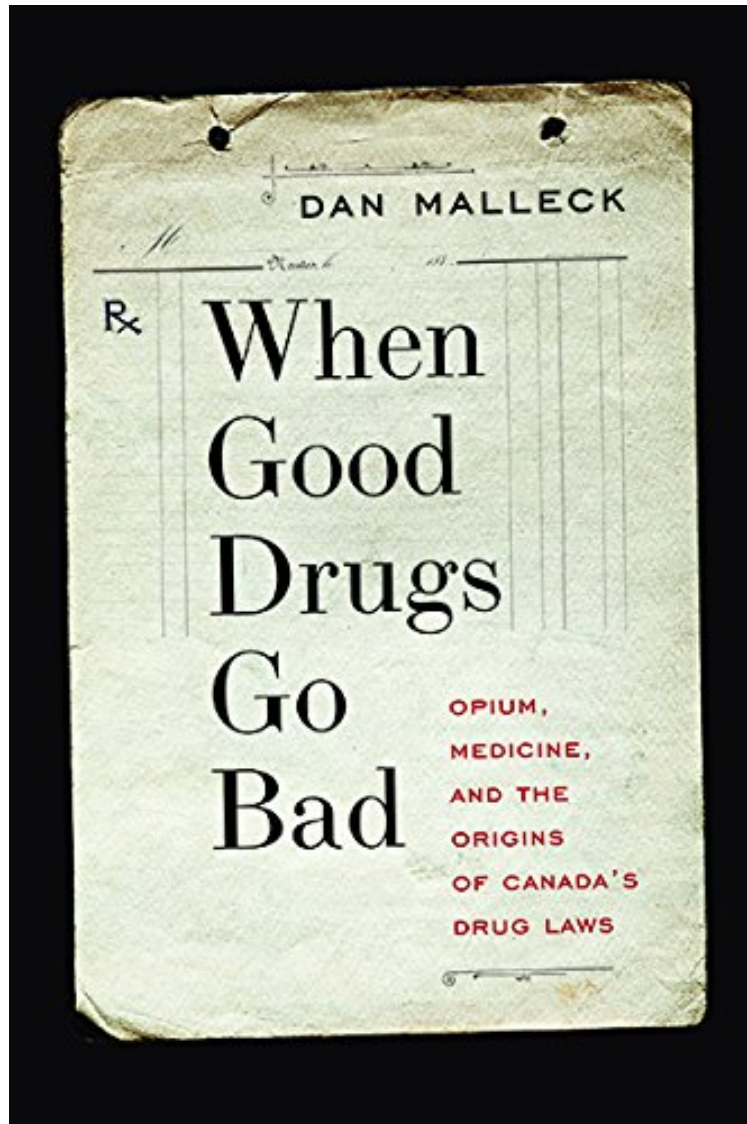


(Download pdf) When Good Drugs Go Bad: Opium, Medicine, and the Origins of Canada's Drug Laws

When Good Drugs Go Bad: Opium, Medicine, and the Origins of Canada's Drug Laws

Dan Malleck

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Dan Malleck : When Good Drugs Go Bad: Opium, Medicine, and the Origins of Canada's Drug Laws before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised When Good Drugs Go Bad: Opium, Medicine, and the Origins of Canada's Drug Laws:

In the 1800s, opium and cocaine could be easily obtained to treat a range of ailments. Drug dependency, when it occurred, was considered a matter of personal vice. Near the end of the century, attitudes shifted and access to drugs became more restricted. Dan Malleck reveals how different forces converged in the early 1900s to influence lawmakers and set the course for the drug laws that exist today. As this book shows, social concerns about drug addiction had less to do with the long pipe and shadowy den than with lobbying by medical professionals, concern about the morality and future of the nation, and a burgeoning pharmaceutical industry.

Malleck's extensive use of primary sources convincingly establishes this context and describes the dominant origin story of Canada's drug laws that has not frequently been told. (Noah Wernikowski *Saskatchewan Law*) Malleck vividly depicts how sensationalism, misunderstanding, and the threat to the practice of medicine fuelled the new concept of addiction distinct from insanity and moral depravity. Malleck's scouring of all available records provides a rich understanding of how the social and cultural factors surrounding opium in Canada set the stage for the moral debate over drug use. His thorough analysis and ability to draw on a mountain of records to seamlessly tell the story provides the reader with a new found appreciation of the complex development of drug legislation in the modern era. (Joel Rudewicz *Active History*) [A] close study of how doctors, pharmacists, bureaucrats, and policy-makers wrestled over the control of opiates in the decades leading to the first Opium Act of 1908. *When Good Drugs Go Bad* will be of interest to scholars exploring the history of drugs and their regulation while also adding to our understanding of state formation and professionalization during the nineteenth century. Its multi-regional focus on Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia serves to nationalize these issues. Malleck also addresses and critically challenges the association in British Columbia between anti-Chinese sentiments and opium that, he argues, has distorted events by insisting that the Opium Act was a reaction to racial tensions. Instead, by broadening the regional lens, Malleck shifts the story to a contest over professional authority. (Erika Dyck *BC Studies*) In Malleck's brilliant account we can see how commercial interests both combined and competed with professionals and sellers to influence Canada's drug laws. As Canadians debate how marijuana should be designated legal or illegal, medicine or recreational drug or both, Malleck provides a fascinating description of a similar journey taken by pain medications such as opium and cocaine at the beginning of the last century. His book provides a useful history to help us navigate today's discussions about who should grow and sell safe and affordable marijuana. (Colleen Fuller, a researcher and writer focused on health and pharmaceutical policy *Alberta Views*) *When Good Drugs Go Bad* deepens our understanding of the connections that could be so easily drawn between the body, race, medicine and the nation in early twentieth century Canada. (Yvan Prkachin, *Harvard University Left History*, Vol. 21 No. 1, Spring-Summer 2016) There is something enduring about the image of the Victorian drug addict, languishing in the smoky confines of an underground opium den, the embodiment of moral lassitude. *When Good Drugs Go Bad* reveals that in nineteenth-century Canada, most Canadians were drug users every day, people taking addictive drugs prescribed by their doctors and purchased at the local pharmacy. Throughout the 1800s, opium and cocaine could be easily obtained to treat a range of ailments. Drug dependency, when it occurred, was considered a matter of personal vice. Near the end of the century, attitudes shifted and access to drugs became more restricted. How did this happen? Dan Malleck examines the conditions that led to Canada's current drug laws. Drawing on newspaper accounts, medical and pharmacy journals, professional association files, asylum documents, physicians' case books, and pharmacy records, he demonstrates how a number of social, economic, and cultural forces converged in the early 1900s to influence lawmakers and criminalize addiction. His research exposes how social concerns about drug addiction had less to do with the long pipe and shadowy den than with lobbying by medical associations, a growing pharmaceutical industry, and national concern about the morality and future of the nation. "This book will be of great interest to scholars, students of drug policy and social policy more generally, and indeed to anyone interested in how Canada's current systems of drug control were formed by history." Virginia Berridge, author of *Demons: Our Changing Attitudes to Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs* About the Author Dan Malleck is associate professor in the department of Health Sciences at Brock University. He is the author of *Try To Control Yourself: The Regulation of Public Drinking in Post-Prohibition Ontario* and coeditor of *Consuming Modernity: Gendered Behaviour and Consumerism Before the Baby Boom*.