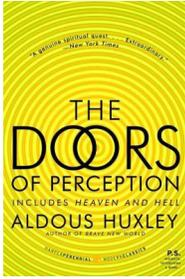


# Books by the Stack



## *The Doors of Perception; and Heaven and Hell* by Aldous Huxley

Among the most profound explorations of the effects of mind-expanding drugs ever written, here are two complete classic books – *The Doors of Perception* and *Heaven and Hell* – in which Aldous Huxley reveals the mind's remote frontiers and the unmapped areas of human consciousness.

**Why you'll like it:** *Psychedelic, literary, exploration of consciousness.*

**About the Author:** Aldous Huxley was born on July 26, 1894, in Surrey, England, into a distinguished scientific and literary family; his grandfather was the noted scientist and writer, T.H. Huxley. Following an eye illness at age 16 that resulted in near-blindness, Huxley abandoned hope of a career in medicine and turned instead to literature, attending Oxford University and graduating with honors. While at Oxford, he published two volumes of poetry. *Crome Yellow*, his first novel, was published in 1927 followed by *Antic Hay*, *Those Barren Leaves*, and *Point Counter Point*. His most famous novel, *Brave New World*, published in 1932, is a science fiction classic about a futuristic society controlled by technology. In all, Huxley produced 47 works during his long career. In 1947, Huxley moved with his family to southern California. During the 1950s, he experimented with mescaline and LSD. *Doors of Perception* and *Heaven and Hell*, both works of nonfiction, were based on his experiences while taking mescaline under supervision. In 1959, Aldous Huxley received the Award of Merit for the Novel from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He died on November 22, 1963. (Bowker Author Biography)

### Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss the idea of truth. Can human beings ever know the truth about life? Are transcendental experiences like those described by Huxley necessary to understand the truth?
2. What is the importance of the point of view of the author in each essay? Explain how the structure of the essays both helps Huxley to make his point and hinders him from making his point.
3. Discuss the importance of art in both essays. Why does Huxley make so many references to art and artists?
4. Discuss the importance of color and light. Compare the use of color and light in works of art to color and light experienced by mescaline user?
5. What event was, according to the author, an example of ancient pageantry which was enriched and improved by technological advances? (from *Heaven and Hell*: Appendix 3)

6. Who used to say that when he self-flagellated God would deny him nothing? (from *Heaven and Hell*: Appendix 2)

7. Who wrote the biography about Carlyle? To what does Carlyle compare the heavens and earth? (from *Heaven and Hell*: Appendix 8)

8. According to the author in Appendix 6, what opens the doors of heaven, hell, and limbo for the living? Spiritual enlightenment; death; the presence or absence of certain chemicals in the blood; “massy keys of metals twain”.

(Questions issued by BookRags.)



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