



## The Empire of Opium: Colonial Exploitation in *Sea of Poppies* and the Silences of *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*

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**Abstract:** *Opium's complicated relationship to pleasure, addiction, commerce, and colonialism has made it a prominent topic in literary and historical discourse. Amitav Ghosh's Sea of Poppies (2008) and Thomas De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium-Eater (1821) feature two different but related depictions of opium. Ghosh places opium within the larger framework of British colonialism and the international drug trade, whereas De Quincey offers a more personal description of addiction, examining the psychological and physical effects of opium intake. The destructive repercussions of addiction and the criminality linked to opium use in both texts are examined in this study. It makes the case through a comparative analysis that De Quincey and Ghosh demonstrate how opium serves as a tool for social disintegration, moral decay, and economic exploitation in addition to being a substance of individual dependence. The data also shows that Ghosh highlights the structural brutality and societal repercussions caused by the opium economy, whereas De Quincey concentrates on the inner anguish of the addict.*

**Keywords:** *Opium, Addiction, Delinquency, Colonialism, Thomas De Quincey, Amitav Ghosh, Drug Culture, British Empire.*

**Introduction:** The histories of medicine, trade, empire, and literature are all intricately linked to the history of opium. Opium was praised for centuries as a cure for misery, yet its addictive qualities had detrimental communal and individual effects. These paradoxes have frequently been represented in literary works, which depict opium as both a source of pleasure and a destructive force. One of the first and most important works of literature about drug addiction is Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. De Quincey's experiences with opium are chronicled in the essay, which describes both the euphoric feelings and the psychological suffering that came with his addiction. By portraying the addict as both a victim and a participant in self-destruction, the story changed how people thought about addiction. Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*, published over two centuries later, takes a postcolonial look at the history of opium. The novel, which is set against the backdrop of the opium trade in nineteenth-century India, reveals the social and economic systems that upheld imperial authority and addiction. Instead of concentrating on a single addict, Ghosh depicts entire villages whose lives are impacted by the production and sale of opium. Though in different ways, both texts address the problem of delinquency. According to De Quincey's story, moral decline brought on by addiction, societal disengagement, and personal neglect all contribute to criminality. In Ghosh's book, colonial policies that compel peasants to cultivate opium and enable a worldwide drug trade institutionalize delinquency.

**Opium and the Historical Context of Addiction:** The historical background of opium must be taken into account in order to comprehend the significance of these literary works. Opium was extensively accessible in Britain and India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was frequently used as a recreational drug, sedative, and pain reliever. However, widespread addiction resulted from rising use. Opium was sold lawfully in Britain and was frequently consumed without being aware of its risk for addiction. De Quincey's experiences reveal a culture that underestimated the risks of opium while viewing it as a common medication. His story illustrates how infrequent use can eventually turn into dependency. Opium had a varied status in colonial India. Opium was turned into a lucrative commodity by the British East India Company. Large amounts of opium were shipped to China, and farmers were forced to grow poppies. The British Empire made huge profits from this trade, but both producers and consumers suffered greatly as a result. Opium's dual character is highlighted by the disparate settings of Britain and India. It was both a worldwide economic tool and a personal intoxication. Although they do so from distinct angles, De Quincey and Ghosh both examine these aspects.

**Delinquency and Moral Decline in *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*:** The slow spiral into addiction is one of De Quincey's main topics. At first, opium seems to be a wonderful drug that may make people happy and relieve suffering. De Quincey talks about emotional health, intellectual stimulation, and peace of mind. The appearance of control is produced by these beneficial benefits. But this seeming control quickly vanishes. Opium starts to take over every part of the narrator's life as reliance grows. Addiction results in actions that could be considered delinquent. These acts indicate a break from societal responsibility and self-discipline rather than necessarily including criminal activity. De Quincey grows more and more cut off from civilization. His addiction makes it difficult for him to uphold consistent routines and meet commitments. His quest for opium turns into the central theme of his life. Such disregard is indicative of a more general tendency that is frequently linked to substance abuse, in which the drug is prioritized over obligations and social connections. The narrator's self-deception is another instance of criminality. De Quincey makes numerous attempts to justify his intake throughout the narrative, telling himself that he can manage his addiction. This self-delusion shows how substance abuse can skew judgment and contributes to the persistence of addiction. The story also shows how moral agency is being undermined. The addict becomes caught in a vicious cycle of craving and fleeting relief as they progressively lose the ability to make logical decisions. According to De Quincey's experience, addiction is a disorder that erodes self-determination and promotes harmful behaviour.

**Psychological Effects of Opium Addiction in De Quincey:** *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater's* parts on the psychological effects of addiction stand out the most. Opium first improves creativity and perception. The narrator goes through intense emotional states and vivid senses. However, these joys gradually turn into nightmares. De Quincey talks about extreme anxiety, hallucinations, and scary dreams. His unconscious mind is dominated by images of menacing characters, harsh structures, and unending landscapes. The creative energies that once brought joy now bring terror. The detrimental effects of addiction on mental health are demonstrated by these psychological disorders. The addict loses the ability to discriminate between fact and fiction and gets trapped inside his own head. The earlier sensations of pleasure are replaced by fear, paranoia, and emotional instability. The narrative suggests that addiction is not merely a physical condition but a profound psychological crisis. Opium alters consciousness in ways that ultimately fragment the self. The addict experiences a loss of coherence and stability, becoming estranged from ordinary reality. This psychological deterioration contributes to delinquency by weakening the individual's capacity for social participation. As mental suffering intensifies, the addict withdraws from relationships and responsibilities, further deepening isolation.

**Physical Consequences of Addiction in De Quincey:** De Quincey documents various physical side effects of long-term opium use in addition to psychological distress. As tolerance grows, more doses are needed to get the same effects. Overcoming dependence gets harder and harder. Every time the narrator tries to cut back on his consumption, he feels weak, exhausted, and extremely uncomfortable. The physiological hold of

addiction is demonstrated by these signs. Opium now serves as a necessity to prevent misery rather than a source of pleasure. The body turns into a place where dependency and desire clash. A difficult-to-break cycle is created when psychological suffering is reinforced by physical decline. Therefore, De Quincey's description foreshadows contemporary conceptions of addiction as a disorder with both biological and psychological components.

**Opium as Colonial Violence in *Sea of Poppies*:** Amitav Ghosh investigates the broader social dynamics surrounding opium, whereas De Quincey concentrates on individual addiction. Opium is a tool of imperial control in *Sea of Poppies*, not just a narcotic. The book takes place in the years leading up to the Opium Wars, when British colonial officials actively increased India's opium output. Instead of growing food crops, farmers are under pressure to grow poppies. Traditional agricultural systems are upended by this change, which also makes the economy more vulnerable. Opium cultivation is seen by Ghosh as a type of institutional delinquency. Profit is given precedence above human welfare by the colonial government, which fosters exploitation and suffering. In Ghosh's story, the imperial system itself is the real criminal, in contrast to De Quincey's individual addict. The forced cultivation of poppies deprives peasants of economic independence. Families become trapped in cycles of debt and dependency. Their labor enriches colonial authorities while undermining local communities. Thus, opium functions as an instrument of structural violence.

**Addiction and Social Disintegration in *Sea of Poppies*:** Opium's impacts go beyond its commercial exploitation. Ghosh illustrates how the dispersion of social life is a result of addiction. Communities affected by the opium trafficking are unstable and uneasy. As economic demands increase, traditional relationships are upended. People become susceptible to manipulation by commercial interests and colonial institutions. Additionally, addiction seems to be a global issue. India produces opium, which is used in far-off places, especially China. The book highlights how the effects of addiction transcend national borders rather than being limited to a particular society. Ghosh demonstrates the opium economy's wide-ranging influence by emphasizing these international ties. Instead of harming lone individuals, addiction becomes a social issue that affects entire societies. As a result, the novel expands the definition of delinquency. It looks at how political and economic structures lead to negative behaviors and social misery rather than concentrating only on individual wrongdoing.

**Comparative Analysis: Individual and Collective Dimensions of Addiction:** There are notable distinctions between De Quincey and Ghosh's approaches to treating opium addiction. Addiction is portrayed by De Quincey as a very intimate feeling. The story focuses on the addict's inner life, highlighting their physical need and psychological suffering. Individual addiction leads to delinquency, which shows up as self-neglect and social disengagement. In contrast, Ghosh places addiction in a larger historical context. The emphasis now is on society rather than the individual. Colonial organizations that make money from the manufacture and sale of opium are linked to delinquency. Addiction stops being a sign of individual weakness and instead becomes a symptom of systemic exploitation. Both books emphasize the harmful effects of opium despite these distinctions. The material impedes human freedom and adds to anguish in each piece. Addiction is a force that upends lives and communities, whether it is studied at the level of individual psychology or international politics. Additionally, both writers question oversimplified moral conclusions. Addicts are not just portrayed as criminals or moral failings. Rather, addiction is portrayed as a complicated illness influenced by psychological, societal, and economic variables. This sophisticated viewpoint invites readers to think about the larger factors that lead to substance abuse.

**Literary Representation of Opium and Addiction:** De Quincey and Ghosh's literary devices support their conceptual issues. De Quincey makes extensive use of vivid dream descriptions and autobiographical storytelling. His writing effectively conveys the emotional experience of addiction, drawing readers into the erratic emotions of joy and misery. Ghosh uses a narrative structure that is both polyphonic and historical. The wide-ranging socioeconomic effects of the opium trade are revealed through a variety of personalities

and viewpoints. The problem's collective aspect is reflected in this wider narrative scope. Opium-related iconography is used in both books. Opium represents temptation and psychological captivity in De Quincey's writings. The poppy is used as a metaphor for economic compulsion and colonial exploitation in Ghosh's book. Both authors use these creative techniques to turn historical facts into gripping stories that highlight the human costs of addiction.

**Literature Review:** Scholars from a variety of disciplines, including literary studies, history, sociology, postcolonial studies, and addiction studies, have been drawn to the study of opium in literature. Many people consider Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* to be one of the classic works of addiction literature. The work has been analyzed by critics as an early psychiatric explanation of drug habit, an autobiographical story, and a romantic investigation of consciousness. On the other hand, because of its depiction of colonial capitalism, international trade networks, and the historical reality of the opium business, Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* has attracted a lot of scholarly attention. A greater comprehension of the connection between addiction, delinquency, and imperial authority is made possible by combining these two books. Addiction as a psychological disorder is a significant area of research on De Quincey. The artistic and creative aspects of opium-induced experiences were frequently highlighted by early commentators. They saw De Quincey as a writer whose drug usage opened up new avenues for reflection and literary expression. The text's surreal imagery, visionary vistas, and elevated consciousness were often emphasized by romantic critics. Later academics, however, contested this idealized perspective, claiming that these readings frequently overlook the detrimental effects of addiction. Instead, the narrative's descriptions of social isolation, emotional instability, and physical reliance are highlighted in modern addiction studies. The connection between addiction and selfhood is another field of study. According to academics, De Quincey depicts addiction as a process that causes a person to progressively lose control over who they are. The addict feels alienated, confused, and fragmented. The ego is split between obsessive desire and rational awareness. Modern interpretations of addiction narratives, which often depict dependency as a conflict between agency and compulsion, have been impacted by this perspective.

*Confessions'* textual complexity has also been examined by poststructuralist academics. They contend that ambiguities and contradictions abound in De Quincey's story. The book both praises and denounces opium at the same time. The author clearly depicts the pleasures and creative potential that the substance produces while also cautioning readers about the risks of addiction. These conflicts highlight how difficult it is to portray addiction within traditional moral frameworks. On the other hand, colonialism and global capitalism have received a lot of attention in *Sea of Poppies*, studies. Ghosh's reconstruction of the opium trade in the nineteenth century has been highlighted by both literary critics and historians. Because it reveals the economic exploitation that supported colonial prosperity, the book is often read as a critique of British imperialism. Opium serves as both a commodity and a symbol of imperial aggression, according to academics. The novel illustrates how colonial economics were intertwined through the production, transit, and use of opium.

Ghosh's depiction of underprivileged populations has drawn special attention from postcolonial critics. The experiences of peasants, laborers, indentured migrants, and other subaltern groups that are frequently left out of official historical narratives are highlighted in the book. By reclaiming the voices of people who suffered under colonial control, scholars contend that Ghosh challenges Eurocentric narratives of empire. One important tool for exposing these dominance hierarchies is opium. Globalization in *Sea of Poppies* is the subject of another important corpus of research. The novel's depiction of a globe linked by trade, migration, and economic exchange has drawn criticism. India, China, Britain, and other countries are connected by the opium trade, which creates a huge web of business ties. However, these ties are extremely unequal. While misery is concentrated among colonial nations, wealth accumulates at the empire's center.

Relatively few works have explicitly compared De Quincey with Ghosh, despite the fact that both texts have been extensively studied. Addiction and colonialism are typically treated as distinct fields of study in existing



research. However, both pieces deal with the same material and highlight various aspects of its societal relevance. Ghosh investigates the external and historical ramifications of addiction, while De Quincey looks at its psychological effects. Therefore, a comparative approach provides important insights into how systemic exploitation and personal dependency are related. By putting these works in conversation, this study adds to the body of existing scholarship. It makes the case that addiction cannot be viewed only as a social phenomenon or as an individual experience. Rather, addiction results from the interplay of political power, economic systems, and psychological susceptibility. De Quincey and Ghosh both shed light on these interrelated realities through their unique narrative techniques.

**Textual Analysis:** “The poppy had become the master’s crop.” Colonial economic dominance is summed up in one succinct sentence. The possessive “master’s” indicates that the colonial state now owns the harvest instead of Indian peasants. The sentence illustrates how British imperialism deprived farmers of their independence and turned agriculture into a tool of capitalist exploitation. “No one could remember when the sahibs had begun to force people to grow poppy instead of food.” The contrast between “food” and “poppy” highlights the brutality of colonial capitalism. Cash-crop cultivation replaces subsistence farming, which benefits the East India Company while causing starvation and dependency. “The factory’s gomustas advanced money to the peasants only to bind them in debt.” Debt serves as a colonial control mechanism. Advancements turn become instruments of eternal servitude rather than economic opportunity. “The Ibis was filled with people uprooted by the Empire.” Imperial globalization is represented by the ship. In the same way that opium moves through colonial trade networks, labourer’s, prisoners, sailors, and migrants become commodities in the imperial economy.

“Here was the secret of happiness.” Opium is portrayed by De Quincey as a highly intimate form of pleasure. Notably, he never talks about the source of the drug or the workers who make it. When read in conjunction with *Sea of Poppies*, this quiet takes on political significance. “Opium gives and does not take away.” This romanticized portrayal obscures the drug’s exploitative colonial economy. Indian farmers face poverty and coercion, while English consumers enjoy themselves. “I seemed every night to descend...into the heart of Oriental dreams.” The “Orient” does not seem to be a colonized geographical reality, but rather an imagined environment. Britain’s material reliance on colonial extraction is concealed by the exoticization and aestheticization of the East. “The pains of opium.” Addiction and pain are later described by De Quincey, but they are still personal and psychological. He never makes the connection between his own pain and the colonial agony associated with the manufacture and distribution of opium. *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* turns opium into a unique artistic and psychological experience, whereas *Sea of Poppies* uses the lived experiences of Indian peasants to reveal the horrors of the British opium trade. The colonial past that De Quincey’s story omits is restored by Ghosh. Therefore, *Confessions*’ silence is ideological rather than coincidental, illustrating how imperial consumption depends on colonial labour’s invisibility.

**Theoretical Framework: Addiction Studies and Postcolonial Theory:** *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* and *Sea of Poppies* both use an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that integrates postcolonial theory and addiction studies to analyze opium addiction. These methods offer complementary viewpoints on the personal and societal aspects of addiction. Studies on addiction cast doubt on conventional moral justifications for substance abuse. Addiction was frequently depicted in earlier discourses as an indication of moral failing or personal weakness. However, modern researchers see addiction as a multifaceted illness influenced by social, psychological, biological, and economic variables. This viewpoint is especially pertinent to De Quincey’s story, which shows how dependence develops gradually rather than a conscious decision to commit self-destruction.

The loss of autonomy and compulsive behavior are key components of contemporary addiction theory. Conscious aims and irrational wants clash for the addict. De Quincey’s persistent attempts to control his consumption in spite of his failure to eradicate reliance are explained by this paradigm. Thus, addiction manifests as a disorder that restricts autonomy and skews judgment. Additionally, studies on addiction

acknowledge the impact of environmental factors. Substance usage trends are influenced by social, cultural, and economic factors. This more comprehensive viewpoint establishes a link between postcolonial theory and addiction studies. The cultural, political, and economic ramifications of colonial dominance are examined by postcolonial theory. Thinkers like Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Edward Said have shown how imperial institutions affect social connections, identity, and knowledge. *In Sea of Poppies*, colonialism is an active force that shapes daily life rather than just a historical backdrop. The idea of imperial authority put forward by Edward Said is very helpful in comprehending the opium trade. Colonial authority used economic tools in addition to military force to maintain control. Growing opium became a way to control labor, make money, and increase imperial power. As a result, the content served as a tool for governance. Another useful perspective is offered by Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern. The laborers and peasants portrayed in Ghosh's book hold reduced roles in colonial society. Official histories frequently leave out their experiences. Ghosh questions prevailing narratives and draws attention to the human costs of imperial policies by emphasizing these people. There are significant parallels between the two books when addiction studies and postcolonial theory are combined. Ghosh reveals the political and economic structures that support addiction, while De Quincey illustrates the psychological effects of addiction. When combined, these frameworks shed light on the various aspects of opium use.

**Colonial Economy and Narcotics Capitalism in Sea of Poppies:** *Sea of Poppies'* depiction of the opium business as a type of colonial capitalism is among its most important contributions. The book shows how systems of exploitation and coercion produce economic wealth. The story revolves around the growing of poppies. Indian villagers are under pressure to grow crops that produce opium rather than food. Farmers are caught in debt cycles as a result of contracts with colonial agents. Instead of serving local communities, their labor is focused on the demands of the empire. This economic structure exemplifies what academics refer to as "narcotics capitalism." Addictive substance production and distribution turn into means of amassing wealth. Opium exports provide tremendous revenues for the British Empire, especially through commerce with China. Financial gain takes precedence above the welfare of producers and consumers. Ghosh shows that this system's effects go well beyond economics. Traditional social systems are upended by agricultural development. Communities are more reliant on colonial institutions, families lose their independence, and villages become unstable. The hypocrisy of imperial philosophy is further revealed in the book. British officials frequently used the justification of advancing culture and progress to defend colonial authority. However, the contradiction at the core of these assertions is exposed by the opium trade. Empire makes money by distributing a drug that is known to cause addiction and pain. Delinquency is structural rather than personal in this case. The systems that promote dependency for financial gain are the moral failings, not lone addicts. Therefore, by connecting individual suffering to international systems of exploitation, Ghosh's critique broadens conventional understandings of addiction.

**Subaltern Perspectives and the Human Cost of Opium:** *Sea of Poppies'* focus on subaltern sensations is one of its unique qualities. Ghosh emphasizes the stories of the individuals impacted by the opium business rather than political figures or colonial officials. The personal effects of colonial policy are made clear by characters like Deeti. Poppy farming shapes her family's means of subsistence, and her own hardships are a reflection of larger social changes. The book uses these personalities to show how imperial economics permeate social and family life. The subaltern viewpoint draws attention to aspects of addiction that De Quincey's story ignores. Ghosh highlights the susceptibility of the group as a whole, whereas De Quincey examines the psychological anguish of a single customer. Communities as a whole grow reliant on economic systems that they have little control over. This emphasis on underrepresented voices subverts prevailing historical narratives. Global trade and commercial growth are frequently praised in official chronicles of empire. Instead, Ghosh exposes the human misery that lies underlying these accomplishments. It is demonstrated that the exploitation of colonial populations is essential to the development of imperial capitals. The book also shows how addiction affects society at various levels. While some characters directly experience the consequences of opium as consumers, others do so indirectly through social unrest and economic compulsion. This more comprehensive view highlights the drug economy's widespread impact.

**Detailed Textual Analysis: Delinquency and Addiction in De Quincey:** Confessions of an English Opium-Eater shows the slow transition from therapeutic use to destructive reliance. At first, De Quincey comes across opium as a treatment for physical discomfort. Simplistic moral judgments are complicated by this medical context, which makes it significant. Addiction develops from an effort to lessen pain rather than from criminal intent. The story's opening parts place a strong emphasis on enjoyment. Opium seems to improve aesthetic appreciation, emotional sensitivity, and intellectual activity. De Quincey frequently compares the medication to alcohol, portraying it as a source of improvement rather than deterioration. However, the seeds of addiction are present in these portrayals. A cycle of dependency is created when recurrent usage is encouraged by the intensity of pleasure. The narrator's life is becoming more and more structured around having access to the drug. Insofar as consumerism takes precedence over customary social obligations, this change constitutes a type of delinquency. The dream scenes shed more light on the consequences of addiction. Repetition, excess, and a loss of control are the hallmarks of De Quincey's nightmares. The structure of addiction itself is reflected in these characteristics. Addiction overwhelms a person's ability to manage themselves, much as dreams overwhelm the dreamer.

The story also illustrates how addiction causes temporal distortions. Time seems elongated, broken, and erratic. The addict is unable to sustain a consistent sense of advancement because they are caught in cycles of expectation and release. Psychological discomfort and social estrangement are exacerbated by this temporal disruption. Crucially, De Quincey depicts addiction as a state of extreme loneliness. The addict feels alone even if they are surrounded by civilization. Others are mainly unaware of the internal conflict. Dependency is strengthened and misery is exacerbated by this loneliness.

**Detailed Textual Analysis: Opium, Power, and Resistance in Sea of Poppies:** Opium serves as a representation of colonial authority in Sea of Poppies. The terrain is dominated by poppy fields, which act as obvious symbols of imperial rule. Their existence is a reflection of how local economies are changing to meet the demands of international trade. Coercion is emphasized several times in the book. Farmers are forced to grow poppies due to colonial coercion and economic need rather than their own free will. Ghosh's portrayal of addiction differs from De Quincey's because to this coercion. Ghosh's characters encounter types of structural dependency enforced from above, whereas De Quincey's dependency grows by personal consumption. However, resistance continues to be a significant topic. Many characters make an effort to flee restrictive circumstances by migrating, rebelling, or reinventing themselves. Their behavior casts doubt on colonial dominance's inevitability. In this sense, the ship Ibis serves as a potent metaphor. It becomes a place where traditional social hierarchies are challenged and altered as it transports a varied group of people across the ocean. Both dislocation and the potential for new identities are represented by the journey. Ghosh shows that exploitation and addiction are not normal circumstances by using these storytelling devices. They are the result of particular historical arrangements that are subject to dispute and modification.

**Comparative Discussion: From Personal Dependency to Imperial Addiction:** A shift from individual to collective ideas on addiction can be seen when comparing the two works. De Quincey's story starts with oneself. The psychological experience of dependency is the main issue. Communities, economies, and civilizations are all included in Ghosh's tale. This variation is a reflection of shifting historical circumstances. When De Quincey wrote, opium was mostly thought of either a medical condition or a personal habit. Ghosh writes from a modern viewpoint influenced by global history and postcolonial criticism. However, there are significant parallels between the passages. Addiction is portrayed in both as a loss of autonomy. In De Quincey, a person's desire enslaves them. In Ghosh, colonial economic systems impose restrictions on entire communities. Both pieces use terminology related to bondage and dependency, but on different scales. The connection between pleasure and misery is another recurring theme. At first, opium provides comfort, relief, or financial gain. However, these advantages eventually give way to negative outcomes. The paradoxical character of addiction is highlighted by this pattern: the drug produces restraint while promising emancipation. Together, the texts suggest that addiction should not be understood solely in moral terms. It is a phenomenon shaped by historical circumstances, economic structures, and psychological

processes. Recognizing these complexities enables a more nuanced understanding of both personal dependency and social exploitation.

**Conclusion:** Two of the most important literary works in English literature that deal with opium are *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* by Thomas De Quincey and *Sea of Poppies* by Amitav Ghosh. Despite being written almost two centuries apart, the books deal with related issues of addiction, criminality, and human misery. De Quincey gives a personal narrative of dependency, showing how addiction alters perception, distorts identity, and erodes autonomy. His story shows that delinquency can encompass self-neglect, social disengagement, and psychiatric breakdown in addition to criminal activity. The addict is caught in vicious cycles of pain and desire that undermine their autonomy. By placing opium within the framework of colonial capitalism, Ghosh expands this analysis. The political and economic factors that support addiction globally are revealed in the book. Delinquency is seen as a systematic issue ingrained in imperial institutions rather than just an individual shortcoming. Through exploitation, the opium trade creates wealth, connecting individual suffering to global injustices. These books can be compared to show how complex addiction is. It is both political and psychological, individual and group, biological and historical at the same time. Both authors challenge simplistic explanations that reduce addiction to moral weakness. Instead, they demonstrate that dependency emerges through complex interactions among individuals, societies, and institutions.

Ultimately, these works remain relevant because the issues they address continue to shape contemporary debates about drugs, public health, and social justice. By examining both the subjective experience of addiction and the structural conditions that enable it, De Quincey and Ghosh encourage readers to recognize the human costs of narcotic economies. Their writings serve as powerful reminders that addiction is never solely an individual problem; it is also a reflection of the societies in which it occurs. Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* and Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* provide complementary perspectives on opium addiction and its consequences. De Quincey examines the intimate psychological and physical effects of dependency, revealing how addiction leads to isolation, self-deception, and personal decline. Ghosh expands the discussion by situating opium within the context of colonialism, exposing the economic exploitation and social disintegration produced by the global narcotics trade.

In both pieces, the idea of delinquency plays a major role. In De Quincey's story, the addict's incapacity to carry out social and personal obligations leads to criminality. Delinquency is ingrained in colonial institutions that put profit ahead of the well-being of people in Ghosh's book. When taken as a whole, the writings show that addiction is a societal and political problem in addition to an individual one. In the end, both writers highlight the terrible effects of opium use. Their writings serve as a reminder to readers that addiction has an impact on society's larger institutions in addition to an individual's body and psyche. *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* and *Sea of Poppies* continue to be potent literary analyses of addiction and its long-lasting human costs by examining both individual pain and societal exploitation.

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