



Drugs: The Chemical Influence

Sub-chapter	Section	Subject Matter	People
Part 1: Overview - Drugs and Society	<i>i. The ever-changing brain</i>	Recreational drugs as an alleviation from social pressures • ...as chemical supplements: enhancing emotional pleasure • A brief look at caffeine, alcohol, tobacco & cannabis in modern society	
	<i>ii. The social impact</i>	The categorisation of drugs & their effects • The comparative dangers of socially acceptable drugs & illegal substances • The social enforcement of drinking habits	
	<i>iii. Dependence</i>	The subtle lure of addictive drugs & the psychological pains of withdrawal • The abject failure of prohibiting recreational drugs	
	<i>iv. A brief history of western drug culture - the failure of prohibition</i>	Changing social attitudes: from brown heroin in the 1970s • Ecstasy & its influence in 1980s society • The introduction of crack cocaine & other 'new' illicit drugs	
Part 2: The Analgesics	<i>i. Aspirin and other non-opiates</i>	An explanation of analgesic drugs & how they work • Aspirin: its discovery, uses & dangers • Paracetamol & NSAIDs • Combination drugs: from ibuprofen to co-codamol	Felix Hoffmann





Part 2: The Analgesics (...continued)	<i>ii. Heroin and other narcotics</i>	Explanation of opiates & opioids • A history of opium (from killing pain to creating pleasure) • A description of various alkaloids & their effects • The creation of semi-synthetic compounds • Heroin: seduction, dependance & withdrawal • The introduction of other opioids (from oxycodone to pethidine) • The tragedy of addiction	Paracelsus
Part 3: The Depressants	<i>i. Alcohol</i>	Ethanol as the most commonly used depressant • Fermentation & distillation: alcohol by volume of beers, wines & spirits • Rates of intoxication • The origin & types of popular alcoholic drinks • Historic legal controls • The popularity of alcohol & its adverse effects	
	<i>ii. Barbiturates and benzodiazepines</i>	A brief description of barbiturates, their effects & dangers • The advantages of benzodiazepines, their variations & misuse	
	<i>iii. GHB</i>	The origin of GHB & its properties • GHB as an example of misguided social intolerance to new drugs • The effects of ingestion	
	<i>iv. Ketamine * Solvents & glue</i>	The creation & commercial/medical uses of ketamine • The effects & risks associated with the recreational use of ketamine • The deadly consequences of solvent abuse	
Part 4. The Stimulants	<i>i. Caffeine * Cocoa</i>	The historic origins of tea, coffee & cocoa • The effects of caffeine • The irresistible lure of chocolate	
	<i>ii. Nicotine</i>	A short history of tobacco (cultivation & use) • The established link between smoking & dangerous disease • Passive smoking & casualties • The powerful tobacco industry & its shameful influence • Smoking as an addictive pursuit - the deadly effects of nicotine consumption • The perpetual illusion of smokers • Giving up • The changing tactics of the industry in a world of tighter regulations	





Part 4. The Stimulants (...continued)	<i>iii. Anabolic steroids * Nitrites</i>	A brief explanation of steroids & their medical uses • The misuse of steroids in sport & society • The unwanted side-effects & inherent dangers of both short & long term use • The appearance of amyl & butyl nitrites • The pleasures & hazards of taking poppers	Ben Johnson
	<i>iv. Amphetamines</i>	A brief description of amphetamines & their main effects • Medical uses & history • The rise of 'speed' in 1970s drug culture • The addictive dangers of amphetamine overuse • Sleep depravation & the club scene	
	<i>v. Cocaine</i>	The coca shrub, the isolation of cocaine & its early medical uses • The rise of cocaine as a recreational drug • Effects & addiction • Crack cocaine & its associated dangers • Withdrawal & experimentation	
	<i>vi. Ecstasy - the 'stimulogen'</i>	The unique properties of MDMA & a brief history of the drug • Ecstasy: social influence & negative media bias • The psychological benefits of MDMA & the limited dangers of overuse • The greater dangers of ignorance & misinformation	Leah Betts
	<i>vii. PCP - the disruptive combination</i>	A brief description of PCP & its historic uses • PCP as an illicit street drug • The acute dangers of PCP intoxication	
Part 5: The Hallucinogens	<i>i. A psychedelic account</i>	A brief introduction to hallucinogens & descriptions of their variety • The ergot alkaloids & the psilocybin/psilocin alkaloids • From mescaline to THC • The belladonna & epibatidine alkaloids • The mystical properties of DMT & the harmala alkaloids • The relative safety of psychedelics	
	<i>ii. A psychedelic background</i>	A brief history of psychedelics & their role in our perceptual evolution • A food of the gods: from <i>Homo erectus</i> to modern tribal communities • Psychoactive compounds & primal perceptions (iboga & sacred mushrooms) • Stepping back from modern reality	





Part 5: The Hallucinogens (...continued)	<i>iii. The psychedelic reality</i>	The role of psychedelics in our prehistoric venture in the Americas • The invasion of European culture: Old World domination & the collapse of New World reality • The perceptual influence of native American psychedelics • The historic demonisation of psychoactive substances in the Christian world • The link between modern science & shamanistic concepts • Psychedelics & modern reality: from complete rejection to gradual acceptance	R. Gordon Wasson
	<i>iv. Mescaline</i>	Mescaline as a natural psychoactive compound (peyote & the San Pedro cacti) • The valuable properties of New World psychedelics • A brief history of San Pedro cacti • Shamanic rituals & western corruption of native American culture • Chemical synthesis & ‘The Doors of Perception’ • Mescaline as a recreational education of mind	Aldous Huxley
	<i>v. Magic mushrooms / psychedelic fungi</i>	A brief introduction to sacred mushrooms (the effects of psilocybin & psilocin) • The profound effect of ergot on human history (from the ‘Oracle of Delphi’ to the ‘New Testament’) • Medieval Christianity & the smothering of ‘magical’ pagan rites (from Kykeon to the fly agaric) • Rediscovery: Psychedelic revelations of the 1960s • taking a magic mushroom trip • Mushrooms & society	Socrates Plato Sophocles Homer Jesus Aristotle R. Gordon Wasson





Part 5: The Hallucinogens

(...continued)

vi. LSD

A brief description of LSD & its effects • The history of LSD & its unwarranted prohibition • The psychotomimetic benefits of LSD



Investigations into the ergot alkaloids & the criminalisation of further research • The story of acid culture in the late 20th century



Opening the doors of perception • Acid trips as waking dreams & trans-personal experiences • LSD as a creative drug & a perceptual tonic for the mind



LSD as a potent, non-toxic drug • An explanation for 'flashbacks' • Education: the key to benefitting from LSD as a therapeutic drug

Albert Hofmann



Albert Hofmann | R.
Gordon Wasson |
Timothy Leary | Jimi
Hendrix



vii. Cannabis (biological effects)

The unique status of cannabis • THC & the vital role of cannabinoid receptors • the pineal gland & the importance of DMT for dreams - cannabis & melatonin production • From spiritual enlightenment to anti-addiction properties • Therapeutic benefits

viii. Cannabis (history)

The value of cultivation: from prehistoric hemp to Victorian cramps • The 20th century demonisation of cannabis (from Egypt to the USA) • Marijuana as a new drug menace following the failure of alcohol prohibition • The 1930s counter-culture & the growing popularity of cannabis as a recreational drug • Ill-perceived drug enforcement & changing fashions • The growing recognition of cannabis' immense therapeutic value • THC & the irrational continuation of prohibition

Shang-Nung | Elizabeth
I | Queen Victoria |
Francisco Villa | Harry
J. Anslinger | William
Randolph Hearst | Jimi
Hendrix | Janis Joplin |
Bob Marley

ix. Cannabis (the experience)

Continued prohibition: Cannabis in relation to the social & political contradictions of dated drug laws • Toxicity & strains • Common effects & enhanced perceptions • Long-term use & perceptual awareness • The paradoxical dangers of smoking joints





Part 5: The Hallucinogens

(...continued)

*x. ...to a
concluding
scenario*

Recreational drugs & personal liberty (a clash of culture & curiosity) •
Drugs & the power of cultural acceptance • Drugs & the evolution of
consciousness • Maintaining illegitimacy: the blanket reasoning that
disparages recreational drugs (both corruptive & beneficial) • The
chemical constraints of the human condition • Synthetic cures: an
illustration of social morality (public health vs. company profit)



The psychological consequences of prohibition (& the lack of distinction
between beneficial & harmful practices) • Drugs as a scapegoat for social
ills • Drugs, imagination & human reality

