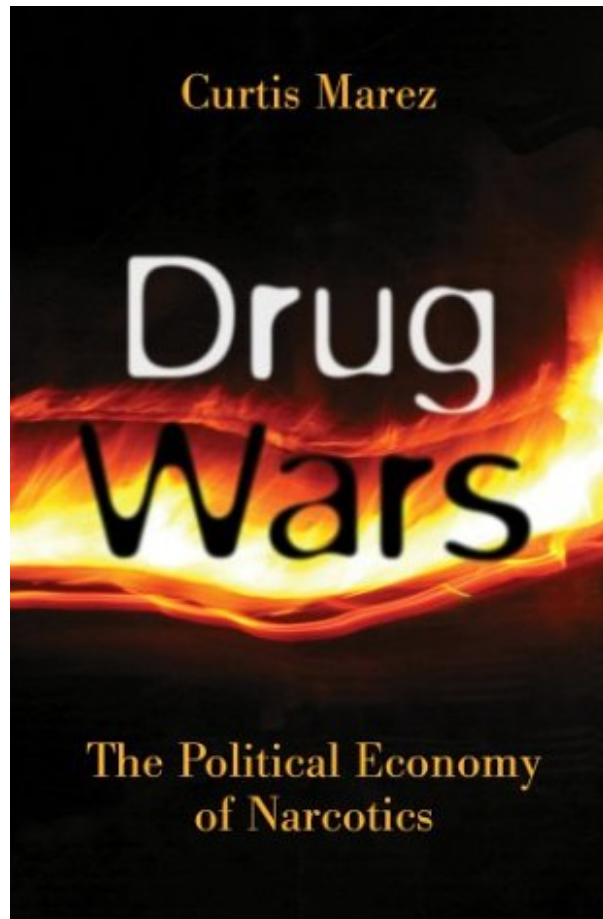
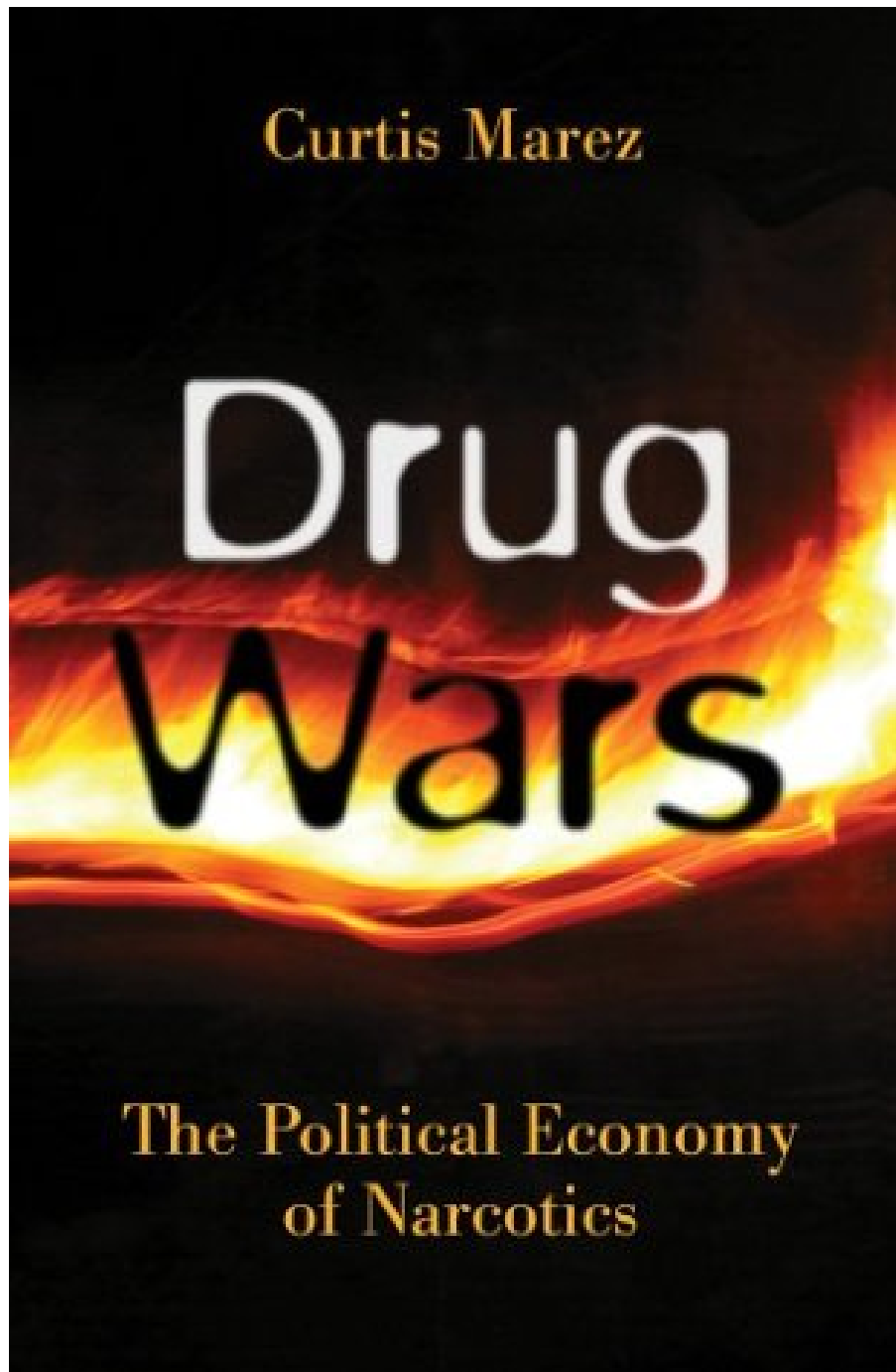


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About the Author

Mareza is Assistant Professor of Critical Studies at the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television.

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DRUG WARS: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NARCOTICS

BY CURTIS MAREZ PDF

Inaugurated in 1984, America's "War on Drugs" is just the most recent skirmish in a standoff between global drug trafficking and state power. From Britain's nineteenth-century Opium Wars in China to the activities of Colombia's drug cartels and their suppression by U.S.-backed military forces today, conflicts over narcotics have justified imperial expansion, global capitalism, and state violence, even as they have also fueled the movement of goods and labor around the world.

In *Drug Wars*, cultural critic Curtis Marez examines two hundred years of writings, graphic works, films, and music that both demonize and celebrate the commerce in cocaine, marijuana, and opium, providing a bold interdisciplinary exploration of drugs in the popular imagination. Ranging from the writings of Sigmund Freud to pro-drug lord Mexican popular music, gangsta rap, and Brian De Palma's 1983 epic *Scarface*, *Drug Wars* moves from the representations and realities of the Opium Wars to the long history of drug and immigration enforcement on the U.S.-Mexican border, and to cocaine use and interdiction in South America, Middle Europe, and among American Indians. Throughout Marez juxtaposes official drug policy and propaganda with subversive images that challenge and sometimes even taunt government and legal efforts.

As Marez shows, despite the state's best efforts to use the media to obscure the hypocrisies and failures of its drug policies—be they lurid descriptions of Chinese opium dens in the English popular press or Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign—marginalized groups have consistently opposed the expansion of state power that drug traffic has historically supported.

Curtis Marez is assistant professor of critical studies at the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television.

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About the Author

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8 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

Groundbreaking Look at Racism and the Drug Wars

By Ellen Komp

I've been a drug policy reform activist for 17 years and have never before seen the Latin American perspective presented the way that Prof. Marez does in this book. Tracing the use of opium to subdue the Chinese by Britain and the U.S., Marez draws comparisons to U.S. laws against marijuana and the subjugation of Mexicans. Filled with fascinating details and photographs about early Hollywood and its racist propaganda against Mexicans and marijuana, the book ends with chapters on South American "Cocaine Colonialism." Highly recommended, essential reading.

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Great read and full of interesting info

By Frank Tanner

I appreciated how this book compared different "drug wars" over marijuana, opium, and cocaine, thereby telling a longer story that helps us understand the historical context for the recent "drug war" rhetoric. It is fascinating to see how at different times this rhetoric has targeted black people, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans. Marez does a great job of showing how drug scares were used as a tactic to control insurgent groups of people but he also shows us how people fought back and imagined other possibilities and pathways in the face of this. This book is also a very entertaining read, full of fascinating references to popular culture in the past and in recent history.

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