

On Hashish



Walter Benjamin

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Walter Benjamin, Howard Eiland (Editor), Marcus Boon (Introduction)

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Walter Benjamin's posthumously published collection of writings on hashish is a detailed blueprint for a book that was never written--a "truly exceptional book about hashish," as Benjamin describes it in a letter to his friend Gershom Scholem. A series of "protocols of drug experiments," written by himself and his co-participants between 1927 and 1934, together with short prose pieces that he published during his lifetime, *On Hashish* provides a peculiarly intimate portrait of Benjamin, venturesome as ever at the end of the Weimar Republic, and of his unique form of thought.

Consciously placing himself in a tradition of literary drug-connoisseurs from Baudelaire to Hermann Hesse, Benjamin looked to hashish and other drugs for an initiation into what he called "profane illumination." At issue here, as everywhere in Benjamin's work, is a new way of seeing, a new connection to the ordinary world. Under the influence of hashish, as time and space become inseparable, experiences become subtly stratified and resonant: we inhabit more than one plane in time. What Benjamin, in his contemporaneous study of Surrealism, calls "image space" comes vividly to life in this philosophical immersion in the sensuous.

This English-language edition of *On Hashish* features a section of supplementary materials--drawn from Benjamin's essays, letters, and sketches--relating to hashish use, as well as a reminiscence by his friend Jean Selz, which concerns a night of opium-smoking in Ibiza. A preface by Howard Eiland discusses the leading motifs of Benjamin's reflections on intoxication.

On Hashish Details

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From Reader Review On Hashish for online ebook

Phoenix says

not everybody sounds stupid when you read what they wrote while stoned....

Peter Panacci says

A rare and extremely beautiful look into the mind of a literary and philosophical prodigy, while undergoing the transformative and intoxicating effects of Hashish. Beautifully descriptive, personally enlightening and inspiring.

Peter Landau says

If people hate to hear about what you dreamed last night, they certainly don't care about your psychedelic experiences. Not me. Tell me all about your dreams and your drug trips! That's where the true self seeps out between the cracks of the facade you build to hide yourself. Or maybe I'm just a voyeuristic gossip. Either way, if true, then Walter Benjamin is a bore, or at least uptight. His collection of fragments *ON HASHISH* is just that, a dull litany of scientific experiments on hash, where he was the test subject. Whatever you got to do to get high, man, I won't judge. Benjamin was hoping to write a book from these notes, but that never materialized. What we get instead are the ramblings of a straight-laced nerd getting stoned and swinging from paranoia to euphoria and finally landing on the munchies. It's unintentionally hilarious. I'd get baked with this fruitcake any time.

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Sara Abdulaziz says

Zach says

Why aren't there more studies like this?

Conor says

One of the few books that I both regret buying and reading. From what I can tell, Benjamin never published this, because he was writing it as research into the surrealist movement. The book itself is just cobbled together notes, including several drafts of stories about Hashish which are not of any real use to anyone but a Benjamin historian. This might be interesting for a few people, but, save for the addenda, I consider it an absolute failure of a text.

Luís C. says

In his book **"About hashish"** Walter Benjamin presents a meticulous study as a clinical protocol, about their experiences with the use of psychoactive drugs.

Gjermund says

SMoke it up! Hahahaaaha. Ikke lest, men ser fet ut.

Rachael Richardson says

Silly silly. A more intimate look into this wild man's journals. Not a good introduction to Benjamin. Doesn't read cover to cover. Unless maybe you've never done any kind of drugs and are wildly curious to the point where reading a pre-holocaust German Jewish Marxist literary-cultural critic/ philosopher/essayist's account of his rare experiences using mind altering substances would be give you a rush. I'm just sort of bumming through it in spurts, once in awhile. I love Walter Benjamin. I also enjoy hash. Also, I felt like a pretty

substantial fucking tool standing in line at the bookstore checkout counter, holding "On Hashish."

Zainab M says

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Laurent says

Verzamelde inzichten die Benjamin vanuit de eerste hand over de narcotische roes heeft verworven. Benjamin hanteert een tweeledige benaderingswijze: '(...) die van een deelnemer die zich gewillig overlevert aan de roes, en van iemand die daarbij tegelijkertijd de kracht mobiliseert om datgene wat hij daarbij ondergaat tot spreken te brengen en er kritisch tegenover te stellen.' Een korte reeks geschriften die de roes van bewustzijnsverdovende middelen tot onderwerp hebben, bestaande uit verslagen van experimenten met drugs waaraan Benjamin heeft deelgenomen. Slechts 2 teksten uit deze interessante bundeling werden effectief door Benjamin gepubliceerd. Aan de andere heeft hij meegewerkt, ondersteuning verleend of aantekeningen bezorgd, maar zonder ermee naar buiten te komen. Ondanks de fragmentarische, geheimzinnige en chaotische aard, een boeiend geheel in de typisch suggestieve stijl van Benjamin geschreven.

Scott Jackson says

"An ambiguous wink from Nirvana" is the best descriptor I have ever read.

Bodour Bahliwah says

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Asa Wilder says

Not really a cohesive book. More just the notes and ramblings of someone earnestly trying to explain the feeling of being high. And that person is Walter Benjamin, so when it's good, it's really good. I laughed out

loud a couple times thinking about Benjamin just being all high-school stonery.

"The hashish-eater experiences the power of the gaze to suck a hundred sites out of one place.

Morning sleep after smoking. It's as though, so I said, life had been sealed up like food preserved in a can. Sleep, however, is the liquid in which it lay, and which now, saturated with all the aromas of life, is poured off.

Red is like a butterfly alighting upon each shade of the color red"
