

“Be Drunk”: The Art of Intoxication

Fall 2018, Department of English, University of North Florida

LIT 4934 Bldg. 9-Fred Shultz Hall; Room 1233 Tues. and Thurs.: 9:25-10:40 AM

Professor: Clark Lunberry, Ph.D.

Website: <http://www.unf.edu/~clunberry/>

Office Hours: Tues. and Thurs. 10:50 AM – 1:00 PM (and by appointment)

Email: clark.lunberry@unf.edu

Phone: (904) 620-2273

Office: Bldg. 8, Rm. 2645

“You have to be always drunk. That's all there is to it—it's the only way. So as not to feel the horrible burden of time that breaks your back and bends you to the earth, you have to be continually drunk.”

— Charles Baudelaire, “Be Drunk”

“Now I am an outcast. I loathe my country. The best thing for me is a drunken sleep on the beach.”

— Arthur Rimbaud, “A Season in Hell”

Intoxication offers hope. Intoxication offers escape. Intoxication offers the comforting illusion of being alive, a temporary respite from the weight of the world...its tasks, duties, assignments...and an escape from time's passing, time's passing away. Such sentiments were voiced by the 19th century French poet Charles Baudelaire in his still stunning and provocative prose poem “Be Drunk.”

In this class, we will have as our focus the art of intoxication that has, in part, helped to shape (and derange) our modern and contemporary sensibilities. Beginning, as we must, with Baudelaire, we will chart our way through the rich and hallucinatory terrain by which so many modern writers and artists have written and created so vividly of various forms of intoxication. Imagined there are alternative worlds, an expanded consciousness (of consciousness), and a desired and euphoric escape from the dreariness, the boredom of everyday life...the tedium (and terror) of “Time.” (Our modern dilemma is just that: we are burdened by both too little time—causing terror—and too much time—causing tedium—with both, maddeningly, endured at the same damn time!). I'll be the designated driver.

In addition to Baudelaire, we will also be engaging the work of Edgar Allan Poe (“A Tale of the Ragged Mountain”), Thomas de Quincey (*Confessions of an English Opium Eater*), Arthur Rimbaud (“Drunken Boat” and “A Season in Hell”), Sigmund Freud (“On Cocaine”), Henri Michaux (*Miserable Miracle*), Antonin Artaud (*The Peyote Dance*), Walter Benjamin (*On Hashish*), Mina Loy (“Lunar Baedeker”), Aldous Huxley (*The Doors of Perception and A Season in Hell*), María Sabina (and the “Mushroom Ceremony of the Mazatec Indians of Mexico”), Billie Holliday (from *Lady Sings the Blues*), Oliver Sacks on hallucinations, and more.

Required Texts: In order for us to all be “on the same page” in our discussions, please buy the exact editions of the books listed below, with the same ISBN. All of these books are available on-line and in the UNF bookstore.

1. *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, by Thomas De Quincey. Publisher: Dover Publications; ISBN-10: 0486287424
2. *Miserable Miracle*, by Henri Michaux. Publisher: NYRB Classics; ISBN-10: 1590170016
3. *The Doors of Perception and A Season in Hell*, by Aldous Huxley. Publisher: Harper Perennial Modern Classics. ISBN-10: 0061729078.
4. *A Season in Hell & The Drunken Boat*, by Arthur Rimbaud. Publisher: New Directions; ISBN-10: 0811219488
5. *Artificial Paradises: Baudelaire's Masterpiece on Hashish*, by Charles Baudelaire. Publisher: Citadel; ISBN-10: 0806514833
6. *On Hashish*, by Walter Benjamin. Publisher: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press; ISBN-10: 0674022211
7. *Baudelaire: Poems*. Publisher: Everyman's Library, ISBN-10: 0679429107