

Xix - Plants - Nature Alchemists transform air
soil, water, into precious things - The astonishing
Photosynthesis

xx - Plants don't locomote - so they make chemicals to attract
and repel

xxi - Agriculture - Something the grasses did to the
people as a way to conquer the trees.

xxii - today our presence is felt everywhere - Plants
success depends on getting along with us.

7 John Chapman, liked to be with Indians and Children

11 - Kazakhstan - home of apple too

38 - The Old Days - Pre Christian when "man is still
to his own thinking brother of plants and animals."

52 - Sex is nature's way of creating fresh genetic combinations

57 - It is on wildness that domestication depends

Thoreau - in wildness is the preservation of the world.

Wendell Berry "In human culture is the preservation of wildness."

64 - Tulip Flowers - how did these organs of plants
manage to get themselves cross wired with human ideal of value
and status and eros?

70 - A flower - evolved to look like a certain female insect, viewed
from behind.

141 - Getting Hi makes Animals more vulnerable

The more I read the more I was
led to abhor and detest my own laws.
Frederick Douglass

139 Weil - Consciousness Change - "A basic human activity" ~~BOOK~~ BOOK

false. Perhaps it is our work ethic that is offended—you know pain, no gain. Or maybe it is the provenance of the chemicals that troubles us, the fact that they come from outside. Especially in the Judeo-Christian West, we tend to define ourselves by the distance we've put between ourselves and nature, and we jealously guard the borders between matter and spirit as proof of our ties to the angels. The notion that spirit might turn out in some sense to be matter (and plant matter, no less!) is a threat to our sense of separateness and godliness. Spiritual knowledge comes from above or within, but surely not from plants. Christians have a name for someone who believes otherwise: pagan.

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Two stories stand behind the taboos that people in the West have placed on cannabis at various times in its history. Each reflects our anxieties about this remarkable plant, about what its Dionysian power might do to us if it is not resisted or brought under control.

The first, brought back from the Orient by Marco Polo (among others), is the story of the Assassins—or rather, a corruption of the story of the Assassins, which may or may not be apocryphal to begin with. The time is the eleventh century, when a vicious sect called the Assassins, under the absolute control of Hassan ibn al Sabbah (aka "the Old Man of the Mountain") is terrorizing Persia, robbing and murdering with brutal abandon. Hassan's marauders will do anything he tells them to, no questions asked; they have lost their fear of death. How does Hassan secure this perfect loyalty? By treating his men to a foretaste of the eternal paradise that will be theirs should they die in his service.

Hassan would begin his initiation of new recruits by giving them so much hashish that they passed out. Hours later the men would awaken to find themselves in the midst of a most beautiful

What, then, was the knowledge that God wanted to keep from Adam and Eve in the Garden? Theologians will debate this question without end, but it seems to me the most important answer is hidden in plain sight. The *content* of the knowledge Adam and Eve could gain by tasting of the fruit does not matter nearly as much as its *form*—that is, the very fact that there was spiritual knowledge of *any* kind to be had from a tree from nature. The new faith sought to break the human bond with magic nature, to disenchant the world of plants and animals by directing our attention to a single God in the sky. Yet Jehovah couldn't very well pretend the tree of knowledge didn't exist, not when generations of plant-worshipping pagans knew better. So the pagan tree is allowed to grow even in Eden, though ringed around now with a strong taboo. Yes, there is spiritual knowledge in nature, the new God is acknowledging, and its temptations are fierce, but I am fiercer still. Yield to it, and you will be punished.

So unfolds the drug war's first battle.

I've removed most all of the temptations from my own garden, though not without regret or protest. Immersed this spring in research for this chapter, I was sorely tempted to plant one of the hybrid cannabis seeds I'd seen for sale in Amsterdam. I immediately

greatest pleasure ever known in just a minute more . . . But that future never comes." In this respect the cocaine experience is "a savage mimicry of consumer consciousness." With cannabis or the psychedelics, on the other hand, "pleasure can come from natural beauty, domestic tasks, friends and relatives, conversation, or any number of objects that do not need to be purchased."

thought better of it, however. So I planted lots of opium poppies instead. I hasten to add that I've no plans to do anything with my poppies except admire them—first their fleeting tissue-paper blooms, then their swelling blue-green seedpods, fat with milky alkaloid. (Unless, of course, simply walking among the poppies is enough to have an effect, as it was for Dorothy in Oz.) Unscored and so at least arguably innocent, these poppies are my stand-ins for the cannabis I cannot plant. Whenever I look at their dreamy petals, I'll be reminded of the powers this garden has abjured in order to stay on the safe side of the law.

So I make do with this bowdlerized garden, this densely planted plot of acceptable pleasures—good things to eat, beautiful things to gaze upon—fenced around by heeded laws. If Dionysus is represented in this garden, and he surely is, it's mainly in the flower border. I would be the last person to make light of the power of a fragrant rose to raise one's spirits, summon memories, even, in some not merely metaphorical sense, to intoxicate.

The garden is a place of many sacraments, an arena—at once as common as any room and as special as a church—where we can go not just to witness but to enact in a ritual way our abiding ties to the natural world. Abiding, yet by now badly attenuated, for civilization seems bent on breaking or at least forgetting our connections to the earth. But in the garden the old bonds are preserved, and not merely as symbols. So we eat from the vegetable patch, and, if we're paying attention, we're recalled to our dependence on the sun and the rain and the everyday leaf-by-leaf alchemy we call photosynthesis. Likewise, the poultice of comfrey leaves that lifts a wasp's sting from our skin returns us to a quasi-magic world of healing plants from which modern