

# The Spice Melange as a Catalyst to the Discovery of the Mind<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Melange, or spice as it is also known, is an ingredient in Frank Herbert's novel *Dune*. It symbolizes the infinite possibilities of the human mind, as it is a source of knowledge and power. Both addictive and mind-altering, for the people of Arrakis, its source place, the spice is the basis of their lives and the cornerstone of their daily rituals. Due to its effect, the traditional lifespan is extended three times, but at the same time, its consumption causes a strong addiction. It is the basis of the rites of passage. The spice is a consciousness-expanding narcotic produced during the natural life cycle of sandworms, which has been the core of technological development and commerce since its discovery. Moreover, the formation of the cultural memory of the Fremen is made possible by the Water of Life, a substance transformed from poison and heavily saturated with spice. In tribal society, constant contact with the spice also manifests in physical changes, as the natural layer of their eyes turns otherworldly blue due to consumption. In my study, I address the following questions: can spice as a drug fully enhance the capabilities of the human mind? What is its role in the rites, and how does it enable the cultural memory of the tribe? What do various interest groups in the galaxy use it for? The core of my topic is the relationship between the spice and the individual through different social strata, ritual ceremonies, and the question of foresight.

**Keywords:** spice, people, sublime, navigators, cultural memory

## The Presence of Mind Modifiers in Philosophy

[W]ith a blessed company—we following in the train of Zeus, and others in that of some other god—... saw the blessed sight and vision and were initiated into that which is rightly called the most blessed of mysteries, which we celebrated in a state of perfection ...

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being permitted as initiates to the sight of perfect and simple and calm and happy apparitions, which we saw in the pure light, being ourselves pure and not entombed in this which we carry about with us and call the body, in which we are imprisoned like an oyster in its shell. (Plato, 1925, 250/b–c.)

According to the latest research, the relationship between philosophy and mind-altering drugs goes back to the ancient Greeks, thus to the foundations of Western philosophy. In the dialogues of the Athenian philosopher Plato, the role of the so-called “pharmakon” is examined, which identifies the written text with a multifaceted substance that can heal, poison, or kill. There are several theories about Plato’s encounter with the world of narcotic drinks, one of which is about the psychoactive mushroom mixed into the drink during his initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries, and the other is that certain substances with narcotic properties were used during the preparation of Athenian wine. It will probably never be clear exactly what happened, but it likely played a role in Plato’s philosophy about ideas and the body. As can be seen from the quote above, the body is a kind of prison through which ideas cannot be experienced. “Blessed sight and mysteries” suggest an out-of-body experience that made it possible to step into the “clear light,” glimpse ideas, or recall them. A state similar to initiation is expressed several times around the metaphor of vision, light and sun are symbols of knowledge in all of Plato’s works.

This pharmakon, this ‘medicine,’ this philter, which acts as both remedy and poison, already introduces itself into the body of the discourse with all its ambivalence. This charm, this spellbinding virtue, this power of fascination, can be—alternately or simultaneously—beneficent or maleficent. The pharmakon would be a substance—with all that that word can connote in terms of matter with occult virtues, cryptic depths refusing to submit their ambivalence to analysis, already paving the way for alchemy—if we didn’t have eventually to come to recognize it as antistuff itself: that which resists any philosopheme, indefinitely exceeding its bounds as nonidentity, nonessence, non-substance; granting philosophy by that very fact the inexhaustible adversity of what funds it and the infinite absence of what funds it. (Derrida, 1981, p. 70)

In *Plato’s Pharmacy*, Derrida analyzes the phenomenon of the “pharmakon,” which—as seen from the quote above—is an indefinable substance. Its duality is manifested during its use: it is both a medicine and a poison and can be beneficial as well as a malicious agent. Based on its nature, it bears the traits of mythical narrative, enchantment and occultism, and ritual mysticism. It leaves the ordinary, the natural, in favor of a mysterious depth, which we now intend to approach through the first volume of Frank Herbert’s *Dune* series of novels.

## The Importance of Spice in the Novel

Melange, or spice as it is also known, is the most important ingredient in Frank Herbert's novel *Dune*, where the planet Arrakis is the sole source of it. In Herbert's work, the spice symbolizes the infinite possibilities of the human mind, a source of knowledge and power, and it represents the inexhaustibility and dangers of conscious functioning. At the same time, the spice can be considered a drug that expands sensory perceptions, a consciousness modifier that increases mental alertness, a poison that tears away the veil of benevolent appearances covering the world, and a medicine that prolongs life.

'Can you remember your first taste of spice?'

'It tasted like cinnamon.'

'But never twice the same,' he said. 'It's like life—it presents a different face each time you take it. Somehow that the spice produces a learned-flavor reaction. The body, learning a thing is good for it, interprets the flavor as pleasurable—slightly euphoric. And, like life, never to be truly synthesized.' (Herbert, 1999, p. 74)

In the quoted passage, the flavor of the spice is compared to cinnamon, which is an ingredient of the holy anointment used during consecration in Christian ceremonies, essentially a mediator of divine blessing, and at the same time, a symbol of wisdom (Diós I. & Viczián J., 1997, p. 469). Spice is not just a symbol; it is life itself, as its regular consumption can extend the traditional lifespan three times. It is clear from the text that despite its variety, the spice is created naturally—it cannot be produced artificially—it is a gift of nature over which man can never truly have power. Its consumption causes a feeling of euphoria during certain chemical reactions in the body, and in this heightened state of consciousness, an intense feeling of happiness can be experienced. In his book, *The Doors of Perception*, Huxley records his own experiences after consuming mescaline controlled by scientists and describes the altered perception of reality as a similar experience.

As Mind at Large seeps past the no longer watertight valve, all kinds of biologically useless things start to happen. In some cases there may be extra-sensory perceptions. Other persons discover a world of visionary beauty. To others again is revealed the glory, the infinite value and meaningfulness of naked existence, of the given, unconceptualized event. In the final stage of egolessness there is an 'obscure knowledge' that All is in all—that All is actually each. This is as near, I take it, as a finite mind can ever come to 'perceiving everything that is happening everywhere in the universe.' (Huxley, 1954, p. 7)

From the quote, it is important to highlight the perception beyond the senses, which appears in the novel mainly in the form of experienced visions of the future. At the same time,

the experience of mystical wisdom plays a prominent role, as well, since, under the influence of the spice, Paul Atreides is able to discover the past, present, and future at the same time, as well as to awaken both female and male genetic memory and spiritual union with his ancestors.

Spice is a consciousness-expanding narcotic produced during the natural life cycle of sandworms, which has been the core of technological development and commerce since its discovery. The discovery of the spice led to the exploitation of Arrakis; the Great Houses of the Empire, and the power of the emperor were inevitably tied to the extraction of the spice. However, this is constantly made difficult by the wild and territorial sandworms and the indigenous Fremen, who are culturally and biologically connected to the drug. Their guerilla tactics make the already hazardous extraction even more difficult since the spice can only be found in large quantities in the deep desert, so the noise made by the machines always attracts the sandworms. It is important to note that before the discovery of the spice, the planet did not receive special attention in the galaxy, it was just a remote, poor, desert planet that only captured the imagination of ecologists. The Imperial Experimental Stations established here represented the great dream of the Fremen, the possibility of a green planet, but this was soon forgotten when the countless possibilities hidden by the spice were discovered in the universe.

In the economic sense, spice is the rarest and most valuable commodity in the empire, the price of one deka of spice on the open market is six hundred and twenty thousand solari<sup>2</sup>, which can be used to buy a comfortable, luxurious life on a safe planet. Among the Great Houses, those whose leaders could afford to consume the spice on a regular basis are considered rich, but its accumulation involved serious danger, as the Padishah Emperor, the Bene Gesserit, and the rival Great Houses see the gathering of larger stocks as a potential threat. It is no coincidence, that after Paul Atreides became the emperor, he maintained his power by collecting and distributing the spice in a controlled manner.

It also plays an important role in travel and cultural development, allowing navigators to safely control ships in space. Spice is the basis of the culture of the Fremen, the formation of their cultural memory is made possible by the Water of Life, a substance transformed from poison and heavily saturated with spice. In tribal society, constant contact with the spice manifests itself in physical changes, as the natural layer of their eyes turns otherworldly blue because of consumption. As a result of the spice, the main character, Paul Atreides, will experience possible life paths and visions that flash the future, his consciousness will expand almost infinitely, and he will meld the mind of his predecessors with his own personality.

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<sup>2</sup>"Official monetary unit of the Imperium, its purchasing power set at quatricentennial negotiations between the Guild, the Landsraad, and the Emperor." (Herbert, 1999, p. 560–61).

The following paragraphs consider the issue of drugs, medicine, and magical panaceas from the point of view of philosophy. How is cultural memory related to the spice and what effect did it have on the culture of the Fremen? A higher state of consciousness or a simple drug, what can spice really do? Can we see spice as an embodiment of the Kantian experience of the sublime, which almost infinitely expands consciousness and enables cultural memory?

## **The Building Blocks of Discovering the Universe**

And he thought then about the Guild—the force that had specialized for so long that it had become a parasite, unable to exist independently of the life upon which it fed. They had never dared grasp the sword... and now they could not grasp it. They might have taken Arrakis when they realized the error of specializing on the melange awareness-spectrum narcotic for their navigators. They could have done this, lived their glorious day and died. Instead, they'd existed from moment to moment, hoping the seas in which they swam might produce a new host when the old one died. The Guild navigators, gifted with limited prescience, had made the fatal decision: they'd chosen always the clear, safe course that leads ever downward into stagnation. (Herbert, 1999, p. 503)

The Space League is one of the three pillars of the known universe, the organization responsible for trade and space travel. The quoted excerpt mentions the Navigators, who play a prominent role within the League, essentially functioning as supercomputers, thus calculating the complicated trajectories required for space travel. In the second volume of the novel series, *Dune Messiah*, we can observe their physical appearance, usually surrounded by the greatest secrecy. For example, during interstellar travel, passengers cannot leave their own ships in the hold. All League members are characterized by the so-called eyes of Ibad, namely, the iris that turns otherworldly blue due to consuming a large amount of spice. At the same time, Navigators are exposed to more severe influences. Essentially, they live in a large container constantly filled with spice concentrate, so their shape is wreathed in orange spice gas. Due to extreme and long-term exposure, their bodies are deformed and mutated, their limbs are elongated, and their appearance is often described as “human-like fish” due to their finned legs and webbed hands.

Just like Paul Atreides, they see the future, but due to their intellectual limitations, they use the logical side of their brains, so they are unable to set up a complex vision of the future; they only see a thin path, which they use in a highly mathematical way. For the League, spice is an invaluable economic asset that ensures that humans do not become isolated groups in the universe. Since there are no computers or artificial

intelligence in the world of *Dune*, spice has become the basis for exploring the cosmos. The effect of the spice can be seen here as a consciousness-expanding narcotic, which is capable of reaching a higher level of thinking and a kind of "foresight," which makes it possible to experience future slices of time.

Predicting, fortune-telling, and prophesying are distinguished as follows: the *first* is foresight according to laws of experience (therefore natural); the *second* is contrary to the familiar laws of experience (contrary to nature); but the *third* is, or is considered to be, inspiration from a cause that is distinct from nature (supernatural). Because this third capacity seems to result from the influence of a god, it is also properly called the *faculty of divination* (since every shrewd guess about the future is also improperly called divination). (Kant, 2006, p. 80–81)

Kant, in his anthropological didactics, discusses the forms of divination and foresight, which he relates to the modes of sensual experience. In his later work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, the a priori forms of perception are the basis of cognition; they can be derived from reason, as opposed to sensual experiences, which originate from the world (Kant, 2013). In our case, the examination of Kant's a priori synthetic judgment will be interesting since it is possible mainly in mathematical thinking (see Navigators). In search of the conditions for cognition, he tries to map the deep structure before reason, which precedes all discoveries. Kant examines space and time in the section on transcendental aesthetics and interprets them as the a priori basis of our sensory perception. Based on the Kantian interpretation, seeing into the future can only be considered a supernatural act, in other words, a divine intervention. In the novel, the spice dulls the sensory perceptions, but the layers of consciousness that experience space and time are strengthened, which enables the creation of a highly developed cultural memory and the ability to predict.

Partaking of intoxicating food and drink is a physical means to excite or soothe the power of imagination. Some of these, as poisons, *weaken* the vital force (certain mushrooms, wild rosemary, wild hogweed, the Chicha of the Peruvians, the Ava of the South Sea Indians, opium); others *strengthen* it or at least elevate its feeling (like fermented beverages, wine and beer, or the spirits extracted from them, such as brandy); but all of them are contrary to nature and artificial. He who takes them in such excess that he is for a time incapable of ordering his sense representations according to laws of experience is said to be *drunk* or *intoxicated*; and putting oneself in this condition voluntarily or intentionally is called *getting drunk*. (Kant, 2006, p. 62–63)

Kant analyzes the use of mind-altering drugs in connection with the strengthening and weakening of the imagination, which, according to him, is associated with a confusion

of sensory perceptions and a weakness of the will. In Kantian philosophy, states of intoxication and ecstasy are morally reprehensible since, in this state, the Self is unable to use reason and judgment properly. It is important to highlight from the quote above “contrary to nature” and “artificial,” which refer to the fact that man creates a substance in opposition to the order of nature, which enhances his imagination. The state of the Self under the influence of the drug is shameful: it endangers its cognitive abilities due to carelessness, and its happiness is only naivety, through which it escapes from the responsibility of human existence. Among the stages caused by the imagination, Kant only exempts sleep as a biological necessity that the body needs. In the novel, however, the spice is a naturally occurring substance that, in addition to ecstasy, often results in spiritual awareness. During its consumption, waking dreams and visions appear in the mind, the processing of which requires a high level of intellectual preparation.

### **Effects of the Melange Intake**

‘The spice,’ he said. ‘It’s in everything here—the air, the soil, the food. The geriatric spice. It’s like the Truthsayer drug. It’s a poison!’ She stiffened. His voice lowered and he repeated: ‘A poison—so subtle, so insidious ... so irreversible. It won’t even kill you unless you stop taking it. We can’t leave Arrakis unless we take part of Arrakis with us.’ The terrifying presence of his voice brooked no dispute. ‘You and the spice,’ Paul said. ‘The spice changes anyone who gets this much of it, but thanks to you, I could bring the change to consciousness. I don’t get to leave it in the unconscious where its disturbance can be blanked out. I can see it.’ (Herbert, 1999, p. 213)

Paul Atrides, the protagonist of the novel, is constantly exposed to the spice after arriving on Arrakis, he is the only character who, thanks to his Mentat and Bene Gesserit training, can become aware of the change on a higher spiritual level when he is exposed to the raw spice itself in the deep desert. In the excerpt cited, he first compares it to the medicine of the Truthsayers, which will be explored later, and then refers to the spice as a poison. In this scene as well, several effects appear that the user can experience while consuming the spice. First of all, it is an addictive substance whose effect is close to that of a drug. Even when consumed in small quantities, it becomes indispensable for the body, its absence leading to a slow and painful death. Moreover, it is characterized by three adjectives: *subtle*, *insidious*, and *irreversible*, which can be linked to the world of narcotics and poisons. Thus, the spice is an essentially indefinable substance. But perhaps its most important effect in the text is the change, which results in a kind of super-sensible spiritual awareness, where sense experiences, time, and space are blurred.

This ability is called foresight in the novel, and several characters possess spice-induced predictions but to varying levels and degrees. Guild Navigators can only use their abilities

to plan safe interstellar routes, while the Bene Gesserit have developed more complex techniques but mainly use their foresight when crossing bloodlines. Paul Atreides' ability is the most advanced in the known universe, and because of that, he experienced a whole range of possible life paths as a result of spice consumption. However, it is only after his son-Leto the Second-becomes an adult that the true power of foresight indicated by the drug is truly revealed, as he follows the so-called Golden Path and ensures the survival of humanity by further developing his own body through evolution for this purpose. Of course, the condition caused by the spice also has its limitations. For example, the possessors of the ability cannot see each other in the flash visions of the future; seeing their own death places a constant psychological burden on them, and, in order to maintain the visions, the consumption of an ever-increasing amount of spice is necessary.

In the novel, the latter is often described as a state similar to drunkenness, and its liberating power brings the experience closer to Nietzsche's Dionysian worldview.

There are two powers above all else that elevate the naive men of nature to the self-forgetting of intoxication: the drive of springtime and narcotic drink. Their workings are symbolized in the figure of Dionysus. In both states, the *principium individuation* is sundered and the subjective disappears entirely before the erupting force of the generally human, indeed, the common-to-all, the natural. (Nietzsche, 2013, p. 31)

The consumption of spice is a euphoric experience, an experience of intoxication and spiritual liberation, just as the world turns upside down for those participating in the cult of Dionysus. The place of the moderately reasonable Apollo is taken by the rampaging, veil-removing Dionysus. Paul Atreides often describes the spice experience as if the veil covering the world has been torn<sup>3</sup>, the naked truth is revealed, the images of the future and the past merge. The boundaries of the Self are blurred: the user of the drug can contact the personalities of his predecessors, which he has stored at the cellular level. The resulting cultural memory makes the past alive-the personality seems lost under the imprint of other consciousnesses.

## Water of Life

'The drug's dangerous, she said, but it gives insight. When a Truthsayer's gifted by the drug, she can look many places in her memory—in her body's memory. We look down so many avenues of the past... but only feminine avenues.' Her voice took on a note of sadness.

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<sup>3</sup> "He fell silent as memory of that seeing filled him. No prescient dream, no experience of his life had quite prepared him for the totality with which the veils had been ripped away to reveal naked time" (Herbert, 1999, p. 214).



'Yet, there's a place where no Truthsayer can see. We are repelled by it, terrorized. It is said a man will come one day and find in the gift of the drug his inward eye. He will look where we cannot—into both feminine and masculine pasts.' (Herbert, 1999, p. 19)

The Water of Life is a spice-infused form of a highly toxic liquid created by drowning younger sandworms. The Fremen and Bene Gesserit use it to elevate their female priestesses to a higher spiritual level, allowing candidates to contact their feminine ancestors or perish in excruciating agony if they cannot synthesize the poison. The Bene Gesserit schools were designed to explore the physical and mental potential of women. The Bene Gesserit can control every muscle and nerve in their body on a biological level, down to the individual fibers, and are capable of voluntarily induced catalepsy (a state of feigned death) in an emergency. At the same time, they are able to break down poisons by regulating their internal chemistry, perceive the truth to varying degrees, and use the Voice, which is a very advanced behavior manipulation technique. The Water of Life is a substance used during the initiation of the Sayyadina and Reverend Mothers, which allows the cultural memory to be dissolved within the Self, but only on the female side. A deadly poison for the unprepared.

And the memory-mind encapsulated within her opened itself to Jessica, permitting a view down a wide corridor to other Reverend Mothers until there seemed no end to them. Jessica recoiled, fearing she would become lost in an ocean of oneness. Still, the corridor remained, revealing to Jessica that the Fremen culture was far older than she had suspected. (Herbert, 1999, p. 384)

As can be seen from the excerpt, the Self that synthesizes the Water of Life from poison into a narcotic drink seems to be lost in its own genetic memory, and its personality is suddenly filled with unknown, familiar consciousnesses that it must assimilate. This revelatory experience is the most intense and dangerous way to experience the spice, and, at the same time, it is a fundamental moment of experiencing Fremen cultural memory.

The fear, as I analyze it in retrospect, was of being overwhelmed, of disintegrating under a pressure of reality greater than a mind, accustomed to living most of the time in a cosy world of symbols, could possibly bear. The literature of religious experience abounds in references to the pains and terrors overwhelming those who have come, too suddenly, face to face with some manifestation of the *Mysterium tremendum*. (Huxley, 1954, p. 17)

Through the experience of religious mysticism, Jessica experiences the fear that can be associated with the loss of her Self as we can also read in Huxley's text. Under the influence of the spice, his genetic memory is awakened, which experience can be described

with the concept of *mysterium tremendum*. During the encounter with the sacred, in the religious rite, the ego is overcome with existential tremors and elemental fear, due to its own diminishing nature, in addition to the cultural memory accumulated over the centuries.

Paul Atreides was the first man to successfully transmute the Water of Life without dying. Despite consuming only a drop of water, he fell into a coma so deep for three weeks that many thought he was dead. Finally, he successfully synthesized the material and acquired almost perfect foresight, which included not only the past and the future but also the present.

### **Spice Orgy**

He felt carnival excitement in the air. He knew what would happen if he drank this spice drug with its quintessence of the substance that brought the change onto him. He would return to the vision of pure time, of time-become-space. It would perch him on the dizzying summit and defy him to understand. (Herbert, 1999, p. 386)

The narcotic drink created from the Water of Life forms the basis of the Fremen's spice orgy. The transformed spice liquid was consumed by all members of the sietch, which resulted in a kind of spiritual connection and helped to maintain the cultural memory of the tribe. Although the Fremen also experienced a small form of "foresight" during the spice orgies, it was recorded as a fear-inducing, culturally suppressed phenomenon. The sacred encounter with the divine is often identified with the feeling of fear, which is beyond human to such an extent that it is impossible for consciousness to fully absorb it.

During the spice orgies, the Fremen's strict way of life is dissolved, and the members of the tribe celebrate freedom from social burdens with dance and an unrestricted experience of sexuality. Dionysian exuberance is evoked by the spice orgy, which results in the disappearance of individuality in the community consciousness.

Most men and women lead lives at the worst so painful, at the best so monotonous, poor and limited that the urge to escape, the longing to transcend themselves if only for a few moments, is and has always been one of the principal appetites of the soul. Art and religion, carnivals and saturnalia, dancing and listening to oratory-all these have served, in H. G. Wells's phrase, as Doors in the Wall. And for private, for everyday use there have always been chemical intoxicants. All the vegetable sedatives and narcotics, all the euphorics that grow on trees, the hallucinogens that ripen in berries or can be squeezed from roots-all, without exception, have been known and systematically used by human beings from time immemorial. (Huxley, 1954, p. 19)

The strict way of life and puritanism of the Fremen are manifested in water discipline and in the lack of traditional forms of cultural entertainment. In order to survive, the order of the tribal society inculcates in the Fremen from early childhood that a drop of water can decide life or death. In Fremen society, the spice orgy provides a gateway to exit this form of lifestyle that does not tolerate contradiction, from the desert way of life that revolves around survival. The consumption of narcotic substances during mythical, religious rites is as old as humanity, it can be observed in primitive society as well as in higher forms of culture. Their effect can be observed mainly in the encounter with holiness and during initiation ceremonies, which are often recorded as a state of euphoria or ecstasy.

Pharmakon is also a word for perfume. A perfume without essence, as we earlier called it a drug without substance. It transforms order into ornament, the cosmos, into a cosmetic. Death, masks, makeup, all are part of the festival that subverts the order of the city, its smooth regulation by the dialectician and the science of being. Plato, as we shall see, is not long in identifying writing with festivity. And play. A certain festival, a certain game. (Derrida, 1981, p. 142)

As a conclusion, I would like to refer to the beginning of the text, *Plato's Pharmacy*, by Derrida, as there is also a more communal interpretation of "pharmakon," evoking saturnalia. The concept of play becomes important here: social constraints are dissolved, the individual experiences the unity of nature, the sacred bond between people through the holiday. The Greek festival cycle associated with Dionysus is initially a music and dance party, a revelry, which later turns into a tragedy under the influence of Apollo. Society reenacts the Dionysian repeatedly so that its body can be purified through catharsis. Similarly, the Fremen can continue the disciplined order of their daily lives by introducing momentary chaos and revelry, which they sanctify with ritual mysticism.

## **Conclusion**

The mythical significance of vision-inducing psychoactive plants runs deep in human history. Their role was not only limited to forming the basis of ritual ceremonies and expanding the boundaries of human consciousness but also helped in the processing of various traumas, and metaphysical or transcendent fulfillment, so in addition to their complex psychological effect, they also influenced philosophy. The soma of the Vedic religion, the hemp used in Asia and Africa, the Mexican cactus known as the magic mushroom, the sacred drinks of the Indian tribes, and the various concoctions of the medieval mystical movements all show the presence of psychedelic drugs and their ritual, magical and religious use in culture. (Grof, 1980)

In Frank Herbert's novel *Dune*, the spice plays a prominent role. We can see it as a narcotic, a medicine, and a panacea used in various religious rituals. Its effect is complex: it not only sharpens cellular memory but also leads to a certain out-of-body experience, insight into the future, and a transcendent unity with the universe. Its experience is strongly associated with the death-rebirth symbols found in certain cultures, such as water, caves, monster figures, the pervasive blue color, and the act of strangulation and poisoning. Consumers of the spice often feel a universal connection with their fellow human beings, with nature, or with some kind of ultimate principle. In the case of Paul Atreides, the gesture of death and rebirth is actually realized when he takes in the Water of Life, his biological functions are reduced to a minimum. He maintains his existence in a state of willing death without consuming food or drink, while his spirit participates in a metaphysical journey into his own past and visions of a possible future.

In a great majority of sessions there is an overall tendency toward perceptual changes in various sensory areas. Consciousness is usually qualitatively changed and has a dream-like character. The access to unconscious material is typically facilitated and psychological defenses are lowered. Emotional reactivity is almost always greatly enhanced and affective factors play an important role as determinants of the LSD reaction. A rather striking aspect of the LSD effect is a marked intensification of mental processes and neural processes in general; this involves phenomena of differing nature and origin. (Grof, 1980, p. 51)

As the above quote shows, the effects of the spice often resemble the physiological effects experienced during LSD treatments. Brian Herbert, the author's son, recounts in the afterword of *Dune* that his father experienced ritual narcotics used in various ceremonies during his travels to Mexico in the 1950s. The spice was born from the fusion of similar psychedelic experiences from different cultures, thus incorporating common human cultural symbols that are related to religion and some kind of universal primordial unity. The phenomenon of extrasensory perception, which can be examined through the spice, allows the characters to confront themselves existentially.

The novel *Dune* addresses complex philosophical and social issues with religious and existential metaphors that are understandable to a contemporary audience, bringing the ancient questions of humanity's philosophy within reach. Spice is both a means of conveying cultural memory and a symbol of cultural heritage, a naturally occurring substance that enables a religious, ritualistic view of the functioning of human consciousness.

In the future, it may be worthwhile to further expand the study with a philosophical examination of other psychedelic phenomena found in the novel, such as the ability called Voice, which shows parallels with the verbal use of *logos* without instruments and its effect on the *pharmakon*. In addition to Huxley's thesis, it may be worth placing greater emphasis on the work of Derrida and Stanislav Grof and further examining the appearance of rituals and experiences related to the spice in the novel.

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