



Opium: Reality's Dark Dream

Thomas Dormandy

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Opium and its derivatives morphine and heroin have destroyed, corrupted, and killed individuals, families, communities, and even whole nations. And yet, for most of its long history, opium has also been humanity's most effective means of alleviating physical and mental pain. This extraordinary book encompasses the entire history of the world's most fascinating drug, from the first evidence of poppy cultivation by stone-age man to the present-day opium trade in Afghanistan. Dr. Thomas Dormandy tells the story with verve and insight, uncovering the strange power of opiates to motivate major conflicts yet also inspire great art and medical breakthroughs, to trigger the rise of global criminal networks yet also revolutionize attitudes toward well-being.

Opium: Reality's Dark Dream traverses the globe and the centuries, exploring opium's role in colonialism, the Chinese Opium Wars, laudanum-inspired sublime Romantic poetry, American "Yellow Peril" fears, the rise of the Mafia and the black market, 1960s counterculture, and more. Dr. Dormandy also recounts exotic or sad stories of individual addiction. Throughout the book the author emphasizes opium's complex, valuable relationship with developments in medicine, health, and disease, highlighting the perplexing dual nature of the drug as both the cause and relief of great suffering in widely diverse civilizations.

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