narcotic. Rather, I have attempted to mount a critique of the authority of such statements, displacing their unquestioning ontological status and virtue, in an attempt to show that these statements are *authorised* as metaphysically true vis-à-vis their relationship to the state and the narcotic. The narcotic user *becomes* criminal, not *is* necessarily and automatically criminal, even if that presupposition is powerful. As recent events have shown, it is only now that the epistemological status of the drug has begun to be questioned, or indeed *can* be questioned, perhaps most obviously in the case of marijuana.

Criminalisation is, however, still the preponderant discourse in the “anti” narcotic crusade – not only does a factual analysis of the incarceration of narcotic offenders point to this, but any encounter with “anti” narcotic authorities is almost invariably through the police. It is therefore incumbent on this study to suggest new means and mechanisms that may arise once we understand that this authority can and indeed should be displaced. While this is not an analysis of conspiracy stories, it is undeniable that the regime of criminalisation has been used for nefarious ends, whether that is embodied in the thoughts and structures of institutional racism (as seen in the penitentiary system of the U.S.) or in the CIA involvement in various illicit activities (for a further discussion see Webb 1999). What is needed then is a more just interaction between the narcotic narrative and those institutional authorities tasked with its control.

How might we go about displacing the authority of those regimes that have guarded against the narcotic since the inception of the narcotic? Indeed, continuing with this thought, how might we bring *justice*, perhaps for the first time, to the narcotic narrative? While the space offered by this study is inadequate, once again, I would like to make some suggestions that might be derived from the rest of the study. The most important objective to creating a justice of/for the narcotic involves the collapsing of the difference between the narcotic and normal society. As noted countless times, throughout this thesis, the *pharmakon* creates an exile, an exile that is brought to an end through the inclusionary act of the sacrifice of the *pharmakos*. Both of these concepts however, while analytically differentiated in this study, are actually supplementary – there is a difference, but this difference is a result of the oppositional logic of modernity, the exile and the return placed as oppositional movements, acts and logics. However, the trace of the one is embodied in the other; most simply there can be no concept of exile without the concept of return, and vice-versa. Furthermore, and as noted, which axiom (poison/elixir and guilt/innocence) is considered normatively superior is

not a function of the concepts themselves but a function of the institutions that define them. There is, however, no metaphysical justification to this, as critical complexity tells us – the inside and the outside, order and chaos, *both* are *constitutively necessary* for the functioning of the complex system.

As noted, this has been articulated in the various institutional domains that have legitimated or delegitimated the narcotic of cocaine. The *substance* of cocaine did not change in any way between its time as the darling of the medical regime and its time as the powder of the cocaine girl. What changed however, were the actors and institutions that legitimated or delegitimated it as a substance. If the narrative of the narcotic is complex, however, then the trace of both axioms is always conceptually present; what changes is our articulation of the narcotic. Simply put, so long as we continue to see the narcotic narrative as something *different* from society, we may never solve the “problems” it presents to us – we need to begin to see the narrative as a function of western modernity, just like any other.

Collapsing the difference between the narcotic and “legitimate” or legal society would require a fundamental reorientation of our views to *both* these narratives, and would require a revised epistemology which can contemplate both at the same time. While there may be a powerful normative residue that shapes our thoughts when thinking of the narcotic, this is manifest as a product of the narrative’s interaction with the various institutional bodies which articulate it – these articulations are but one among many. That is the locus from where the politics of the narrative of the narcotic arises; it is our *choice* to highlight whatever narrative of the narcotic we think most plausible and just. This applies both to the history of the narcotic and indeed to my own analysis. The narrative of the narcotic is not apart from “us,” something alien from “straight” society, but is supplementary too and complicit in every articulation of legitimate or legal society. The authority of the *différance* that dissects this larger narrative, the narrative that can, ontologically, contemplate both the legitimate and the illegitimate, is constantly iterated at the point where we rely on the demarcation in order to make sense of both elements. Therefore, collapsing the oppositional logic of the elements not only reveals that they are, so to speak, two sides of the same coin, but the difference has been the tool of politics and the product of discursive contestation since its very inception. This revised epistemological understanding of the narrative of the narcotic has very real consequences both for that narrative and for what might be termed “straight” society.

This is not an argument for the introduction of blanket legislation or legalisation, for that is precisely the problem. To argue for legalisation against that of criminalisation simply continues the oppositional structure of the logic of modernity, the logic that has made this

problem apparent in the first place. Equally, it is not really an *argument* to make narcotics legal. And yet, a certain form of regulation may be the only option left open to us. We need laws against narcotics. But we also need those laws to be just, a justice that can never be manifest when it inserts a distance between the narcotic and the law, the sign of the “anti.” This is the *aporia* with which I wish to end, the *aporia* of the justice of the narcotic, a justice that we need, that we want, but cannot manifest in the present.

To do so requires one final revisiting of one of this study’s most central texts. Derrida, in *Force of Law: The “Mystical Foundations” of Authority* (1989), argues that “it turns out that *droit* [law] claims to exercise itself in the name of justice and that justice is required to establish itself in the name of a law that must be ‘enforced.’ Deconstruction always finds itself between these two poles” (959 – 961). To explain this tension, he provides an analysis of three instances of what he has termed “the *aporia* of the rule” (961). It is to these three instances that we must turn, in light of the insights offered by this study’s interpretive/generative analysis, in order to understand just how the exclusion of the narcotic has played protagonist to western modernity. It is only with this analysis of the logic of exclusion in place that we can hope to begin preventing the exclusion. In the final analysis it is this exclusion, I argue, which has prevented us from engaging *justly* with the narcotic. To seek a just epistemological framework within which to deal with the narcotic, then, requires us to understand the tension that has always surrounded western law and the concept of justice itself.

In the first *aporia*, “the *épokhè* and the rule,” (961 – 963, emphasis added) it is Derrida himself who most succinctly sums up the *aporia*, and it is therefore fruitful to quote him at length:

Our common axiom is that to be just or unjust and to exercise justice, I must be free and responsible for my actions, my behaviour, my thought, my decisions. We would not say of a being without freedom, or at least of one without freedom in a given act, that its decision is just or unjust. But this freedom or this decision of the just, if it is one, must follow a law or prescription, a rule. In this sense, in its very autonomy, in its freedom to follow or to give itself laws, it must have the power to be of the calculable or programmable order, for example as an act of fairness. But if the act simply consists of applying a rule, of enacting a program or effecting a calculation, we might say that it is legal, that it conforms to law, and perhaps, *by metaphor*, that it is just, *but would be wrong to say that the decision was just.*

The application of the constitutive premises of the war on drugs to the narcotic narrative is fundamentally unjust; it is the application of a rule born from the narcotic’s sacrificial

invention that in itself was at the moment of that Decision neither just nor unjust. It was, necessarily, *beyond* the law that would retrospectively imagine the act of violence as just, as “metaphor” for the violence’s action. Equally, however, the suggestions contained within this study would also be unjust if they did not come from or where derived through an analysis of the narcotic narrative – the suggestions *must also* “follow a law or prescription, a rule.” There is then a tension between the following of law and the need to break free from that law, to operate simultaneously within and beyond the law.

Ultimately this tension can only be mitigated through the individual handling of each interjection, each contest of the law, in its own individuality – this is what justice or *to do* justice means. To do so, then, requires firstly that we understand the law, that we know from whence the rule was derived, and secondly, that we base our decision as to what constitutes justice in its own individuality. An analysis of the narcotic narrative then must firstly be interpretive, it must know from whence the narrative came. Secondly, however, it must also be generative – it must be able to judge the present situation in light of the past as an individual occurrence. It is for this reason that critical complexity theory was suggested as a revised epistemological lens through which to view the narcotic narrative; it is this epistemology that is *a priori* concerned with a sensitivity to the initial conditions which began the complex system, and secondly, with the *a priori* focus on the relationships between objects, rather than the objects themselves. To understand those relationships however, we must understand the discourses. It is for this reason that this study, in its quest for a revised epistemology and (hopefully) a new just interaction with the narcotic narrative, has maintained the form it has.

Derrida’s second articulation of this *aporia*, “the ghost of the undecidable” (963 – 967, original emphasis) reveals the same logic as the previous *aporia*, but highlights the difficulty of the act of a just judgement itself. In his words (963),

Justice, as law, is never exercised without a decision that *cuts*, that divides. This decision does not simply consist in its final form, for example a penal sanction, equitable or not, in the order of proportional or distributive justice. It begins, it ought to being, by right or in principle, within initiative of learning, reading, understanding, interpreting the rule, and even calculating. For if the calculation is calculation, the decision to calculate is not of the order of the calculable and must not be.

In order for a decision to be just it must necessarily be fraught with danger, it must necessarily be undecidable and yet also have to be decided. This is the feeling of *aporia* that

justice must necessarily invoke in our decisions for those decisions to be just; one must be *torn* between the two poles minimally constitutive of the decision. It is here that discourse itself becomes powerful; if the fear and loathing of the addict, as a function of the narcotic narrative, *already* assumes the addict to be guilty (because of the very narrative that imagines them as an addict) then the decision will never be fraught with danger. Their guilt, in other words, has already been pre-decided as a function of the normativity of the narcotic (which in itself is a function of the narcotic's historical narrative). Every unjust decision with regards to the narcotic and those that interact with it, in this reading, were decided the moment the narcotic was sacrificially invented. It is only when we see this injustice in light of such a lengthy historical narrative that we can appreciate just how unjust it is to judge in light of the normativity of the narcotic. It is for this reason, then, that we must suspend judgement at the moment we judge – we must be aware of, and yet also critique the logic and narrative that has positioned the narcotic as the antithesis to western modernity. Ideally then, and while justice is always *to come*, it is through the advancement of a self-reflexive framework that we can begin to hope to deal with the narcotic in a more just manner. This *does not* mean, however, that we ought to simply and always favourably judge the narcotic, nor simply suspend judgement at every encounter. To do so would simply be to reverse the logic that has condemned the narcotic in the first place. What is needed, then, is a fair and balanced, indeed uniquely individual approach to the judgement of each case, each instantiation of the narcotic. Again, it is my argument that critical complexity theory offers us a unique focal lens through which we can begin this reimagining of the narcotic *beyond* the narrative which has given birth, ultimately, to the failure and injustice of the present war on drugs.

The third and final *aporia*, that of “the urgency that obstructs the horizon of knowledge” (967 – 971) is perhaps the most poignant considering the present undecidability of the war on drugs. As Derrida (967) argues,

But justice, however unrepresentable it may be, doesn't wait. It is that which must not wait. To be direct, simple and brief, let us say this: a just decision is always required immediately, “right away.” It cannot furnish itself with infinite information and the unlimited knowledge of conditions, rules or hypothetical imperatives that could justify it. And even if it did have all that at its disposal, even if it did give itself the time, all the time and all the necessary facts about the matter, the moment of *decision, as such*, always remains a finite moment of urgency and precipitation, since it must not be the consequence or the effect of this theoretical knowledge, of this reflection or this deliberation, since it always marks the interruption of the juridico- or ethico- or politico-cognitive deliberation that precedes it, that must precede it.

The need for justice is one of urgency, of the present. That decision, however, cannot come from the present (for then it would be nothing more than a decision) and yet at the same time cannot come from the past (for then it would be a rule). The just decision must occur *beyond* the law at the same time as it is a function of that law – the performative moment of justice, just like violence, always transcends its own history. It is for this reason that this study can only ever point to the need for a new epistemology, a new justice, with regards to the narcotic narrative. It can never in itself *be* just or offer justice. Considering the mounting critiques against the war on drugs it is at this crossroads that we have the opportunity to pursue, however terse and however difficult, the path *towards* justice. That path, however, must be aware of its own past, aware, ultimately, of how it came into being. Ironically, rather than face the death of the sacrificial supplementarity of the narcotic narrative to western modernity, it is here that it becomes most potent. We can never, then, exorcise the ghost of the origin, but we can reach a position *beyond* this haunting. Being aware of the ghost is however the only way by which we may critique the logic which has made the trace of the ghost so important to the war on drugs; as has been noted before, we can never overthrow the metaphysics of presence which makes the origin forceful, but we can and indeed must nip, at every step, at the heels which makes that logic powerful.

Might then we ever reach a truly just relation or decision with regards to the narcotic narrative? As nihilistic as it might be, I am tempted to say no. *But* that does not mean we cannot or should not continue trying to. Simply giving up, simply consigning endless cycles of addicts to prison is more unjust than attempting, however futile and fraught with danger that search is, to *find* justice. Justice will always be *to come*, but only if we actively seek it. While we cannot escape the performativity of justice, we can critique that performance, and that, ultimately, has been the *raison d'être* of this study. Critical complexity theory, as a new and self-reflexive focal lens through which to critique the narcotic narrative is but one such avenue of critique, but one that this study has thought to contain the tools for the search for a new form of justice. As to whether that search will be fruitful or not is beyond the realm of this study, but we must begin somewhere. It is for that reason that since the very first word, this study has been concerned with finding a new vantage point, a new existence, for the narcotic. It is also for this reason that this thesis has remained philosophical in its outlook and strategies – to truly appreciate the power and meaning of the above *aporia* necessarily limits one to attempting to provide a more just account of the path which the narcotic has travelled.

## End Note

The irony of doing this work has not escaped me; in writing this thesis I have displayed all the same emotional and physical responses that determines the psychologist's definition of addiction. And yet this addiction has been legitimate, productive, rational – its legitimacy is not wrought from the knowledge contained herein itself, but because of the type of knowledge it is. Even more ironic is that this thesis, in its physical form, will most likely be left to gather dust on the shelves of some library while the war on drugs rages on outside. Perhaps it is safer that way. Ultimately, I am left knowing that I do not have the answers to the problem presented to us by the narcotic. But I do know, and indeed hope I have shown, just why those problems are so very difficult. In these final moments then, I am left with the exact logic that Socrates was so famous for, and which ultimately caused his death. Again, it is ironic that the ancient past haunts the very latest research conducted on the narcotic narrative.

How does one conclude the story of the narcotic? How do I, as the author, lay to rest this addiction that has enthralled my every waking moment for the last four years? The short answer is I cannot. We cannot. The narcotic, the origin, has not yet been laid to rest. Indeed, in drawing to a close this study, by relinquishing the past, I cannot help but be overwhelmed by the future. There is, simply put, still much to do.

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