

10 Expanding intoxication: what can drinking places (c.1850–1950) tell us about other intoxicants and other sites?

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Abstract

Drinking places like pubs and taverns have received a fair amount of attention from historians over the last 50 years, generating much discussion about their role in societies around the world. This chapter sets out to expand our understandings of drinking places in three ways. First, it considers them as sites for the consumption of other intoxicants besides alcohol. Second, it follows recent calls for a broader understanding of intoxication, drawing connections between intoxicants and some of the social characteristics of drinking places: publicness, sociability, commensality and hospitality. Third, the chapter will suggest expanding our engagement with these sites beyond our usual focus on drink and drinkers, while at the same time extending the limits of drinking places themselves. In considering these possibilities, the chapter engages with recent work in the fields of material culture and ‘new materialisms’, seeing intoxicating sites as places where new things might emerge.

The chapter begins by considering those intoxicants that were consumed alongside alcohol in drinking places in this period. The second section considers the relationship between intoxicants and the public sphere, opening up a discussion of the qualities and social character of these sites. The third asks an important question, developing this investigation

of the character of drinking places: if pubs, cafes and bookshops can all be 'good places', as Ray Oldenburg described them (1989), how important was intoxication? The fourth section of the chapter suggests that examining the material cultures of intoxication might show us how social relations between consumers are actively made, so that cultural values like commensality, hospitality and generosity are materialised or objectified. Concentrating on those practices that involve gifting (Mauss, 1990), it's clear that this may also be a central part of what made these places 'good'. Intoxicants, collective social practices of consumption and their associated meanings, and material environments came together to make these sites important for their patrons. The fifth section re-thinks drinking places, intoxicants and intoxication by drawing upon expanded senses of place, materiality and meaning, and the sixth further expands our sense of the limits of drinking places by considering the mobility of objects associated with drink and drinking sites. In conclusion, the chapter demonstrates that drinking places can tell us a good deal about other intoxicants and other sites.

Introduction: expansive intoxication, unbounded drinking places

This chapter considers drinking places—sites primarily dedicated to the sale and public consumption of alcoholic drinks—between about 1850 and 1950. It can be argued that this period saw their increasing specialisation around the world, as commercial, regulatory and social developments encouraged the separation of the production, retail and consumption of alcohol from other sites like homes and workplaces (Kneale, 2021). In the process, drinking places became more distinctive as a particular kind of site. At the same time, though, they were rarely *just* places to drink alcohol; they were often also sites for the consumption of other intoxicants like tobacco and caffeine, and of course for sociable interaction.

The journalist George Sala's description of an anonymous East London beer-shop in the 1850s offers us a useful example. This beer-shop is one of many pubs Sala shows his readers on an imagined tour of 'London's Publics', but it has surprisingly little to tell us about alcohol.

Here is a beer-shop—a little, blinking, wall-eyed edifice, with red curtains in the window, and a bar squeezed up in one corner, as though it were ashamed of itself. From the door of the tap-room which we open, comes forth a thick, compact body of smoke. There are, perhaps, twenty people in the room, and they are all smoking like limekilns. From a kiln at the upper extremity, comes forth the well-remembered notes of the old *trink-lied*, 'Am Rhein, am Rhein.' We are in Vaterland at once. All these are Teutons—German sugarbakers.

(Sala, 1859: 266)

Here, the bar is almost 'ashamed of itself', while the most obvious intoxicant is probably tobacco consumed in clay pipes, given the description of these smokers as 'kilns'. Sala reminds us that drinking places were not exclusively focused on drinking; they also fostered other kinds of intoxication as well as a valuable sociability. How might we expand our idea of drinking places without losing sight of what it is that makes them distinctive from other sociable, and sometimes intoxicating, spaces like cafes, street corners and lidos?

The chapter seeks to explore these questions, expanding our understandings of drinking places in three ways. First, it considers them as sites for the consumption of other intoxicants besides alcohol. Studies of individual intoxicants can give the impression that sites of consumption were reserved for one substance alone; discussions of the regulation of alcohol often ignore nicotine

and caffeine. Second, it follows recent calls for a broader understanding of intoxication. If drinking places are public, social sites, intoxication may be something more than the collision of intoxicant and consumer, “not merely the physiological and neurological effects of plants, beverages, and chemicals but also religious ecstasy, hypnotic trance, musical reverie, intense collective joy” (Withington, 2014: 12). The collective consumption of Sala’s sugarbakers was visible in the ‘body of smoke’ they produced, for example, and their singing might have intoxicated singers and listeners alike. This broader understanding of intoxication draws connections between intoxicants and some of the social characteristics of drinking places: publicness, sociability, commensality and hospitality. We will look at these, in turn. Finally, the chapter will suggest expanding our engagement with these sites beyond our usual focus on drink and drinkers, while at the same time extending the limits of drinking places themselves. In considering these possibilities, the chapter engages with recent work in the fields of material culture and ‘new materialisms’. Orthodox approaches to ‘consumption’ tend, via a particular reading of Veblen (1915), to analyse objects for clues about their consumers’ identities (for a good example of work of this kind, see Holt, 2018). Sala’s journalism follows a similar logic, as his tour of London’s pubs becomes a series of sketches of social ‘types’. The sugarbakers’ beer-shop stands in for Whitechapel’s German quarter, for example, and the description fits what one British author saw as the ‘three national characteristics’ of German immigrants: ‘smoking, singing, and Sabbath-breaking’ (Apperson, 1914: 161). Elsewhere in Whitechapel, Sala visited Jewish pubs where “Smoking is universal—cigars the rule, pipes the exception”, which to Sala’s racialising eye marked these smokers out as “peculiar in their amusements, as in everything else” (1859: 267).

This chapter takes a different approach. Rather than reading intoxicants as markers of pre-existing identities, this engagement with intoxicating sites sees them as places where new things might emerge. Through the sharing of intoxicants, other material things, and social practices, hospitality and generosity can be produced through commensal consumption. Examined through the lens of the new materialisms, intoxication becomes something that emerges out of the interaction of consumers, intoxicants, songs, light and visual spectacles, and a wider affective atmosphere, which expands to fill much larger and more heterogeneous spaces than Sala's beer-shop. How did intoxicants, collective social practices of consumption and their associated meanings, and material environments come together to make these sites so important to their patrons?

The value of these ideas for our understanding of drinking places is explored across six sections. The chapter begins by considering other intoxicants besides alcohol that were consumed in some drinking places in this period, concentrating on tobacco. The second section considers the relationship between intoxicants and the public sphere, opening up a discussion of the qualities and social character of these sites. The third asks an important question, developing this investigation of the character of drinking places: if pubs, cafes and bookshops can all be 'good places', as Ray Oldenburg described these vital sites of sociability (1989), how important are intoxicants? What difference did alcohol, tobacco, coffee and tea make? To answer this, we will consider the importance of sociability, commensality and hospitality in Oldenburg's good places.

The fourth section of the chapter suggests that examining the *material cultures* of intoxication might show us how social relations between consumers are actively made, so that cultural

values like commensality, hospitality and generosity are materialised or objectified.

Concentrating on those practices that involve *gifting* (Mauss, 1990), it's clear that not only is this more strongly associated with alcohol and tobacco than other intoxicants but may also be a central part of what makes these places 'good'. The fifth section re-thinks drinking places, intoxicants and intoxication by drawing upon expanded senses of place, materiality and meaning, and the sixth further expands our sense of the limits of drinking places, before the chapter concludes.

We begin by looking at the intoxicants consumed in these sites over this period.

Drinking places and intoxicants, 1850–1950

By 1850, much of the world was already accustomed to David Courtwright's 'big three' intoxicants: alcohol, caffeine and tobacco (2001). While Courtwright's 'little three' (opium, cannabis and coca) were consumed alongside alcohol, they are not as prominent in the historiography of drinking places. By contrast, alcohol and tobacco were often taken together, and were understood as everyday luxuries, part of 'a community of goods' (Withington, 2020a: 387) until the twentieth century. The relationship between caffeine and alcohol was more complicated; they could be posed as alternatives—or even rivals—to one another, but could also be consumed together, particularly as part of a meal. In consequence, cafés might or might not be 'alcoholized social spaces' (Toner, 2015: 28), depending on where you were. In Paris, Mexico City and Copenhagen, cafés offered wine and spirits as part of a wider range of beverages (Eriksen, 1999; Haine, 2003; Toner, 2015). British coffee- and tea-rooms tended not to be licenced for the sale of alcoholic drinks in this period, however (Burnett, 1999, 2004).

Some of these places were provided as alternatives to the pub, of course (Davison, 2006), and the 'improved' pub of the first half of the twentieth century also emphasised the sale of tea, coffee and food (Greenaway, 1998; Gutzke, 2005). Restaurants, inns and hotels offered caffeinated drinks along with meals, alcoholic drinks and other services, much as they had done in the eighteenth century, when "in most provincial towns, among its many other functions, the inn was the coffee house" (Maudlin, 2019: 28), or indeed in the late seventeenth century, when "provincial coffee rooms were hidden in alehouses and inns" (Withington, 2020b: 74).

Concentrating on tobacco, this section sets out to demonstrate the close relationship between smoking and alcoholic drinking places.

In 1850, the British per capita consumption of tobacco stood at 2lbs per adult, a figure unchanged for two centuries; by 1950, this figure had risen to 7lbs per adult, with the machine-rolled cigarette dominating the market following its introduction in the 1880s (Hilton, 2000: 2). Matthew Hilton's focus on what he calls the 'bourgeois-liberal context of smoking' (3), the product of 'a minority smoking culture' of gentlemanly smokers (22), reflects the difficulty of finding alternative accounts of the smoking habits of the majority of British consumers. Despite this, "a more communal pleasure and use of smoking can be discerned in the public houses frequented by the labouring classes in which the free issue of clay pipes ... suggested a certain traditional ritual of hospitality" (4). This is an important insight, and one we will return to. For many Victorian writers, though, the clay pipe served as a simple marker of class, and smoking an index of the character of smokers and their drinking place. Charles Dickens' description of a public house in Scotland Yard provides an early example, with its "lusty coalheavers, quaffing large draughts of Barclay's best, and puffing forth volumes of smoke,

which wreathed heavily above their heads, and involved the room in a thick dark cloud” (1875: 407). This prodigious pipe-smoking matches their heavy drinking, both signs of masculine physicality. The close connection between smoking and drinking was noted by many British observers, often—but not always—by critics of one or both of these habits. A pamphlet produced by the Anti-Narcotic League quoted a Dr. James Hamilton on the topic, for example: “Extinguish the pipes of London, and you will go far to shut up the public-houses” (Hind Smith, undated: 6). The social investigator and journalist J. Ewing Ritchie described a London pub patronised by “the most wretched men and women possible to imagine”, noting, “They are drinking gin and smoking, and all have the appearance of confirmed sots” (1858: 202). From this perspective, working-class use of these intoxicants suggested a helpless, incontinent, consumption.

In other non-fiction sources, the ordinary pipe is often simply described as ‘short’, as it is in the American Temperance lecturer John B. Gough’s description of a Saturday night in Whitechapel: “a combination of commerce, fun, frolic, cheating, begging, thieving, deviltry, short pipes, thick sticks, mouldy umbrellas, dirty faces, and ragged coats. Here are gin palaces in profusion” (1880: 101). Salvation Army co-founder William Booth’s *In Darkest England And The Way Out* quoted another description of Whitechapel, where a woman ‘horribly bloated with drink’ argued with “Two dirty tramp-like men ... smoking their short cutty pipes”; giving up, she “took herself off, her mouth full of oaths and cursing, to the public-house” (1890: 164–165).

However, the close association between pipe-smoking and drinking was also observed in the case of higher-status smokers, as this humorous entry in the dictionary of Victorian slang collected by novelist and playwright J. Redding Ware suggests:

Colour the meerschaum, To. Drinking to the extent of reddening the nose. ... The phrase arises from an association of ideas those in the first place of darkening the colour of a meerschaum pipe by steady smoking, and in the second, intensifying the hue of the nose by steady drinking.

(1909: 86)

Ware's Dictionary is far less critical of drinking than these other sources, suggesting that the close association between drinking and pipe-smoking could be viewed in a more even-handed way.

The machine-rolled cigarette, which replaced the pipe as the dominant form of smoking in Britain after the First World War (Hilton, 2000: 83–85), may have been associated with the fall in alcohol consumption in Britain between the 1890s and the end of the Second World War, as the cigarette offered working-class smokers something to spend their income on besides drink (Dingle, 1972). At the end of our period, the social research organisation Mass Observation estimated that 81% of British men and 39% of women smoked (1949: 95). While this meant that cigarettes and pipes could be found everywhere, “All smokers are more likely to be pubgoers than non-smokers, and heavy smokers are more than twice as likely to be so” (98). Bolton’s pubs were smoky places, with 46% of their patrons smoking at any one time (Mass Observation, 1943: 203).

Where it was a new intoxicant, tobacco’s relation with existing social spaces varied around the world. In Europe, smoking was stimulated by new sites like the coffeehouse, but where the public consumption of tea and coffee was already well-established, tobacco fitted into existing

patterns of use. Coffee “whetted the appetites of Middle Eastern consumers for new tastes and recreations” like smoking (Grehan, 2006: 1358), with tobacco pipes in use from the late seventeenth century (Bouzigard and Saidel, 2012). The water pipe or hookah suited coffeehouses and bath houses because its bulkiness demanded ‘stationary leisure’ (Grehan, 2006: 1357, 1358). During the British occupation of Egypt, “observers of Cairene café culture reported the popularity of smoking the water pipe, drinking coffee, listening to Arabic music” and gambling, and beer, wine and cocktails were also available in beerhalls, hotels and bars (Fonder, 2013: 240, 40, 216). The bars and coffeehouses of early twentieth-century Ottoman ports also served beer (Fuhrmann, 2009; Georgeon, 2002). In Qing China, tobacco and alcohol were already closely linked by the seventeenth century, and in many urban areas, “pipe tobacco was simply added to the tea, alcohol, and snacks already ingested in ... semi-public arenas” like teahouses, theatres, courtesan houses and restaurants (Benedict 2011: 67–68, 69). In similar sites in different parts of the world, alcohol, tobacco and caffeine mingled. In the next section, we begin to investigate the arguments that have been made about the connection between the character of these public spaces and the intoxicants consumed in them. Is publicness a quality exclusively associated with coffee, for example?

Public places and intoxication

Alcoholic drinking places have long been associated with a cluster of ideas concerning publicness, democracy and hospitality. In nineteenth-century Russia, the urban tavern shared some of the character of the village commune (Transchel, 2006); the nineteenth-century French café was the ‘church of the working class’, a ‘proletarian public sphere’ (Haine, 1994: 16; 2006).

Drinking places were also the most important sites of working-class sociability in Germany (Roberts, 1984, 1991), and a significant rival to the church in Wales and England (Harrison, 1973, Lambert, 1983). They provided newspapers, hosted political discussions and radical meetings, literary and scientific societies, friendly societies and other manifestations of civil society (Kneale, 2021). In the 1930s, Mass Observation argued that pubs represented “a temporally and spatially liberated public sphere” (Hubble, 2006: 211).

Jurgen Habermas’s account of the emergence of a public sphere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries describes English coffeehouses, French *salons* and German literary societies as the centres of this new public culture (1991). Concentrating on the connections between print, literary and political criticism, and a growing consciousness of a wider public, Habermas had little to say about the intoxicants that shared these spaces with the men and women who constituted this new world. It has been left to others to suggest that—in the English case—it might have been significant that it was coffee, and not alcohol, that characterised these sites. Wolfgang Schivelbusch’s account of coffee as the ‘great soberer’ sees it as the Protestant work ethic in liquid form (1993: 18), for example, enrolled in a post-Reformation campaign to drive alcohol from public life. This account of ‘the tavern dethroned’, as Michelet put it (cited 35), strengthens the links between coffee, sobriety and an emerging bourgeois subject. A similar reading of coffee as the solution to the problems posed by alcohol is set out in Stallybrass and White’s *The politics and poetics of transgression* (1986, and see Withington, 2020b for a wider survey).

Considering work on these European sites, Matthee concludes that “Coffeehouses in the Middle East played a similar ‘modernizing’ role in the sense that they contributed to the

creation of a cultural public sphere separate from the mosque” (Matthee, 2014: 113, and see Kömeçoğlu, 2005). However, while the elite might drink alcohol in private,

alcohol in a Muslim environment could never become fully integrated into the idea of good living... never become the subject of a public discourse, just as the tavern, operating in the shadows, could never become part of a quasi-public sphere, unlike the often open and airy coffee house, a communal extension of the private home and the basis for political action.

(Matthee, 2014: 104)

However, and as Matthee suggests, it is hard to map different intoxicants onto public and private spaces and spheres. Phil Withington’s recent work suggests that coffee was far less important to British coffeehouses than has been assumed (2020b). Following the commodity rather than the institution, Withington concludes that coffee was relatively scarce in Britain before the eighteenth century, which meant that what was consumed in the new coffeehouses was just as likely to be another non-alcoholic or alcoholic drink; that coffeehouse sociability covered just as many activities—and could be as rowdy—as tavern sociability; and that some coffeehouses, particularly in the provinces, were simply rooms in alehouses. Withington concludes, “Rather than a transformative drug ... coffee emerges as a force and feature of hybridity—of the mixed economies of coffeehouse, alehouse, and, latterly, household, and of the range of practices, meanings, and tastes attendant to its consumption in those places” (74). It is also difficult to map intoxicants onto different senses of the public because part of the appeal of many drinking places was their *combination* of characteristics usually associated with

either the home or public space. Perry Duis described the US saloons as ‘semi-public city spaces’ (1983: 3), and W. Scott Haine suggested that patrons sought a ‘communal privacy’ in French cafés (1996: 55, and see Clement, 2020); British clubs offered both elite and ordinary men a private place in the city (Milne-Smith, 2006, 2011; Tremlett, 1987), while pubs could be ‘sites of surrogate domesticity’ (Booth, 2018: 290). Similarly, in Istanbul, “the coffeehouse was indeed an extension of home, the street and the market, resisting the easy and convenient distinction between the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ that has proved a pivotal ingredient of the debate on the emergence of the public sphere in early modern Europe” (Kirli, 2016: 172). It’s also worth emphasising Withington’s point that coffeehouses were not necessarily orderly spaces either. In mid-Victorian Britain, a Select Committee considering places of public entertainment heard complaints from the Metropolitan Police that London’s coffeeshops—unregulated, unlike pubs—witnessed “scenes of very great disorder and great mischief” (1852–1853: 13). The coffeehouses of Ottoman Istanbul were also closely surveilled (Kirli, 2016), and the Turkish Republic saw village coffeehouses as threats to rural productivity and civil society (Öztürk, 2008). Alcoholised spaces were not straightforwardly ‘public’, and coffee was not always associated with a sober, wakeful and rational activity.

If their appeal was not a consequence of their facilitation of public life, then perhaps drinking places were valued for their welcoming character and association with hospitality? We consider this in the next section.

Good places? Sociability, commensality and hospitality

While there might not be a straightforward relationship between intoxication and publicness, another influential characterisation of these sites, from Ray Oldenburg's *The Great Good Place* (1989), can help us consider a cluster of social theoretical ideas sometimes associated with discussions of drinking places: sociability, commensality and hospitality.

Arguing that America needed to revitalise its 'third places'—sites between home and work, which are "the core settings of informal public life" (16)—Oldenburg combined sociology, history and folksy anecdote to set out the things that make these sites 'good places'. He emphasised their openness, their nature as 'neutral ground' for all, dominated by conversation and playful interaction, with a crowd of regulars helping to set the tone. Intoxication is not essential, though, as bookshops and other urban spaces can also be good places. This wider genre of spaces has more recently been described by the sociologist Eric Klinenberg as 'social infrastructure' (2018), defined by Alan Latham and Jack Layton as "networks of spaces, facilities, institutions, and groups that create affordances for social connection" (2019: 3). From this perspective, drinking places and cafés are just one kind of commercial social infrastructure. Georg Simmel seems to have been one of Oldenburg's inspirations, so we might imagine that in these places, we interact with others in ways that go beyond instrumental calculation, where sociability is 'the play form of association' (Simmel, 1997: 122). This is very different from Thorstein Veblen's discussion of the habits of American journeymen printers, who were well known for their "dram-drinking, 'treating,' [*round-buying*] and smoking in public places" (1915: 90). For Veblen, this was not a moral failing but a form of conspicuous consumption, a demonstration of the printer's wealth, implying secure employment and skilled labour. A printer who only socialised in order to advertise their own success and hear about employment

possibilities would be a poor drinking companion, however. For Simmel, sociability must avoid both objective reality—drinking as a way of looking for work—and ‘the absolutely personal and subjective’, as it might if the printer treated the bartender as his personal therapist (Simmel, 1997: 123). While we have still not established the importance of intoxication in these sites, this note about sociability suggests that it might be worth examining two closely associated concepts: commensality and hospitality.

Commensality emphasises the importance of sharing a table, sharing food and drink with others. Drawing again on Simmel, Claude Fischler reminds us that while eating is inevitably individual—no one can eat what we are eating—we can at least share the *act* of consumption; “it counteracts the essential, basic, biological, ‘exclusive selfishness of eating’ and turns it into, at the very least, a collective, social experience” (2011: 531). While it can create exclusion and hierarchy as well as inclusion and equality, commensality may well be one of the things that gives drinking places their association with conviviality and openness. These sites also offer hospitality, where the instrumental calculations of the hospitality industry meet the kinds of ‘light-touch’ sociability that make us feel welcome in otherwise anonymous urban environments (Bell, 2007). While unconditional hospitality may not be possible, the work of Derrida and others indicates ways in which drinking places might provide ‘hybrid’ forms of hospitality to the stranger, even in ‘staged’ encounters with the ‘affable barman’ who has been trained to provide a service (Bell, 2007: 17).

Returning to temperance efforts to create ‘alternatives to the pub’, for example, it is clear that reformers sought alcohol-free commensality and hospitality. Temperance banquets brought hundreds of men and women of different classes together in orderly feasts to consume tea and

cakes, for example (Rappaport, 2013). While tea had widely varying meanings for its consumers, these commensal events created both hierarchy and conviviality, as banquets were often chaired by local worthies or representatives of temperance societies, and friends and strangers ate and drank together.

Sociability, commensality and hospitality are found in other sites and do not depend on intoxication, so this can only explain part of the link between drinking places and the welcoming publicness of the 'great good place'. To understand the relationship between intoxicants and hospitality, we need to examine their shared material culture and the idea of the gift.

'With Beer One Thanks': intoxicants and the gift

While publicness, sociability, commensality and hospitality were often associated with drinking places, they are not dependent on the intoxicants consumed in these sites. Turning to insights developed in material culture studies allows us to find closer links between intoxicants and these social practices. In this section, we return to publicness, sociability, commensality and hospitality to argue that while they are not unique to drinking places, their strong association with these sites is the result of specific social practices and material cultures.

The importance of the gift in experiences of intoxication has not had as much attention as it deserves. Building upon a saying from 1872, however—"With beer one thanks, but with money one pays" (cited in Harrison, 1971: 55)—Mariana Adler has suggested that, "Through the giving and exchange of drinks social ties of obligation and reciprocity were established" (1991: 382). Money converted sociability into purely instrumental action, but the gift of a drink meant something more. As Marcel Mauss noted, "the thing received is not inactive. Even when it has

been abandoned by the giver, it still possesses something of him” (1990: 15). A gifted drink creates the obligation to respond in kind, adding “a moral or ethical dimension to gift exchange that is fundamentally irreducible to economic calculation” (Pawlett, 2011: 659). A gift does more than express the relationship between giver and receiver; it *produces* that relationship. And as gifts create not only relationships between individuals, but also relations with wider cultural ideas like charity or generosity, the gift of a drink connects giver and receiver to a broader ethic of hospitality. In other words, the gift of a drink helps create the character of drinking places.

In Britain and the US in this period, buying drinks for others was called ‘treating’. Sometimes, a treat was reciprocated, often through the buying of rounds of drinks, suggesting an equal relationship. Mass Observation noted that men sometimes completed a round, each member of a group buying their share, even though they did not want to drink that much or could not really afford to (1943). Elsewhere, some drinkers bought more than others, though. Dennis *et al.*’s study of a West Yorkshire mining community found that higher earners bought other workers drinks, suggesting that this was a form of ‘capital destruction’ which narrowed differences in income and status between different groups of men (1956). As this suggests, of course, this gift might create hierarchy as well as conviviality. As Dietler notes, “commensal hospitality ... like the exchange of gifts, serves to establish and reproduce social relations”, and these relations can be antagonistic just as gift exchanges can be (2001: 74). Skilled workers in Soviet Russia demanded vodka as ‘pay’ for the informal apprenticeship of new factory workers, and as this ‘booty’ was shared with their superiors, it flowed upwards like a tithe, creating

bonds with the managers above them rather than the workers below them (Transchel, 2006: 134–135). Gifts of drink created both egalitarian and hierarchical environments.

What Mauss called ‘the obligation to reciprocate’ can be seen in Mass Observation’s description of round-buying: “the strong social compulsion for its observance, the stigma attached to those who do not carry it out, and the resentment expressed by anyone accused of doing so” (1943: 177). Bolton’s drinkers were judged on their generosity, their adoption of an ethic of hospitality. These practices created a connection between drinking places and intoxicants, and trust, sociability, hospitality and commensality. According to his biographer, Mass Observation’s Tom Harrison agreed with this understanding of drinking: “It was, he felt, the only way to know a man or to learn if you could trust him” (Heimann, 2003: 22). A similar ‘code’ was observed in saloons in the United States at the turn of the century: “men who did each other the honor of drinking together also were expected to celebrate and reinforce their special bond through the swapping of drinks, favors, small loans, and other gestures of mutual assistance and friendship” (Powers, 1994: 1). The saloon ‘regular’ was loyal to the rules that bound the group—“constancy, conformity, conviviality, commonality”—guiding the ways in which drinkers interacted with one another (Powers, 1998: 21). The ‘good’ qualities of drinking places were actively produced in these exchanges of material things, and the sites in which they happened took on those characteristics.

Less attention has been paid to the commensal consumption of other intoxicants. One English tobacco trade publication estimated that each publican gave away 80–100 gross of clay pipes to their customers every year, which “further suggests the importance of hospitality in the smoking ritual” (Hilton, 2000: 49). This gift from the publican might have been at small cost to

them at one or two shillings per gross (British Weekly, 1889: 70), but it still suggests something more than canny marketing. Against the tendency of smokers to describe their consumption as a solitary, contemplative, pleasure, there are many indications that these gifted pipes could be commensally smoked, like the 'body of smoke' created by Sala's sugarbakers or the smoking of Dickens' coalheavers. This description of a 'smoking parliament' in London in the 1850s presents another example: "pipes were always placed on the table after dinner, together with screws of shag tobacco, and a smoking parliament moistened with hot or cold punch according to the seasons, was generally held during the following hour" (Apperson, 1914: 163).

This commensality could also be a gift between smokers. In the twentieth century, one German critic of the cigarette nonetheless recognised its value "as the symbol of a hospitable home when time does not permit that anything else be offered" (cited in Schivelbusch, 1993: 116). Mass Observation recorded cigarette 'rounds' in pubs and other drinking places; this "helped define the group, it enclosed a community to the exclusion of non-smokers and continued the public, communal mode of consumption" (Hilton, 2000: 130). Mass Observers estimated that only half of the groups they observed in ordinary post-war cafés offered cigarettes around, which they thought was actually a sign of 'cigarette close-fistedness'; "it takes the more relaxed and social atmosphere of the pub to persuade the smoker to regard his cigarettes with a less possessive eye; in the pubs packets are more freely offered round" (1949: 128–129). This identification of 'close-fistedness' echoed criticism of the 'slow-motion people' who were last to offer to buy a round of drinks (1943: 178), again indicating the obligation to reciprocate. Victorian smokers made similar complaints about 'tobacco-cadgers' who exploited the custom of sharing tobacco by taking more than one pipe's 'charge' when it was offered, or not

reciprocating (Wright, 1867: 93–94). In one of W. W. Jacobs' short stories, an unpopular Londoner is described as "The sort of man that 'ad always left his baccy-box at 'ome, but always 'ad a big pipe in 'is pocket" (1919: 84). Treating might also have prompted greater consumption, as smokers reported smoking more in company; "smoking in the social relaxation of the pub is about three times as frequent as smoking in lunch-time cafes, buses, dance halls, queues or the street" (Mass Observation, 1949: 145). However, Observers saw pub smoking as "a way of underlining and embellishing enjoyment that is already there" (145). Either way, smoking was strongly associated with sociability.

This association with gifting and sharing was visible elsewhere too. In interwar Egypt, cigarette advertising "expressed the same sense of social familiarity earlier associated with the habit of the water-pipe", showing the cigarette as "a means to keep company, to connect, rather than as a way to portray individualism... In ads, smokers offered a cigarette to a friend, or lit a cigarette for a companion as a token of camaraderie and respect" (Shecter, 2005: 488). In China, tobacco was already part of the hospitality hosts were obliged to offer, "join[ing] tea as the quintessential expression of hospitality when receiving guests ... Cordially offering visitors a pipe along with tea, snacks, or alcohol signaled one's generosity, good manners, and refinement" (Benedict, 2011: 68). In twentieth-century Chengdu teahouses supplied patrons with tobacco, pipes and cigarettes, much as British pubs did (Wang, 2008: 127). Wu Zuxiang's 1944 essay 'Yan' (Tobacco) considers the changing importance of sharing tobacco; "there are no rituals one can engage in to replicate the kind of intimate sharing implied by passing along the hookah. Instead, all one can do is open a pack and offer a mass-produced stick to the other"

(Benedict, 2011: 192). However even as a degraded form of hospitality, cigarette sharing was still important for masculine social networks at the end of the twentieth century (247). Approaching the consumption of alcohol and tobacco as a form of material culture allows us to locate some of the characteristics of drinking places in particular practices and material things, rather than seeing them as part of a more nebulous association of ideas and specific places. In pre-industrial Russia, for example, a gift of vodka could create symbolic capital in different ways: for the parents of the bride at village weddings; as payment for contributors to *pomochi* (work parties for road building or harvesting) or as a fine or compensation for wrongdoing (Transchel, 2006: 17–19). Communal generosity, collective labour and justice were associated with village life, rather than drinking places, but once these practices became established in urban taverns, they took on some of the positively valued character of the commune. Drinking place sociability *produced* commensality, hospitality and generosity, just as contemporary home decoration actively *makes* homes, genders and classes (Gullestad, 1993). A gifted drink or cigarette materialises or objectifies these qualities. But does it matter that these practices and things intoxicate?

Material engagements, intoxicating atmospheres

What role does alcohol play within ‘social infrastructure’? Mass Observation saw something like drunkenness without alcohol in football and holiday crowds and other contemporary forms of excitement: “the hysterical forms of revivalism and mass enthusiasm produce substantially the same effects as drink in an industrialized culture, and tend to replace altogether the need for alcohol in the individuals concerned” (1943: 252–253). Do we need to privilege sociability over

intoxication, though? Bruno Latour suggested that social scientists tend to see objects as “mere receptacles for human categories” (1993: 52); from that perspective, alcohol and tobacco simply *represent* hospitality or intoxication. On the other side of the divide, natural scientists assume that intoxicants are strong and society is weak, turning “humans into so many puppets manipulated by objective forces” (53).

To get beyond the stale dichotomy Latour identified, we might turn to recent work in what is sometimes described as the ‘new materialism’. A useful demonstration of the value of these ideas comes from Alan Latham and Derek McCormack’s discussion of the ‘psychoactive socialities’ intoxicants help create in cities (2004). Drawing on Deleuze and others, they consider bodies, alcohol and other elements of city life as assemblages rather than ‘solid’ and singular objects. Rather than a powerful, external force acting upon us, “the fluid and volatile liquidity of alcohol confronts us with the difficulty of apprehending its materiality as an object” (715). This is because things do not have innate properties but develop capacities through their interactions with other things. Alcohol is one thing in a bottle and another in the bloodstream, but it remains lively, possessing the capacity to change, to become new things. It could be very difficult to make alcohol-free temperance drinks in the nineteenth century, for example. A British report on ginger, herb and botanic beers of this kind conducted in 1906 found that 37% of them contained more than 2% alcohol by volume (ABV), the level at which the law defined them as alcoholic drinks; around 13% of the total contained 4–6% ABV, and the strongest 3% ranged between 6 and 9.5% ABV. While some may have been misleadingly labelled by unscrupulous producers, it is more likely that their strength was the result of accidental fermentation caused by poor storage or the use of very strong alcohol to make the essences

that gave them their flavour (Pratt, 1907: 223–224). The ‘Bishop’s Beer’ sold in Bishop Fallows’s temperance ‘Home Salon’ in Chicago was non-alcoholic only for the first two weeks after brewing, at which point fermentation (and disqualification as a temperance drink) became a real possibility (Calkins, 1901: 226).

These lively concoctions seem to fit Jane Bennett’s idea of ‘vital materialism’, which considers “the capacity of things—edibles, commodities, storms, metals—not only to impede or block the will and design of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own” (2010: xiii). Alcohol has the capacity to do different things as it forms relations with us, acting as an antiseptic bactericide in hand sanitiser gel, or intoxicating us when consumed, much as Bennett considers eating as the addition of food to a ‘non-linear’ assemblage (our bodies) with unpredictable and emergent effects (2010: 42). As Courtwright noted, the arrival of new substances—sugar (and the spirits made from it), tobacco, coffee, tea—from Europe’s colonies triggered a ‘psychoactive revolution’ that changed not only tastes but also bodies, feelings and thoughts (2001). Sugar made new relations possible in the eighteenth century, quickly joining tea and coffee in British cups and encouraging rituals of gentlemanly sociability around the punchbowl (Harvey, 2012). In late nineteenth-century France, the availability of cheap sugar made from beets just as *phylloxera* was destroying the nation’s vineyards encouraged a new taste for brandies and spirit drinks like absinthe, and a new commensal ritual, the *aperitif* (Prestwich, 1988). Fittingly, one of Latham and McCormack’s examples of “the active, affective role played by the nonhuman (or inhuman) in shaping emergent materialities” is the sweetness of that 1990s folk devil, the ‘alcopop’ (2004: 717). Sugar and alcohol turn out to be lively substances, good mixers, entering into

highly productive relationships with all kinds of other assemblages, including our bodies and social spaces.

But if we are looking for assemblages, for collections of things, people and affect, why stop with intoxicants, when we might see drinking places themselves as intoxicating? The material form of drinking places and the objects they contain have been thought to encourage alcohol consumption, like the ‘perpendicular drinking’ associated with nineteenth-century bars without seats in both London and Mexico City, or the encouragement that open, undivided bars apparently gave to drinking, as acquaintances saw and treated one another (Kneale, 1999, 2012; Toner, 2011). We might also think of the affective ‘atmospheres’ of intoxication, with atmospheres understood as “aesthetic and affective spaces”, “spaces not so much as three-dimensional containers for activity, but as shifting configurations of bodies, materials, and ideas taking place with different degrees of affective intensity and duration” (McCormack 2013: 59, 60). The intoxicating atmospheres of drinking places emerge from the interaction of humans and non-humans, including less apparently material things like light and shadow, or the intensity and rhythm of sound (Duff, 2012; Wilton and Moreno, 2012; Shaw, 2014; Wilkinson, 2017).

Thinking historically, Dickens’ famous description of an early London gin palace, originally published in 1835 (Jackson, 2019: 6), is often read for the contrast it draws between the opulence of this site and the poverty of its patrons, but it also suggests an intoxicating atmosphere:

All is light and brilliancy. The hum of many voices issues from that splendid gin-shop ... the gay building with the fantastically ornamented parapet, the illuminated clock,

the plate-glass windows surrounded by stucco rosettes, and its profusion of gas-lights in richly-gilt burners, is perfectly dazzling when contrasted with the darkness and dirt we have just left... A bar of French-polished mahogany, elegantly carved, extends the whole width of the place; and there are two side-aisles of great casks, painted green and gold, enclosed within a light brass rail...

(1875: 166)

Not all drinking places could offer the etched and coloured glass, mirrors, polished metal and wood, marble, tiles, gas lights, and shining bottles and glasses that were found in gin palaces or cabarets, but they would all have some kind of atmosphere: smoke and other smells, fragrant and otherwise; talk, laughter, music, contemplative or hostile silences. Different spaces might have their own specific atmospheres like the snug (private, cosy) and the open bar (public, lively); Stella Moss reads Mass Observation's study of types of rooms in Bolton's pubs as productive of different masculinities in a similar fashion (2016). Clearly, alcohol played an important part in these assemblages, and so did human bodies, but the intoxicating atmosphere of these venues belongs to the assemblage, not to those two elements alone. Cameron Duff's description of a rather different example makes a similar point. "The young man about to consume a tablet of ecstasy in a downtown warehouse party is not the only agent involved in this consumption", Duff suggests; we should also consider the text messages that connect him to friends and others; the music, the equipment that provides it and the skills of the DJ in creating and playing his set; the furniture and carefully calibrated design of spaces within the club; even the new trainers he is looking forward to testing on the dance floor (2012:

150). For Duff, this approach offers another way of thinking about the contexts of consumption: “What if one were to prioritise analysis of the *event of consumption* rather than the drug user?” (2014: 636, emphasis in original). The task of the researcher who is also part of this event is then to reflect on the shared experience of it, or the ‘common-sense’ of this intoxication as Thomas Thurnell-Read puts it (2011: 46), a collective sensory engagement with laughter, music or the smells of vodka and vomit.

This consideration of the event of consumption goes beyond the idea of ‘drunken deportment’ (MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969) because it refuses to divide intoxication into ‘physiological’ and ‘cultural’ elements, while decentring drunkenness and the ‘effects’ of consumption. Sala’s description of the sugarbakers’ beer-shop takes in the smoke, the smokers and their song—the atmosphere as he encountered it—and alcohol is just another element. Other forms of intoxication emerge from these environments. Perhaps the short pipes that marked out working-class smokers were short for a reason, for example. While “Smoking was a mobile activity that might be combined with working as well as leisure and sociability” (Owens *et al.*, 2010: 220), the long-stemmed ‘churchwarden’s pipe’ was, for G. L. Apperson, intended for smokers “of what I might call a sedentary nature. You could not even walk while holding a long churchwarden in your mouth... Labourers smoked short clays when out of doors, and churchwardens when they rested from their labours and took their ease in their inn in the evenings” (1914: 164–165). While the origins of its name remain obscure, there are suggestions that the churchwarden’s long stem also made it the best pipe to smoke while reading, so it could be a solitary pipe as well as a sociable one. Seen as an event of consumption, as a coming together of practice, mobility and materiality, the churchwarden required a seat or at least

somewhere to stand still, while the short pipe, like the cigarette that replaced it, needed fewer accessories.

Expanded sites, mobile objects

As a final consideration, we might explode these drinking places even further, following their material and affective components away from the sites themselves. British drinkers circulated from pub to pub, weaving connections between drinking places, homes, workplaces and other sites. Objects travelled with them: the clay pipes publicans gave away, the bottles, buckets, jugs or 'growlers' that carried pub-poured beer into homes, the drinking and smoking paraphernalia deliberately or absent-mindedly taken from the bar. We know that the flow of alcohol out of drinking places worried British reformers because the Child Messenger Act of 1901 restricted children to carrying beer home to their parents in containers sealed or corked after filling; after the 1908 Children's Act, only premises with a dedicated off-sales or 'jug-and-bottle' counter could sell beer to children (Moss, 2009; Jennings, 2016). Alcohol spilling out of pubs contaminated surrounding spaces (Croll, 1999; Kneale, 1999; Kneale, 2001), affecting even those charged with protecting society against it, as Richard Robinson's account of Brighton's drunken policemen shows (2016). In the US, the women and children who 'rushed the growler', carrying pails of beer from the salon, blurred the distinction between supposedly public and private spaces, but drink was also highly mobile throughout the city as beer peddlers sold bottles from wagons (Duis, 1983).

We can follow these objects, tracing their biographies and trajectories (Appadurai, 1986, and see Cook, 2004). Archaeologists, historians and historical geographers have suggested that the

material culture of intoxicant consumption is ubiquitous in many urban sites. We would expect the remains of clay pipes and drinking vessels to make up a significant part of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century American and British drinking place assemblages (Pearce, 2000), but it is more interesting when they turn up in rubbish left by households in Victorian Limehouse:

Discarded household objects, often marked by years of wear and tear, draw attention to the minutiae of daily domestic routines: the preparation of food and drink and the coming together of people at different times of the day for their consumption; the grind of household chores; the care of children; or the moments of sociability, pleasure and release offered by alcohol and tobacco.

(Owens *et al.*, 2010: 214)

These objects included a pewter vessel engraved with the name of the nearby Spread Eagle pub (Owens and Jefferies, 2016), and many well-smoked pipes, possibly given away in this or another local drinking place. Elsewhere in London, this team found ‘moralising china’ dinner services, some with temperance connotations, alongside large numbers of wine bottles (Jefferies *et al.*, 2009). The contradictory nature of these assemblages emphasises the fluidity and complexity of these mobile material worlds. Tavern flasks, jugs, tankards and mugs are found in other domestic assemblages in Lambeth, alongside pipes (Tyler, 2004) and in the Kent village of Guston discarded jugs were probably used to carry beer from the Plough to labourers’ cottages (Licence, 2015). If we can ‘follow’ these objects—like the Spread Eagle’s pewter (Owens and Jefferies, 2016), the glass bottles the Biucchi brothers sold in Clerkenwell (Jefferies, 2009), the beer bottles thrown away by a Shropshire postman (Licence, 2015) and the bottles that evaded

Prohibition restrictions at six sites in California (Mosher and Wilkie, 2010)—we can connect homes, workplaces and drinking places.

Archaeological work of this kind, coupled with a historical attention to traces of material things in archives, allows us to expand our sense of these sites, in much the same way that Ruth Slatter has approached London's Methodist chapels. The material spaces of these chapels expanded and shifted as cups, saucers, cutlery, tables and chairs travelled up and down the steep hill of Archway Road, or as a communion service was given from one East London chapel to another (2019b). These mobile, material things and spaces were as much a part of Methodist religious experience (Slatter, 2019a) as seats and gas-lights were part of the intoxicating atmosphere of the gin palace. Seeing sites as 'becoming', on the verge of turning into something else or held together by practices of care, restoration and co-habitation (Edensor, 2011), extends our apprehension of them in both time and space.

Conclusions

This chapter has suggested that we might expand our understanding of drinking places, chiefly by extending our understanding of intoxication to include other substances as well as the wider contexts, sites and meanings of consumption, and by more closely examining the relationship between intoxication and the associations drinking places have with sociability, commensality and hospitality. As mobile and expansive assemblages of affects, bodies and objects, these sites turn out to be much more diffuse places than we might have expected them to be, and much less dominated by drinking and alcohol as opposed to other practices and materials.

However, it is worth considering some of the new questions that might emerge from the synthesis of these perspectives on intoxication and place. One of the key problems here is the tension between the human-centred approach of material culture studies and the post-humanist arguments of many forms of new materialism. If a cigarette offered to a fellow smoker simply signifies hospitality, for example, does it matter that it is a cigarette and not something else? Powers notes that saloon bartenders were not allowed to accept a customer's offer of a drink; asking for cash instead was thought to be 'baldly mercenary' but it was acceptable to take a cigar, because both had the same money value and "treating with tobacco was regarded as a sociable and roughly comparable gesture to treating with alcohol" (1994: 5). From this perspective, the intoxicating capacities of beer and cigarettes are less important than their equivalence as gifts.

However, we might see intoxication as a key part of this sociability, as an affective outcome closely bound up with feelings of commensality and hospitality. Dietler sees intoxication as a special form of commensality precisely *because* these materials form new relations with their consumers:

Alcoholic beverages frequently have a privileged role in the feasting context because they are essentially food with certain psychoactive properties resulting from an alternative means of preparation that tend to amplify their significance in the important dramaturgical aspects of ritual... Moreover, this property of fermentation as a quasi-magical transformation of food into a substance that, in turn, transforms human consciousness augments the symbolic value of alcohol in the common liminal aspects of rituals.

(2001: 72–73)

The transformation of food into alcohol is not simply a change in meaning but a change in food's capacities. Working on the ways in which these approaches contradict and complement each other might help to draw out the importance that the special charge of intoxication, as a more-than-human outcome, has for what we tend to think of as purely human forms of sociability.

The second issue concerns critical insights that have not been explored in this chapter, but which remain of utmost importance. Much of the work on drinking places drawn upon here is concerned with social difference—class, gender, sexuality, race, age and more. Practices and substances of commensality and generosity can exclude or dominate just as easily as they bring equals together, and a consumption event or assemblage can create outcomes that divide and exclude. For Valerie Hey, masculine pub sociability was driven by a 'taboo against unbonding', for example, where men's commensal, hospitable experience is threatened by women (1986). Similarly, Mass Observation's discussion of British smoking noted that "Post-war wage increases have gone for the most part to the man of the house rather than to the housewife, and have been used by him largely to balance the extra cost of tobacco" (Mass Observation, 1949: 3). Pub smoking, like the drinking discussed by Moss (2016), clearly created very different kinds of experiences. It also shaped other kinds of relationships. The nineteenth-century pipes bought so cheaply by the publican and freely given away to customers, the majority of them men, were made by women working at home; "Clay pipes are difficult to make, and require a great deal of practice. Sixteen must be made to the dozen, for many break, and many are imperfect. ... And after all this, the pipes are sold [*to the publican*] at less than a farthing each!" (British Weekly,

1889: 70–71). In this way, masculine enjoyment of commensal smoking in ‘great good places’ depended in part on free pipes produced by women’s poorly paid domestic labour.

Still, tracing these contradictions and connections is entirely in keeping with the argument that we should be looking at these and other spaces with a new eye for the things that emerge from them, often unexpectedly. A broader examination of drinking places may well generate entirely new questions for researchers interested in intoxication.

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