

Chapter 1 : The Poem of Hashish by Charles Baudelaire

Hashish, or Indian hemp (Cannabis indica), is a plant of the family Urticacea, resembling in every respect the hemp of our latitudes, except that it does not attain the same height. It possesses very extraordinary intoxicating properties, which for some years past have attracted in France the attention of men of science and of the world.

There are days when man awakes with a young and vigorous genius. Though his eyelids be scarcely released from the slumber which sealed them, the exterior world shows itself to him with a powerful relief, a clearness of contour, and a richness of colour which are admirable. The moral world opens out its vast perspective, full of new clarities. A man gratified by this happiness, unfortunately rare and transient, feels himself at once more an artist and more a just man; to say all in a word, a nobler being. But the most singular thing in this exceptional condition of the spirit and of the senses -- which I may without exaggeration call heavenly, if I compare it with the heavy shadows of common and daily existence -- is that it has not been created by any visible or easily definable cause. Is it the result of good hygiene and of a wise regimen? Such is the first explanation which suggests itself; but we are obliged to recognise that often this marvel, this prodigy, so to say, produces itself as if it were the effect of a superior and invisible power, of a power exterior to man, after a period of the abuse of his physical faculties. Shall we say that it is the reward of assiduous prayer and spiritual ardour? It is certain that a constant elevation of the desire, a tension of the spiritual forces in a heavenly direction, would be the most proper regimen for creating this moral health, so brilliant and so glorious. But what absurd law causes it to manifest itself as it sometimes does after shameful orgies of the imagination; after a sophisticated abuse of reason, which is, to its straightforward and rational use, that which the tricks of dislocation which some acrobats have taught themselves to perform are to sane gymnastics? For this reason I prefer to consider this abnormal condition of the spirit as a true grace; as a magic mirror wherein man is invited to see himself at his best; that is to say, as that which he should be, and might be; a kind of angelic excitement; a rehabilitation of the most flattering type. Besides this charming and singular state, where all the forces are balanced; where the imagination, though enormously powerful, does not drag after it into perilous adventures the moral sense; when an exquisite sensibility is no longer tortured by sick nerves, those councillors-in-ordinary of crime or despair; this marvellous state, I say, has no prodromal symptoms. It is as unexpected as a ghost. It is a species of obsession, but of intermittent obsession; from which we should be able to draw, if we were but wise, the certainty of a nobler existence, and the hope of attaining to it by the daily exercise of our will. This sharpness of thought, this enthusiasm of the senses and of the spirit, must in every age have appeared to man as the chiefest of blessings; and for this reason, considering nothing but the immediate pleasure he has, without worrying himself as to whether he were violating the laws of his constitution, he has sought, in physical science, in pharmacy, in the grossest liquors, in the subtlest perfumes, in every climate and in every age, the means of fleeing, were it but for some hours only, his habitaculum of mire, and, as the author of "Lazare" says, "to carry Paradise at the first assault. One might take a proverbial metaphor, "All roads lead to Rome," and apply it to the moral world: The mind of man is glutted with passion: But this unhappy soul, whose natural depravity is equal to its sudden aptitude, paradoxical enough, for charity and the most arduous virtues, is full of paradoxes which allow him to turn to other purposes the overflow of this overmastering passion. He never imagines that he is selling himself wholesale: This visible lord of visible nature -- I speak of man -- has, then, wished to create Paradise by chemistry, by fermented drinks; like a maniac who should replace solid furniture and real gardens by decorations painted on canvas and mounted on frames. It is in this degradation of the sense of the Infinite that lies, according to me, the reason of all guilty excesses; from the solitary and concentrated drunkenness of the man of letters, who, obliged to seek in opium an anodyne for a physical suffering, and having thus discovered a well of morbid pleasure, has made of it, little by little, his sole diet, and as it were the sum of his spiritual life; down to the most disgusting sot of the suburbs, who, his head full of flame and of glory, rolls ridiculously in the muck of the roads. The analysis of the mysterious effect and the diseased pleasures which these drugs beget, of the inevitable chastisement which results from their prolonged use, and finally the immortality necessarily employed in this pursuit of a false

ideal, constitutes the subject of this study. The subject of opium has been treated already, and in a manner at once so startling, so scientific, and so poetic that I shall not dare to add a word to it. I will therefore content myself in another study, with giving an analysis of this incomparable book, which has never been fully translated into French. The author, an illustrious man of a powerful and exquisite imagination, to-day retired and silent, has dared with tragic candour to write down the delights and the tortures which he once found in opium, and the most dramatic portion of his book is that where he speaks of the superhuman efforts of will which he found it necessary to bring into action in order to escape from the damnation which he had imprudently incurred. To-day I shall only speak of hashish, and I shall speak of it after numerous investigations and minute information; extracts from notes or confidences of intelligent men who had long been addicted to it; only, I shall combine these varied documents into a sort of monograph, choosing a particular soul, and one easy to explain and to define, as a type suitable to experiences of this nature. The stories of Marco Polo, which have been so unjustly laughed at, as in the case of some other old travellers, have been verified by men of science, and deserve our belief. I shall not repeat his story of how, after having intoxicated them with hashish whence the word "assassin" the old Man of the Mountains shut up in a garden filled with delights those of his youngest disciples to whom he wished to give an idea of Paradise as an earnest of the reward, so to speak, of a passive and unreflecting obedience. The reader may consult, concerning the secret Society of Hashishins, the work of Von Hammer-Purgstall, and the note of M. Sylvestre de Sacy contained in vol. Herodotus tells us that the Syrians used to gather grains of hemp and throw red-hot stones upon them; so that it was like a vapour-bath, more perfumed than that of any Grecian stove; and the pleasure of it was so acute that it drew cries of joy from them. Hashish, in effect, comes to us from the East. The exciting properties of hemp were well known in ancient Egypt, and the use of it is very widely spread under different names in India, Algeria, and Arabia Felix; but we have around us, under our eyes, curious examples of the intoxication caused by vegetable emanations. Without speaking of the children who, having played and rolled themselves in heaps of cut lucern, often experience singular attacks of vertigo, it is well known that during the hemp harvest both male and female workers undergo similar effects. One would say that from the harvest rises a miasma which troubles their brains despitefully. The head of the reaper is full of whirlwinds, sometimes laden with reveries; at certain moments the limbs grow weak and refuse their office. We have heard tell of crises of somnambulism as being frequent among the Russian peasants, whose cause, they say, must be attributed to the use of hemp-seed oil in the preparation of food. Who does not know the extravagant behavior of hens which have eaten grains of hemp-seed, and the wild enthusiasm of the horses which the peasants, at weddings and on the feasts of their patron saints, prepare for a steeplechase by a ration of hemp-seed, sometimes sprinkled with wine? Nevertheless, French hemp is unsuitable for preparing hashish, or at least, as repeated experiments have shown, unfitted to give a drug which is equal in power to hashish. Hashish, or Indian hemp *Cannabis indica*, is a plant of the family *Urticacea*, resembling in every respect the hemp of our latitudes, except that it does not attain the same height. It possesses very extraordinary intoxicating properties, which for some years past have attracted in France the attention of men of science and of the world. It is more or less highly esteemed according to its different sources: Hashish or grass; that is to say, the grass par excellence, as if the Arabs had wished to define in a single word the grass source of all material pleasures has different names, according to its composition and the method of preparation which it has undergone in the country where it has been gathered: It makes considerable difference at what season of the year it is gathered. It possesses its greatest energy when it is in flower. The flowering tops are in consequence the only parts employed in the different preparations of which we are about to speak. The extrait gras of hashish, as the Arabs prepare it, is obtained by boiling the tops of the fresh plant in butter, with a little water. It is strained, after complete evaporation of all humidity, and one thus obtains a preparation which has the appearance of a pomade, in colour greenish yellow, and which possesses a disagreeable odour of hashish and of rancid butter. Under this form it is employed in small pills of two to four grammes in weight, but on account of its objectionable smell, which increases with age, the Arabs conceal the extrait gras in sweetmeats. The most commonly employed of these sweetmeats, dawamesk, is a mixture of extrait gras, sugar, and various other aromatic substances, such as vanilla, cinnamon, pistachio, almond, musk. Sometimes one even adds a

little cantharides, with an object which has nothing in common with the ordinary results of hashish. The experiments made by Messrs. Smith, Gastinel, and Decourtive were directed towards the discovery of the active principles of hashish. Despite their efforts, its chemical combination is still little known, but one usually attributes its properties to a resinous matter which is found there in the proportion of about 10 per cent. To obtain this resin the dried plant is reduced to a coarse powder, which is then washed several times with alcohol; this is afterwards partially distilled and evaporated until it reaches the consistency of an extract; this extract is treated with water, which dissolves the gummy foreign matter, and the resin then remains in a pure condition. This product is soft, of a dark green colour, and possesses to a high degree the characteristic smell of hashish. Five, ten, fifteen centigrammes are sufficient to produce surprising results. But the haschischine, which may be administered under the form of chocolate pastilles or small pills mixed with ginger, has, like the dawamesk and the extrait gras, effects more or less vigorous, and of an extremely varied nature, according to the individual temperament and nervous susceptibility of the hashish-eater; and, more than that, the result varies in the same individual. Sometimes he will experience an immoderate and irresistible gaiety, sometimes a slumber doubtful and thronged with dreams. There are, however, some phenomena which occur regularly enough; above all, in the case of persons of a regular temperament and education; there is a kind of unity in its variety which will allow me to edit, without too much trouble, this monograph on hashish-drunkness of which I spoke before. At Constantinople, in Algeria, and even in France, some people smoke hashish mixed with tobacco, but then the phenomena in question only occur under a form much moderated, and, so to say, lazy. I have heard it said that recently, by means of distillation, an essential oil has been drawn from hashish which appears to possess a power much more active than all the preparations hitherto known, but it has not been sufficiently studied for me to speak with certainty of its results. Is it not superfluous to add that tea, coffee, and alcoholic drinks are powerful adjuvants which accelerate more or less the outbreak of this mysterious intoxication? What does one see? Marvellous things, is it not so? Is it very beautiful? Such are the usual questions which, with a curiosity mingled with fear, those ignorant of hashish address to its adepts. It is, as it were, the childish impatience to know, resembling that of those people who have never quitted their firesides when they meet a man who returns from distant and unknown countries. They imagine hashish-drunkness to themselves as a prodigious country, a vast theatre of sleight-of-hand and of juggling, where all is miraculous, all unforeseen. And since for the ordinary run of readers and of questioners the word "hashish" connotes the idea of a strange and topsy-turvy world, the expectation of prodigious dreams it would be better to say hallucinations, which are, by the way, less frequent than people suppose, I will at once remark upon the important difference which separates the effects of hashish from the phenomena of dream. In dream, that adventurous voyage which we undertake every night, there is something positively miraculous. It is a miracle whose punctual occurrence has blunted its mystery. The dreams of man are of two classes. That is the natural dream; it is the man himself. But the other kind of dream, the dream absurd and unforeseen, without meaning or connection with the character, the life, and the passions of the sleeper: As it is inexplicable by natural causes, they attributed to it a cause external to man, and even to-day, leaving out of account oneiromancers and the fooleries of a philosophical school which sees in dreams of this type sometimes a reproach, sometimes a warning; in short, a symbolic and moral picture begotten in the spirit itself of the sleeper. It is a dictionary which one must study; a language of which sages may obtain the key. In the intoxication of hashish there is nothing like this. We shall not go outside the class of natural dream. The drunkness, throughout its duration, it is true, will be nothing but an immense dream, thanks to the intensity of its colours and the rapidity of its conceptions. But it will always keep the idiosyncrasy of the individual. The man has desired to dream; the dream will govern the man. But this dream will be truly the son of its father. The idle man has taxed his ingenuity to introduce artificially the supernatural into his life and into his thought; but, after all, and despite the accidental energy of his experiences, he is nothing but the same man magnified, the same number raised to a very high power. He is brought into subjection, but, unhappily for him, it is not by himself; that is to say, by the part of himself which is already dominant. Let it be well understood then, by worldly and ignorant folk, curious of acquaintance with exceptional joys, that they will find in hashish nothing miraculous, absolutely nothing but the natural in a superabundant degree. The brain

and the organism upon which hashish operates will only give their ordinary and individual phenomena, magnified, it is true, both in quantity and quality, but always faithful to their origin. Man cannot escape the fatality of his moral and physical temperament. Hashish will be, indeed, for the impressions and familiar thoughts of the man, a mirror which magnifies, yet no more than a mirror. Here is the drug before your eyes: Allow me to remark in passing that this proposition can be inverted, and that the most disgusting and revolting perfume would become perhaps a pleasure to inhale if it were reduced to its minimum quantity and intensity. You can swallow it without fear; it is not fatal; it will in nowise injure your physical organs. Perhaps later on too frequent an employment of the sorcery will diminish the strength of your will; perhaps you will be less a man than you are today; but retribution is so far off, and the nature of the eventual disaster so difficult to define! What is it that you risk? A little nervous fatigue to-morrow -- no more. Do you not every day risk greater punishments for less reward? Very good then; you have even, to make it act more quickly and vigorously, imbibed your dose of extrait gras in a cup of black coffee. You are now sufficiently provisioned for a long and strange journey; the steamer has whistled, the sails are trimmed; and you have this curious advantage over ordinary travellers, that you have no idea where you are going. I presume that you have taken the precaution to choose carefully your moment for setting out on this adventure.

Chapter 2 : The Haschish Poem by John Greenleaf Whittier - Poem Hunter

In the s Charles Baudelaire was a regular member of the infamous Club des Hashischins ("Club of the Hashish-Eaters"), a Parisian literary group dedicated to the exploration of altered states of consciousness, principally through the use of hashish (a concentrated form of cannabis resin).

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Chapter 3 : Poem: Bread, Hashish And Moon by Nizar Qabbani

In the intoxication of hashish there is nothing like this. We shall not go outside the class of natural dream. The drunkenness, throughout its duration, it is true, will be nothing but an immense dream, thanks to the intensity of its colours and the rapidity of its conceptions. But it will always.

The edition used by this review is the Citadel Press book, translated by Stacy Diamond. Charles Baudelaire was an early precursor to the French symbolist movement of the late nineteenth century. The literary movement was a reaction to realism and placed a lot of emphasis on the power of dreams and the imagination as tools for communicating ideals through symbols. Synaesthesia was one of the great tools of the symbolists and Baudelaire wrote of hashish: Ideas are distorted; perceptions are confused. Sounds are clothed in colors and colors in music. Baudelaire utilised the dream as the symbolic ground of the drug experience, which in the case of this edition of *Artificial Paradises* incorporates wine, hashish and opium. For instance, he discusses the existence of two types of dreams. Hashish intoxication, he contends, belongs to the former. Further intertextualities will also be explored later in this review. Whoever has had a grief to appease, a memory to evoke, a sorrow to drown, a castle in Spain to build—all have at one time invoked the mysterious god who lies concealed in the fibers [sic] of the grapevine. On the one hand, you have the drug of which the author says therein inhabits a god. There is much recourse to Bacchus and Orpheus in his discourse on wine, which conjures images of an ancient lineage and romantic embodiment. However, while wine is treated as an equal to humanity, with its own distinct historical aura and cast as having a personal relationship with its drinker, hashish is portrayed in a much darker light. Incongruous connections, coincidental resemblances, interminable puns, and comic sketches provide endless delight. But it is his personal moral ascription to hashish that highlights these facets in a negative light; for Baudelaire hashish is solitary and thus anti-social, having a disastrous effect: Baudelaire outlines stages of the hashish intoxication. Firstly, words and ideas take on bizarre new meanings: External things, forms and images, swell to monstrous proportions, revealing themselves in fantastic shapes as yet unimagined. Interestingly, this raises an important question. Very similar motifs are used in psychedelic literature, empathetic identification with external objects, but are elements of the two experiences the same? Or, perhaps, is it a restrictive model of language that is unable to break out of certain modes? There seems to be a general disagreement as to whether hashish should be classed as a psychedelic; however, using literature as a tool for asking the question, it appears to clearly class them together. Not to mention his repeated emphasis on time distortion. The explanation of the mechanics differ, from a realignment of perception to an expansion of consciousness, but the result is categorically similar. In the climatic stage: This is a fascinating connection. By reaching the point of contradiction resolution, which is more recently explored as a divine experience in psychedelic literature, Baudelaire saw it through hashish as being anti-social. However, a degree of separation between the individual and his fellows underlies both perspectives; the two take on the same division. According to Baudelaire the paradises are artificial because using drugs is like replacing real gardens for scenery painted on canvas. And, on the other hand, he believes no state should endorse hashish precisely because he believes it is anti-social.

Chapter 4 : Erowid Charles Baudelaire Vault : The Poem of Hashish

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Chapter 5 : 'Marijuana' poems - Hello Poetry

Summary. The Poem of Hashish () was first published in "By graduations, external objects assume unique appearances in the endless combining and transfiguring of forms.

Chapter 6 : Cannabis Poems | Examples of Cannabis Poetry

*The Poem of Hashish by Baudelaire, Charles/ Crowley, Aleister (TRN). Paperback available at Half Price Books®
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Chapter 7 : Brief history of hashish - Alchimia blog

Published in as the first part of his Les Paradis Artificiel, under the heading Hashish, this essay of Baudelaire's is also known as 'The Poem of Hashish', perhaps because it was so called in the ubiquitous Aleister Crowley translation, used here, which he gave as the third part of a study called The Herb Dangerous, published in his Equinox.

Chapter 8 : Hash Poems | Examples of Hash Poetry

This carefully crafted ebook: "The Poem of Hashish (The Complete Essay translated by Aleister Crowley)" is formatted for your eReader with a functional and detailed table of contents. Poem of Hashish () by Charles Pierre Baudelaire (1857-1870) was first published in

Chapter 9 : The Poem of Hashish - Baudelaire, Charles/ Crowley, Aleister (TRN) - | HPB

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