



Strange Drugs make for Strange Bedfellows: Ernst Jünger, Albert Hofmann and the Politics of Psychedelics

Alan Piper

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Psychedelic drugs and LSD in particular are associated with the Left Wing political radicalism and Hippie culture of the 1960s and as promising to usher in a world of peace love and understanding. However, the discovery of the powerful psychedelic drug LSD emerged in the shadow of the Second World War and has from the outset been a substance of interest to individuals of a radically conservative disposition such as Ernst Jünger, the close friend of Albert Hofmann who first synthesised LSD. That interest continues in the shape of elements of the present day Radical Right, who mix an interest in pre-war Volkish ideology and Nordic paganism with psychoactive drugs and contemporary right wing political thought. 'Strange Drugs make for Strange Bedfellows' examines the promotion of conservative revolutionary thought within the New Age milieu, which includes contemporary psychedelia, and the interest of individuals from the Radical Right in the role of psychoactive drugs in traditional and contemporary Nordic shamanism. "The popular view of psychedelics regards these astonishing drugs as agents of positive personal and societal transformation, signposting humanity toward the Age of Aquarius. Yet there has always been an almost wilfully overlooked and sinister nightside to psychedelia's sun-kissed Eden. Alan Piper's penetrating study delves deep in the murky historical backwaters of fascist thought, taking us on a long, strange, trip from the trenches to contemporary Nordic neo-paganism, where WWI warrior/philosopher Ernst Jünger's personal and LSD informed relationship with Albert Hofmann rubs shoulders with arcane occult and right wing beliefs about psychedelics. Piper's view that the qualities and experiences of LSD and other psychedelics suggests they are, perhaps, neutral tools that can be used to inform any philosophy, liberal or conservative will, rightfully, challenge and provoke many readers. Dense, but highly readable, and satisfyingly referenced, Strange Drugs make for strange bedfellows, brings fresh depth and perspective to the history of psychedelic drugs." - Andy Roberts, author of *Albion Dreaming: A popular history of LSD in Britain Since the sixties* psychedelic culture has typically been viewed, from both within and without, as a fellow-traveller with progressive, environmental, liberal and communitarian politics. But the psychedelic experience has been understood quite differently in other times and places. Alan Piper's sensitive exploration of its role in the thought of Ernst Jünger, a seminal influence on Albert Hoffman and other psychedelic pioneers of the 1950s, shows how it can offer meaning and validation to quite different political ideologies: individualist, reactionary, even fascist. As well as exposing the appropriation of psychedelic culture by modern far-right interests, his analysis raises profound questions about the meaning of the experience and its political dimensions." -Mike Jay author of *High Society: Mind-Altering Drugs in History and Culture*. "In *Strange Drugs Make for Strange Bedfellows*, Alan Piper tells the fascinating and challenging story of the unexplored links between the psychedelic movement which emerged in the mid 20th century, and right wing politics. While to many this connection seems counterintuitive, Piper's well researched and finely argued work, explains how it is that these movements are not only historically intertwined, but also exist in a complex ideological interplay steeped in ideas of nature and mysticism. Instructive and well worth a read." - Dr Amy Hale, anthropologist and folklorist, author *John Michell, Radical Traditionalism, and the Emerging Politics of the Pagan New Right*.

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