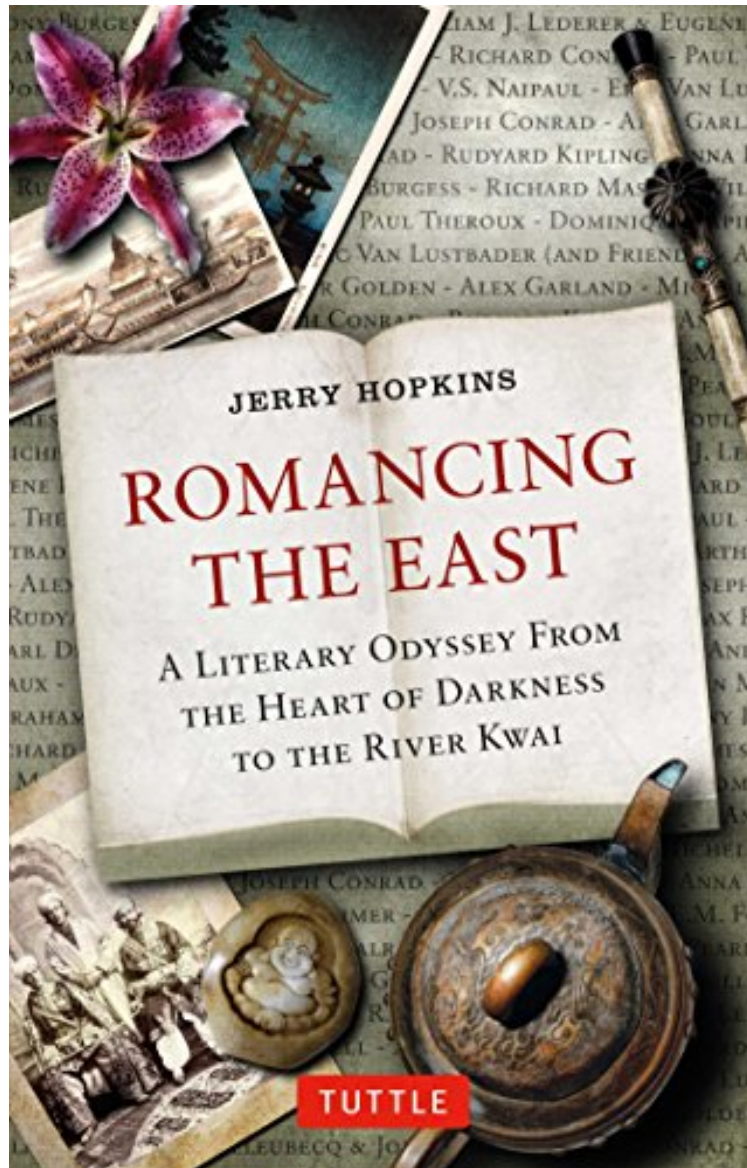


(Free pdf) Romancing the East: A Literary Odyssey from the Heart of Darkness to the River Kwai

Romancing the East: A Literary Odyssey from the Heart of Darkness to the River Kwai

Jerry Hopkins

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#9497021 in Books 2017-06-20 2017-06-20 Original language: English 8.00 x 1.00 x 5.131, .0 #File Name: 0804848920288 pages | File size: 15.Mb

Jerry Hopkins : Romancing the East: A Literary Odyssey from the Heart of Darkness to the River Kwai before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Romancing the East: A Literary Odyssey from the Heart of Darkness to the River Kwai:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very Enlightening
By George William Cooper
Reading this book caused lights to go on in distant memories of mine, illuminating where ideas, impressions, fantasies, whatever had been planted in me by the authors Jerry Hopkins wrote about. It helped me see the origins of the road that one day led me to make Asia, specifically Cambodia, my home.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Fine Romance
By Janet Brown
Jerry Hopkins is approaching the 40-book mark and for that alone we should all go to Bangkok and buy him a beer. His writing life has swept from rock-and-roll L.A. to Hawaii to Thailand, and his biography of Jim Morrison, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, has become a classic. If there's one writer who's fully qualified to examine the lives and work of other writers, it's the redoubtable Mr. Hopkins. His latest book is subtitled *A Literary Odyssey from the Heart of Darkness to the River Kwai*, and it's a trip worth taking. Think of it as a series of conversations about almost every writer who has ever made Asia their subject matter--thirty-four writers in thirty-two essays. It's far too lively a discussion to be thought of as a survey course of literature about Asia--the opinions and insights found here are born from a barroom, not a classroom. And that is a very good thing indeed. Hopkins examines the lives, work, and settings of other authors in a way that makes you want to read the books he writes about and find out more information about their authors. Each essay is carefully and thoughtfully written by a man who obviously loves to read and who respects the writers whose books come into his life. Not for him the cheap shot--he uses humor in his portrayals of writers but he is never snide. It's difficult to imagine that anyone could find something new to say about Anna Leonowens, the lady whose book is still banned in the Kingdom of Thailand, as well as the movies that were spawned by it, but Hopkins does. "...Anna Leonowens was the Victorian era's version of a "gonzo" journalist, a predecessor to Hunter Thompson, a writer with imagination and bravado who didn't let facts get in the way of a good story." Suddenly a picture of a hoop-skirted lady sitting beside Hunter in the backseat of a convertible with the top down, "just outside of Barstow when the drugs kicked in," is rooted in the imaginations of readers, and Anna and the King of Siam will never be the same. "Elfish everything seems, for everything as well as everybody is small, and queer, and mysterious," Hopkins quotes Lafcadio Hearn in 19th century Japan and then remarks, "It is as if the writer were describing a visit to Middle Earth, where hobbits lived." Hopkins is a master at hooking his readers with a well-turned description and then launching into a provocative literary discussion; his essay on Kipling alone, with literary criticism by Teddy Roosevelt included, is enough to bring a whole new wave of readers to Kim. Hopkins is not, as he terms W. Somerset Maugham with a fair degree of asperity, "a predatory gossip." In his examination of Marguerite Duras, he tells about her sexagenarian habit of downing "up to nine liters of cheap Bordeaux a day" as a way of explaining her limited literary output at that time ("as little as one sentence a day.") And he all but cheers for her when she "sobers up in 1982 at a Paris hospital" and finishes the book that will make her famous, *The Lover*, when she is 68 years old. Even when he could rightfully be vicious, when he writes about what he knows well that has been claimed by men who know it far less thoroughly, Jerry Hopkins is kind, fair-minded, and insightful. Michel Houellebecq and John Burdett are followers of a time-honored tradition, come to Thailand, find the sex industry, and write about it. "Their novels placed in Thailand," Hopkins says, "...were among the better crafted of the lot, but none of the others exceeded them in grisly exploitation, creating a Thailand that was not only licentious, but also ridiculous." He goes on to back up this assessment by letting the writers' books prove it for him, which they accomplish masterfully. "For those who enjoy sleeping with literary ghosts," Hopkins provides locations where these august shades might still be hanging around. Although by no means a guidebook, tucking away a copy of *Romancing the East* in the bottom of a carry-on could be one of the happiest decisions that a traveler to Asia will make. Take it on a plane with you; give it to a friend; find Jerry Hopkins and buy him a beer.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Context on great writers stories, lives, and trials
By michelezI
so enjoyed this often tongue-in-cheek little volume of biographical information, social and historical context on writers such as Joseph Conrad, Anna Leowens, Rudyard Kipling, and two dozen more. Most of the writers Hopkins covers in his highly readable, short essays I knew only through their novels, and some not at all. It adds dimension to read well-selected details about their lives, times, and trials. Now I really must go back and read the novels of Marguerite Duras, the French Colonial writer born in Vietnam, or at least search Netflix to see if I can watch any the 38 films she wrote screenplays for. There is a seductive element of literary gossip here that keeps the material fresh, even when it is Hopkins relaying Anthony Burgess's close to 100-year old description of Somerset Maugham's readiness for a game of poker. The essays follow no discernible format, instead they are driven by the personal interest of Jerry Hopkins for his subjects. This makes for surprises, because what interests Hopkins you invariably want to know more about. As the essays move from the 19th Century toward the present, they sometimes meander from core subject toward whimsical discussion and opinions, such as the location of the "real Shangri-la" of the novel *Lost Horizons* by James Hilton, who readers learn never even got close. The essay on Richard Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1959), offers Hopkins analysis that its continuing popularity had something to do with how well it fed the conspiracy theories of the next decade of Presidential and other assassinations in America. But overall, the bemused voice of longtime expatriate writer Hopkins enriches views of Asia, and provides some real insights into why we think what we do about it. Mostly Western authors have interpreted the East to generations of readers, often based on long and profound experience, and sometimes based on very little at all.

Profiling individual, legendary authors, best-selling author Jerry Hopkins combines his research and his own experiences as a longtime expatriate with an intimate knowledge of Asia and offers us a unique perspective on the impact of Eastern culture in Western literature. From the time of Marco Polo's trek across the Central Asian desert to the empire of the mighty Mongol Khan, no other place on earth, not the languid South Pacific or even deepest, darkest Africa has so challenged and enchanted the Western imagination as have the fabled lands of the East! However soaked in blood its history and no matter how unsettling its social conditions and poverty, Asia has never lost its irresistible attraction or mysticism. It has long been an inspiration for Western novelists, so much so that more than 5000 novels have been set in Asia in the English language alone. Storied names like Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, Pearl S. Buck, George Orwell, Graham Greene, E.M. Forster and many more have used their experiences in Asia as a vibrant backdrop for some of the world's most famous works of literature.

"Hopkins, the author of famous rock bios on Jim Morrison and Elvis, as well as a chronicler of Asia in non-fiction titles such as *Thailand Confidential* and *Asian Aphrodisiacs*, has a highly effective bullshit detector. He knows how to disentangle the facts from the fictions. Thanks to the author's conversational writing style and talent for uncovering the telling anecdote, the book never gets bogged down in cumbersome lit crit. TripAdvisor will help you find restaurants and lodgings, but *Romancing the East* by Jerry Hopkins serves up the artistic spices and brain food that will nourish and embellish any of your wanderings in Asia and India. " PATA Compass

"Jerry Hopkins was present at the creation of Rolling Stone magazine and the early hippie days of West Coast rock. After penning the definitive biography of Jim Morrison *No One Here Gets Out Alive* he took off for a long sojourn in Hawaii. He's been in Thailand now for 20 years, still writing books, three dozen of them so far. My favorite is *Bangkok Babylon* profiles of 26 well-known expatriates in Thailand. He's done the same now with 32 Western writers in *Romancing the East*. His portraits range from Conrad and Kipling to Greene and Burgess to Theroux and Naipaul I would have preferred that weak chapters on Richard Conlon and Ian Fleming be replaced by more serious observers of Asia but this is to criticize Jerry Hopkins for the book he did not write. The one he did is shrewd, fascinating, trenchant, an education and a joy to read." Phuket Gazette

"Sometimes it's hard to see the trees when the forest is so big. But, collectively, Hopkins' chapters paint an absorbing mural of displaced foreigners struggling to understand and explain "the exotic East" in the context of their own damaged lives and forsaken homelands." The Nation

About the Author Jerry Hopkins has published more than 1,000 magazine articles and 36 books, including several international bestsellers the cult classic *No One Here Gets Out Alive* among them. He moved to Thailand in 1993 where he developed a strong reputation with his writings on food, travel, and various aspects of Asian life and culture. Recent titles include *Thailand Confidential*, *Bangkok Babylon* and *Asian Aphrodisiacs*. Hopkins and his Thai-Khmer wife divide their time between a flat in Bangkok and a house on a working farm near the Cambodian border.