

Huxley's Impact on America

INTRODUCTION

“Holy smoking freaking crazy man!!!!!!!!!!!!!! What inna name of heaven is that! Somebody hellllllllp me! I can't believe my eyes..... ((((((((((Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!))))))))))”

If this is your idea of a typical hallucinogenic experience, then you are not far from wrong. The fact of the matter is, however, that most people have *no idea* what a hallucinogenic experience is because most people – and most scholars – have never experienced an LSD or mescaline experience. Which is why the work of Aldous Huxley is so important. His book *The Doors of Perception* not only reports on what a true mescaline experience is, but it also tells the story from a first-hand perspective. This means that his work stands at the forefront of research into the true experiences of those who use hallucinogenic drugs. The importance of this seminal work cannot be overstated. It is a virtual first of its kind and it stands as a classic work allowing future researchers to understand this whole field in a new and personal way. This is why Huxley's work is so crucial and important to this whole field.

But Huxley has been neglected for many decades. In fact, there are few works on the meaning and significance of *The Doors of Perception*. Usually Huxley, while regarded as a novelist of high caliber, especially for *Brave New World*, usually he is not discussed in relation

to his work on mescaline. This work has been neglected primarily because of the stigma attached to drug use in general, and hallucinogens in particular. And yet this very neglect has worked to the detriment of the American law enforcement community. How can law enforcement officers deal with the various types of drug users if they cannot understand them? This neglect of a deep psychological insight into the use of mescaline has worked, and will continue to work, to the detriment of the entire American justice system, from the Supreme Court to the President to the local sheriffs and police officers of this nation. Few have studied this subject, and the neglect that has been its fate has hurt the entire American system of jurisprudence. Understanding is vital to fighting crime and unless we understand what motivates those who use hallucinogens we will never understand the first things about drug crime.

Huxley has also been misunderstood. Not that understanding Huxley will lead to a magical eradication of all drug crime. But understanding him will certainly give us insights that can be used in the American criminal system and in the American legal system, which is often unable to figure out what to do about the drug scene. Huxley has been misunderstood because he has been marginalized and treated as an eccentric. Actually this misunderstanding can be cleared up with a good analysis of his book.

This essay (this is my roadmap paragraph) will talk about how Huxley discovered the effects of mescaline and how he took that one step further by giving us a philosophical approach to mescaline use and all drug use. The thesis of this essay is that Huxley and his work on mescaline is a key to understanding the mind of the modern drug user. Without such understanding the war against drugs will certainly be lost.

HUXLEY'S INSIGHT

Huxley said in *The Doors of Perception* that all people need “chemical vacations.”¹ He went on to state that he believed his experience in taking mescaline had helped him gain insights into human psychology.

This insight can certainly be one which many readers of the book miss. It is a key insight of the book but is buried in the final pages. It means that Huxley's main thesis, that people need chemical vacations to escape reality, might have been neglected by scholars and researchers. They might have focused on his psychedelic experiences and might have missed that he believed all people should try this for themselves, not to get addicted, but to gain insight into their minds and the minds of others.

HOW HUXLEY CAN HELP

Huxley's insight can help lawyers, judges, legislators, and police officers who work in the drug scene prosecuting criminals. This insight of Huxley's can open the minds of the American criminal system so that it might see how a respected novelist can use mescaline, a powerful

¹Huxley 1954:64. What Huxley meant by this is that all people need to take a break from their surroundings – psychological and physical surroundings – and experience another dimension or an alternate reality. This can be achieved through diet, psychology, religion, or chemical means. In this book he talks about his mescaline experience and how it helped him see the world and himself in a new way. He does not want people to become drug addicts; that is an important point. He believes that a simple mescaline experience will not be harmful. He also stated that he wished there were drugs that could do what mescaline did but have a shorter life, that is, have an effect that lasted less than 36 hours. This would be fine, but so far scientists have not discovered them. Or have they? Some think that drugs such as pregnenolone can provide a shorter psychedelic experience. Certainly in the future we will discover even better drugs that have more intense effects but that do not disrupt sleep and work as much as a mescaline trip would.

psychedelic, and yet come back and still be productive member of society.

CONCLUSION

In summary, we have seen how Huxley had a psychedelic experience and how he generalized from it to the lives of other people. He described what happened to him, but he also took it one step further. In a keen psychological insight, he speculated that all people need and could benefit from occasional “chemical vacations.” And then we stated that if the American legal system could understand that psychedelics were not so harmful, they might have a more open mind and understand criminals who use drugs.

The future of American jurisprudence and law enforcement is not good, when it comes to the drug war. We are certainly losing. But if we take advantage of Huxley’s insight, we may come to realize that certain psychedelics are not harmful, or not as harmful as they have been portrayed in the laws we currently have. Huxley’s work may open the doors of perception and lead to a more enlightened criminal system – if only we could “listen” to what he has to say and hear it anew.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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