



Sex, Drugs & Magick

Robert Anton Wilson

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Sex, Drugs & Magick can be considered a "scholarly" appraisal of both the historical and modern use (an misuse) of drugs in conjunction with sex and "occult" practices. But don't let the word "scholarly" put you off. Done in Wilson's inimitable style, this is a book filled with humor, cynicism, wonder and *essential* information for those who would pursue what can be an immensely rewarding path, potholed with a array of social and physical dangers.

Sex, Drugs & Magick Details

Date : Published 2008 by New Falcon Publications (first published 1973)

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Author : Robert Anton Wilson

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Del says

Heh. Don't buy "Sex and Drugs", because it's a watered down version of this book.

Taught me more about trance work, about what's available to you as a working magician in the world around you. Even if these aren't your typical modality, don't throw out the baby with the bong water.

Aaron says

This book is roughly a history of aphrodisiacs around the world. It branches out to cover some really interesting uses for, and perceptions of drugs in different cultures. S,D,&M also discusses different drugs individually, and comes to some conclusions that were surprising to me. This book is different from most of Robert Anton Wilson's titles (that I am familiar with) in that it's very much non-fiction, but his wit, and incredible way of disseminating things are present here much in the same tone as his other work. Check it out!

Vanni Santoni says

contiene un paio di spunti buoni

Wesley Elliott says

I actually felt smarter after reading this book. The history of drug use in sexual practices/society is covered & discussed in good detail. Turns out, I learned a lot more in college than I realized at the time. This is a great read for anyone who is open-minded or not a prude.

Kate Woods Walker says

In a sane world, *this* would be a textbook, despite its spooky title. Robert Anton Wilson, so sadly now gone from this world, was a treasure of a human being, and in this volume his clear, rational, truthful voice rings out to all who can still hear. Read this book!

From the laugh-out-loud funny introduction to the glossary of substances that closes out the book, RAW is nothing so much as clear-eyed and objective. I'd trust what he has to say over an unmarked semi-truck full of D.A.R.E. officers.

Lohmatii says

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Ruby Hollyberry says

One of several of his books I used to have and love and eventually gave to people on "permanent loan". :)

bartosz says

Robert Anton Wilson's, Sex Drugs and Magick took me back to the days of reading Phrack, the Anarchist's Cookbook and Internet magazines of dubious quality. As with them, the experience is highly enjoyable, though probably not to be taken seriously.

The book presents a scientific, historical, and anecdotal account of the use of drugs and magic to enhance sexual experience. "Magic" here is understood not as extra sensory perception but mysticism, rituals, or other means of "programming a trip". Three major threads intertwine to tell full story: fictionalized accounts of people using drugs, the history and effects of drugs, and history of drug-using mystics.

The stories follow a similar pattern: the subject is an acquaintance of the author, whom he meets before and after some drug inspired transformation. So, one chapter tells the story of Jane that used LSD to (successfully) treat frigidity, with the caveat of landing in a mental institution. Another chapter follows Leonard, a man experimenting with drugs, and apparently every form of deviancy known to man. His transformation takes place years later when he becomes a born-again Christian. Yet another chapter tells the story of a couple experimenting with drugs and alternative lifestyles. As Wilson puts it their transformation was a divorce by psychedelics.

The accounts are short and amusing, a printed fossil of both the sexual and drug revolutions. Yet, they rarely touch the subject of magic - something really jarring seeing how often this thread is repeated in other parts of the book.

The author frequently makes a connection between sex and religious rites, as in tantra or pagan fertility rites, something he contrast against sexually repressed Christianity. Similarly, drug usage and religion have a similar long history. The author describes several drugs and religious rites: peyote and marijuana and various practices of shamanism; belladonna and pagan rites; or the modern drug LSD and "programming the biocomputer". The effects of drugs are described with due diligence and complement the, sometimes surprising, anecdotal accounts.

The book also presents several mystics who combined drugs or sex with religion, mostly concentrating on Alister Crowley and Hassan i Sabbah - the founder of Assassins.

Somewhat unsurprisingly, the book is riddled with factual errors. The reports on using orally-administered niacin to abort a psychedelic experience are mixed - the study by Hoffer used the vitamin intravenously in a 200mg dose. The author proposes an oral dose of 4g which is 20x that, or about 20,000% of the RDA. A quick Google search reveals people overdosing on similar dosages: 5g of niacin in the case of one 14 year old admitted to hospital with organ failure, who wanted to use niacin to "flush out" drugs out of his system.

On the historical side, there isn't much evidence to support the thesis that hashish was used by the Assassins - the origin of this claim seems to trace back to medieval legends. Another ahistoricism is attributing the modern Catholic practice to historical Christianity: "Christ and his follower Paul had even more peculiar sexual ideas and many of their followers gave up sex entirely [...] to this day Catholic priests psychologically castrate themselves by vowing sexual celibacy". There is nothing to suggest that the modern practice of celibacy comes down to the Church's views about sex (or Christ's for that matter - while Paul was celibate, Peter had a wife) and everything to suggest that the decision was a financial one.

Another bad aspect of the book is the martyred tone that it takes. While we can all agree that a government that can monitor your bodily fluids is too powerful, the fact that the author presents this with all the grace of a spoiled brat may alienate some readers.

The most important takeaways from the book are: that drugs, sex and religion have a long and intertwined history; surprisingly enough, the "peak experience" that drugs may offer seems to be available with training (as in tantric sex); not all drugs enhance sex and most drugs that seem to stimulate it have a reality expanding function like LSD or marijuana and not inhibitive one like alcohol or heroin.

Despite the annoyances the book is quite fun to read. Robert Anton Wilson has a knack to present his case clearly and in a droll manner. The content just screams "the 60s". Highly recommended, if you want a serious non-serious read or are very heavily into counter-culture.

Dave Haskins says

Sexuality, Psychedelics

Lex Talionis says

The name pretty much says it all ... this book is second only to the Vaults of Erowid in its honest look at drugs and their effects, with a specific eye towards their impact on various sexual (and transcendental) experiences.

Jack Luminous says

Merytoryczna warto?? tej ksi??ki jest raczej niewielka, ale walory rozrywkowe wynagradzaj? wszelkie braki w tre?ci! Dobra pozycja dla osób zainteresowanych kontrkultur? lat 60tych albo zagadnieniami tytu?owymi,

z naciskiem na "drugs".

Matthew says

some drugs are good sometimes. know yr brain first.
