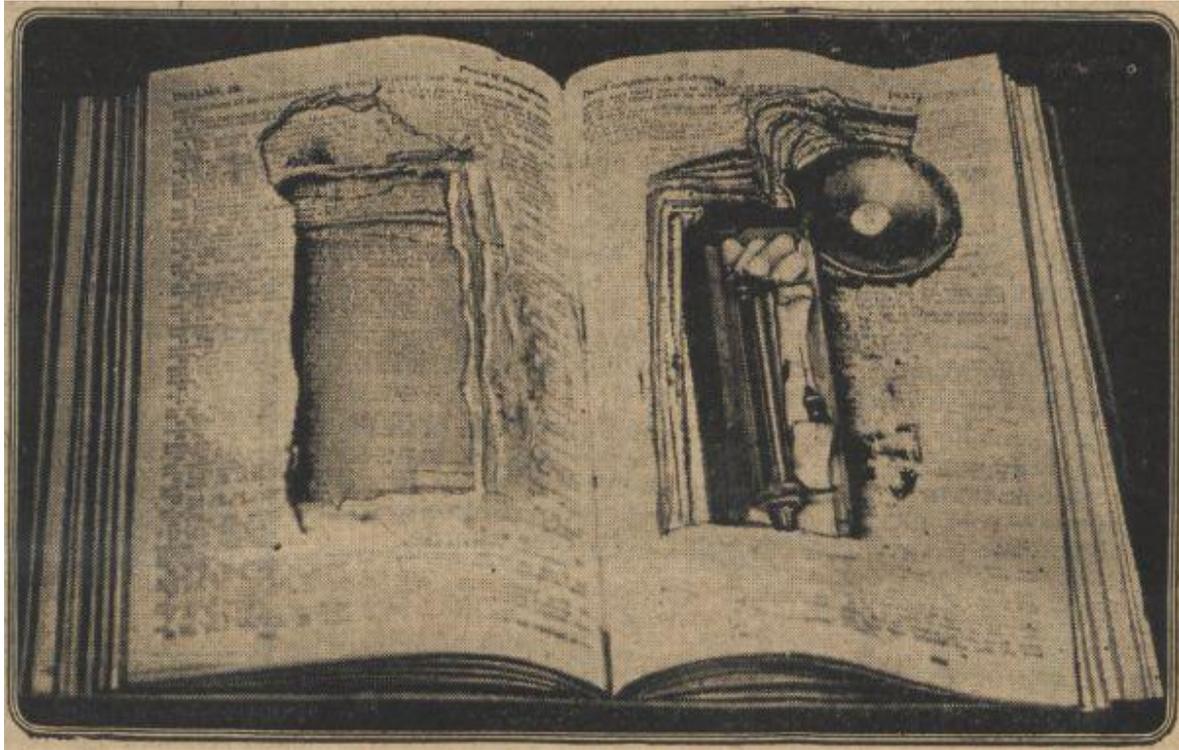


From Social Problems to Fashionable Scenes:



Drugs, Power, and Modernity in the Netherlands since the
Early Modern Age

MA Thesis
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August 4th 2015
Cultural History
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Contents

List of figures.....	3
Introduction	4
Outline, method , and sources	5
Historiography	6
Chapter 1: Drugs and Moderniy	8
Methodology.....	8
Colonialism.....	10
The rise of the bourgeoisie.....	13
Secularisation.....	15
Conclsusion	16
Chapter 2:Drugs as a Bio-Political Tool	18
Chapter 3: Drugs Against the Grain	24
Opium	25
Bohemian drug fashions.....	28
Psychedelics and counter-culture	32
Heroin.....	36
Conclusion.....	39
Chapter 4: Morphine and Cocaine.....	41
The archive and the use of newspapers as a historical source.....	42
Quantitative overview	43
Article analysis	48
Turn-of-the-century ‘morphinists’ and ‘cocainists’	49
Interbellum drug fears	52
Fictional Representations.....	57
Morphine in turn-of-the-century Dutch literature	58
Twentieth-century sensationalism and moralism in art.....	60
Conclusion.....	65
Bibliography.....	67
Appendix – Primary Sources	71

List of figures

1 Frontispiece to Dufour's Treatise, picturing an Arab, Chinese, and Amerindian figure drinking their native beverage. -----	12
2. "Morphine" and "morphine" in the Delpher archive-----	44
3. "Cocaine" and "cocaïne" in the Delpher archive-----	44
4. Frequency of articles with at least one type of addiction-related keyword -----	45
5. "Elixir Virenque", a panacea containing cocaine, pepsin, and diastase. <i>Java-bode</i> , 20-09-1892. http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010293703:mpeg21:a0016 -----	47
6. Advertisement for a luxurious detox treatment in a German castle, <i>Nieuws van den Dag</i> , 29-05-1905 -----	48

Cover Image: Confiscated hollowed-out Bible containing morphine and cocaine, *De Sumatra Post*, 20-08-1928. Delpher Archive <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010360311:mpeg21:a0159>

Introduction

In the roughly three centuries from the Enlightenment through the twentieth century the world changed drastically. Ever-improving transport and communication technologies enabled an unprecedented exchange of goods, ideas, and people across the globe. In Europe, the old power of the Church began to make way for the authority of new institutions, such as science and bureaucracy, while nobles and royals slowly lost much of their influence to a rising bourgeoisie. Colonization and migration as well as education and upward mobility blurred political, ethnic, and cultural boundaries, and created brand new social groups. Meanwhile, economic growth and improvements in hygiene and medicine caused population numbers to skyrocket: in just 250 years, the world's population quadrupled from an approximate 600 million in 1700 to 2.4 billion in 1950. By way of comparison, such a fourfold increase had previously taken nearly 2000 years, since 200 BCE (150 million).¹

In this new, immense and intertwined world of change and motion, old systems of power no longer sufficed to maintain control. Whereas previously Church and State had been able to impose their will on relatively homogenous, god-fearing and stable populations, now an increasingly complex patchwork of groups and individuals required more sophisticated forms of control. French historian Michel Foucault has discussed in detail how such modern structures of power developed. One such new mechanism of control is what he called *biopower*, the control of populations and individuals using new techniques facilitated by scientific developments, such as psychiatry, medicine, eugenics, and pedagogy, in order to create docile and productive members of society. The power to “take life or let live” was replaced by the power to “make live or let die”.²

Definition

‘Drugs’ can be understood in a variety of ways, referring to medicine or recreationally used intoxicants, which in term can encompass only ‘hard’ drugs such as cocaine and heroin, or more conventional psychoactive substances like coffee. To avoid confusion, I take ‘drugs’ to mean *all substances that are produced and consumed for their psychoactive properties* (therefore including coffee, tea, alcohol and, arguably, chocolate).

¹ United States Census Bureau. *Historical Estimates of World Population*. Accessed May 18 2015. https://www.census.gov/population/international/data/worldpop/table_history.php

² Michel Foucault, “Society Must be Defended” (Lecture, Collège de France, 17 March 1976), Trans. David Macey, Ed. Mauro Bertani & Alessandro Fontana, 241.

It is no coincidence that this dawn of modernity coincided with the period in which drugs established a major place for themselves in the fabric of human life. The use of psychoactive substances in any past society, from the Vikings to pre-modern Maori to Incas, pales in comparison to the variety and abundance of intoxicants available to modern brains. But what role did drugs play in this process of modernization, in which increasing societal complexity was met with increasingly sophisticated measures of control? Should we see them as a contributor to the chaos, or as a tool which groups, individuals, and rulers have used to deal with the challenges the modern world poses? In other words:

How do the practices of psychoactive drug use, the social identities of those who use drugs, and the (dominant) discourses that are constructed around them interact to shape the meaning of drugs in the modern world?

This research project aims to answer this question by zooming in on the history of intoxicants in the Netherlands, a country which is not only famous today for its lenient drug policy but which also played a major role in the early production and distribution of psychoactive commodities such as tobacco, cocaine, and opium. Like elsewhere in the world, drugs in the Netherlands went through various phases of cultural sanction, sometimes accepted or even lauded by mainstream society as useful new inventions, sometimes reviled as a source of moral decay.

Power plays an important role in how this process plays out. The main theoretical underpinning of this research project, therefore, is Foucault's concept of modern power, and specifically biopower, since the history of drugs is inextricably connected to the history of living human bodies and the effect they have on these bodies. Foucault's notion of power has justifiably been criticized for disproportionately presenting a top-down process of control, while discounting contrary forces of rebellion, personal agency, and subversion. I therefore adapt Foucault's totalizing model into a dialectic one, in which forces which preserve the status quo, social order, and the power of elites constantly come into contact with forces which threaten or challenge the status quo, whether they be deliberate rebellions or side effects of other historical developments. Drugs provide an excellent 'testing case' for this model since, with their ability to directly alter the neurochemistry of the brain, they can be an extremely potent driving force in human behavior. Drugs can therefore be both a powerful tool in top-down control *and* a formidable subversive agent.

Outline, method, and sources

In the first chapter, I develop this theoretical model in greater detail and apply it to the early phases of the intertwined arrival of the global drug network and the modern world: the early

modern period (roughly 1500 to 1850) and the role that drugs played in the mayor historical developments that took place in this era. In the second and third chapters, I examine two different sides of drugs in the modern period since the nineteenth century: their use as a tool of social control, and their subversive potential and discursive reactions to this potential. In chapter four, finally, I zoom in on cocaine and morphine (ab)use in the early twentieth century in the Netherlands and the way these drug practices and the dominant social discourse in which they gained meaning fit into the model of social control and challenges thereto that I outline in the preceding chapters.

This research thus takes a *'longue durée'*-approach, incorporating broad theoretical concepts and historical developments, and simultaneously zooming in on more specific phenomena, particularly in the last chapter. The first three chapters will be based on secondary literature; in the fourth chapter I will take advantage of the possibilities the digitalized newspaper archive *Delpher* offers by examining newspaper articles from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that discuss the use of morphine and cocaine. I treat these journalistic reports as contributors to and reflections of dominant societal discourses on these drugs, based on the assumption that newspapers offer a 'window' into the mainstream social, political, and cultural 'life' of a time and place. In addition to journalistic reports, I will also examine the image of the two substances that was constructed in the same period in fictional representations, such as movies, books, and plays.

Historiography

The history of drugs is a booming field. Previously tangential to other forms of scholarship, such as economic history or the history of science and medicine, drugs have in recent decades become a topic of historical examination in their own right. Particularly for France and England, as well as the United States and Germany, a considerable body of literature on the role of drugs in art, politics, and other aspects of culture already exists. For the Netherlands this body of knowledge is far more limited, although there are more and more Dutch scholars working on the history of drugs from various angles. Jos ten Berge, for example, takes an art-historical approach, examining both the role of drugs in art and the ways in which art has represented drug use.³ Toine Pieters and Stephen Snelders take a very different perspective, looking at the history of pharmaceutical drugs

³ An example of the former perspective is his doctoral thesis, *Drugs in de Kunst: van Opium tot LSD* (VU University Amsterdam, 2004); an example of the latter approach is his article "In een Zacht Suizende Extaze: Morfinisme en Morfinomanie in Decadent Parijs, een Iconografie." *De Negentiende Eeuw* 31 (2007).

within the context of psychiatry and medical and non-medical self-medication.⁴ Marcel de Kort has written a more politically oriented history, focusing on the history of the unique drug policies of the Netherlands.⁵ Gemma Blok, finally, takes a social- and cultural-historical approach to the history of addict's care and rehabilitation in the Netherlands since the nineteenth century.⁶ No large-scale historical examination of the role of drugs in modernity has been undertaken thus far for the Netherlands, however, although David Courtwright's *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World* could be interpreted as an international instance of such a project.⁷

⁴ Toine Pieters and Stephen Snelders, "Psychotropic Drug Use: Between Healing and Enhancing the Mind, *Neuroethics* 2 (2009).

⁵ De Kort, Marcel. *Tussen Patient en Delinquent: Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Drugsbeleid*. Rotterdam: Verloren, 1995.

⁶ Gemma Blok, *Ziek of Zwak: Geschiedenis van de Verslavingszorg in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Nieuwezijds, 2011).

⁷ David Courtwright, *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World*, (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 2002).

Chapter 1:

Drugs and modernity

Methodology

The transformation of 'drugs' from a geographically separated group of psychoactive plants and concoctions rooted in distinct local traditions into an extensive world-wide repository of natural and synthetic intoxicants occurred over the course of just a few hundred years, synchronically with the start of the modern era. Accounts have varied, however, on what exactly constitutes 'modernity', and how its workings should be understood. Traditionally, historiography has often swayed towards one of two metanarratives, either explaining modernity as the accumulative advance of humanity's 'spirit' through a series of periods, movements, and revolutions and at the hands of a select group of 'great men', or as the reflection of changing material circumstances (whether in the Marxist sense of the word or from the perspective of scientific and technological inventions). This began to change in the 1970s with the start of the 'cultural turn', when scholars developed a third way between impersonal 'forces' working akin to a force of nature and the deliberate action of 'great men' by examining the construction of *meaning* in culture – a human act, but one that transcends the individual level. In the work of Michel Foucault, arguably the most influential figure in this turn, the changes taking place in the period generally associated with the rise of modernity (i.e. between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries) primarily came to be seen through the lens of power and knowledge: human behavior that previously had been controlled through the force of authority, rules, and morality, in modernity became the object of (scientific) scrutiny and advanced (technological) means of control. Drugs, in this perspective, can be seen as one such – distinctively modern – 'tool' in the construction of power, as shall become clear in the second chapter.

To view drugs in the modern age solely as a tool for controlling populations, however, would be a huge discredit to the vast variety of uses and meanings intoxicants have taken on in the past 400-or-so years, and to the wealth of human activity that has taken place around them. Indeed, the 'Foucauldian' approach of examining power structures and 'discourses' has been attacked in recent decades for offering a one-sided and totalizing view of impersonal and immaterial forces working over a virtually powerless population, while neglecting the influence of the material world and the actions of people 'on the ground'. Thus in recent years, both more 'personal' and more 'material' approaches to historiography have emerged. An example of such a trend is the recent surge of

scholarly attention to oral history, as is the new methodology of praxiography, which focuses on the role of material and bodily practices in the construction of knowledge and meaning.⁸ The latter approach offers promising perspectives with regards to drugs, whose use is both an incontestably material and highly personal, embodied practice. A challenge that these new approaches pose, however, is reconciling their small, intimate scale with a larger-than-life phenomenon taking place over a prolonged period of time, such as modernity.

In examining the role of drugs in the birth of the modern world, I therefore propose a methodology that combines elements of Foucauldian discourse analysis and praxiography, acknowledging the power of cultural discourses (e.g. 'modern science') but with two important modifications: firstly, I reject the dichotomy between material practices and immaterial discourses, and instead propose to approach practice as a speech act contributing to meaning, and discourse as a practice that affects the material world. Secondly, I complicate the power relationship inherent in modern discourses: rather than conceiving of a totalizing, inescapable web of bourgeois discursive and disciplinary power, I would argue that it is more fruitful to conceive of a web that is full of internal contradictions and conflict, with different 'agents' exerting their influence by offering possibilities and resources as well as challenges. Foucault, in his 'archaeologies' of the clinic, the prison, or 'sexual science' primarily examined *how* these tools of social control developed, whereas asking *why* they did reveals the power of the subversive elements in society (e.g. criminals, oddballs, homosexuals) they were created to regulate, and of the historical developments that rendered the social order vulnerable enough to require such institutions.

In practice, this means a focus on the way people handle and make use of the conditions they live under. Human agency is placed at the center of analysis, along with on one side the *needs and challenges* that motivate this action, and on the other side available *resources and techniques* that facilitate it. Put in economic terms, this approach could be described as a 'supply and demand' model, though to avoid the insinuation that historical developments function according to calculable, predictable laws, it may be better to use the somewhat clunky terms 'needs' and 'resources': people (whether conceived of as groups or individuals) have historically, locally, and personally determined 'needs' (e.g. for a sense of identity or community, or the maintenance of one's social position) and equally historically particular 'resources', which can be both material and immaterial (e.g. technology, ideology, religion, substances etc.). Viewed in this way, the social order (or the bourgeois elite often associated with this order in modern times) becomes just one of many

⁸ Iris Clever and Willemijn Ruberg, "Beyond Cultural History? The Material Turn, Praxiography, and Body History", in *Humanities* 3 (2014), 552-553.

agents making use of available cultural and material resources according to its needs (i.e. preservation of the social order, productive workers, etc.), which are partly the result of challenges posed by other agents using such resources. Drugs provide an interesting perspective in this context, for they can be seen as both a resource (and one that over the course of global modernization became increasingly available to a wide range of people) and, due to their addictive properties, as a 'need'.

An advantage of this model is that it allows for both historical specificity and continuity, and can help explain local exceptions to general patterns. Furthermore, it acknowledges the agency of groups, practices, and individuals that may not be dominant, but that nonetheless give shape to the web of meanings, practices, and institutions of a culture. A limitation, however, is that in practice it is much easier to write a 'needs and resources'-based history from the perspective of dominant social groups than more marginalized groups, since the majority of available (written) sources come from the former: the drives and motivations of eighteenth-century illiterate workers, of slaves, or of children, to name a few examples, are difficult to uncover, so their discernable agency may often be limited to the reflections of their actions in the reactions of hegemonic groups and institutions. Another drawback is that oversimplification is nearly inevitable, since it is impossible to give a comprehensive account of all the motivations, needs, and resources relevant to a specific phenomenon, and since offering a coherent narrative requires arbitrary distinctions between social groups which are then treated as unitary agents. These limitations aside, a major advantage of this approach is that it allows for an explanation of large historical developments without losing sight of either material conditions or human agency. Below, I will demonstrate how this can work for the role of drugs in modernity, through the examples of three quintessentially 'modern' phenomena: colonialism, the rise of the bourgeoisie, and secularisation.

Colonialism

One of the most obvious transformations to have taken place in the world since 1500 has been the increasing global dominance of Europeans and their descendants, to the point where 'modernization' is often used synonymously with 'westernization' for non-western parts of the world. Crucial to this process, often designated through the terms 'colonialism' and 'imperialism', was the growth of European-dominated commercial activity, which differed from earlier transnational trade in a significant way: where the Islamic world, which had been the cultural, geographical, and commercial center of the medieval world, had primarily dominated in the exchange, transfer, and distribution of tradeable goods, now Europeans also took control of the

world-wide *production* of new commodities. Some of the most important of these commodities were what we would now call ‘soft drugs’: coffee, tea, tobacco, and chocolate. Of these, tobacco was likely the first Europeans came in contact with – Columbus and his crew were introduced to ‘cigars’ by members of the Tainos tribe when they first arrived on what is now Cuba in 1492⁹ – and along with its fellow ‘New World crop’ cocoa was also the first to undergo the process of what economic historian Jordan Goodman calls ‘Europeanization’, in which bartering with indigenous producers was replaced by the colonial cultivation of the crops by European settlers (and later African slaves).¹⁰ Coffee followed a different trajectory, as it had been part of the African and Middle-Eastern trade network since the fifteenth century, and only reached Europe through Venetian merchants in the seventeenth century.¹¹ Initially, European coffee merchants were dependent on Yemeni oligarchs, until in the early eighteenth century the Dutch began growing it as a colonial crop in Java and Surinam.¹² Tea has an even older history than coffee, with the earliest records of its consumption as a medicinal beverage dating from the fourth century in China.¹³ Although the Dutch East Indian Trading Company began importing tea in the seventeenth century,¹⁴ the Chinese retained complete control of its production until the nineteenth century, when information on how to grow the crop spread to the Dutch and British¹⁵ who began cultivation respectively in Java (1830s) and India and Ceylon (1850).¹⁶ All these ‘cash crops’ would form a huge impetus to Western-European economies, with domestic consumption, tax revenue for states, and the re-export to the European hinterland all bringing in astronomical amounts of cash. Furthermore, their production can be seen as a major driving force behind the appropriation of land throughout the world by Europeans and subsequent territorial control over what would become vast overseas empires.

⁹ Sander L. Gilman and Zhou Xun, “Introduction,” *Smoke: A Global History of Smoking* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 9.

¹⁰ Jordan Goodman, *Excitania: Or, How Enlightenment Europe Took to Soft Drugs*,” in *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology*, eds Jordan Goodman, Paul Lovejoy, and Andrew Sherratt (London/New York: Routledge, 1995), 129.

¹¹ Rudolph Matthee, “Exotic Substances: the Introduction and Global Spread of Tobacco, Coffee, Cocoa, Tea, and Distilled Liquor, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Drugs and Narcotics in History*, eds Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 29.

¹² Goodman 130.

¹³ David Courtwright, *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World*, (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 22.

¹⁴ John H. Weisburger and James Comer, “Chapter III.11: Tea”, *The Cambridge World History of Food*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 714.

¹⁵ Goodman 130.

¹⁶ Goodman 130-131.

Goodman describes how Western Europeans also appropriated the 'new' substances in a cultural sense. They developed new modes of consumption, such as snuff tobacco and coffee drunk with milk and sugar, to fit within its existing cultural framework and new 'modern' cultural contexts. Simultaneously, the exotic connotations of coffee, tea, and chocolate proved to be highly useful symbolic resources in the formation of Europe's self-image as a conqueror and new center of the world, where the earth's riches came together. Examples of such visual appropriations are the cover image of Sylvestre Dufour's *Traitez du Café, du Thé, et du Chocolate* (pictured below), and the use of imagery such as Native Americans on tobacco packaging and the "Turk's Head" outside coffee houses.



1 Frontispiece to Dufour's Treatise, picturing an Arab, Chinese, and Amerindian figure drinking their native beverage.

In addition to being a motivation for imperialism as a source of wealth and a symbolic resource in creating a discourse of domination, the soft drugs of the early modern period were also used by Europeans as a tool for establishing dominance. David Courtwright demonstrates this point in his book *Consuming Habits: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World*. European colonizers, he argues, both purposely and inadvertently profited greatly from the addictive properties of various intoxicants, at the expense of native populations. Many 'coolies' in East Asia smoked opium to cope with their tough working conditions, and thus simultaneously kept opium revenues up and labour costs down, since they often got into debt with their employers and were thus forced to continue working to pay off their debt (see also chapters 2 and 3).¹⁷ Alcohol, used by Europeans in barter with native

tribes (both as merchandize and as a way of debilitating their trade partner's negotiation skills) devastated Native American communities, while providing white merchants with cheap fur and land.¹⁸ African slavers, furthermore, developed a taste for tobacco and rum and, as a content Portuguese governor observed in 1791, "the more they acquire this taste, the more they will come to the slave markets with what to satisfy their appetite ... One of [our] principal objectives is to attempt to please those with whom we live and from whom we wish to take advantage, making them successively more dependent and passionate for our booze."¹⁹

The rise of the bourgeoisie

Within Europe itself, too, the psychoactive commodities played a major role in key developments, most notably the rise of bourgeois society. As mentioned, coffee, tea, chocolate, and tobacco formed a huge source of revenue for Europeans, and although a considerable portion of this ended up in state hands through taxation, it was primarily the merchant class and those in adjacent professions, rather than the traditional landed elite, who profited from these overseas exploits. In Holland, which only had a relatively small aristocracy to begin with and was heavily involved in overseas trade and exploitation, this contributed to the emergence of what Simon Schama has called a 'pot belly'-shaped society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with a relatively well-off middle class forming the largest and most influential social group.²⁰

Soft drugs provided not only an economic base for this rising social class, but also a cultural context for social climbing. This is primarily the case for coffee and tea, which would take up a central position in the cultivation of *respectability*, in the words of Woodruff Smith "one of the foundations of bourgeois society".²¹ As a ticket to social emulation and recognition, early modern respectability was radically new in that it was, in principle, indifferent to noble birth or ancestry; anyone who displayed appropriate behavior and manners could be respectable, and the concept thus facilitated a considerable increase in social mobility. Coffee and tea, and particularly the coffee houses and tea salons that sprouted up all over Europe in the eighteenth century, formed an important context for the development of respectability, primarily because they provided a new

¹⁸ Ibid., 146-147

¹⁹ Governor Almeida e Vasconcelos, cited in Courtwright, 149-150.

²⁰ Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* (London/New York: Collins, 1987), 174.

²¹ Woodruff D. Smith, "From Coffehouse to Parlour: The Consumption of Coffe, Tea, and Sugar in Nort-Western Erop in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Consuming Habits: Drugs in History and Anthropology*, eds Jordan Goodman, Paul Lovejoy, and Andrew Sherratt (London/New York: Routledge, 1995), 150.

social setting that was both informal and civil. The link between socializing and the consumption of food and beverages was a long-established phenomenon in Europe, but for a long time, virtually the only safe and available beverages were beer and wine, and the only publically accessible locales for common people rowdy taverns, where rising intoxication levels often led to brawls and other forms of ‘uncivil’ behavior.²² Coffee houses, which had entered Europe from Turkey along with its coffee tradition,²³ provided a new public sphere for (upper-) middle-class men – and men only – where the beverage consumed not only did not intoxicate, but even sharpened the mind. Coffee drinking came to be associated with health, moderation, civility, and intellectual activity, and coffee houses became centres of business as well as breeding grounds for Enlightenment thought²⁴. The doctrine of equality that emerged out of this undermined the political and social hegemony of the aristocracy and indeed, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, coffee also became associated with the political revolutions of the rising middle class: both the 1789 attack on the Bastille and the various uprisings across Europe in 1848 were planned in coffee houses, and in France cafés were closed as a precautionary measure any time a revolt was feared to be imminent.²⁵

Tea consumption, meanwhile, developed in a domestic sphere, and here too people who previously would have been excluded from ‘fashionable’ society were now able to cultivate an air of propriety. Tea parlours became a staple of bourgeois households and the daily afternoon tea a ritual through which ‘respectable’ families displayed their social standing.²⁶ Around this practice a new desire for tea tables, chinaware, and other ‘tea paraphernalia’ that could provide further opportunities for social display evolved, and a growing market for luxury goods emerged.²⁷ As tea consumption spread further down the social ladder in the second half of the eighteenth century, so did this new consumer culture, a phenomenon which in recent years has been connected to the start of the industrial revolution by scholars such as Dutch historian Jan de Vries, who has postulated a preceding *industrious revolution*: working- and middle-class households, in order to satisfy their growing demand for luxury consumer goods, increasingly sacrificed leisure time in favour of labour producing marketable goods, thus fueling both the supply and demand of

²²

²³ Steven C. Topik, “Chapter III.4 : Coffee.” *The Cambridge World History of Food*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 642.,

²⁴ Smith, 152-155.

²⁵ Topik 643.

²⁶ Smith, 157-159.

²⁷ Maxime Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-century Britain* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 230-233.

consumer items.²⁸ Tea, in this context, along with other habit-forming substances and status-enhancing luxury goods, was thus both a 'resource', for social elevation and display, and a need that spurred behavior which would change the economic landscape of Western Europe considerably.

Secularisation

A third prominent factor in the process of modernization is secularisation, or the decline in church attendance and subsequent decrease in the social and political influence of religion. Although scholars have recently begun to contest the classic 'secularisation thesis', or the idea that modernization necessarily comes with decreasing levels of religiosity, the fact that the *form* this religiosity took changed dramatically in early modern to modern period remains largely uncontested, as does the notion that 'the Church' as a central authority did lose much of its universal influence over people's lives. Traditional accounts of modernity have often offered the advance of science as an explanation (e.g. Weber's notion of the 'disenchantment' of the world) but 'neurohistorian' Daniel Lord Smail has shown that it is also possible to understand secularisation from the perspective of drugs and other 'psychotropic mechanisms' – mechanisms that work on the chemistry of the brain. In his book *On Deep History and the Brain*, in which he incorporates evolutionary theory and neuroscience into historiography, Smail characterizes the 'long eighteenth century' (roughly 1660-1820) as the 'age of addiction', since Europe in this period was flooded with mood-altering substances and activities, from the soft drugs discussed in this chapter to novels, pornography, and gossip taking place in the new tea rooms and cafes. It was also around this time that the word 'addiction' came to be used as a dependence on something pleasure-inducing such as a psychoactive substance – previously it had been understood as the state of being indentured to another person.²⁹ These 'autotropic mechanisms', mood-altering tools inflicted upon oneself, Smail argues, provided an alternative for the 'teletropic' (i.e. inflicted on someone else) mechanisms that had long been provided by the Church, such as the comfort (i.e. stress-reducing mechanism) of liturgy, or the dopamine impulse from an exciting sermon.³⁰ The 'psychotropic revolution' of the eighteenth century may thus partly account for, as Smail puts it, the process of "de-Christianization, of declining attendance at religious services and confession"³¹ that took place

²⁸ Jan de Vries, "The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution," *The Journal of Economic History* 54 (1994), 255.

²⁹ Daniel Lord Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2008, 183-184.

³⁰ Smail, 172

³¹ Smail, 184, 185.

in this same century, and thus of the diminishing control religious authorities exerted over the masses.

While I would argue that expressing historical developments in neurological and evolutionary terms may pose more limitations than advantages, the notion of religion and intoxicating substances both serving emotional and social needs is a powerful one. Extending Smail's argument to the social function of psychotropic mechanisms, it becomes clear how churches lost their unmatched position as the center for social life in many communities in the long eighteenth century. Where the weekly church attendance had long been the primary opportunity for ordinary people to 'see-and-be-seen', socialize, and gain a sense of community and belonging, coffee and tea provided a new and rivaling context of sociability: one could invite an acquaintance over for tea, or frequent a café to meet like-minded individuals any day of the week, thus making church attendance less of a social necessity.

Conclusion

Drugs played a facilitating role in a series of forces that gave rise to a new, bourgeois, social order: an ideology of egalitarianism that discredited social distinction based on birth, increasing social mobility and access to public spheres of sociability, and a global trade network that provided a new source of wealth. It is noteworthy, however, that these same forces would also provide a challenge to the new male bourgeois social order: increased social mobility, mingling opportunities, and transnational exchange and communication allow for increased social unrest; Enlightenment arguments against tyranny, oppression, and religious persecution made it more difficult to employ traditional modes of control; and notions of universal equality provided a powerful rallying cry for those groups who had not profited from them in the way that bourgeois men had, such as women, non-Europeans exploited through colonialism, and the working classes. The new bourgeois elite thus needed new tools of control and ideological justification to resolve the internal paradoxes of the developments that had reshaped the world in their favour. It is in this context that the emergence of modern techniques of social control starting in the nineteenth century, such as the census, the modern prison system or psychiatry, can be understood, as well as the new discourses that justified racial, sexual, and socio-economic inequality. This is precisely the argument George Fredrickson makes in his book *Racism: A Short History*: while the atrocities committed at the hands of Europeans against black slaves and Asian and American natives in the initial stages of commercial expansion likely occurred within a context of religious justification (e.g. the only way to save the souls of Africans is to enslave them), folk prejudice, and unscrupulous economic

opportunism,³² white supremacy as an internally coherent intellectual system did not develop until *after* ideals of universal human equality had been espoused by the Enlightenment, and a need arose to exempt non-whites from this new absolute moral imperative of human treatment. Modern science, and particularly evolutionary theory, provided a useful tool in the creation of scientific racism at the end of the nineteenth century, thus enabling the dehumanization of black and brown people, just as it provided an authoritative ‘proof’ of women’s inferiority to men.³³

In this new era of white male bourgeois establishment, drugs would once again play a role as a tool for challenging the social order, while simultaneously also fitting in the newly emerging structures of social control. The following chapters will address these two sides of psychoactive substances in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, beginning with the latter, the use of drugs as a tool in what Foucault would call *biopower* – the management human life at a demographic and individual level through the use of sophisticated material and immaterial techniques.

³² Ibid, 26-31.

³³ Cynthia Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Gender* (Cambridge MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3-6.

Chapter 2:

Drugs as a Bio-political Tool

Foucault characterized 'biopower' as the power to "make' live and 'let' die", as opposed to the right to "take life or let live" of traditional sovereignty.³⁴ It can also be understood as the 'management' (as opposed to 'ruling') of populations, employing modern (scientific) techniques to create a situation in which the social order is maintained and society runs smoothly and productively. Pharmaceutical drugs, which began their rapid development in the nineteenth century, provided a valuable resource in the construction of this new form of power: without any force or threats of violence, or even the necessity of giving orders, they offered the power to increase workers' productivity, tranquilize the unruly, and, with the rise of modern psychiatry, normalize the abnormal.

David Courtwright has outlined the many ways in which workers throughout history have used psychoactive substances across the world, from opium-smoking Chinese migrant workers to cannabis-smoking peasants in Colombia, to "beer-guzzling printers" in London.³⁵ Using drugs to palliate labour is by no means alien to contemporary western society either, as the ubiquitous consumption of coffee by white-collar workers and growing use of Adderall and other amphetamines among students demonstrate. While none of these drugs were 'administered' by a ruling class in a direct form of power play, they did pose a dual advantage for employers, by enabling workers to make longer days of mind-numbing work and making them reliable employees, since they had to work to be able to afford their habits. Because many workers across the world who smoked or drank or used other substances spent a significant portion of their income on their poison instead of on education, savings, or land accumulation, Courtwright argues, (addictive) drug use has often had the inadvertent side-effect of curbing social mobility.³⁶

A more conscious use of drugs as a disciplining and performance-enhancing tool is the distribution of alcohol and particularly tobacco among soldiers. Cigarettes in particular were seen as an important palliative tool for terrified soldiers, to the point where not just armies themselves, but also humanitarian organisations such as the Red Cross handed millions of them out on the front

³⁴ Michel Foucault, "Society Must be Defended" (Lecture, Collège de France, 17 March 1976), Trans. David Macey, Ed. Mauro Bertani & Alessandro Fontana, 241.

³⁵ David T. Courtwright, *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 136.

³⁶ Courtwright, 138.

during the First World War.³⁷ Regular tobacco distribution, military wisdom taught, kept mutinies at bay, morale high, and made troops easier to discipline.³⁸ Just as cigarettes were proving to be an indispensable tool for coping with the strains of modern warfare, from the late nineteenth century onwards, new pharmaceutical drugs were prescribed on the home front for the strains of modern daily life. Morphine, which emerged on the market in the 1820s and gained popularity after the invention of the hypodermic needle in the 1850s, was prescribed for a variety of ailments, and particularly for women's afflictions ranging from nymphomania³⁹ to hysteria⁴⁰, that quintessentially modern disease affecting the frail nervous system of 'the weaker sex', supposedly unable to cope with the pace and pressure of modern society.⁴¹ Meanwhile, opiate use was emerging as a form of 'soft power' on a micro-level within the household: opium solutions and 'soothing syrups' often based on morphine were used to tranquilize rowdy or restless children throughout the entire nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁴² Although such practises became outlawed with the Opium Act of 1919, various other, more sophisticated drugs were developed over the course of the twentieth century that have served – and still serve – similar purposes, such as dextro-amphetamine (1937) and methylphenidate (i.e. Ritalin, 1960) prescribed for children with ADHD.⁴³

The most striking change towards 'soft power' as a result of drug innovations, however, took place in psychiatric hospitals. Thomas Ban, in his historical analysis of the pharmacotherapy of mental illness, describes how the discovery of morphine, potassium bromide, and chloral hydrate in the second half of the nineteenth century allowed for the abolition of physical restraint in psychiatric facilities: unruly, aggressive, or agitated patients, who previously would have been placed, in the words of the British advocate of non-restraint John Conolly, "in the position of dangerous animals," chained to a wall or locked in a cage-like structure, could now be controlled

³⁷ Ibid., 142.

³⁸ Ibid., 141.

³⁹ Edward Becher and the editors of the Consumer Reports, *Licit and Illicit Drugs, Licit and Illicit Drugs; The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens, and Marijuana - Including Caffeine, Nicotine, and Alcohol* (Boston: Little Brown, 1974), 14

⁴⁰ Virginia Berridge, and Griffith Edwards, *Opium and the People: Opiate use in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Lande, 1981), 17

⁴¹ Laura Briggs, "The Race of Hysteria: 'Overcivilization' and the 'Savage' Woman in Late Nineteenth Century Obstetrics and Gynecology", in *American Quarterly* 52:2 (2000), 247.

⁴² Berridge and Edwards, 98-99.

⁴³ Thomas A. Ban, "Pharmacotherapy of Mental Illness – A Historical Analysis", *Progress in Neuro-Psychopharmacology and Biological Psychiatry* 25.4 (2001), 712.

with nothing but a little injection.⁴⁴ Mental asylums were thus able to transform from tumultuous places of confinement to tranquil, clinical facilities.

Michel Foucault, in his 1961 work *Folie et Dérison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (first published in complete English translation in 2006 as *History of Madness*) challenged the popular interpretation of this change as a moment of 'enlightenment', during which centuries of dark oppression made way for a more 'humane' approach. In fact, Foucault argued, the confinement of the mentally abnormal was itself a product of (early) modernity: before the seventeenth century, Foucault claimed, 'madness' was seen in a much more positive light, as a form of knowledge. While tragic and uncomfortable to behold, the mad were seen as important reminders of the frailty of the world's order and the ever-present threat of chaos, which is why they were frequently depicted in art – particularly in imagery of the apocalypse.⁴⁵ This changed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, following what he termed the 'classical event'. With this moment, which Foucault more or less equates with Descartes' meditations, Europeans adopted a belief in humankind's potential for pure reason, and thus drew a dividing line between Reason and Unreason. Liminal figures such as the mad, physical manifestations of man's capacity for unreason, therefore became unacceptable.⁴⁶ Simultaneously, another form of 'rationalisation' was taking place, in the political sphere. Based on the new 'classical' assertion that humans were capable of shaping the world to their will, new bourgeois and monarchial instruments of social control emerged⁴⁷. The result of these two aspects of the 'classical event' combined was the rapid emergence of institutions of confinement in the heart of European cities, in which all kinds of 'undesirables', such as vagrants, prostitutes, criminals, the poor and, indeed, the mad, were simultaneously excluded from society and placed under its strict control. The primary example Foucault uses for this phenomenon is the Hôpital Général in Paris, which almost immediately after its founding in 1656, housed a staggering 1% of the entire Parisian population⁴⁸

The third and modern phase in the Western construct of madness, for Foucault, was its medicalization, which began at the end of the eighteenth century. In line with a more general trend towards knowledge construction as a method of control, madness became a subject of scientific inquiry, and as such was transformed from a morally contemptible form of behavior to a factual medical condition, a disease. Thus modern psychiatry emerged, and with it a more advanced

⁴⁴ Ban, 710-711

⁴⁵ Jean Khalifa, "Introduction", Michel Foucault, *History of Madness* (New York/London: Routledge, 2006), xvi.

⁴⁶ Ibid., xxi-xxii.

⁴⁷ Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, 49.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 54

method than ever for controlling undesirable behavior. In Foucault's view, the modern positivist view of psychiatry was thus not so much an 'enlightened' move away from earlier inhumane and ignorant practices, but rather an outgrowth of those earlier practices, especially since it was made possible precisely through the early modern methods of confinement, which had turned the insane into an easily accessible object of scientific observation.⁴⁹

I would argue that an equally important role was played by the invention of modern psychopharmaceuticals, since they gave rise to the mental patient not just as an object of scientific knowledge, but also as subject to treatment. The three 'sedative' drugs I mentioned earlier, morphine, potassium bromide, and chloral hydrate, were the first of a long line of psychotropics that would allow psychiatrists to direct the mental states of their patients into more desirable paths. Patients who previously would have been simply 'put away' could now be returned to functioning, contributing members of society. Some forms of mental illness, such as syphilis-induced dementia, actually disappeared almost completely, due to drugs such as penicillin eliminating their cause.⁵⁰ Many of the new drugs invented, however, such as hyoscine (1880), apomorphine, and barbiturates (1910s),⁵¹ mainly served the purpose of alleviating symptoms and normalising behavior.

The 'medical turn' described by Foucault formed part of what the authors of the Dutch study *De Zieke Natie* have termed the 'medicalization' of society. In the second half of the nineteenth century, developments in science and technology accelerated and an expanding body of scientific disciplines began taking a prominent place in society. The practice of medicine professionalized, and subsequently gained greater prestige and influence. Furthermore, the authors argue, public discourse, and especially critiques of the present state of society, also took an increasingly 'medical' tone.⁵² Concerns regarding the moral decay of society and the necessity of elite interference in lower-class lives were more and more frequently expressed in terms of disease and health.⁵³ This trend also had as a consequence that behaviors which previously had been perceived as 'immoral' but not a form of madness now also came to be seen as a form of (mental) illness, and therefore treatable with the pharmaceutical tools of psychiatry. One example is homosexuality, for which

⁴⁹ Khalfa, xv-xvii.

⁵⁰ Ban, 712.

⁵¹ Ibid, 710-711.

⁵² Liesbet Nys, Henk de Smaele, Jo Tollebeek, and Kaat Wils, "Een Medisch Object: Veranderingen in Menswetenschap, Cultuur en Politiek," in *De Zieke Natie: Over de Medicalisering van de Samenleving 1860-1914* (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 2002), 11-14.

⁵³ Ibid., 14.

apomorphine was infamously introduced as a 'cure' in the twentieth century.⁵⁴ Addiction to psychoactive substances, ironically, also came to be seen as a disease that could be treated chemically, and in fact, some of the most notoriously addictive drugs known today were initially introduced as 'cures' for addictions to other substances. In the early years following the discovery of cocaine (1884), for instance, none other than Sigmund Freud praised the drug's potential for curing morphine dependence.⁵⁵ Morphine, in turn, had been hailed a few years earlier as a revolutionary new treatment for opium addiction⁵⁶ and alcoholism.⁵⁷ In the latter case, it was seen not so much as a complete cure but rather as a socially preferable alternative. As the American doctor J.R. Black put it in a 1889 article on the topic: "[Morphine] is less inimical to healthy life than alcohol. It calms in place of exciting the baser passions, and hence is less productive of acts of violence and crime; in short [...] the use of morphine in place of alcohol is but a choice of evils, and by far the lesser."⁵⁸ Today, a similar approach is taken in the case of heroin addiction, where methadone is often distributed as a more 'stable' and manageable alternative to heroin that allows addicts to build up socially acceptable lives and re-integrate into society.⁵⁹

Psychiatry, perhaps more than any other medical branch, demonstrates the ambiguity of medicine and the concept of 'health', with regards to whether it primarily serves the maintenance of the social order by normalising outliers and 'deviants', or rather the patient as an individual – or indeed whether a clear distinction between the two is even possible. This tension becomes particularly clear in the use of psychotropic drugs outside the walls of the mental asylum. Dutch drug historians Toine Pieters and Stephen Snelders, known for their work on the 'career cycles' of psychotropic drugs, describe how new psychoactive drugs in the early twentieth century such as the barbiturates (e.g. Veronal) and benzodiazepines (e.g. Valium) would initially be tested in psychiatric hospitals, after which they would be enthusiastically embraced by the medical community and prescribed by general practitioners and 'extramural' psychiatrists.⁶⁰ Then, as their renown spread, they would increasingly be used as self-medication by people for both medical and

⁵⁴ Michael King and Annie Bartlett, "British psychiatry and homosexuality," *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 175.2 (1999), 109.

⁵⁵ Gemma Blok, *Ziek of Zwak: Geschiedenis van de Verslavingszorg in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Nieuwezijds, 2011), 16.

⁵⁶ Blok, 15.

⁵⁷ Becher et al., *Licit and Illicit Drugs*, 15.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Becher et al., 15.

⁵⁹ Blok, 146.

⁶⁰ Toine Pieters and Stephen Snelders, "From King Kong Pills to Mother's Little Helpers – Career Cycles of Two Families of Psychotropic Drugs: The Barbiturates and Benzodiazepines," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 24.1 (2007): 96

non-medical reasons.⁶¹ Most drugs would then follow what they call a 'Seige cycle', in which initial enthusiasm which makes the drug fashionable is replaced with disappointment and concern as it fails to live up to its expectations and brings undesired side-effects, after which it is often replaced by a newer, more promising substitute, and the cycle continues.⁶² This had as a result that from the late nineteenth century onwards a constant stream of new neuro-pharmaceuticals has emerged on the market, both as medical tools and consumer items. The prominent role of self-medicating users in this process demonstrates that it would be incorrect to present psychiatry as a unilaterally top-down form of control in which psychiatrists through chemical means exert their power over helpless patients. As consumer items, the new drugs that emerged on the market especially after the 'psychopharmacological revolution' of the 1950s⁶³ served a variety of purposes, from simple comfort or convenience (e.g. sleeping pills, 'Mother's Little Helpers') to a form of self-fashioning and self-enhancement through chemical means ('botox for the mind'⁶⁴): new drugs such as Prozac, MDMA, or Adderall offer happiness, energy, emotional stability, or concentration on demand. It is possible to interpret this type of drug use as the emancipation of the psychiatric patient into an assertive consumer employing psychotropic drugs for his or her personal benefit, although from a foucauldian perspective it can also be seen as a highly effective form of 'self-disciplining', in which consumers turn themselves into more productive, efficient, and socially acceptable versions of themselves, having internalized the dominant norms for acceptable mental states. There is, however, a thin line between this auto-disciplinary use of drugs and its exact opposite, as will become clear in the next chapter.

⁶¹ Ibid., 95

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Toine Pieters and Stephen Snelders, "Psychotropic Drug Use: Between Healing and Enhancing the Mind," *Neuroethics* 2 (2009), 66

⁶⁴ Ibid, 71

Chapter 3:

Drugs Against the Grain

Diametrically opposed to the normalizing, medical use of drugs is their recreational use, which in many cases does not produce docile, calm, law-abiding citizens but rather the contrary: whether they are used in a deliberate effort to turn away from polite society or lead to alienation and social disintegration as an inadvertent side-effect, the recreational use of drugs has a powerful tendency to challenge the status quo, accompanied as it is by change, divergent thinking, social upheaval, or simply chaos. It is therefore not surprising that the most ubiquitous criterion for distinguishing between 'licit' and 'illicit' drugs is whether they are used medically or recreationally.

The nature of this challenge to the social order can vary considerably, particularly with regards to the agency of the drug user, and to a large extent this is determined by the way the drug use is perceived and treated by society. This chapter examines two ways in which the meaning of recreational drug use can be constructed: as part of a cultural 'movement' that critiques mainstream society or engenders change, or as a social problem that needs to be addressed and solved in which drug users are not conscious political agents but compulsive elements of degeneration and disintegration who either need to be 'saved' or from whom society needs to be saved. Alcohol is a notorious example of primarily the latter option, especially from the late nineteenth century onwards, when alcoholism increasingly came to be seen as a disease and a wide range of civil initiatives emerged to 'save' alcoholic workers and their families from themselves, as part of the larger bourgeois movement attempting to solve the 'social question'.⁶⁵ By contrast, the coffee drinkers of the revolutionary salons and coffeehouses of the eighteenth century, mentioned in the first chapter, have gone down in history not as a social problem group but as harbingers of progress – although the elites against whom they were rallying, and who famously closed the coffee houses in times of political upheaval, are likely to have had a different view. History is written by the victors, as this example of a bourgeois perspective prevailing over an aristocratic one shows, but there are more factors that determine whether a drug and its use in a specific time is seen as part of an active 'movement' or a 'problem' to be treated, both by contemporaries and in retrospect. This chapter discusses these factors through the lens of several well-known period-specific drug phenomena.

⁶⁵ Gemma Blok, *Ziek of Zwak* 2-3.

Opium

The oldest of narcotic substances forms an interesting example, since its meaning, perception, and treatment has varied considerably depending on historical period, geographical setting, and user group. Traditionally a widely used analgesic and gastrointestinal medicine, the instances of recreational use of opium most relevant to the Dutch context center on Indonesia. As mentioned in chapter 1, opium proved not just a highly profitable commodity for early Dutch colonizers in the Indies, but also a means of establishing a relationship of dependence between addicted and indebted labourers and their employers.⁶⁶ While the East Indian Trading Company was solely preoccupied with the financial gains resulting from its monopoly on opium imports (poppy production within the archipelago was outlawed), when the Dutch government took over control in the colony in 1798 the situation became slightly more complex, as the management of opium users began to play a role. An important source on the development of Dutch colonial opium policies is a 1938 essay by the colonial administrator Willem Phillipus Coolhaas. On the one hand, Coolhaas explained, profits from the trade in opium and levied taxes formed a huge source of income for the Dutch state, while on the other hand the colonial administration took it upon itself to protect the natives from such 'evils' as opium addiction.⁶⁷ This latter concern gained in prominence with the rise of the paternalistic colonial attitude that in the twentieth century would be officially adopted as the 'ethical policy'. For a while, taxation and the maintenance of high prices appeared to be a solution to this double bind, simultaneously 'discouraging' opium consumption among the population and keeping the annual opium-fuelled cash flow steadily growing: the Dutch state, which had a monopoly on importing opium and 'leased' the right to distribute the drug within the archipelago (primarily to Chinese lease-holders), made a profit of 3369 million guilders on opium between 1834 and 1875, constituting approximately 10 per cent of its annual colonial revenue.⁶⁸ Soon, however, Coolhaas argued, this system proved to be impossible to maintain, due to competition from contraband opium smuggled into the Dutch Indies by primarily Chinese merchants and sold at much lower prices than the state-sanctioned drugs.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the colonial administration was facing increasing pressure from critical Dutch citizens to answer its

⁶⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁷ W. Ph. Coolhaas, "De Strijd Tegen Opium en Alcohol in Nederl. Indië" *Mens en Maatschappij* 20 (1944), 79.

⁶⁸ Marcel de Kort, "A Short History of Drugs in the Netherlands," in *Between Prohibition and Legalization: The Dutch Experiment in Drug Policy*, eds. Ed Leuw and Ineke Haen Marshall (Amsterdam/New York: Kugler Publications, 1994), 7.

⁶⁹ Coolhaas, 80.

'duty' to solve the opium problem in the Indies, for which it was, in their eyes, partly responsible.⁷⁰ These challenges combined likely led to a change in policy at the end of the nineteenth century that Coolhaas identified as the shift from *opiumpacht* to *opiumregie* (state opium monopoly). This meant that the entire chain of production and distribution of opium gradually came under state control, pushing the predominantly Chinese merchants who had previously rented the right to sell opium out of the equation.⁷¹ This allowed the government to control not just the import of opium, but also its use, with some districts requiring *opiumschuivers* (as users were called) to register their exact use in order to obtain an opium licence, and others, where this was possible, banning its use altogether.⁷² The fact that under the new system the Dutch state made greater profits than ever before was, according to Coolhaas, an "incidental circumstance."⁷³ In addition to this change in policy the government also began subsidizing a range of missionary and civic initiatives aimed at educating Indonesian natives and curing addicts. This occurred through such means as propaganda booklets, posters, films, and lectures at the hands of the Anti-opium Societies of Batavia and Bandoeng and the Indonesian chapter of the (temperance- and abstinence-focused) International Organisation of Good Templars (IOGT),⁷⁴ as well as the efforts of hospitals such as the missionary hospital Immanuel, which had a special wing dedicated to curing opium addiction.⁷⁵

The discourse on opium in the Dutch East Indies shows remarkable parallels with that on alcohol in the metropole. In both cases the perceived 'problem population' consisted primarily of the working classes (industrial workers in Dutch cities, 'coolies' on Indonesian plantations) and in both cases the substance abuse of these groups had initially been advantageous to employers. Both opium in the Indies and jenever in the Netherlands could help workers get through their long workdays, so plantation and factory owners often turned a blind eye, if they did not actively encourage the use of the substance: where Dutch-Indian plantations often had their own opium den where laborers quickly built up debts,⁷⁶ nineteenth-century workers in Dutch cities were often paid

⁷⁰De Kort, 8. Examples of such critical stances are those voiced in an article in *De Standaard* on 31 July 1891 which claims that "The Netherlands, with regards to its overseas possessions, has a great moral duty to fulfill" (my translation) and in *Algemeen Handelsblad* on 4 March 1901, which contrasts the economic concerns of the state with the moral concerns of "the Dutch people, which desires the curse of opium to be limited as much as possible".

⁷¹ Coolhaas, 81.

⁷² Ibid, 81-82.

⁷³ Ibid, 87.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 89.

⁷⁵ Blok, *Ziek of Zwak*, 13.

⁷⁶ Blok, 11.

their weekly wage at the pub and many, unsurprisingly, spent much of their earnings on alcohol.⁷⁷ In Schiedam, which by the late nineteenth century housed over 400 jenever distilleries, it is often said that workers were paid partly in kind in order to keep them tied to the distillery, leading to alcoholism being pervasive throughout the town.⁷⁸ In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, it became clear that both opium and alcohol addiction posed more problems than advantages, and both came to be phrased in the vocabulary of the ‘social question’ by reformers of the ruling classes. Alcoholism became the *alcoholquaestie*; the problems surrounding opium the *opiumquaestie*. What was new about this discourse was the focus not on the moral depravity of substance abuse, but on the effect it had on the user’s ability to function as a productive member of society. The image of the drunkard unable to provide for his starving family is well-known, but Coolhaas sketches a similar image of the opium addict (who, like the alcoholic, was stereotypically male), going even further by including his reproductive inadequacy:

“Zijn gezin beteekent niets meer voor hem, als kostwinner is hij niets meer waard. Door een andere eigenschap van het opium is hij bij gebruik van veel opium ook niet meer in staat tot het uitoefenen van de normale geslachtsgemeenschap. [...] de opiumschuiver [wordt] in economisch opzicht een waardeloos lid van de maatschappij, een parasiet en [verwaarloost] zijn gezin.”⁷⁹

The image that emerges here is not one of a malicious criminal or sinner but rather an inadequate part of a larger whole, malfunctioning both socially and physically, that needs to be fixed. Responsibility for the user’s miserable lot was placed – partly at least – on circumstances external to him- or herself: in case of the *opiumschuiver* the opportunism of the Dutch and especially the Chinese merchants, and in the case of the alcoholic the miserable circumstances the labouring poor were living under. A final similarity is the treatment offered to these problems on the part of civil society: the medical and educational measures taken against opium abuse in Indonesia described above were even more developed and extensive in the case of alcoholism in the Netherlands, where religious, civic, and labour organizations converged in their fight against the liquid evil. Some organisations, such as the IOGT, were even active in both domains.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Jaap van der Stel, *De Verslavingszorg Voorbij* (Houten: Bohn Stafleu van Loghum, 2010), 36.

⁷⁸ Christine Baart, “Niets is zo lekker als een zachte korenwijn uit Schiedam,” *Trouw* 30 December 2006.

⁷⁹ Translation: “his family now means nothing to him, as a breadwinner he is worthless. Because of another property of opium he is no longer capable, when using large amounts, of normal sexual intercourse. [...] from an economic perspective the opium user becomes a worthless member of society, a parasite, and neglects his family.” 89.

⁸⁰ Blok, 7.

Although there were considerable differences between the *opiumquaestie* en de *alcoholquaestie*, the discursive similarities between the two phenomena show that the power relations in social class and colonialism worked in similar ways in this period (roughly the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century). The dominant discourse reproduced a relationship of dependence between, in the case of opium, the Netherlands and its colonial native subjects and in the case of alcohol, 'civil society' and alcoholic proletarians. The latter, in each case, not only have little voice in the public debate, but also take on a passive role in the substance use itself, which is not presented as a deliberate act but rather as a symptom of a larger problem or a danger to which the user falls victim. No matter how lovers of opium and jenever viewed their habits themselves (and determining this would require an analysis of very different sources beyond the scope of this research), existing socio-economic and colonial power relations ensured that their challenge to the status quo could be treated as a problem that could be managed through such tools of power Foucault's work is famous for: education, medicalization, and regulation through meticulously recorded knowledge of users and their use (as in the opium user registration in the Dutch Indies).

Bohemian drug fashions

A very different picture emerges when examining recreational opium and other drug use in Western Europe in the nineteenth century, a period which John Logan has aptly dubbed the 'Age of Intoxication'.⁸¹ Before 1800 the psychoactive substances that had been used recreationally in Europe had, apart from alcohol, primarily been those that leave the mind relatively clear, such as coffee, tea, and tobacco. Opiate use was widespread but strictly confined to medicine; as Jos ten Berge argues in his extensive study on the relationship between drugs and art, *Drugs in de Kunst: van Opium tot LSD*, its intoxicating properties were unmentionable until the early nineteenth century, when the Romantic movement spurred interest in ways of inducing dream-like and otherworldly states of mind.⁸² Credited with breaking the taboo on using opium for the sheer pleasure of its dream-like effects is the English poet and intellectual Thomas de Quincey, whose *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* was a sensational hit and would be hugely influential on later generations of drug users.⁸³ De Quincey, along with his mentor, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and other

⁸¹ John Frederick Loga, "The Age of Intoxication," *Yale French Studies* 50 (1974), 81-94.

⁸² Jos ten Berge, *Drugs in de Kunst: van Opium tot LSD* Vol. 1 (PhD dissertation, VU University Amsterdam, 2004), 42.

⁸³ Ten Berge, 43.

European users of his time, did not smoke opium as was common practice in Asia, but rather consumed opium droplets in the form of laudanum, a medicinal tincture commonly prescribed for conditions such as headaches, insomnia, and nervousness.⁸⁴ In de Quincey's narrative this well-known solution for everyday problems became a drug equally dangerous as 'exquisitely' pleasurable, that allowed him to enter states of mind he had not experienced since the innocence of his childhood, open new channels of creativity, and escape the artificial manners of everyday life,⁸⁵ but also brought him insufferable pain and misery.⁸⁶

De Quincey would be archetypical for the new group of users who would 'pioneer' in the recreational use of mind-altering substances in Europe: intellectuals, artists, bohemians, and members of the *demi-monde*, many of whom would describe and depict their experiences in literary or pictorial form. The most famous successor of de Quincey is Charles Baudelaire, who in the mid-nineteenth century prolifically described the 'artificial paradises' his contemporaries resorted to in order to escape the *spleen* and *ennui* of modern life.⁸⁷ Particularly well-known is his treatise on hashish (in 'Du Vin et du haschisch', 1851), which in the 1840s had become the center of what is often considered the first major 'drug scene'. In the *Club des Haschischins* in Paris, famously documented by Théophile Gautier, artistically minded, long-bearded members (who included literary lights such as Balzac, Dumas, and Flaubert) would indulge in nights of hedonistic splendour in Orientalist decors.⁸⁸ Despite its profoundly un-clinical manifestation, the origin of this drug scene was scientific: Gautier had initially consumed hashish with a French psychiatrist known as Moreau de Tours, who approached hashish as an inducible form of madness and therefore a way to gain direct insights into mental illness.⁸⁹ Moreau himself became an enthusiastic member of the club, exemplifying how medico-scientific and recreational use of drugs are far from two separate worlds.

The period after 1870 marked a dramatic change in recreational drug use in Europe. First of all, the range and quantity of substances consumed increased sharply, as hash and laudanum were joined by morphine, cocaine, absinth, and ether, and eventually also opium in its smoked form. Although most of these drugs had initially been introduced as a medicine (even absinth was originally drunk as a panacea by soldiers in the Swiss Alps⁹⁰), in the last decades of the nineteenth

⁸⁴ Mike Jay, *High Society: The Central Role of Mind-Altering Drugs in History, Science and Culture* (Toronto: Park Street Press, 2010), 110.

⁸⁵ Ten Berge, 44-45.

⁸⁶ Jay, 112-113.

⁸⁷ Ten Berge, 92.

⁸⁸ Jay, 120.

⁸⁹ Ten Berge, 78.

⁹⁰ Ten Berge, 158.

century they rapidly became 'fashionable' among recreational users, usually following a similar pattern described by Ten Berge:

The drug is cultivated as a marker of exclusivity in relatively small and closed circles. Then word gets out and soon third parties such as journalists, writers, and artists – usually in that order too – make clever use of the rumours to revel in the gossip, sensation, and fantasy, usually thinly veiled behind a façade of journalistic objectivity or moral outrage.⁹¹

Secondly, drug use now increasingly became polemicized and politicized: on the one hand, distinct user groups formed who drew a certain (sub-)cultural identity from their drug use, much more so than had been the case with the Romantic opium users or the *haschischiens* of the 1840s; on the other hand, society outside of these groups became increasingly aware of and hostile to recreational drug use, associating it with excess and immorality.⁹² Furthermore, drugs now became a tool to consciously reject and turn away from bourgeois society, as many artists, intellectuals, and others of bohemian disposition, did.⁹³ Opium smoking, which became popular among Europeans in the 1890s, had a particularly strong counter-cultural *cachet*, as it was one of the few habits, along with hash-eating, that did not originate in Western medicine, but in the West's mysterious antithesis, the Orient. Western-European bohemians, wary of the materialism, medicalization, and suffocating moralism they perceived in Western society, found their perfect source of rebellion and escapism in the opium dens East-Asian migrants had set up in cities like Paris and London in the decades prior⁹⁴ (The Netherlands came a bit late to the scene, with Chinatowns emerging in Rotterdam and Amsterdam only in the 1910s⁹⁵). Soon sumptuous *fumeries* emerged in especially Paris, decorated in full Orientalist fashion with Buddha statues, kimonos, Chinese wallpaper, and with Oriental serving staff, but mostly devoid of Asian clients, who were confined to small, shabby dens. While opium enthusiasts delighted in the exotic, hedonistic mysticism these places offered, it gave rise to unprecedented moral panic in society at large. Medical and moral concerns with addiction combined with racist fears of racial mixing and the physical and moral degeneration of the white race⁹⁶ (opium smoking among whites was seen as leading to 'yellow blood in white veins'⁹⁷) to form a general association between opium and deviant, underground social groups that

⁹¹ My translation. Jos Ten Berge, "In een Zacht Suizende Extaze: Morfinisme en Morfinomanie in Decadent Parijs, een Iconografie," *De Negentiende Eeuw* 31 (2007), 107.

⁹² Ten Berge, *Drugs in de Kunst*, 111.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 191-192.

⁹⁵ De Kort, 13.

⁹⁶ Berridge and Edwards, *Opium and the People*, 199

⁹⁷ Ten Berge, *Drugs in de Kunst*, 187.

formed a threat to society. This association, however, as Ten Berge has pointed out, only contributed to opium's appeal among bohemians and other sub-cultural rebels.⁹⁸ A prolific new literary genre emerged around the opium smoking, often stressing the mysticism and exotic aesthetic of the opium den as well as the fantastical and spiritual effects of the drug on the mind.

What stands out in this form of recreational drug use (i.e. of absinth, hash, morphine, opium, etc.) by the nineteenth-century European *demimonde* is that, while just as alcoholism and opium use by colonial subjects it was seen as a potential threat to the social order, it differed from these two forms of drug use in that it was (and still is, in historical depictions) seen as an active and conscious *movement* critiquing mainstream society by turning away from it. This difference can partly be explained by the fact that many of these European users were artists and writers and as such took up an active place in the discourse on hash, opium, morphine, and other drugs in Europe: rather than merely being spoken and written *about* in newspapers, books, and print publications, users with first-hand experience of the drugs formed some of the primary contributors to these materials and could thus construct themselves as active agents with perceptions, drives, and motivations. Another reason, related to the first, is the social and cultural status of the users: while many artists and bohemians were not necessarily rich, there was a certain cultural prestige attached to them, and some drugs, such as morphine, primarily emerged as a recreational substance among the very wealthy before being emulated in less exclusive circles.⁹⁹ This class privilege not only allowed users of hash, opiates, and other 'luxurious substances' to consume their drugs in socially more accepted ways (e.g. in private clubs and salons rather than in public spaces) but also for their habits to be perceived as a *fashion* and subject to glamorization and fascination from society at large, even – or especially – when mixed with outrage and moral reprehension. While calls for legislation did emerge, resulting in the ban on non-medical use of intoxicating substances in the 1910s (1919 for the Netherlands with the Opium Act¹⁰⁰) these user groups were not subject to the strict monitoring opium addicts in the Dutch Indies experienced, nor the paternalistic rescue campaigns such as those aimed at alcoholics, and it is worth noting that, as Marcel de Kort has pointed out, the small group of drug users that was actually persecuted in the Netherlands after 1919 was usually confined to Chinese opium smokers.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ten Berge, "In een Zacht Suizende Extaze," 107.

¹⁰⁰ De kort, 10.

¹⁰¹ De kort, 13.

Psychedelics and counter-culture

Perhaps the most famous example of drugs being associated with a specific social and cultural movement is the use of psychedelics among youths in the decades following the second world war. It is nearly impossible to speak of the beatniks, hippies, and yippies of the 'long nineteen-sixties', of the 'summer of love', rock 'n roll, and other aspects of the well-documented postwar youth- and counterculture, without mentioning the role of LSD, marijuana, and other (psychedelic) drugs in these developments. In recent years, historical works have started emerging which focus specifically on drugs themselves in this period, of which, for the Netherlands, Gemma Blok is an important contributor. In her book *Ziek of Zwak: De Geschiedenis van de Verslavingszorg in Nederland*, she devotes a section to the rise of drug consumption among youth subcultures and beyond from the 1950s onwards, as well as its reactions in society. What stands out in her narrative is the many similarities with Ten Berge's analysis of late nineteenth-century drug fashions. One is the emergence of drug use in a relatively small and exclusive circle: in the 1950s, Blok writes, a small subculture began to emerge in primarily Amsterdam of existentialist young intellectuals and artists, clad in black in Parisian-nihilist fashion, who frequented jazz clubs where they would encounter hash which had been introduced by American and Surinamese musicians and by American soldiers stationed in West Germany. In addition to weed and hash, some of these young people would also experiment with opiates, amphetamines, ether, and 'tri' (trichloroethylene, a cleaning chemical that before the 1970s was used as an anaesthetic).¹⁰² In the words of Simon Vinkenoog, poet of this generation, they were waging "a kind of guerrilla on society,"¹⁰³ which they rejected.

When, in the 1960s, the popularity of drugs among Dutch youth increased, so did the – often concerned or scandalizing – media coverage of the 'new' phenomenon. Just as had been the case in the late nineteenth century, however, this negative attention only spurred interest among young people looking for ways to rebel.¹⁰⁴ Particularly sensationalized was LSD, which was introduced in 1965 from England,¹⁰⁵ and which became a national and international symbol of the counter-culture of the 'protest generation'. Just as in the 1870s, intoxicants became a way of elevating oneself above the materialist banality of mainstream society, or, as the Provo movement in the

¹⁰² Blok, 146-147

¹⁰³ Quoted in Louis van Gasteren, *Allemaal Rebellen: Amsterdam 1955-1965* (Amsterdam: Tabula, 1984), 38-39.

¹⁰⁴ Blok, 157.

¹⁰⁵ De Kort, 16.

Netherlands called it, *het klootjesvolk*.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, just as had been the case with the hash and opium scenes, the counter-cultural drug trends of the 1960s were cloaked in a fascination with the East as an alternative to Western society. Enthusiasts of eastern spiritualism gathered in Amsterdam's Vondelpark for marijuana-fueled *love-ins*¹⁰⁷ and the city became a popular stopping point on the so-called 'hippie trail'¹⁰⁸ to South Asia towards the end of the decade.¹⁰⁹ However, where a century earlier the subversive appeal of drugs had primarily lain in their association with decadence and lethargy (qualities directly opposing mainstream bourgeois values of thrift and industry) as well as the sheer 'otherness' of the practice, now the drugs' psychochemical effect itself, particularly of LSD, was seen as having a revolutionary potential: by opening the mind to new thought patterns, LSD could 'deprogram the mind', as one user put it,¹¹⁰ or, in Foucauldian terms, counter the disciplining effects of the materialist and moralist society they had grown up in.

This was far from the only difference with the drug fashions of the turn of the century. Whereas the latter had been followed by a period of increasing regulation and legislation, now an opposite development took place. While in the 1950s and early '60s Dutch drug policies were characterized by strict repression, with even small-time possession charges often resulting in prison sentences of several months,¹¹¹ the tide began to turn in the 1960s, eventually resulting in the *de facto* decriminalization of marijuana, known as the *gedoogbeleid*.

A remarkable role in this was played by the growing body of (scientific) experts that emerged in the discourse surrounding drugs. While in the nineteenth century the medical and social sciences were still in their formative stage, by the 1960s sophisticated means of examining, understanding, and therefore regulating groups and individuals in society had developed, and as public attention for drugs increased, drug users became more and more subject to such examination by psychiatrists, sociologists, policy makers, and experts in the emerging rehabilitative care. These discourses, especially from the late 1960s onwards, differed from previous authoritative verdicts of drug users which had traditionally swayed either towards criminalization (whether within a legal or moral framework) or medicalization (in which drug addiction was either seen as a disease or a

¹⁰⁶ Blok, 154.

¹⁰⁷ Blok, 154-155.

¹⁰⁸ Irena Ateljevic, "Hippie Trails", in *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration*, ed. Immanuel Ness (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 1-2.

¹⁰⁹ Blok, 154-155.

¹¹⁰ Herman Cohen, *Drugs Druggebruikers en Drug-scene* (Alphen a.d. Rijn: Samson, 1975), 128.

¹¹¹ Blok, 146.

consequence of a pre-existing pathology¹¹²), which Marcel de Kort identifies as the two most prominent forms of social control.¹¹³ Now, expert analyses of drug use became increasingly sympathetic to marijuana users, presenting them not as fiends, degenerates, or even as ill, but rather as people whose lifestyle choices were determined by their personal, environmental, and generational circumstances, and whose eccentricity might even add something positive to society. An example of such an analysis is a 1972 study by the Foundation for Alcohol- and Drug Research, which describes the typical drug user as follows:

“The drug user is often more active and tolerant with regards to various forms of sexuality, has a more critical, often ‘leftist’ perspective on society, has greater cultural-intellectual curiosity, is less performance-oriented. Drug users also tend to be more ‘neurotic’. However, there are no indications that any of this constitutes an individual or social pathology among drug users. Only a very small minority of drug users is unable to maintain themselves physically, mentally, or socially.”¹¹⁴

Even among those who viewed marijuana as a harmful and potentially dangerous substance, the view emerged that drug use was an unstoppable aspect of the changing times of which young people were the pioneers, and which the older generation could only hope to regulate.¹¹⁵ ‘Soft’ drugs such as marijuana and their predominantly white, young middle-class users thus garnered a considerable amount of social sanction, and even a certain prestige, as benign rebels shaking Dutch society out of its outmoded inertia. The result of this attitude was a general shift towards decriminalization, which began with the toleration of weed smoking in youth centers and night clubs, followed by decreased police action and a higher dismissal rate in court cases as well as an increasing availability of medical care, shelter, and information for users,¹¹⁶ and culminating in the 1976 Revised Opium Act. The new law, which was largely based on the recommendations of a 1968 committee known as the Baan Commission, distinguished between ‘soft drugs’ (weed and hash) and ‘hard drugs’ (e.g. amphetamines, opiates, cocaine). Although the former were not fully legalized –

¹¹² Priscilla Brandon, “Ziek of Schuldig: De Culturele Beeldvorming ten Aanzien van Drugsverslaving,” *Script Historisch Tijdschrift* 29.4 (2014), 7-8.

¹¹³ Marcel de Kort, *Tussen Patient en Delinquent: Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Drugsbeleid* (Rotterdam: Verloren, 1995), 11. De Kort defines ‘social control’ as “the organized reaction to behavior that is viewed as deviant and/or socially problematic by society”(my translation, n11, 291).

¹¹⁴ My translation. Stichting Alcohol- en Drugsonderzoek, *Drugsgebruik in Nederland* (1972), 1. Quoted in Trees Pels, *Verboden Drugs* 14

¹¹⁵ Blok, 161.

¹¹⁶ Blok, 162-163.

this was deemed internationally unfeasible – soft drug users were essentially to be treated on the same level as alcohol and tobacco users, and police efforts were to focus on the latter category.¹¹⁷

Scholars have offered various explanations for the uniquely tolerant position of the Dutch drug policy in relation to other Western countries in this period. Gemma Blok has argued that Dutch counterculture was relatively ‘tame’ when compared to, for example, the extreme-left terrorist strikes in West-Germany, the explosive 1968 student movement in France, or the high-stake anti-war and civil rights activism in the United States, and for this reason incited less repressive reactions than in these countries. Furthermore, Blok writes, the cannabis debate of the 1960s was heavily colored by the still relatively recent trauma of the Nazi occupation, which made for a general wariness of state repression, as exemplified in a 1969 article in defense of hippies by psychiatrist Joost Matthijsen in *De Volkskrant*: “What’s the use, really, of living according to strict rules, when any day the sticklers for propriety can start war and persecution?”¹¹⁸ Moreover, fears of nuclear bombs and general anti-American sentiments as a result of the Vietnam War rendered public opinion more sympathetic to the viewpoint of the Provos and hippies and hostile to the American ‘war on drugs’. A repressive drug policy was thus seen as something external to Dutch culture that was imposed by foreign powers, which is a point on which the Netherlands differs significantly from other countries. In Sweden, for example, Blok writes, not drug restrictions but drugs themselves were viewed as a ‘foreign invasion’ threatening national identity, which led to much stricter policies geared towards eliminating drug use from society altogether.¹¹⁹

Marcel de Kort offers two further explanations. Firstly, he points out, the Netherlands did not have a pre-existing ‘marijuana ideology’ in the way that particularly the United States did. Already before the Second World War, marijuana was stereotypically associated with Mexican-Americans in the US, and fears of the drug merged with fears of violence by this group to form the idea of cannabis as a ‘killer weed’. In the Netherlands, however, weed and hash before the war had been confined to very small and relatively underground groups of jazz musicians and their entourage; the first user group to truly confront mainstream society was made up primarily of highly educated white middle-class youth.¹²⁰ In addition to the absence of a ‘racial panic’ resulting from this, de Kort also cites the process of de-pillarization in Dutch society in the 1960s as a reason for the relatively progressive stance on drugs that emerged. As the traditional division of society into ‘pillars’

¹¹⁷ De Kort, “A Short History of Drugs in the Netherlands”, 19.

¹¹⁸ My translation. Quoted in Blok, 159.

¹¹⁹ Blok, 166.

¹²⁰ De Kort, “Short History” 17-18.

(protestant, catholic, socialist), of which the elites would negotiate political decisions among each other, began to disintegrate, the playing field was opened for new political and social groups to exert their influence, allowing youth counter-culture to take a more central role in political debates than in other countries.¹²¹

Heroin

While marijuana use transformed from a criminal and pathological behavior into a lifestyle choice associated with social change and even progress, the other side of the new drug policy, concerning hard drugs, continued to be characterized by what de Kort calls the 'two-pronged' approach of social control: medicalization and criminalization. The latter was now to be reserved for the supply side of hard drugs: large-scale dealers, traffickers, and pushers.¹²² Medicalization, conversely, was deemed the appropriate response to users, and then only so-called 'problematic users'. As psychologist and drug researcher Herman Cohen put it in *De Volkskrant* in 1969: "One who is "addicted" to opiates is a patient and not a criminal; the hash-smoker is no criminal either, but simply someone who smokes hash."¹²³ These 'problematic users' had received little media attention for much of the 1960s, when the still relatively small numbers of amphetamine and opium users had been vastly overshadowed by the more numerous and mediagenic cannabis- and LSD-users. This changed in 1972, however, when the hippie movement had petered out and a new type of user emerged on Dutch streets: the heroin addict.

Heroin had been virtually absent from the Dutch drug scene until a combination of developments triggered its emergence in Amsterdam in 1972. A supply shortage in the US, caused by the dismantling of the 'French Connection' (which supplied heroin from East Asia through France) and the pressure placed on Mexican and Middle-Eastern poppy farmers to switch crops, and a demand shortage in East-Asia as a result of the departure of American soldiers (an important outlet in the region) after the end of the Vietnam War, both found their solution in Amsterdam as a new distribution hub.¹²⁴ The Zeedijk area, traditionally the center for opium trade in Amsterdam, was suddenly flooded with cheap, high-quality heroin, which soon attracted users from across

¹²¹ Ibid. 18.

¹²² Ibid, 19-20.

¹²³ My translation. Quoted in Blok, 158.

¹²⁴ Studiegroep Stedelijke Revitalisering. *De Zeedijk : Nieuw Elan, Oude Problemen : Samenwerking Tussen Gemeente En Bedrijfsleven Als Wondermiddel* (Amsterdam: Amsterdamse Studievereniging Voor Sociaal-Geografen, 1987), 38.

Europe and the United States.¹²⁵ Simultaneously, opium became virtually unavailable, as the police – often tipped off by the new heroin dealers coming in from Singapore and Hong Kong¹²⁶ – began rounding up the old Chinese opium dealers, and many opium addicts were forced to switch to heroin.¹²⁷ Another group to be affected was the young Surinamese men who would hang out near the top of the Zeedijk and whose marginalized position as new arrivals and racial minorities rendered them ideal targets for heroin dealers – both as clients and intermediary workers.¹²⁸

The public perception of heroin addicts changed considerably over the course of the 1970s and '80s. In the '70s heroin enjoyed a certain romantic status, due to its associations with the rock 'n roll lifestyle, with art and poetry, and with a general cultural rebellion as the ultimate form of alienating oneself from polite society.¹²⁹ By the 1980s, however, the 'junkie' had become a sad figure, an object of pity that formed an eyesore and a nuisance in public space, an image that exacerbated with the coming of AIDS, as well as by the changing demographic make-up of users, who now more and more were 'marginalized individuals' of some sort.¹³⁰ A common term used to describe addicts, even in rehabilitative care facilities, was 'junkie syndrome', referring to a combination of lying and deceit, egocentric behavior, and self-victimization.¹³¹

Heroin was cited by many experts as the key drug in 'problematic drug use', which was defined, in a manner reminiscent of turn-of-the-century views of alcohol and opium addiction, in terms of the user's ability to *function* in society. In the words of Van de Akker and Van Rooy, drug use became problematic when it affected "either someone's physical functioning, or their mental functioning, or their social functioning."¹³² Rehabilitative care, therefore, was primarily geared towards restoring addicts to normal, productive members of society. Just as in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, furthermore, the institutions and organisations aimed at helping addicts that emerged were civil initiatives, not measures taken by the state.¹³³ Blok has identified two main strands of addicts' care that emerged from the 1970s onwards. The first, which she terms the 'traditional' or medical approach, was aimed at fully 'curing' the addict and placed strict

¹²⁵Frank van Gemert and Hans Verbraeck. "VIII. Snacks, Sex, and Smack." *Between Prohibition and Legalization: The Dutch Experiment in Drug Policy*. Ed. Ed Leuw and I. Haen Marshall (Amsterdam: Kugler Publications, 1994), 148-149.

¹²⁶ Studiegroep Stedelijke Revitalisering, 38-39.

¹²⁷ Blok, 183.

¹²⁸ SSR, 39-40.

¹²⁹ Blok, 184.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 217.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 213, 219

¹³² My translation. P. van de Akker and H. Van Rooij. *Sociale en Psychische Achtergronden van het Problematisch Drugsgebruik* (Tilburg: IVA, 1976). Quoted in Pels 8.

¹³³ Blok

demands on users hoping to enroll in a program to kick their habit.¹³⁴ Examples of organizations taking this approach are the Jellinek clinic in Amsterdam and the so-called 'Drug-Free Communities' (DVG's), hierarchically structured and heavily staffed facilities based on an American concept.¹³⁵ Soon, however, these methods attracted criticisms from various angles. One often-voiced critique was that rehab programs such as those offered by Jellinek were too exclusive, catering only to the 'top layer' of addicts who were relatively well-adjusted and willing (and able) to abide by the strict rules and conditions for methadone distribution (e.g. complete cessation of heroin use, daily urine tests, considerable lifestyle changes). The vast majority of users was thus left to fend for themselves, and many, through various illegal attempts at maintaining their expensive habit, ended up in the criminal justice system. Furthermore, many centers, and particularly the DVG's, were criticized for their paternalistic approach and often humiliating disciplinary measures, which former clients and visiting journalists described as a form of 'brainwashing'.¹³⁶ These critiques followed the reasoning of the more general 'anti-psychiatry' movement, which distrusted psychiatry and medicalized approaches to addiction as a bourgeois tool for normalizing deviant individuals.¹³⁷

In response to these criticisms, Blok writes, an 'alternative' form of care emerged in the 1970s, based on the notion that even those unable or unwilling to quit 'cold turkey' were deserving of care and assistance. Based on this 'acceptance model' a series of initiatives emerged that aimed to offer a 'third way' outside of medicalization or criminalization. Key characteristics of this approach were the less restrictive distribution of methadone, health and safety measures such as the distribution of clean needles, and the offering of socio-economic care (e.g. help finding an apartment, work) as a means of establishing a relationship of trust between addicts and care workers and making structural changes in the life of the addict more feasible.¹³⁸ This approach would later become known as 'harm reduction'.¹³⁹

An important driving force (and source of funding) behind the alternative addiction care were Christian organisations, but in addition to this, a role that should not be underestimated is that played by addicts themselves. User organisations such as the Rotterdam-based 'Junkiebond'¹⁴⁰ took an active part in the heroin debate and resisted paternalistic discourses such as that expressed in

¹³⁴ Blok, 196-197.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 188.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 214.

¹³⁷ Blok, 206.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 201-202.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 221.

¹⁴⁰ De Kort, Tussen Patient en Delinquent, 261.

the idea of a 'junkie syndrome', which was often used as a justification for placing rehabilitating addicts under strict control but which users argued was actually a result of such restrictions of freedom. In the 1980s, these organisations also began to express concern over what they perceived to be increasingly harsh policies regarding hard drug users.¹⁴¹ Under pressure from businesses and residents of areas frequented by drug users, police began to crack down on 'bothersome' addicts. A notorious example is the Zeedijk, which by the 1980s was widely regarded as unsafe due to its dominant heroin scene and where, as part of a larger urban renewal program, local authorities took extensive measures to 'sweep clean' the neighborhood.¹⁴² Complaints of police brutality were frequent, as were reports of racial profiling among the local Surinamese community. Indeed, the project took a conspicuously racial tone; an informal term used for the 'renewal' of the Zeedijk area was its 'de-Surinamisation'.¹⁴³ Although forced institutionalization of addicts was illegal under the Dutch constitution, the government did encourage 'creative use' of existing legal options for "pressuring addicts to begin the termination of their drug use".¹⁴⁴ In Amsterdam, as part of the 'project street junks', arrested addicts were offered the choice of prison or treatment in a rehab center.¹⁴⁵ The old 'two-pronged' answer of social control to 'problematic drug users', criminalization and medicalization, despite numerous critiques and alongside alternatives more sympathetic to addicts, was thus still very much alive.

Conclusion

The examples discussed in this chapter illustrate that societal perceptions of and reactions to recreational drug use as a challenge to the social order can sway towards two distinct (though often overlapping) directions: recognition as a movement or lifestyle and identification as a problem that requires intervention. Various factors determine a society's orientation towards one of these two poles, such as the effect and intensity of the drug, larger historical and cultural circumstances ('zeitgeist') and, perhaps most importantly, the demographic make-up of the user group. Small, exclusive groups with a certain amount of cultural, social, or economic capital, such as the artists, intellectuals, and wealthy hedonists who experimented with drugs in the nineteenth century, as well as larger groups whose members take up a central position in mainstream society, such as the white, middle-class youths in 1960s and 1970s counter-culture, are more easily recognized as a

¹⁴¹ Blok, 219.

¹⁴² SSR, 41.

¹⁴³ SSR, 48.

¹⁴⁴ Handelingen Tweede Kamer 1987-1988, quoted in Blok 227.

¹⁴⁵ Blok 227.

movement whose drug use gains meaning not as a symptom of individual pathology or larger societal problems, but as a deliberate criticism of the prevailing culture. Users who are in a more marginalized or subordinated position, however, whether through social class, race, or colonial relations, are more likely to be spoken of as a 'problem' that needs to be 'treated', whether through the criminal justice system, medical or psychiatric care, or education. Differences in crime rates and medical and social problems certainly play a role in this, as drug habits are easier to maintain (and potentially even hide) by the wealthy than by the poor, but image formation is an equally significant factor, as demonstrated by the transformation of the archetypical 'junkie' from romantic outsider to pitiful nuisance, in almost perfect synchronization with the changing socio-economic and racial makeup of the user population. This is an important point to consider when examining 'subversive' rebellions against prevailing power structures: the fact that we recognize these movements as such is often to a large extent thanks to the already privileged position of their contributors in these power structures.

This chapter has covered some of the most famous instances of drug use in the Netherlands and Western Europe in the past 150 years, but leaves a rather large gap between the two major periods under discussion: the first half of the twentieth century. This period witnessed some highly important events in the history of drugs in the Netherlands, such as the first drug legislations and the rise of large-scale consumption of morphine and cocaine, but little has been written on it thus far. It is not immediately obvious whether the use of these substances was primarily subject to a discourse presenting it as a 'movement' or a 'problem', in the way it is for the hippie subculture of the 'opium question'. It is therefore worthwhile to take a closer look at the cultural image formation in mainstream discussions of these drugs in this period in Dutch history.

Chapter 4:

Morphine and Cocaine

On December 2nd, 1885, *Soerabaijisch Handelsblad*, a Dutch-language newspaper based in Java's second largest city Soerabaja, observed a startling trend in its section on European affairs: "countless" Parisian women, of various social standing, were dying of morphine overdoses. "Initially only in vogue among the ladies from the former entourage of empress Eugénie," the article reads, "nowadays morphine enjoys full Parisian citizenship." The author compares the practice of injecting "the lethal poison" to the adders ladies of antiquity used to kill themselves with, but argues that morphine is even worse, since the effect of the former could be undone, while the latter "irrevocably compels lethal repetitions." On the same page, a different segment of the European affairs section enthusiastically reports a new treatment for seasickness, which has recently been tested on several adults and a six year old child, with "miraculous" results, and also offers promising perspectives with regards to cholera treatment. The substance used: cocaine.

Cut to the 1930s, and morphine and cocaine appear side by side on the pages of *Soerabaijisch Handelsblad* again, but this time in a very different context. Countless reports of cocaine and morphine confiscations, arrested dealers, and dismantled smuggling cartels appear, and alarming headlines, reading "Morphine – a scourge of humanity"¹⁴⁶ or "Cocaine, curse of youth"¹⁴⁷ emerge in Dutch and East Indian newspapers alike. These examples suggest that morphine, and especially cocaine, went through considerable changes in use, legislation, and cultural meaning between the 1880s and the 1930s. This chapter examines these changes from the perspective of the framework of socially deviant drug use I have outlined in the previous chapter: how does the public perception of cocaine and morphine that developed in the early twentieth century fit within the categories of drug-related movements and drug-related problems, and how does this compare to the nineteenth century? To answer this question, I will examine the public discourse on morphine and cocaine from three different angles. Firstly, I will conduct a rudimentary quantitative analysis of discussions of morphine and cocaine in Dutch-language newspapers in the period 1870-1940 to establish an overview of general trends and developments through time in the cultural significance of both drugs. Secondly, I will conduct a discourse analysis of selected articles discussing morphine and

¹⁴⁶ W.R. Klein, "De Dokter aan 't Woord. Morfine. Een geesel der menschheid." *Indische Courant*, May 21 1932.

¹⁴⁷ D.H. Wester, "Cocaine, Vloek der jeugd " *De Telegraaf*, 19-07-1930.
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cocaine use and addiction, both those written by doctors and by non-medical journalists. Finally, I will compare the perspective that emerges here with the image that emerges in fictional representations of the two drugs. For the first two angles I use the Delpher archive of the Dutch Royal Library, and for the third a combination of books and a selection of films and plays, the latter two through the lens of advertisements and reviews from the papers of the Delpher archive, since they are otherwise mostly lost in time.

The archive and the use of newspapers as a historical source

Delpher is the online archive of Dutch print publications since the seventeenth century, hosted by the Royal Dutch Library. Its newspaper collection contains over 8 million pages from periodicals from the Netherlands, Surinam, the Dutch Antilles, and the Dutch Indies/Indonesia. For the period 1870-1940, this amounts to between 2633 and 9466 different issues per year. Although this is a considerable data pool, it should not be treated as a complete overview of the Dutch journalistic landscape throughout modern history, since far from all Dutch newspapers ever printed have been digitalized, and the archive's text-recognition software still often misses or misreads words, thus distorting search results. The quantitative analysis I will conduct below should therefore not be treated as 'hard data' but as an observation of general trends. Furthermore, the use of newspapers as a historical source poses limitations in and of itself. As Roberto Franzosi argues in his methodological study on the use of the press in social history, newspaper reports only have limited historical validity due to their bias in reporting some events and not others. While most historians consider it safe to assume that newspapers will not print outright lies, several scholars have pointed out that emphasis and silence in reporting are colored by political motivations. As Franzosi puts it, "newspaper reports may be accepted as data that an event did occur, but the lack of such reports may not be an indication that events did not occur."¹⁴⁸ Employing a Gramscian perspective of cultural hegemony, it is possible to see this biased presentation as reflecting "the intentions, will, and interest of dominant economic groups."¹⁴⁹ For this reason my analysis of newspaper reports on cocaine and morphine will not so much focus on the actual occurrence of drug use (though this inevitably plays a role) as on the discourse presented in the press coverage itself, as a both a

¹⁴⁸ Roberto Franzosi, "The press as a source of socio-historical data: issues in the methodology of data collection from newspapers," *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 20.1 (1987), 7.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

reflection of dominant (i.e. bourgeois) perceptions and preoccupations concerning drug use in Dutch society and a *tool* for shaping these perceptions among the population.

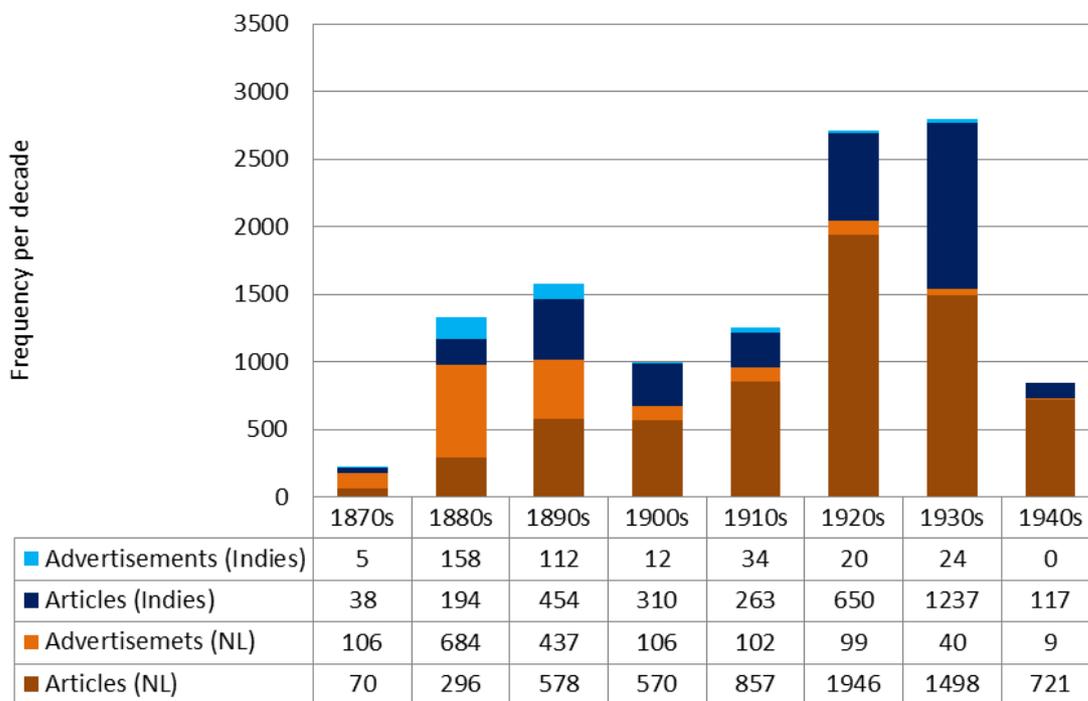
Finally, a note on the use of press from the Dutch Indies is in order. Although the emphasis of my discourse analysis will lie on newspapers circulated in the Netherlands, I would argue that supplementation with colonial newspaper articles is defensible for two reasons. Firstly, upper-class Dutch-Indian society, in the colonial period, though a distinct world of its own, was very much in touch with the culture and society of the ‘motherland’, and Dutch-language newspapers in particular can be seen as a tool in maintaining this cultural connection, and thus as reflective of Dutch values and preoccupations. Secondly, considering that the history of the Dutch Indies forms an important aspect of global and Dutch history with regards to both the use and production of drugs such as cocaine and opiates, Dutch-Indian voices on morphine and cocaine are highly relevant to the present analysis. The third reason is a practical one: because Dutch-Indian newspaper often devoted only one page to European affairs, these reports can be seen as a sort of ‘digest’ filtering out minor news items and covering only larger trends and developments that were considered important, thus leading to more concentrated and historically ‘rich’ articles. Considering the large differences that did exist between Dutch metropolitan and colonial societies, however, it is important to be aware of the geographical origins of the sources discussed.

Quantitative overview

Figure 2 and 3 on the next page present the frequency of morphine and cocaine, respectively, being mentioned per decade in newspaper articles in the Netherlands and the Dutch Indies, differentiated by geographical area of circulation (the Netherlands or Indonesia) and the nature of the piece (article or advertisement). This data was gathered using Delpher’s search engine, which automatically categorizes newspaper segments by type, decade, newspaper, and distribution area. Frequencies were tallied from the combined search results for “morphine” and “morfine” (the two spelling alternatives for morphine in Dutch) and for “cocaine”.

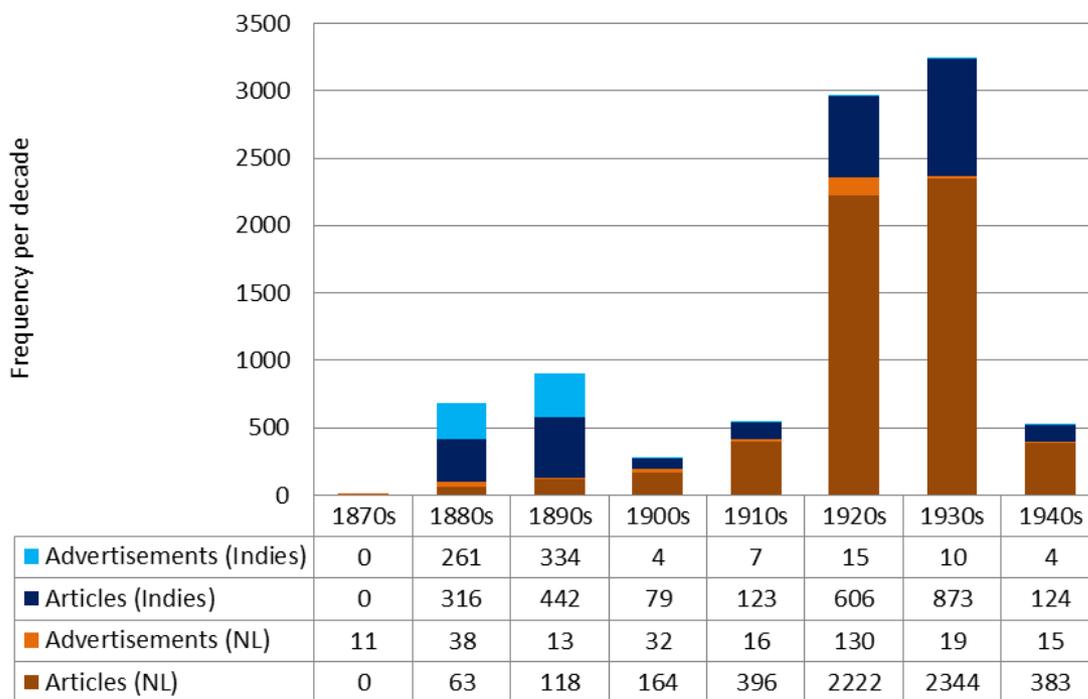
The first thing that stands out from these figures is the overwhelming surge in coverage in the 1920s and 1930s for both morphine and cocaine. This can in part be explained by the greater number of available newspapers in the archive for these decades, as well as by the enactment of the Opium Act in 1919, when the non-medical use, sale, and distribution of both drugs was criminalized and after which their terms can be expected to appear in crime-related news coverage. Indeed, when examining the content of the search results for these decades, the majority of pieces appears to be concerned with criminal activities (i.e. smuggling, dealing,) and their persecution. However, a

Mentions of morphine in Dutch newspapers



2. "Morphine" and "morphine" in the Delpher archive

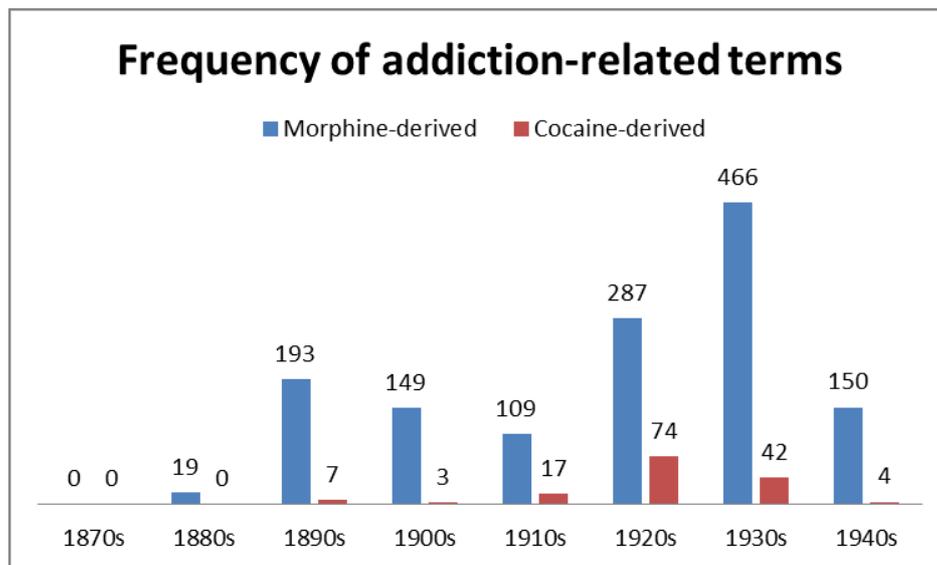
Mentions of cocaine in Dutch newspapers



3. "Cocaine" and "cocaine" in the Delpher archive

Table 1. Frequencies of addiction-related key words over all newspaper segments regardless of type or area of circulation

\\Keyword Decade\\	morfinisme/ morphinisme	morfinist/ morphinist	morfiniste/ morphiniste	Cocaïnisme	Cocaïnist	Cocaïniste	Drankzucht	Alcoholisme	Verslaving
1870s	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	21	5
1880s	11	1	3	0	0	0	49	54	13
1890s	36	42	3	4	2	0	612	879	11
1900s	61	40	21	3	1	0	1430	2354	27
1910s	15	47	19	5	5	0	1105	3035	69
1920s	56	159	34	16	42	4	1124	4212	237
1930s	75	216	63	11	25	0	713	2610	277
1940s	21	70	72	2	1	1	305	760	176



4. Frequency of articles with at least one type of addiction-related keyword

search for ‘addiction-related’ terms, such as the term ‘morphinisme’ for morphine dependence, leads to results, depicted in table 1 and figure 4, which suggest there is more at play. Figure 4 visualizes the result for a search for articles and ads which use at least one ‘morphine’- or ‘cocaine’-derived word pertaining to addicts or addiction (i.e. the masculine/neutral, feminine, and plural forms of “cocaïnist” and the abstract noun “cocaïnisme”). Here too, the 1920s and ‘30s show a considerable increase in frequency, especially so for morphinism, which, contrary to what figures 2 and 3 would predict, featured in newspaper discussions significantly more often than cocainism.¹⁵⁰ The picture becomes especially interesting when the drug figures are compared to terms designating alcoholism. While mentions of morphinism and cocainism pale in comparison to those of “alcoholisme” and its synonym “drankzucht”, the latter both experience a significant drop in the

¹⁵⁰ This does not necessarily mean that cocaine abuse was not a prominent topic of public debate – it may be that the term “cocaïnisme” was simply not a preferred term for the phenomenon, as “morfinisme” was.

1930s. “Verslaving”, the Dutch word for addiction, meanwhile continues its steady growth. This suggests that, just as alcoholism was becoming less of an ‘issue’ in Dutch public consciousness, concerns with addiction in general, and with addictive substances such as morphine and cocaine, were gaining in prominence. Returning to figures 2 and 3, another interesting trend that is observable is that, while newspapers based in the Netherlands predominate in mentions of morphine and of cocaine after 1900, in the late nineteenth century cocaine attracted more print attention in the Dutch Indies. This may be because the 1880s and 1890s were the period in which the Netherlands was beginning to grow coca for export on Java, a move which attracted considerable controversy due to fears from moralists that, like opium, it would take root among the Javanese.¹⁵¹ This, however, did not prevent Java from surpassing the Andean countries as the world’s primary producer of coca, consequently driving cocaine prices down and inciting a global epidemic between the late 1890s and early 1920s.¹⁵² It is salient, therefore, that precisely for this period figure 3 shows a marked silence among particularly East Indian newspapers. During these decades, fervid campaigns for drug legislation were emerging in countries most afflicted by the cocaine epidemic, most notably the United States. The Netherlands, as Marcel de Kort has pointed out, only reluctantly went along with the regulation agreements of the 1910s opium conferences, since it considered them damaging to its economic interests.¹⁵³ It is therefore possible to postulate that, in the place where the most money was being made from cocaine (and to some extent opium and morphine) the moneyed classes, as represented in the newspaper discourse, were not keen to attract any more attention to cocaine than necessary. The surge in discussion in the 1920s and 1930s fits this explanation, since, as mentioned, the vast majority of reports concern illicit activity such as smuggling, which as a form of commerce outside of Dutch control, formed a threat to national drug-related revenue; indeed, during the first international Opium Conference in the Hague, the Dutch delegation referred to smugglers as “our greatest enemies”.¹⁵⁴

A further trend that stands out is the fact that advertising and journalistic reporting seem to follow opposite trajectories, with the incidence of the latter steadily growing and that of the former virtually disappearing after 1900. Ads mentioning cocaine appear to have concentrated in the Dutch Indies, while those referring to morphine appear primarily in Dutch newspapers. A quick look at the contents of the ads, however, reveals another significant difference. While the East

¹⁵¹ Courtwright, *Forces of Habit*, 50.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ 128-130

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

Indian advertisements of the 1880s and 1890s with 'cocaine' in their text predominantly mention the drug in a positive sense as a medical supply and ingredient in healthful and invigorating 'elixirs' (see figure 5), the ads from the Netherlands (and to a lesser extent also from the Dutch Indies) of the same period, primarily mention morphine in a negative sense by expressly stating that the

products they are promoting do *not* contain morphine, comparable to how contemporary ads for dietary items boast about being free from artificial colorants or other additives. An awareness of the potentially harmful nature of morphine was thus emerging earlier than that of cocaine. This also becomes clear when the content of the ads from the 1900s and 1910s is examined: while ads treating 'cocaine' as a pharmaceutical item or topic of commercial interests (e.g. announcements for shareholders of the Dutch Cocaine Factory) still feature prominently alongside new ads offering detox treatments, the announcements with 'morphine' in their text are almost exclusively aimed at addicts hoping to 'substitute' their morphine use or 'detox without coercion' (see figure 6). Starting in the late 1910s, however, a shift in ad content is observable: now morphine and particularly cocaine feature most prominently in announcements for films, plays, books, and even music using the drugs as a theme. I will discuss some of these instances of morphine and cocaine in

entertainment in more detail in the third section of this chapter. From a meta-perspective, however, the changing frequency and content of ads featuring the two drugs already suggest a shift in their



5. "Elixir Virenque", a panacea containing cocaine, pepsin, and diastase. *Java-bode*, 20-09-1892.

cultural meaning – from a useful medicine to a health concern to a dangerous substance and potential source of drama and excitement.



6. Advertisement for a luxurious detox treatment in a German castle, *Nieuws van den Dag*, 29-05-1905

Finally, it may be possible to infer a slight gender difference for the report stats of the two drugs. For morphine, the feminine word 'morfiniste' is used remarkably more often than 'cocainiste', even in proportion to the more gender neutral or masculine words for each drug (i.e. 'morfinisme', 'cocainist'). This may suggest that the typical morphine user was more often presented as female than the typical cocaine user, or that female morphine addicts garnered more media attention than their cocaine-sniffing sisters. However, the sample of cocainism-related mentions is so small that it is impossible to draw any hard conclusions in this domain. In order to determine whether there was a gendered difference between the public perception of the two drugs, as well as the question whether they were talked about in terms of a 'movement' or a 'problem', a qualitative analysis of articles discussing morphine and cocaine use and users is required.

Article analysis

As becomes clear from the quantitative analysis above, the 1920s and 1930s appear to have formed the peak of the social concern and cultural fascination with morphine and cocaine. The following analysis of the discourse used in newspaper discussions of the two drugs will therefore focus on these two decades. However, in order to have a ground for comparison, it may also be helpful to get some idea of the discourses surrounding each substance in prior decades, so I will begin with the late nineteenth century, when the first large-scale (recreational) use of the drugs as well as the social reactions thereto first emerged. To select articles, I use the same search terms in Delpher as in the previous section, and from these select articles that present an opinion or

observation on the use of or addiction to morphine and/or cocaine, excluding advertisements, articles concerning (illicit) dealing and smuggling, and fictional representations.

Turn-of-the-century 'morphinists' and 'cocainists'

The morphine addict of the late nineteenth century had many faces. Originating within the practice of medicine and being administered in a (for lay people) somewhat inaccessible way – with the hypodermic needle – morphine predictably found its first addicts among doctors and nurses. In 1880, *Algemeen Handelsblad* reported a particularly troubling case: the director of a psychiatric hospital had, presumably as a result of his morphine addiction, “turned insane himself”¹⁵⁵ and attacked a patient and medical assistant with a knife. Although ‘morphinism’ was not a widely known phenomenon in the Netherlands yet at this point, the author points out that it was becoming a heated point of discussion in Germany, where physicians were criticized for administering morphine too liberally and irresponsibly. By 1888, morphine addiction was, according to an observer in *Bataviaasch Handelsblad*, a pervasive phenomenon, and not just among doctors and pharmacists. Citing a Parisian doctor named Regnaud, the author describes how morphine had become fashionable among “those who, having nothing to do, kill the time by using morphine, just as others do by drinking or making music. Through morphine they withdraw from their idle and purposeless existence.”¹⁵⁶ Two years later, the *Leeuwarder Courant* stressed that this type of recreational use was primarily a problem among women, and especially unmarried women in high society. A doctor interviewed in the same article, however, stressed that morphine abuse was slowly spreading among the lower classes as well, threatening to become a “people’s ill.”¹⁵⁷ A doctor quoted in *Algemeen Handelsblad* even predicted that morphinism would surpass alcoholism as the addiction of the modern age.¹⁵⁸

Morphine addiction was seen not just as a challenge of modern times, but a symptom. The observer from *Leeuwarder Courant* blamed morphinism on the oversaturation of life in the “fin de Siecle”: “Our modern society, our over-stimulated time longs for intoxicants ever more, to experience just a moment of calm, to escape the cruelty of reality, even the reality of daily

¹⁵⁵ "Het gevaar van Morphine.". *Algemeen Handelsblad*". Amsterdam, 28-02-1880.

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¹⁵⁶ All quotations in English are my translation. "Bijvoegsel van het Bataviaasch Handelsblad van Zaterdag, 20 October 1888, No. 245 Europeesche Kroniek.". *Bataviaasch handelsblad*", 20-10-1888.

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¹⁵⁷ "Buitenland. Algemeen Overzicht. 20 September.". *Leeuwarder courant*", 22-09-1890.

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¹⁵⁸ "Congres voor openbare gezondheidsregeling.". *Algemeen Handelsblad*". 09-07-1899.

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pleasures, which people have grown weary of.”¹⁵⁹ Although there is a certain moral scorn observable for the decadent excesses of primarily French and female morphine users in these turn-of-the-century observations, there is also a sense of sympathy and woe. One commentator referred to morphinism as “one of the tragic sides of fashion,”¹⁶⁰ and another writes, almost wistfully:

“One imagines entering a new life [in dream-like visions] where pleasure and sorrow are experienced in the same measure, surrounded by the most fantastical spectacles and the most exalted creations. This sad enchantment explains the sorry success of the fairy Morphine.”¹⁶¹

As for cocaine abuse, the first concerned voices emerge a few years later, in the final years of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth, with one notable exception. As early as 1869, a critical reader of *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* submitted a thoroughly researched piece on the production, use, and effects of cocaine, in response to a piece in the *Indische Landbouw-Courant* (Indian Agricultural Gazette) proposing the introduction of coca on Java’s plantations. The reader opposed this plan vigorously, calling coca an “unnatural, sensuous pleasure” that turns man into a beast. This had been shown, the author claimed, among the *coqueros* of Peru, who in their wretched frenzy neglected their physical and moral interests and were irredeemable from their “fiendish stimulant.”¹⁶² Luckily, “the more developed white race,” thanks to its superior moral virtue, was less inclined to such vices than the “course and uncivilized” natives of South America, which is why the author was certain that the government and the “well-informed public” would recognize coca’s evils.

The reports of the dangers of cocaine that start emerging around 1900 take a much less proselytizing tone, nor are they cloaked in a discourse of racial superiority. Like morphine, cocaine found its first addicts among those in the medical professions, and in fact some of the first accounts of the new affliction to be published were written by doctors who had been addicted themselves, thus creating a curious mix of a narrative of personal experiences and dispassionate medical observations. One doctor published his experiences in a scientific journal, recounting both the elation he felt and the subsequent paranoia, and diagnosing his former drug-using self with memory loss, decreased brain functioning, and a lack of moral sense.¹⁶³ One article reviewing his

¹⁵⁹ "Buitenland. Algemeen Overzicht. 20 September.". *Leeuwarder courant*. 22-09-1890.

¹⁶⁰ *Bataviaasch handelsblad*, 20-10-1888.

¹⁶¹ "De Wereld der Droomen.". *De locomotief : Samarangsch handels- en advertentie-blad*. Semarang, 24-03-1888.
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¹⁶² "Ingezonden Stukken", *Bataviaasch handelsblad*, 08-03-1869.

<http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110532851:mpeg21:a0022>

¹⁶³ "Cocainisten.". *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*. Groningen, 15-03-1896.

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work cleverly referred to it as “confessions of a cocaine user” (lit.: “sufferer”), echoing De Quincy’s famous opium autobiography.¹⁶⁴

While medical authorities commenting on the subject primarily described cocainism (as well as morphinism) as a disease, non-medical commentaries also emerged, primarily in the context of critiques of the moral decay of the upper classes. Cocaine, in this period, was highly expensive, and thus primarily an elite drug, finding its victims, according to the *Sumatra Post* of October 17 1901, among “doctors, writers, and politicians” and other upper-class individuals desiring something more refined than “common intoxication” (i.e. alcohol). The author therefore calls cocaine an “aristocratic evil”, extra dangerous because users often manage to hide their addiction until it is too late.¹⁶⁵ However, with the exception of one English reviewer cited in *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, who cites the widespread use of ether, cocaine, and morphine among the English upper classes as a sign of the moral decay in general displayed by the aristocracy,¹⁶⁶ the majority of reports construct morphine and cocaine use not as a *symptom* but as a *cause* of immorality. The drugs – along with alcohol – were seen as “poisons of the mind,”¹⁶⁷ that ruined lives by affecting both physical health and one’s character.¹⁶⁸ In a characteristic combination of moralist and medical discourse, drug addiction was termed a “moral disease”¹⁶⁹, creating a propensity for crime both through its debilitating effect on the brain and the insatiable craving for the substance it engendered. Cocaine was now garnering a reputation as being even more dangerous than morphine in this. The *Sumatra Post* warned in 1901:

“Cocaine abuse only sets the lowest passions in motion, it does not give the pleasant dreams and hallucinations of morphine. Abuse of cocaine immediately turns man into its slave and instantly awakens the animal in him. One cannot warn against the use of this poisonous substance enough.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ “Bekentenissen van een cocaïne-lijder.”. *Soerabaijasch handelsblad*. Soerabaja, 12-02-1897.

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¹⁶⁵ “Zelfvergiftiging.”. *De Sumatra post*. Medan, 17-10-1901.

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¹⁶⁶ “De Hoogere Standen In Engeland.”. *Bataviaasch nieuwsblad*, 01-05-1903.

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¹⁶⁷ “Academische Redevoeringen.”. *Bataviaasch nieuwsblad*. Batavia, 11-11-1899.

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¹⁶⁸ “Het leven der kellnerinnen.”. *Rotterdamsch nieuwsblad*. Rotterdam, 02-11-1893.,

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¹⁶⁹ “De Psychische Geneeswijze. (Slot.)”. *Bataviaasch nieuwsblad*. Batavia, 22-03-1888.

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¹⁷⁰ “Narcotica.”. *De Sumatra post*. Medan, 09-02-1901.

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While the morphine addict was thus conceived as a soft, dreamy, tragic, and often female hedonist, whose habit mostly formed a danger to herself, the cocainist took on more 'masculine' attributes and threatened to become somewhat of a 'public menace'. Despite the urgency of these warnings, the solutions that the reports brought forward treated drug addiction not a social question to be addressed through education and reform, as with alcoholism and opium abuse among East Indians, but as an individual problem to be solved by the addict him- or herself, with the aid of a physician. Almost without fail consulted physicians recommended strictly supervised detoxification in an institution away from one's normal life. The advertisements that emerged around 1900 (see figure 6) offering such treatments reflect the upper-class identity of the addicts targeted: far from a bothersome 'problem population' in need of help through civic engagement, they were conscious consumers with the option of solving their personal problem in the most comfortable way possible.

Interbellum drug fears

In the years to come, and in Europe especially after the First World War, (ab)use of morphine and cocaine spread beyond the sphere of doctors and their (affluent) patients, and as a result more numerous and more alarmed discussions of both drug trends appeared in Dutch newspapers. The Netherlands, having been neutral in the Great War, had been spared much of the social upheaval the War had engendered in Belgium, France, Germany, and Great Britain, as well as the exposure of (injured) soldiers to cocaine and especially morphine that had set off epidemics in Paris, Berlin, and London. Morphinism and cocainism were thus less acutely pressing issues in the Netherlands than in its neighboring countries, and Dutch observers acknowledged this, although one reporter did point out that while "in the Rhine lands things have not gotten as far as in Berlin, where morphine and cocaine are sold openly in the streets [...] nevertheless there are already morphinist clubs in existence, who help each other acquire the poison."¹⁷¹ Despite the absence of an immediate threat within the Netherlands, many reports take an alarmist tone, such as one *Telegraaf* article calling the "evil of cocaine" (*cocaïne-kwaad*) in France" an "international danger" requiring transnational intervention.¹⁷² Another report, concerning narcotics abuse in Belgium, cites drug activity around

¹⁷¹ "Morfinisten.". "Nieuwsblad van Friesland : Hepkema's courant". 05-11-1920.
<http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010760296:mpeg21:a0183>

¹⁷² "Het Cocaïne-Kwaad In Frankrijk. Een Internationale Regeling Noodzakelijk." "De Telegraaf," 21-09-1923.
<http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110564104:mpeg21:a0043>

the Netherlands' borders with Belgium and Germany as a looming threat to Dutch youth,¹⁷³ despite the fact that Limburg only served as a point of transport between Belgium and Germany and very little morphine or cocaine was actually remaining in the Netherlands.¹⁷⁴

While drug use among the upper classes was still receiving the most attention in print, it was now judged in very different terms. Rather than reflecting the inherent moral depravity of the aristocracy, several articles present morphinism as a danger destroying otherwise perfectly good breeding in young people of the 'cultured classes': "miserable creatures is what they have become," a journalist writes about the generation of German students falling victim to morphine's lure. "Previously such smart, diligent boys."¹⁷⁵ Morphine, it was believed, could ruin the best in society, and this is where a key difference with the perception of cocaine emerges. Although not everyone exposed to morphine would grow addicted – in fact, a new idea was forming among doctors that some individuals, who had pre-existing neurological and psychological weaknesses or pathologies, were more susceptible to morphinism than others¹⁷⁶ - morphine addiction was essentially a *medical* problem with social ramifications, and would stay a problem for as long as morphine was an indispensable tool in medical practice.¹⁷⁷ Cocainism, on the other hand, was seen as a socio-cultural problem both in its origins and its ramifications. Dr. Ernst Roël contrasted cocaine's historical specificity to morphine's timelessness: not only was it not medically indispensable and therefore eventually ought to be eliminated altogether by authorities, its illicit consumption was also directly a result of the specific circumstances of his time: the war and later the economic crisis had caused "the top and bottom layers of society [to] show an increased need for intoxicants,"¹⁷⁸ which they most dangerously found in cocaine. Furthermore, Roël argued, cocaine was a quintessentially 'social' phenomenon because "The cocainists long for companionship with like-minded people. They form hotbeds of infection in society." Another doctor writing on the evils of cocaine, P.H. van der Hoog, went even further by claiming that cocainism was not the result of a

¹⁷³ This phenomenon forms an interesting ground for comparison with the present situation, where issues raised regarding Belgian and German youth crossing the Dutch border to *acquire* drugs, rather than bringing them in, led to the introduction of the 'wietpas' in border zones, replaced in 2012 by a law requiring coffee shop clients to be Dutch residents in order to be able to purchase weed.

¹⁷⁴ "Een Nieuw Gevaar Voor Onze Jeugd Verdoovende Middelen." "*Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*". 02-01-1931. <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010236025:mpeg21:a0015>

¹⁷⁵ "Morfinisten." "*Nieuwsblad van Friesland*." 05-11-1920.

¹⁷⁶ "De dokter aan 't woord. Morfinisme. Een zwak karakter de eerste oorzaak." "*De Indische courant*", 03-06-1933. <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010284556:mpeg21:a0276>

¹⁷⁷ 12. ERNST Roël."Het Lokkende Gif: Slaven van Morfine en Cocaïne." "*Limburger Koerier: Provinciaal Dagblad*," 02-04-1931. <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:011025285:mpeg21:a0167>

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

medical propensity or adverse conditions, but of pre-existing socially deviant motivations of the addict. His attack is so caustic it merits a verbatim quotation:

“Niet iedereen die wel eens cocaïne gebruikt heeft, b.v. om therapeutische redenen, raakt er aan verslaafd. In tegenstelling met wat men bij morphinegebruik ziet, heeft het weinig invloed op het karakter van menschen, die in psychisch evenwicht verkeerden. Deze worden hoogstens tot gelegenheidscocaïnisten. Maar dergelijke weerstandkrachtige, wilsterke naturen zijn zeldzaam.

De cocaïne kiest bij voorkeur haar slachtoffers onder de leugenaars, de oplichters en vijanden van de geordende samenleving, leeglopers, litterair en artistiek doende Bohémiens en spelers, vooral wanneer er een groot verschil tussen den dadendrang en het scheppingsvermogen van deze menschen bestaat. Geen enkel gif, noch opium en morfine, noch alcohol of heroïne vreet zoo sterk de goede zeden aan.”¹⁷⁹

The evil of cocaine thus lay, according to Van der Hoog, in a combination of the inherent moral depravity of the addict and the degenerative effects of the drug, which unlike any other drug was “capable of tearing off the mask of breeding, which every psyche wears after all, and bringing out the worst traits and faults of the victim.”¹⁸⁰

Another difference perceived between cocaine and morphine in the interbellum was their containment to respectively the public and the private sphere. According to Van der Hoog morphinists – along with opium users, tended towards a certain lethargy and contentment, and while their habit would ultimately destroy them, there was no desire or capacity to extend this destructive force to society at large. Cocainists, on the other hand, “in the most vigorous manner take part in public life,” not rarely as (populist) politicians or journalists who, “although much less gifted and famous than the [...] hashisch-, opium-, and alcohol-addicted poets, are much more dangerous for society than those.”¹⁸¹ Although Van der Hoog is the only commentator I have found to draw this particular connection, another association between cocainism and a different type of ‘public sphere’ was very common: the equally licentious as glamorous night life of Paris, Berlin, and

¹⁷⁹ Translation: “Not everyone who has ever used cocaine, for example for therapeutic reasons, becomes addicted. Contrary to what one sees with morphine use, it has little influence on the character psychologically balanced people. These will at most become occasional cocaine users. But such withstanding, strong-willed natures are rare. Cocaine’s preferred victims of choice are the liars, the charlatans, and the enemies of ordered society, loafers, Bohemians with literary and artistic pretenses, and actors, especially when a large difference between the ambitions and the creative skills of these people exists. No other poison, neither opium and morphine, nor alcohol or heroin, eats away at morality to such an extent.” P. vd Hoog, “Cocaine Het gif, dat lichaam en geest doet ontaarden”. *Het Vaderland : staat- en letterkundig nieuwsblad* 08-03-1931. <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010013396:mpeg21:a0243>

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

London. A certain Dr. Wester writes in *De Telegraaf*, quoting the German physician-turned photographer Paul Wolff: “Morphine is een vergift voor de eenzamen, maar Cocaïne (ist) [sic] ein Geselligkeitsgift, das Rauschmittel der Kinospieeler, Jazzband musiker...”¹⁸² Cocaine’s reputation as a party drug can also be observed in an article describing the growing cocaine abuse in the night cafes of the Montmartre as a “festering evil”¹⁸³ and another reproaching the “coco parties of the *demimonde*”¹⁸⁴ – both, incidentally were published in *De Telegraaf*, the newspaper that four decades later would become the symbol of the scandalizing anti-psychedelic press. The cocaine-fueled revelries of women in particular, appears to have been ground for moral outrage. One French author named Pierre Dottin, cited in *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad* and *Leeuwarder Courant*, even used the exploits of women in London’s West End night life as an argument against the feminist movement: the fact that so many ‘emancipated’ women in England were gambling, smoking, drinking, and using cocaine in shady clubs with Orientals, according to Dottin, proved that women’s liberation had gone too far.¹⁸⁵

Cocaine use was thus taking place, or at least imagined to take place, in settings outside of the control of ‘polite society’ and as such was perceived as much more of a ‘danger’ than the more domesticated morphinism. This wild and uncontrollable aspect of cocainism is also observable in the repeated comparisons to animals that interbellum observers made, just as belle-époque authors had done. Dr. Wester, for example, noted that cocainists, if their addiction continues long enough, become “less than an animal,” a danger to themselves and to others. Curiously, while morphinism’s apparent civility compared to cocaine addiction made it seem relatively benign, this same characteristic rendered it extra dangerous when compared to alcoholism. As one observer put it:

“There is something despicable about the drunkard in his stupor, the morphinist manages to hide his short intoxication, but because of his sly attempts at acquiring morphine, he is capable of becoming a criminal. He does not shy away from deception, or from any other means to reach his goal. He will steal if necessary. And if there is no other way of getting morphine, they

¹⁸² Translation: “Morphine is a poison for the lonely, but cocaine is a social drug, the intoxicant of movie actors, jazz musicians...”

¹⁸³ “Een Voortwoekerend Kwaad. Cocaïne-verkoop te Parijs.”. *De Telegraaf*,” 24-06-1921.

<http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010551561:mpeg21:a0073>

¹⁸⁴ “Het Cocaïne-Kwaad In Frankrijk. Een Internationale Regeling Noodzakelijk.”. *De Telegraaf*,” 21-09-1923.

<http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110564104:mpeg21:a0043>

¹⁸⁵ “Voor de Dames.”. *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*,” 26-04-1924

<http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010494779:mpeg21:a0088> and “Nadeelige Gevolgen der Emancipatie,” *Leeuwarder courant*,” 17-05-1924.

<http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010603093:mpeg21:a0152>

will feign great agony, preferably at night, hoping the doctor will come to the rescue with the coveted injection.”¹⁸⁶

A medical observer writes:

“[alcoholism] turns man into beast, [morphinism] lets him stay man, but this man becomes evil. That is why morphinism is so much more insidious. Everyone can recognize the drunkard, but not the morphinist. The latter is often highly sensible, but lies.”¹⁸⁷

The dominant image of users of morphine and cocaine, in the early twentieth century thus changed from one of lamentable victims of incautious doctors or of the strain and decadence of modernity, to dangerous agents in this modernity. Of the two, morphinists were constructed more in stereotypically ‘feminine’ terms, as passive, weak, confined to the private sphere, and mainly a threat to themselves, harmful to society at most because of their deceitful behavior. Cocainists, meanwhile, came to be understood as a more ‘explosive’ danger, prone to (violent) crime and debauchery in the public sphere. While the doctors who increasingly gained a voice on the matter in newspapers stressed the pathological nature of people who would become addicted (whether in the sense of an innate weakness of character or a propensity for socially deviant behavior) many medical and non-medical reporters alike also pointed to the potential danger drug addiction posed for society at large, and particularly for impressionable youth: anyone, even those from the most respectable circles, could be affected.

This narrative of encroaching threat does not quite fit in either the view of a drug phenomenon as a movement or as a social problem, as discussed in chapter 3. Appraisals of morphinism and cocaine consumption as a positive movement contributing something to the world, or even as a deliberate critique of mainstream society were virtually non-existent, at least in the dominant, mainstream discourse of ‘polite society’ as represented by the newspaper coverage. But so was the condescension (whether benevolent or disgusted) observable in the social discourse on ‘drunkards’. The vehement denunciation by Dr. van der Hoog of cocainists’ deviant tendencies, however, suggests a certain intentionality on the part of the drug users, and the association with subcultures active in metropolitan nightlife furthermore give the interbellum drug trends an air of a ‘scene,’ although without the political, idealistic, or artistic attributions of the *haschischiens* or hippies. The medicalization and criminalization observable in the responses to morphine and cocaine, on the other hand, are reminiscent of ‘order-restoring’ mechanisms also present in the

¹⁸⁶ “Morfinisten,” *Nieuwsblad van Friesland*, 05-11-1920.

¹⁸⁷ “Geneeskundige Brieven. XCI. Pijn.”. *Leeuwarder courant*, 31-12-1925.
<http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010603583:mpeg21:a0154>

'social problem' narrative of junkies, opium-addicted coolies, and alcoholics. It is thus possible to conceive of interbellum cocaine and morphine abuse as subject to a third narrative, fitting somewhere between the other two. This narrative can perhaps best be described as a social problem, but one which, partly because of the social contexts in which it was taking place, and partly because of the class identity of many of those involved, was not as amenable to a paternalist discourses of top-down 'management' as alcoholism was, and more outside of authorities' control (although, as the dramas of the American prohibition era show, alcohol itself often did not fit this paradigm either). In other words, narcotics abuse became more of a social 'danger' than a social problem – especially in the Netherlands, where reports of chaos and debauchery in neighboring countries may have created more panic than the activities taking place within its own borders would have called for. Postulating this third 'danger' narrative also helps explain the surge of fictional representations of drug use that emerged in the interbellum period, because explosively dangerous and morally scandalous practices among the *beau monde* and *demimonde*, much more so than the social problems of sad lower classes or revolutionary fervor of self-alienating idealists, lend themselves to glamour and excitement as well as moral outrage. The following section will take a closer look at such fictional depictions of narcotic substances.

Fictional Representations

Fiction, more so even than newspapers, may give rise to reservations regarding its use as a historical source. The fiction author, after all, is not bound by any responsibility to give an accurate portrayal of reality, no matter how realistic his or her narratives may seem. As a *cultural*-historical source, however, fictional works can prove to be highly valuable, in two mayor ways. Firstly – and this counts mainly for commercial works meant to appeal to large audiences – they cater to people's expectations, associations, and fantasies, and can thus implicitly reflect the popular cultural values of the time in which they were made. Secondly, as Marita Mathijssen argues in her treatise on the literary life of the nineteenth century, fictional works, just as more factual texts and treatises, have often been used as a tool for educating the people, or otherwise changing people's mentality.¹⁸⁸ Similarly to newspapers, works of fiction can thus reflect cultural concerns and viewpoints, both in a 'bottom up' sense of mainstream interests and from a 'top down' perspective of elite viewpoints being propagated among the population.

¹⁸⁸ Marita Mathijssen, *Het Literaire Leven in de Negentiende Eeuw* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhof, 1987), 17.

Morphine in turn-of-the-century Dutch literature

The late nineteenth century was characterized by a surge in drug-related literature, both written by users themselves, and by outsiders using the theme for its cultural cachet. Particularly in France a large amount of novels, novellas, feuilletons (usually the bottom section of a newspaper containing installments of an ongoing story) and sensationalist news and gossip stories emerged on the subject, and an entire genre of painting evolved around female morphinists, depicted either in luxurious odalisque-like fashion or as harrowing, mysterious creatures.¹⁸⁹ In the Netherlands such artistic depictions were rarer, with two notable exceptions: *Eline Vere* (1889) by Louis Couperus and *Van de Koele Meren des Doods* (1900) by Frederik van Eeden.

Both novels – and most uncontroversially so *Eline Vere* – have been grouped under the ‘naturalist’ genre of Dutch literature. This style is characterized by a ‘scientific,’ psychologizing treatment of characters which has often been linked to the rising popularity of psychoanalysis in the second half of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, naturalist novels often reflect on contemporary social issues and present a critical view of bourgeois modern life.¹⁹⁰ Another common characteristic is a nervous, emotionally fragile, bored and decadent bourgeois protagonist (often female) who throughout the novel goes through a process of disillusionment, in many cases leading to her untimely demise.¹⁹¹ This choice of hero(ine) can be explained in several ways. Lodewijk van Deyssel, an influential pioneer of the movement, connected it to the ‘scientific voyeurism’ of naturalist authors inspired by Freud’s method, since defenseless, neurotic (female) characters were an easy subject of psychological scrutiny.¹⁹² Secondly, as Ton Anbeek points out, the disillusionment and subsequent ruin of a sensitive soul formed a useful device for critiquing the cold, sober, bourgeois reality the character came in conflict with.¹⁹³ The protagonist her- or himself had little agency in this – in fact, one of the most often cited characteristics of naturalist novels is their fatalism. As Anbeek puts it:

“[...] these writers want to show that the mentally unstable protagonists are not themselves guilty of their deeds, but that their actions (or lack thereof) are the result of specific circumstances, or rather: of forces that are stronger than one human being’s will.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹ Ten Berge, “In een Zacht Suizende Extaze,”

¹⁹⁰ Ton Anbeek, “Kenmerken van de Nederlandse naturalistische roman,” *De Nieuwe Taalgids* 72.6 (1979),

¹⁹¹ Anbeek, 521, 524

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 524-528.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 525.

Such forces could be natural – heredity and genetics were rapidly gaining credence in this period – or social, such as the character’s upbringing, their social circles, or society at large.

Louis Couperus’ debut novel, *Eline Vere* (originally published as a feuilleton) fits this description to a T. The eponymous heroin is a melancholic, nervous young girl of the upper classes of The Hague, living with her solidly bourgeois and pragmatic sister and her husband. Eline suffers from a perpetual sense of dissatisfaction, and after a series of romantic disappointments sinks into a mental and physical malaise which she tries to palliate with morphine droplets, prescribed to her by a doctor in Brussels where she stays for a while, at her uncle’s house, after an escalating conflict with her sister leaves her homeless. Soon, Eline is unable to go without the droplets, and she dies of an overdose, not in a deliberate suicide, but by passively accepting the death that comes over her.

Van Eemden’s *Van de Koele Meren des Doods* also deals with an upper-class young woman suffering from nervousness and dissatisfaction. Hedwig de Fontayne grows up in a wealthy but broken home: her mother dies when she is very young and her father subsequently develops a drinking problem. Struggling with feelings of guilt over her budding sexuality, she marries the severely sexually repressed Gerard, but soon grows discontent running her immaculate bourgeois home, and leaves her husband for the worldlier pianist Ritsert. After this affair fails, and her born-out-of-wedlock baby dies, she has a nervous breakdown, and ends up all alone and dispossessed in Paris. Here, a sympathetic doctor injects her with morphine to alleviate her terror of losing her mind again. Hedwig grows addicted and begins to prostitute herself to afford her daily injections, until she is admitted to a religious hospital where she is weaned off morphine and finds hope of redemption in the councils of the nun who nurses her, sister Paula. Because of this happy ending, Van Eeden’s novel’s identification as a naturalist book is often contested, and it has even been suggested that it was a deliberate move on the part of van Eeden, as a way of critiquing naturalism’s fatalism and determinism.

Aside from Van Eeden’s hopeful ending, the two books show remarkable similarities. In both novels, morphine functions as a ‘force’ that is stronger than the heroine’s will, with catastrophic consequences for her life. This aligns with the *fin-de-siècle* view of morphine, discussed earlier in this chapter, as a ‘poison of the mind’ that destroys the lives of its helpless victims. It is also noteworthy that both heroines first come in contact with morphine not only in a medical context, as was typical in this period, but also in a *foreign* one: Eline receives morphine drops from her Brussels doctor while her Dutch physician refused to prescribe her any sedatives; Hedwig is unscrupulously injected with morphine by a Parisian doctor. Both novels construct a dichotomy between the sober, ordered bourgeois society of the Netherlands and the wilder aspects of urban

modernity embodied in the francophone metropolitan centers, where propriety and morality make place for debauchery – for Hedwig’s Parisian exploits this is obvious, but the environment Eline stays in in Brussels is also repeatedly called ‘improper’ and ‘unsuitable for a girl of her standing’. Both heroines also fit the description of the stereotypical late-nineteenth century morphine addict: upper-class and female, suffering from *ennui* as a result of her ‘purposeless’ privileged existence, while simultaneously unable to cope with the pressures of modern life. Their emotional struggles, and subsequent drug abuse, can thus be seen as a criticism on the part of the authors of the degenerate nature of modern bourgeois society. Where Couperous, ostensibly, saw no way out of this, however, Van Eeden saw hope in other, more constructive forms of unconventionality than drugs: the deeply religious sister Paula, as a nun, has purposely placed herself outside of the establishment, as has Joob, an eccentric poet with whom Hedwig finds consolation and inspiration. Also telling is the setting in which Hedwig eventually chooses to live out her days: she does not return to high society in the city, but moves in with a humble peasant family who live on her family’s old summer estate, where she lives a life of simple pleasures, religious devotion, and contemplation.

The use of morphine, in these two novels, can thus be seen as reflecting a preoccupation of the late nineteenth century with the toxicity of modern city life, and one of the possible responses to the suffocating conditions of bourgeois society. In the decades to come, the first of these narrative functions of drugs would remain, while the second would slowly make place for an opposite perspective, with not the bourgeois order being the problem but the evil of the narcotics attacking it.

Twentieth-century sensationalism and moralism in art

Cinema, in the early twentieth century, was a highly influential form of entertainment, possibly even more so than today in our media-saturated world of television and internet. Unfortunately, many of the films that captivated audiences (nearly) a century ago, are no longer accessible today. Plays, if their scenario is not preserved in print, are even more transient, so many a drama or comedy that helped shape people’s perceptions of drugs in the past may never be known by historians. Newspapers offer a peek into this forgotten cultural life, however, by showing what was on, how it was advertised, and what reviewers thought of it. Though often limited in the information such pieces provide, they offer an important additional benefit for the Netherlands in that they show how foreign films, presumably more indicative of the views of the country they were produced in than the Netherlands itself, were ‘translated’ for the Dutch market. I mean this both in the literal sense – for example, films would usually be advertised using a Dutch title – and in the

sense of re-shaping the meaning of the film within a Dutch cultural context through emphasis and interpretation.

The 1910s offer very little to go on, but show at least a hint of beginning interest in morphine among film audiences, beyond an announcement for *Het Zwarte Variété* (original Danish: Den Sorte Variété), advertised as a “grand, captivating sensational drama in three acts, from the life of a morphinist”¹⁹⁵ and an ad for a film called *Het Morfine-Gevaar* (“The Morphine Menace”) run in the Dutch-Indies. The latter’s promotional text suggests it served a didactic, possibly even political function: “Wie het Morphine-gevaar in al zijn verwoestenden omvang kent, zal de overtuiging toegedaan zijn, dat het met alle kracht bestreden moet worden.”¹⁹⁶

More information is available for the shows of the 1920s, when cocaine as well as morphine became a more frequently used theme in entertainment. In the fall of 1924, for example, the Amsterdam theater ‘Flora’ staged a play called *Cocaïne: Het Moordende Poeder*. Several reviews of the play appeared in Dutch newspapers, which offer interesting insights. The piece, a musical drama about a young farm girl who is driven into cocaine abuse in night cafes by the death of her lover and the abuse by her father, appears to have been a folk play aimed at educating the masses on the dangers of cocaine – an effort which one reviewer in *De Telegraaf* mercilessly mocks:

“En het publiek was nog steeds het zelfde. Gediensstigen, die haar uitgangavond hebben. Voorstadsvolk van burgerlijke allure. Het was een solied, een degelijk puliek, dat nog nét zoo is als voor tien aren – en dat over tien jaar nét zoo zal zijn. Het beetje cocaïne, dat de menschen hier te slikken krijgen, doet hen niets. En men vraagt zich eenigszins verbaasd af, wat de relativiteitsbetrekking is tusschen dit publiek en een draak van perverse toxicomanie. Tegen zulk een stuk zou men moord en brand moeten schreeuwen: en moeten schrijven – in een land, waar koko of cokes in het nachtleven gekënd wordt, wanneer voor prikkel zoeken weelde- en ellende-publiek “gehaald” werd. Maar deze menschen kijken er met open mond naar, zooals ze naar een spel van Mars-wezens zouden kijken.”¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ "Advertentie." *"Algemeen Handelsblad,"* Amsterdam, 12-04-1913.

<http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010651038:mpeg21:a0039>

¹⁹⁶ Translation: “those who know the morphine menace in its full destructive extent, will be of the conviction, that it needs to be combated with full force.” “Advertentie.” *"De Sumatra post,"* Medan, 23-11-1918.

<http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010367780:mpeg21:a0022>

¹⁹⁷ Translation: “And the audience was still the same as ever. Servants on their night out. Suburban folk of petty-bourgeois allure. It was a solid, above-board audience, that is just the same as it was ten years ago – and that will be exactly the same ten years from now. The small portion of cocaine that people are presented with here, does not affect them. One wonders, somewhat befuddled, what the relation even is between this audience and such a monster of perverted toxicomania. One ought to scream – and write – blue murder against such a play – in a country where ‘koko’ or cokes in nightlife is actually a known occurrence, if there was a “pull” for a stimulant-craving public of opulence and misery. But these people are staring at it with their mouths half open, as they would at a play of Martians.” R. Feenstra, “Aan het Zoeklicht. Cocaïne,” *De Telegraaf*. Amsterdam, 18-10-1924. <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110562826:mpeg21:a0243>

Other reviewers are somewhat kinder, but the consensus seems to be that the play was overly sentimental and course, although one reviewer does note that the audience seemed to love it.¹⁹⁸ This case thus presents an interesting dichotomy between the more elite view of the journalists, who deemed the play both 'immoral' as an "advertisement for toxicomania" and unnecessary due to the absence of a cocaine scene in the Netherlands, and a more common audience enjoying the content's strange and dramatic appeal.

The Flora play was not alone in its use of cocaine's potential for drama with a moral lesson. Two years earlier, the Union Cinema in Amsterdam screened an English film that had been redubbed *Londen bij Nacht* ('London by night'; original English title: *Cocaine*), described by a reviewer as showing "not only the artificial stimulation, but also the misery that cocaine brings"¹⁹⁹ in London's nightlife. Here too, the story centered on an innocent young girl who is threatened with ruin as she is introduced to the "lethal powder" in a night club, although this time the ingénue was not a farm girl but the teenage daughter of a major English drug lord, unaware of her father's illicit activities.

Another movie, from 1921 and produced in the US, also played on the theme of cocaine as a wild big city drug, and once again centered on its use by attractive young women. *Greater than Love* – significantly redubbed *De Stad der Zonden* ('The City of Sin') emerged in Dutch cinemas in 1926, A reviewer in *Algemeen Handelsblad* disapprovingly describes the five protagonists of the film, who:

"fill up their empty lives with foxtrots, their empty stomachs with cocktails, their empty nostrils (if they're not suffering from a cold) with cigarette smoke, but those who live off this diet, in sinful cities apparently tend to resort to cocaine sometimes, as does the youngest and prettiest of the five friends, with as a consequence that she prematurely blows out her last breath among those who walked the wrong road with her up until this tragic milestone."²⁰⁰

While in all of these narratives a certain moralist pretense is observable – and this moral aspect is repeatedly highlighted by Dutch reviewers, the play and especially these films also demonstrate a cultural fascination with the dangerous but glamorous life of cocaine users. This image of 'sex, drugs, and jazz,' as we might call it, also emerges in *Cocaine: Berlijnsch Zedenbeeld*, a book written by the Dutch actor Coen Hissink, apparently based on his own experiences in Berlin's

¹⁹⁸ "Kunst En Letteren. Tooneel. „Cocaine" — Flora." *De Tijd : godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, 's-Hertogenbosch, 16-09-1924. <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010530929:mpeg21:a0039>

¹⁹⁹ "Union-Bioscope. Londen bij nacht." *De Telegraaf*, Amsterdam, 11-10-1924. <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110562813:mpeg21:a0166>

²⁰⁰Review "De Stad der Zonde." "Algemeen Handelsblad". Amsterdam, 16-05-1926. <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010657762:mpeg21:a0186>

nightlife. The book contains three short stories, the first of which recounts the cocaine abuse among international film stars in Berlin. Interestingly, the story presents both a female and a male user, but both are treated very differently. The female cocainist, the young and beautiful 'star' Ilona, grown weary and melancholic from her intense life of excess, loses herself to the drug, helpless without it, and eventually succumbs to it. She only "schnupps" (as Hissink calls snorting) in solitude, in the privacy of her dressing room, thus following more the stereotypical modern of the female morphinist than the cocaine user. The latter archetype, however, is embodied in her male counterpart, who also turns to coke, but in a public setting: on a "Dionysian whim"²⁰¹ he visits an underground gay club and consumes copious amounts of alcohol and cocaine out of a burning desire to sin – "he wanted to play with live, or have a boxing match with it"²⁰², which he eventually satisfies by visiting a prostitute.

The 'roaring twenties' thus gave rise to fictionalized representations of cocaine as a symbol of a new exclusive, glamorous, and sensational world that was emerging in the night clubs of the great urban centers of the world, a fantasy for the masses that was simultaneously reproachful and enviable. With the coming of the more sober 1930s this image lost much of its momentum, but a new, exciting, though even more morally reprehensible aspect of cocaine emerged: smugglers. In the 1932 German film *Rauschgift* they formed the premise for an exciting action story, about a hero who according to an ad in *De Tijd*, "in a manner equally adventurous, exciting, and sensational, exposes a cocaine- and morphine cartel"²⁰³ to save his sister, a beautiful opera singer, who has become addicted to morphine. Another film of this time in which drug smugglers served as exciting 'bad guys' was the more lighthearted *The Camels Are Coming* (1934), a British action-comedy about an air force pilot in Egypt on an adventurous mission to catch a group of cocaine traffickers, which garnered considerable press attention in particularly the Dutch Indies.

As time progressed, fictional representations of cocaine and morphine thus became less and less focused on 'warning' the public of the dangers of narcotics, and more on their entertainment value as exciting and glamorous cultural phenomena, although this excitement was in part based on the 'danger' and immorality of the drugs. A major difference with the medical and journalistic discourses on morphine and cocaine discussed earlier in this chapter is that while these spoke mainly of (cocaine) addicts in gender-neutral or masculine terms, in the fictional narratives female

²⁰¹ Coen Hissink, *Berlijnsch Zedenbeeld* (Amsterdam: Regenboog, 1928), 87.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ "Advertentie," "*De Tijd : Godsdienstig-Staatkundig Dagblad*," s-Hertogenbosch, 18-05-1933. <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010535308:mpeg21:a0056>

users are over-represented. These drug-using fictional women tend to follow one of two 'types': the sinful, hedonistic femme fatale of modern night life, or the innocent, helpless victim of a dangerous drug. Both stereotypes, while not realistically reproducing the situation sketched out by alarmed social observers in the more serious media, do reflect a certain duality that appears to have emerged in the cultural understanding of morphine and cocaine in the first half of the twentieth century: one of simultaneous danger and attraction, or fascination. This would pose a serious discursive problem for attempts at social control: too much of a threat to accept as a benign cultural movement and too rich in 'cultural capital' (to use Alain Bourdieu's term) to be constructed as a 'problem population' that could be educated and disciplined, the archetypical hard drug user, and particularly the 'party drug' user such as the cocainist, slipped between the two narratives of the social order to become an elusive threat to that same order, and to a large extent still escapes measures of control today.

Conclusion

Psychoactive drugs, it has become clear, have transformed the modern world considerably in the past 500 years or so, and can even be said to have contributed to the birth of modernity itself. They should not, however, be seen as something that simply 'happened' to humanity, engendering change in a unified process that slowly rolled itself out over the course of history. Rather, psychotropic substances have been used by people of all walks and stations of life in an incredibly wide variety of ways for an equally wide variety of purposes, which often come in conflict with each other. Drugs gain meaning and power through practices – the way they are used – as well as discourses – the way they are talked about and viewed. In the first chapter, we saw how soft drugs such as coffee and tea played a facilitating role in the formation of a new, bourgeois identity, in the challenging of old forms of power and hierarchy, and in the formation of new structures of power. The new social order that thus emerged, however, was also faced with new challenges in a modern world of change mobility, questioning of power and, increasingly, of intoxication. While drugs posed a potent new tool in a distinctly modern form of control, using softer, more sophisticated forms of power than outright force, as discussed in chapter two, this same potency would also form one of the greatest challenges to the social order of the modern age: addiction and illicit (recreational) drug use. Some instances of this have been discussed in chapters three and four, but many more are imaginable.

Drugs can – literally – change people's mindsets, create new social settings, new behaviors, and new identities, give rise to entire artistic genres, and drastically change the drives and motivations of people, and many of these aspects are not easily amenable to social control. However, what role and meaning intoxicants take on in a society is not just determined by their use itself, but also by the discourses that evolve around and about them, which are in turn embedded in existing structures of power and inequality. Here, it can be tempting to fall into Foucauldian pessimism, and claim that even the most deviant, rebellious forms of drug use are always already subject to existing power structures, but this would attribute too much credence to the latter. If there is anything the present study has shown, it is that instruments of power, whether they be drugs themselves or discourses and practices intended to control the abuse of these drugs, never quite work out as straightforwardly as expected. Substances meant to regulate one addiction end up creating a new one, medical and psychiatric tools become popular means to spice up parties, and discourses meant to denounce subversive drug-related practices in the end just give them more counter-cultural 'cool'. Conversely, drug use starting out as a form of rebellion can eventually cause someone to become in need of care by institutions of (paternalistic) control.

The use of drugs engenders reactions in society, which in turn change the meaning of these drugs and their use. Cocaine and morphine are examples of how mechanisms of control can be grossly inadequate, as well as how powerful *and* versatile the cultural meanings that drugs can take on are. Whether one approves of recreational drugs use or not, it is clear that intoxicants, as well as the people who use them, have an unyielding tendency to 'shake things up' and lead to new cultural formations.

I have attempted, with this research, to offer a new perspective in the historiography of modernity, as well as of drugs, but the present study only scratches the surface. There is a wealth of uncharted territory in the world of drugs, especially with regard to actual practices of drug use and abuse, and the experiences of those groups beyond the dominant discourses in society. The approach used in this study is an attempt at broadening post-structuralist discourse analysis, allowing for a more dynamic and open perspective. There may be other, more straightforward ways of doing this, but I believe that the history of drugs, thanks to their versatility and potency in both the material and immaterial domain, can play a promising role in such a venture. Either way, I have no doubt that the future of historical drug research, like the future of drugs themselves, will be full of surprises.

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