

The Vocabulary of Drunkenness¹

Harry Gene Levine²

SUMMARY. American terms meaning "drunk," taken from various dictionaries, including that of Benjamin Franklin (1737), are listed and discussed.

THE EDITORS of the *Dictionary of American Slang* (1, p. 652) report that "the concept having the most slang synonyms is *drunk*." The *Dictionary* lists 353 terms, with more added in the Appendix. In 1737 Benjamin Franklin compiled a list of 228 terms for being drunk (2). *The American Thesaurus of Slang* (3) lists close to 900 terms.³

Obviously, Americans, like many other peoples of the world, have taken being drunk very seriously. Alcohol researchers, however, have not—they have never seriously examined normal, ordinary, nonpathological drunkenness: the drunkenness of parties and celebrations, of beginnings and endings, and of mourning. The various words for *drunk* are data on the meaning of drunkenness in American culture, and the interpretations of items appear to be wide open.⁴

It is striking that so many of the American synonyms of *drunk* suggest some kind of power, force or violence, often used to de-

¹ From the Department of Sociology, Queens College of the City University of New York, and the Social Research Group, University of California, Berkeley.

² Department of Sociology, Queens College, Flushing, New York 11367.

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³ This article is concerned with American expressions for being drunk. It seems likely that in at least some other languages there are more synonyms for *drunk* than for any other word. It seems plausible that cultures in which drunkenness is common (especially spirits-drinking societies of the British Isles, Scandinavia, parts of Eastern Europe and parts of Latin America) would have the most expressions. It also seems likely that as spirits drinking or as drunkenness becomes more common anywhere, more expressions for being drunk would appear. One question for cross-cultural comparison concerns the types of metaphors used to describe drunkenness. Is America exceptional in its use of forceful and violent words, or do other languages use them with the same frequency?

⁴ *The Dictionary of American Slang* has meanings in the text for most of the terms listed in its appendixes and in this article. Flexner's *I Hear America Talking* (4) has words for a number of things besides drunkenness, including saloons, aspects of the liquor business and names of drinks. H. L. Mencken's *The American Language* (5) also discusses a number of synonyms of *drinking*, *prohibition* and *alcohol*. Rubington's (6) "The language of 'drunks'" is a fine dictionary of terms used by Skid Row alcoholics and homeless men.

scribe good times. For example: *crashed, clobbered, bombed, busted, crocked, swacked, boxed, potted, buried, canned, gassed, plastered, shellacked, wiped-out, tanked, ossified, looped, packaged, paralyzed, shot, damaged, whipped, battered, screwed* and so on. These are not at all inherently derogatory terms, and often they are used to describe pleasurable occasions, both remembered and anticipated, as in the expression "When this is finished I am going to get really bombed [smashed, plastered, etc.]." The forceful and violent words are frequently used to describe drunkenness in celebration, a good time. But what exactly is good about being drunk—about being *stoned* or *smashed*? Why would someone look forward to being *bombed*, or recall with pleasure when he, or some part of himself, was *clobbered* or *buried*? And why do people keep finding new terms to describe the experience, terms which are often other powerful, violent or forceful metaphors? The Appendix to the *Dictionary of American Slang* (p. 764) notes that "slang synonyms for *drunk* continue to appear with amazing frequency," and lists among the more recent ones, *bagged, blitzed, bombed, crashed, have a kick in the guts, plowed, shit-faced, tore down, tore up, twisted* and *wiped-out*.

The forceful and violent words imply that something is smashed, wiped out, buried, and so on. I suggest that that something might be thought of as ordinary or everyday consciousness and experience. Leaving the ordinary consciousness of everyday life requires considerable force—it is not easy to do—and in some profound (but recognizable) way it is experienced as the destruction of something. Perhaps this is best captured in the expression *out of my mind*, which is also used to describe nonalcohol states. It means, roughly, not being one's normal self, truly disconnected from one's ordinary ways of perceiving and acting. It is commonly used to describe drunkenness, as in the expression "This Saturday I'm going to get bombed [smashed, etc.] out of my mind." This is not the anticipation of a stupor as much as it is the anticipation of a break with ordinary consciousness. In short, part of the pleasure of drunkenness is the pleasure involve in destroying everyday consciousness. The unceasing stream of forceful and violent words signifies that.

To begin to answer questions about the language of drunkenness involves steps toward a theory of intoxication. Among the tasks involved in studying drunkenness is developing ways to think about and talk about both ordinary experience (which probably would not be equated with sobriety) and drunkenness. The division of life and experience into two different realms recalls Durkheim's (7) idea

that the divisions of the sacred and the profane are the elementary forms of religious life, and Castañeda's (8) notions of ordinary and nonordinary reality. There are many more such frameworks for discussion of drunkenness.

The editors of the *Dictionary of American Slang* suggest that most of the terms associated with being drunk are associated with being unconscious or dead; being happy, high, content, bright or conspicuous; staggering, especially as a sailor on rough seas; being physically bent or beaten; and being bottled or cooked. They also note that there are some nonsense words (like *pifflicated*). Obviously there are many possible categories.

The following are all of the terms meaning *drunk* in the 1975 edition of the *Dictionary of American Slang* (1, pp. 652-654)⁵:

alkied; all geezed up; aped.

balmy; bamboozled; basted; battered; behind the cork; bent; biggy; bleary-eyed; blind; blinded; blink, on the; bloated; blotto; blown; blown up; blue; blue around the gills; blue-eyed; boiled; boozed; boozed up; boozy; bottled; bowzed; bowzered; breezy; bridgey; bruised; bungey; bunned; buried; burn with a low blue flame; buzzed; buzzey.

caged; canned; canned up; carry a (heavy) load; cat; clobbered; cocked; cock-eyed; comfortable; cooked; corked; corned; crocked; cronk; crump; crumped; crumped out; cuckooed; cut.

dagged; damaged; D and D; dead to the world; decks awash; ding-swizzled; discouraged; disguised; draw a blank; drunk.

edged; elevated; embalmed.

faint; feel good; feel no pain; fired up; fish-eyed; fishy; floating; flooey; fogmatic; folded; four sheets to (in) the wind; foxed; fractured; frazzled; fresh; fried; fried up; full; full as an egg; full as a tick; fuzzled; fuzzy.

gaged; gassed; gay; gayed; geared up; geezed; ginned; ginned up; glassy; glassy-eyed; glowed; glued; gone; greased; grogged; guyed out; guzzled.

half-cocked; half-corned; half-crocked; half-screwed; half seas over; half shaved; half-shot; half-slewed; half-snaped; half-sprung; half-stewed; half the bay over; half the bay under; half under; hammered; hang one on; happy; have a bag on; have a bun on; have a can on; have a glow on; have an edge on; have a package on; have a snoot full; have (one's) gage up; have (one's) pots on; heeled; high; high as a kite; higher than a

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kite; high lonesome; hipped; hoary-eyed; hooted; hot; how-come-ye-so.

illuminated; in the gutter; in (one's) cups.

jagged; jammed; jazzed; jingled; jolly; jugged; jug-steamed; juiced; juiced up.

killed; kited; knocked for a loop; knocked out.

laid out; lathered; limp; lined; liquored; liquored up; lit; lit to the gills; lit to the guards; lit up; lit up like a Christmas tree (Main Street, Times Square, Broadway, a store window, a church, etc.); loaded; loaded for bear; loaded to the gills (the muzzle, the plimsoll mark, etc.); looped; looped-legged; loopy; lubricated; lush; lushed; lushed up.

mellow; melted; merry; mokus; mulled; mulled up.

oiled; on the lee lurch; on the sauce; on the shikker; organized; orie-eyed; ossified; out like a light; out on the roof; overboard; overset; owly-eyed.

packaged; paralyzed; parboiled; petrified; pickled; pie-eyed; piffed; pifficated; piffled; pifflicated; pigeon-eyed; pilfered; pinked; piped; pixilated; plastered; plonked; polished up; polluted; potted; potted up; potty; preserved; primed; pruned.

raunchy; ready; rigid; Rileyed; ripe; rocky; rosy; rum-dum.

salted down; sap-happy; sapped; saturated; sawed; scraunched; screaming; screeching; screwed; scronched; sent; set-up; sewed up; shaved; shellacked; shikker; shikkered; shined; shot; shot in the neck; slewed; slopped; slopped over; sloppy; sloshed; slugged; smashed; smoked; snapped; snozzled; snubbed; snuffy; soaked; soshed; soused; soused to the gills; sozzled; spiffed; spifflicated; sprung; squiffed; squiffy; stewed; stewed up; stewed to the gills; sticked; stiff; stinking; stinkarooed; stinko; stitched; stone blind; stoned; striped; stunned; swacked; swazzled; wiped; wizzled; swozzled.

tangle-footed; tangle-legged; tanked; tanked up; teed up; three sheets in the wind; tiddly; tie one on; tight; tight as a tick, etc.; tipped; tuned; turned on.

under the table; under the weather; up to the gills.

vulcanized.

wall-eyed; wapsed down; weak-jointed; well-oiled; wet; whipped; whipsey; whooshed; wilted; wing-heavy; woofled; woozy.

zig-zag.

The following are in the Appendix to the Supplement (1, p. 764) as recent additions: *bagged; blitzed; bombed; bongoed; boxed; crashed; featured; flaked out; frozen; glazed; have a brass eye;*

have a kick in the guts; have a rubber drink; have a skate on; have a skinful; have a slant on; have [one's] flag out; horseback; in the bag; leaping; nimtopsical; over the bay; owled; plowed; pull a Daniel Boone; pull a shut-eye; shit-faced; tore down; tore up; twisted; wiped out; zonked; zozzled.

The editors of the *Dictionary* note that there is considerable traffic between words for alcohol and those for other drugs. They report that the most common synonyms for *drunk* which have been used, especially recently, for the effects of other drugs include *aped; bent; blink; blue; buried; buzzed; gassed; glued; have a bag on; high* (the most common word); *laid out; limp; lit; loaded; shot; smashed; stiff; stoned* (the second most common word). The editors suggest that "the use of these *drunk* words to apply to the *high* or euphoria obtained from drugs, esp. among college students, is a strong indication that the present college generation may take drugs for some of the same reasons that older generations drank whiskey, and to obtain some of the same reactions" (p. 764). Leaving aside questions of motivation, a related conclusion might be that in American culture there is a certain consistency, across drugs, in the experience of intoxication.

In *I Hear America Talking* (4), Flexner (one of the editors of the *Dictionary of American Slang*) has another discussion of the synonyms for *drunkenness*. Flexner suggests (p. 125) that words associated with being drunk can be divided according to three broad stages of drunkenness:

(1) words for the initial comfortable, relaxed feeling which makes us pleasantly conspicuous, as *happy, jolly, high, have a glow on, and lit*; (2) words for the stage of being unsteady on one's feet and not seeing clearly, as *tipsy, three sheets to the wind* (as if a boat is rolling), and *bleary eyed*; (3) words for the final stupor of being drunk, including words for punishment, oblivion, or death, as *clobbered, smashed, petrified, glassy eyed, and stoned*, and also including such food-preserving words as *pickled, corned, and soused* (which originally meant 'pickled').

However commonsensical such a division, it mixes categories. Most of the first describe an experience, most of the second describe external behavior, and the third could describe either. Words like *stoned*, for example, when used to describe other drugs, especially cannabis, do not mean *stupor*. When referring to alcohol they do not necessarily mean it either. I am suggesting that the really heavy, forceful or violent words do not always or necessarily refer to the "final stupor of being drunk." They might for some people in

some contexts, and in many other contexts they do not. Certainly this is open to empirical research.

In 1927, Edmund Wilson (9) compiled a list of words denoting drunkenness which he said were in common use in the United States. Wilson claimed that his list had "been arranged, as far as possible, in order of degrees of intensity of the conditions which they represent, beginning with the mildest stages and progressing to the more disastrous." The order should probably not be taken very seriously, but the list is a fascinating document⁶:

<i>lit</i>	<i>wet</i>	<i>passed out cold</i>
<i>squiffy</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>embalmed</i>
<i>oiled</i>	<i>horseback</i>	<i>buried</i>
<i>lubricated</i>	<i>liquored</i>	<i>blotto</i>
<i>owled</i>	<i>pickled</i>	<i>lit up like the sky</i>
<i>edged</i>	<i>ginned</i>	<i>lit up like the</i>
<i>jingled</i>	<i>schicker (Yiddish)</i>	<i>Commonwealth</i>
<i>piffed</i>	<i>spifflicated</i>	<i>lit up like a Christmas tree</i>
<i>piped</i>	<i>primed</i>	<i>lit up like a store window</i>
<i>sloppy</i>	<i>organized</i>	<i>lit up like a church</i>
<i>woozy</i>	<i>featured</i>	<i>fried to the hat</i>
<i>happy</i>	<i>pie-eyed</i>	<i>slopped to the ears</i>
<i>half-screwed</i>	<i>cock-eyed</i>	<i>stewed to the gills</i>
<i>half-cocked</i>	<i>wall-eyed</i>	<i>boiled as an owl</i>
<i>half-shot</i>	<i>glassy-eyed</i>	<i>to have a bun on</i>
<i>half seas over</i>	<i>bleary-eyed</i>	<i>to have a slant on</i>
<i>fried</i>	<i>hoary-eyed</i>	<i>to have a skate on</i>
<i>stewed</i>	<i>over the Bay</i>	<i>to have a snootful</i>
<i>boiled</i>	<i>four sheets in the wind</i>	<i>to have a skinful</i>
<i>zozzled</i>	<i>crooked</i>	<i>to draw a blank</i>
<i>sprung</i>	<i>loaded</i>	<i>to pull a shut-eye</i>
<i>scrooched</i>	<i>leaping</i>	<i>to pull a Daniel Boone</i>
<i>jazzed</i>	<i>screeching</i>	<i>to have a rubber drink</i>
<i>jagged</i>	<i>lathered</i>	<i>to have a hangover</i>
<i>canned</i>	<i>plastered</i>	<i>to have a head</i>
<i>corked</i>	<i>soused</i>	<i>to have the jumps</i>
<i>corned</i>	<i>bloated</i>	<i>to have the shakes</i>
<i>potted</i>	<i>polluted</i>	<i>to have the zings</i>
<i>hooted</i>	<i>saturated</i>	<i>to have the</i>
<i>slopped</i>	<i>full as a tick</i>	<i>heeby-jeebies</i>
<i>tanked</i>	<i>loaded for bear</i>	<i>to have the</i>
<i>stinko</i>	<i>loaded to the muzzle</i>	<i>screaming-meemies</i>
<i>blind</i>	<i>loaded to the plimsoll mark</i>	<i>to have the whoops and</i>
<i>stiff</i>	<i>wapsed down</i>	<i>jingles</i>
<i>under the table</i>	<i>paralyzed</i>	<i>to burn with a low blue</i>
<i>tight</i>	<i>ossified</i>	<i>flame</i>
<i>full</i>	<i>out like a light</i>	

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Wilson (pp. 90-91) also discussed some of the nuances of the terms and their use during Prohibition:

Some of these words, such as *loaded* and *full*, are a little old-fashioned now; but they are still understood. Others, such as *cock-eyed* and *oiled*, which are included in the *Drinker's Dictionary* compiled by Benjamin Franklin (and containing two hundred and twenty-eight terms) seem to be enjoying a new popularity. It is interesting to note that one hears nowadays less often of people going on *sprees*, *toots*, *tears*, *jags*, *bats*, *brannigans* or *benders*. All these terms suggest, not merely extreme drunkenness, but also an exceptional occurrence, a breaking away by the drinker from the conditions of his normal life. It is possible that their partial disappearance is mainly to be accounted for by the fact that this kind of fierce protracted drinking has now become universal, an accepted feature of social life instead of a disreputable escapade. On the other hand, the vocabulary of social drinking, as exemplified by this list, seems to have become especially rich: one gets the impression that more nuances are nowadays discriminated than was the case before Prohibition. Thus, *fried*, *stewed* and *boiled* all convey distinctly different ideas; and *cock-eyed*, *plastered*, *owled*, *embalmed* and *ossified* evoke quite different images. *Wapsed down* is a rural expression originally applied to crops that have been laid low by a storm; *featured* is a theatrical word, which here refers to a stage at which the social drinker is inspired to believe strongly in his ability to sing a song, to tell a funny story or to execute a dance; *organized* is properly applied to a condition of thorough preparation for a more or less formidable evening; and *blotto*, of English origin, denotes a state of blank bedazement.

Words for being drunk are continually being invented, but some old terms do not go out of existence. Flexner (4, pp. 125-127) has dated some of the more common and typical words Americans have used to mean *drunk*⁷:

drunk, 15th-century England, shortened from the older *drunken*. *Drunk* was later used as a noun to mean a drinking bout, 1839, in the U.S., then to mean a drunk person, 1852. *inebriated*, another 15th-century English term (from Latin *ebrius*, drunk, from *e*, out + *bria*, wine jar, literally "having emptied out the wine jar"). *intoxicated*, 16th-century England (from Latin *toxicum*, poison, literally "poisoned with drink"). *soused*, 16th-century England; *soused to the gills*, 1890s in America. *boozey*, 16th century in England, 1722 in America; *boozed*, 1850; *boozed up*, 1860s. *in one's cups*, 1580, England. *disguised*, late 16th-century England. *blind*, 17th-century England; *blind drunk*, 1830. *elevated*, 17th-century England; *high*, 1838; *high as a kite*, 1939. *foxed*, 17th-century England. *jolly*, 1650s; *happy*, 1770. *cut*, 1670s. *shot*, 1670; *shot in*

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the neck, 1830; *half shot*, 1837. *half seas over*, late 17th-century in both England and America; *decks awash*, *half the bay over*, late 17th-century; *three sheets to the wind*, 1821; *over the bay*, 1830. *wet*, 1704. *oiled*, 1737; *lubricated*, 1927. *stewed*, 1737; *stewed to the gills*, 1925. *stiff*, 1737; *stiff as a ringbolt*, 1737; *stiff as a plank*, 1932; *stiff as a goat*, 1937. *soaked*, 1737. *buzzed*, 1737. *bowzered*, 1737. *cock-eyed*, *cocked*, 1737; *half cocked*, 1888. *mellow*, 1737. *overset*, 1737. *jagged*, 1737. *grogged*, 1770s; *groggy*, 1818 (literally, "full of frog"). *fuzzy*, 1770. *corned*, 1785. *out*, late 18th-century. *blue*, 1818. *half-shaved*, 1818; *shaved*, 1851. *snuffy*, 1820. *liquored up*, 1830. *bent*, 1833. *slewed*, 1834. *stinking*, 1837; *stinking drunk*, 1926; *stinko*, 1927. *screwed*, 1838. *lushy*, 1840; *lush*, *lushed*, 1880s (*lush* also first meant liquor, also around 1840). *full*, 1840; *full as a goat*, *full as a lord*, *full as a tick*, 1822; *full as a goose*, 1883; *full as a fiddle*, 1905. *tight*, 1843. *battered*, late 1840s. *feeling good*, 1850s. *pixilated*, 1850s. *swizzled*, 1850s. *whipped*, 1851. *damaged*, 1851. *primed*, 1858. *balmy*, 1860s. *tanglefooted*, 1860s. *spiffed*, 1860; *spifflicated*, 1906. *shot*, 1864. *frazzled*, 1870s. *D and D* (drunk and disorderly), 1870. *squiffy*, 1874; *squiffed*, 1880s. *pie-eyed*, 1880; *owly-eyed*, 1900; *pot eyed*, 1901; *orie-eyed*, 1910; *wall-eyed*, 1927. *boiled*, 1886. *paralyzed*, 1888. *loaded*, 1890s; *loaded for bear*, 1896. *packaged*, 1890s. *loopy*, 1890s; *looped*, 1940s. *shikker*, *shicker*, *shickered* (from the Yiddish *shikker*, drunk, Hebrew *shekar*, strong drink), 1890s. *pickled*, 1890s. *corked*, 1896. *sloppy*, *sloppy drunk*, 1896; *slopped*, 1907. *woozy*, 1897. *have a bun on*, 1900s; *bunned*, 1908. *pifflicated*, 1900s; *piffled*, *piffed*, 1910s. *lit*, 1900; *lit up*, 1902; *illuminated*, 1926; *lit up like a Christmas tree/a church/the Commonwealth/a lighthouse/a store window/the sky/Broadway/Times Square/Main Street*, all 1926–27; *lit up like a cathedral/Catholic Church/high mass/kite/skyscraper*, first recorded 1940–42. *ginned*, 1900. *ossified*, 1901. *saturated*, 1902. *petrified*, 1903. *tanked*, 1905; *tanked up*, 1906. *blotto*, 1905. *shellacked*, 1905. *rosey*, 1905. *jingled*, 1908. *piped*, 1912. *plastered*, 1912. *polluted*, 1912. *organized*, 1914. *gassed*, 1915. *hooted*, 1915. *aped*, 1915. *have a snoot full*, 1918. *jugged*, 1919. *canned*, 1920s. *juiced*, 1920s. *fried*, 1920s; *fried to the eyebrows*, 1925; *fried to the hat*, 1927; *fried to the gills*, first recorded 1942; *fried to the eyes*, 1947. *buried*, 1920s. *potted*, 1922. *dead to the world*, 1926 (the expression has meant "fast asleep" since 1899). *crooked*, 1927. *busted*, 1928. *flooey*, 1930. *rum-dum*, 1931. (Note that all the above terms dated from 1919 to 1933 were coined or popularized in spite of—or because of—Prohibition.) *bombed*, 1940s (World War II was now on). *shit-faced*, 1940s (during the war obscenity and scatology became common. . . .). *feeling no pain*, 1940s. *swacked*, 1941. *sloshed*, 1950s. *boxed*, 1950s. *clobbered*, 1951. *crashed*, late 1950s. *zonked*, late 1950s.

Although the present article is devoted to words describing drunkenness (and not all the other aspects of drinking, saloons, and so on) Flexner dates and identifies synonyms in a few related areas, and they are worth reproducing. He lists terms for *sprees*, *drunkards*, *aftereffects*, and *not drinking*. Note how short all these other lists are in comparison with the words for drunkenness:

To go on a drinking spree: *a bender*, 1827; *on a bender*, 1846. *a drunk*, 1839. *on a bat*, 1848. *to liquor up*, 1850. *on a toot*, 1877. *a jag*, 1888. *a binge*, 1889 (originally this was a British dialect word for filling a boat with water). *to hit the bottle*, 1906. *a booze fight*, 1922.

A heavy drinker: *drunkard*, 15th-century England; *drunk* came to mean an intoxicated person in 1852. *sot*, 16th-century English use (before that time *sot* meant a fool). *boozer*, recorded in 1611 in England, but not common in America until the 1890s; *booze fighter*, 1903; *booze hound*, 1926. *alcoholic*, an 18th-century English word; *alcoholist* was the fairly common word in America in the 1880s and 90s. *dipsomaniac* (Greek *dipsa*, thirst + *maniac*), a 19th-century English word; *dipso*, the shortened form, 1940s. *soak*, 1820. *rum sucker*, 1844. *stiff*, 1870s. *rummy*, 1884; *rum-head*, 1914; *rum-dum*, 1940s. *lush*, 1890s. *souse*, 1890s. *tank*, a very popular word for a drunkard around 1900. *stew*, 1908 (a *stew* was originally a brothel or a low dive such as those frequented by drunkards); *stew-bum*, 1918. *wino*, 1920s.

The aftereffects of drunkenness: *katzenjammers* (German for “cat’s wailing”), 1849. *the shakes*, 1850s. This originally meant the trembling, fever, and chills of ague. *the D.T.s*, *DTs*, 1850s. An abbreviation for *delirium tremens* (Latin for “trembling delirium”), the trembling is violent and the delirium is often hallucinatory. *the jim-jams*, 1852. *the horrors*, 1860s. *seeing pink elephants*, *seeing pink spiders*, 1890s. Referring to the hallucinations of the D.T.s. *heebie-jeebies*, 1910. This term was popularized, and perhaps coined, in Bill De Beck’s comic strip, *Barney Google*. *hangover*, 1912. *the jitters*, 1928. *the screaming meemies*, 1941.

Sobriety: *sober as a judge*, 1835; *sober as a deacon*, 1843; *sober as a church*, 1848; *sober as a shoemaker*, 1871; *sober as a buck shad*, 1949. *cold sober*, 1880s; *stone sober* is probably older, *stone* being used to mean “strong as a stonewall, stoney, completely,” since the 13th-century in the expression *stone dead*, with *stone deaf* and *stone blind* coming in the 14th-century. *on the (water) wagon*, 1905.

The last list I want to reproduce is the first to appear: Benjamin Franklin’s. It was published on 6 January 1737 in Franklin’s newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, under the title *The Drinkers Dictionary*. Headed by a quotation of Franklin’s Poor Richard—“Nothing more like a Fool than a drunken Man”—it was presented as against drunkenness, and as anonymously written. Franklin offered a humorous theory for the many words about drunkenness. He said that because drunkenness is a vice that cannot present itself as a virtue, it “is therefore reduc’d to the wretched Necessity of being express’d by distant round-about Phrases, and of perpetually varying those Phrases, as often as they come to be well understood

to signify plainly that A MAN IS DRUNK.” Franklin, too, was surprised by the number of terms about drunkenness: “Tho’ every one may possibly recollect a Dozen at least of the Expressions us’d on the occasion, yet I think no one who has not much frequented Taverns would imagine the number of them so great as it really is.”

THE DRINKERS DICTIONARY

<p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p>He is Addled, He’s casting up his Accounts, He’s Afflicted, He’s in his Airs.</p>	<p>Has taken a Chirripping Glass, Got Corns in his Head, A Cup too much, Coguy, Copey, He’s heat his Copper, He’s Crocus, Catch’d, He cuts his Capers, He’s been in the Cellar, He’s in his Cups, Non Compos, Cock’d, Curv’d, Cut, Chipper, Chickery, Loaded his Cart, He’s been too free with the Creature, Sir Richard has taken off his Considering Cap, He’s Chap-fallen.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <p>He’s Biggy, Bewitch’d, Block and Block, Boozy, Bowz’d, Been at Barbadoes, Piss’d in the Brook, Drunk as a Wheel-Barrow, Burdock’d, Buskey, Buzzy. Has stole a Manchet out of the Brewer’s Basket, His Head is full of Bees, Has been in the Bibbing Plot, Has drank more than he has bled, He’s Bungey, As Drunk as a Beggar, He sees the Bears, He’s kiss’d black Betty, He’s had a Thump over the Head with Sampson’s Jawbone, He’s Bridgey.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p>He’s Disguiz’d, He’s got a Dish, Kill’d his Dog, Took his Drops, It is a Dark Day with him, He’s a Dead Man, Has Dipp’d his Bill, He’s Dagg’d, He’s seen the Devil.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p>He’s Cat, Chagrin’d, Capable, Cramp’d, Cherubimical, Cherry Merry, Wamble Crop’d, Crack’d, Concern’d, Half Way to Concord.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p>He’s Prince Eugene, Enter’d, Wet both Eyes, Cock Ey’d, Got the Pole Evil, Got a brass Eye, Made an Example,</p>

He's eat a Toad & half for Breakfast,
In his Element.

F

He's Fishey,
Fox'd,
Fuddled,
Sore Footed,
Frozen,
Well in for't,
Owes no Man a Farthing,
Fears no Man,
Crump Footed,
Been to France,
Flush'd,
Froze his Mouth,
Fetter'd,
Been to a Funeral,
His Flag is out,
Fuzl'd,
Spoke with his Friend,
Been at an Indian Feast.

G

He's Glad,
Groatable,
Gold-headed,
Glaiz'd,
Generous,
Booz'd the Gage,
As Dizzy as a Goose,
Been before George,
Got the Gout,
Had a Kick in the Guts,
Been with Sir John Goa,
Been at Geneva,
Globular,
Got the Glanders.

H

Half and Half,
Hardy,
Top Heavy,
Got by the Head,
Hiddey,
Got on his little Hat,
Hammerish,
Loose in the Hilts,
Knows not the way Home,
Got the Hornson,

Haunted with Evil Spirits,
Has taken Hippocrates grand Elixir.

I

He's Intoxicated.

J

He's Jolly,
Jagg'd,
Jumbled,
Going to Jerusalem,
Jocular,
Been to Jerico,
Juicy.

K

He's a King,
Clips the King's English,
Seen the French King,
The King is his Cousin,
Got Kib'd Heels,
Knapt,
Het his Kettle.

L

He's in Liquor,
Lordly,
He makes Indentures with his
Leggs,
Well to live,
Light,
Lappy,
Limber.

M

He sees two Moons,
Merry,
Middling,
Moon-ey'd,
Muddled,
Seen a Flock of Moons,
Maudlin,
Mountous,
Muddy,
Rais'd his Monuments,
Mellow.

N

He's eat the Cocoa Nut,
Nimptopsical,
Got the Night Mare.

O

He's Oil'd,
Eat Opium,
Smelt of an Onion,
Oxyrocium,
Overset.

P

He drank till he gave up his
Half-Penny,
Pidgeon Ey'd,
Pungey,
Priddy,
As good conditioned as a Puppy,
Has scalt his Head Pan,
Been among the Philistines,
In his Prosperity,
He's Been among the Philippians,
He's contending with Pharaoh,
Wasted his Paunch,
He's Polite,
Eat a Pudding Bag.

Q

He's Quarrelsome.

R

He's Rocky,
Raddled,
Rich,
Religious,
Lost his Rudder,
Ragged,
Rais'd,
Been too free with Sir Richard,
Like a Rat in Trouble.

S

He's Stitch'd,
Seafaring,
In the Sudds,
Strong,
Been in the Sun,

As drunk as David's Sow,
Swampt,
His Skin is full,
He's Steady,
He's Stiff,
He's burnt his Shoulder,
He's got his Top Gallant Sails out,
Seen the yellow Star,
As Stiff as a Ring-bolt,
Half Seas over,
His Shoes pinches him,
Staggerish,
It is Star-light with him,
He carries too much Sail,
Stew'd,
Stubb'd,
Soak'd,
Soft,
Been too free with Sir John
Strawberry,
He's right before the Wind with all
his Studding Sails out,
Has Sold his Senses.

T

He's Top'd,
Tongue-ty'd,
Tann'd,
Tipium Grove,
Double Tongu'd,
Topsy Turvey,
Tipsey,
Has Swallow'd a Tavern Token,
He's Thaw'd,
He's in a Trance,
He's Trammel'd.

V

He makes Virginia fence,
Valiant,
Got the Indian Vapours.

W

The Malt is above the Water,
He's Wise,
He's Wet,
He's been to the Salt Water,
He's Water-soaken,
He's very Weary,
Out of the Way.

I believe that Benjamin Franklin's *Dictionary* marks the beginning of a long cultural trend or period of which we are still a part, but which we can begin to see beyond. Franklin presented his list, he said, "to surprise as well as divert the sober Reader," a person who might not know all of these terms and who probably did not frequent taverns—in other words, a good burgher, a member of the middle class. The newspaper claimed to be reporting to the proper citizens about the low life and the fringes. Franklin ended his *Dictionary* with two long sentences: the first certified the authenticity of the words for being drunk, and the second condemned drunkenness:

The Phrases in this Dictionary are not (like most of our Terms of Art) borrow'd from Foreign Languages, neither are they collected from the Writings of the Learned in our own, but gather'd wholly from the modern Tavern-Conversation of Tiplers. I do not doubt but that there are many more in use; and I was even tempted to add a new one my self under the Letter B, to wit, *Brutify'd*: But upon Consideration, I fear'd being guilty of Injustice to the Brute Creation, if I represented Drunkenness as a beastly Vice, since, 'tis well-known, that the Brutes are in general a very sober sort of People.

There was an ambivalence here, an attraction–repulsion. Franklin did not really think drunkenness was so bad, but he felt obliged to say it was, while at the same time celebrating it by presenting all the terms. It is worth noting that he did not call it the "Drunkard's Dictionary." This was not in fact an antidrunkenness piece, but something more complicated: an appreciation packaged in a moral condemnation.

I mention these points about Franklin as a way of briefly raising the idea of social context. It is clear that what is thought about drunkenness, positive and negative, affects the experience of it. What one learns about drunkenness—through half-conscious and unconscious cultural clues and signs—shapes it. Studies of social context are part of a larger exploration of the meaning and experience of drunkenness, but easily accessible parts of a culture may not be the most important. To get at the experience of drunkenness involves going beyond the limited and stock phrases (e.g., *disinhibited*, *relaxed*, *loose*, *sociable*) routinely used to describe it.

The ever-increasing number of expressions and terms about drunkenness are metaphors that deserve to be considered seriously. We know that drunkenness has been feared and tabooed in Amer-

ica, and Franklin's is just one expression of those fears and taboos. Drunkenness has also been sought, desired and loved. That side of the ambivalence is talked about much less often, and much more informally. Perhaps, in our culture, it is also far more difficult to talk about or even to think about that side. I have assembled all of these terms so that I can raise questions about the experience of drunkenness, especially its attractive and pleasurable sides. What does it feel like to be drunk? What feels good about it? What is the experience that all these words are talking about?

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