Soon after his birth the family went to The Farm and then later to Greenheys, a larger country house in Chorlton-on-Medlock near Manchester.

In three years after the death of his father, Thomas Quincey, his mother — the erstwhile Elizabeth Person — took the name "De Quincey. He was a weak and sickly child. His youth was spent in solitude, and when his elder brother, William, came home, he wrought havoc in the quiet
surroundings. De Quincey's mother was a woman of strong character and intelligence, but seems to have inspired more awe than affection in her children. She brought them up strictly, taking De Quincey out of school after three years because she was afraid he would become big-headed, and sending him to an inferior school at Wingfield, Wiltshire.

His first plan had been to reach Wordsworth, whose Lyrical Ballads had consoled him in fits of depression and had awakened in him a deep reverence for the poet. From July to November Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey Quincey lived as a wayfarer. He soon lost his guinea by ceasing to keep his family informed of his whereabouts, and had difficulty making ends meet. Still, apparently fearing pursuit, he borrowed some money and travelled to London, where he tried to borrow more.

Having failed, he lived close to starvation rather than return to his family. Discovered by chance by his friends, De Quincey was brought home and finally allowed to go to Worcester College, Oxford on a reduced income. Here, we are told, "he came to be looked upon as a strange being who associated with no one. His acquaintance with Wordsworth led to his settling in at Grasmere in the Lake District.

He lived for ten years in Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey Cottage which Wordsworth had occupied and which is now a popular tourist attraction, and for another five years at Foxghyll Country House, Ambleside. His wife Margaret bore him eight children before her death in Three of De Quincey's daughters survived him. He was "a champion of aristocratic privilege," reserved " Jacobin " as his highest term of opprobrium, held reactionary views on the Peterloo Massacre and the Sepoy rebellion on Catholic Emancipation and the enfranchisement of the common people.

While some people wrongly think that De Quincey was an abolitionist, a quick read of his West Indies essays would reveal that he was in fact a racist who believed white people to be physically and morally superior. In he went to London to dispose of some translations from German authors, but was persuaded first to write and publish an account of his opium experiences, which that year appeared in the London Magazine.

This new sensation eclipsed Lamb's Essays of Elia which were then appearing in the same periodical. The Confessions of an English Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey were soon published in book form. From this time on, De Quincey maintained himself by contributing to various magazines. He soon exchanged London and the Lakes for Edinburgh [20] the nearby village of Poltonand Glasgow; he spent the remainder of his life in Scotland. Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine and its rival Tait's Magazine received numerous contributions.

Joan of Arc was published in Tait's. Between and Tait's published a series of De Quincey's reminiscences of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Robert Southey and other figures among the Lake Poets — a series that taken together constitutes one of his most important works. Along with his opium addiction, debt was one of the primary constraints of De Quincey's adult life. After leaving Oxford without a degree, he made an attempt to study law, but desultorily and unsuccessfully; he had no steady income and spent large sums on books he was a lifelong collector.

By the s he was constantly in financial difficulties. More than once in his later years, De Quincey was forced to seek protection from arrest in the debtors' sanctuary of Holyrood in Edinburgh. Yet De Quincey's money problems persisted; he got into further difficulties for debts he incurred within the sanctuary. His financial situation improved only later in his life. When his daughters matured, they managed his budget more responsibly than he ever had himself. Medical practitioners have speculated on the physical ailments that inspired and underlay De Quincey's resort to opium, and searched the corpus of his autobiographical works for evidence.

As with many addicts, De Quincey's opium addiction may have had a "self-medication" aspect for real physical illnesses, as well as a psychological aspect. By his own testimony, De Quincey first used opium to relieve his neuralgia; he used it for pleasure, but no more than weekly, through it was in that he first commenced daily usage, in response to illness and his grief over the death of Wordsworth's young daughter Catherine.

During — his daily dose was very high, and resulted in the sufferings recounted in the final sections of his Confessions. For the rest of his life his opium use fluctuated between extremes; he took "enormous doses" in but late in he Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey for 61 days with none at all. There are many theories surrounding the effects of opium on literary creativity and notably, his periods of low use were literally unproductive.

His stone, in the southwest section of the churchyard on a west facing wall, is plain and says nothing of his work. During the final decade of his life, De Quincey labored on a collected edition of his works.

It was only when De Quincey, a chronic procrastinator, failed to answer repeated letters from James Thomas Fields [35] that the American publisher proceeded independently, reprinting the author's works from their original magazine appearances. Twenty-two volumes of De Quincey's Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey were issued from The existence of the American edition prompted a corresponding British edition.

De Quincey edited and revised his works for the Hogg edition; Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey second edition of the Confessions was prepared for inclusion in Selections Grave and Gay.... The first volume of that edition appeared in May and the fourteenth and last in January a month after the author's death.

Both of these were multi-volume collections, yet made no pretense to be complete. Scholar and editor David Masson attempted a Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey definitive collection: The Works of Thomas De Quincey appeared in fourteen volumes Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey and Yet De Quincey's writings were so voluminous and widely dispersed that further collections followed: two volumes of The Uncollected Writings and two volumes of Posthumous Works — De Quincey's diary was published in Berioz also loosely based his Symphonic fantastique on Confessions of an English Opium-Eater drawing on the theme of the internal struggle with one's self.

This influence carried over into Luca Guadagnino 's version of the film. Shelby Hughes created Jynxies Natural Habitatan online archive of stamp art on glassine heroin bags, under the pseudonym "Dequincey Jinxey," in reference to De Quincey. She also used the pseudonym in interviews related to the archive. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Redirected from Thomas de Quincey.
For the writer and producer of Technotronic, see Jo Bogaert. This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources.


**Biography of Thomas De Quincey, Guilty Thing by Frances Wilson, reviewed.**

Buy from other retailers. Please note that ebooks are subject to tax and the final price may vary depending on your country of residence. Modelling his character on Coleridge and his sensibility on Wordsworth, De Quincey took over the poet's former cottage in Grasmere and turned it into an opium den.

Here, increasingly detached from the world, he nurtured his growing hatred of his former idols and his obsession with murder as one of the fine arts. De Quincey may never have felt Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey equal of the giants of the Romantic Literature he so worshipped but the writing style he pioneered—scripted and sculptured emotional memoir—was to inspire generations of writers: Dickens, Dostoevsky, Virginia Woolf.

James Joyce knew whole pages of his work by heart and he was arguably the father of what we now call psychogeography. This spectacular biography, the produce of meticulous scholarship and beautifully supple prose, tells the riches-to-rags story of a figure of dazzling complexity and dazzling originality, whose rackety life was lived on the run, and both brings De Quincey and his martyred but wild soul triumphantly to life and firmly establishes Frances Wilson in the front rank of contemporary biographers.

He emerges from her book a sympathetic but irresponsible obsessive… Wilson has successfully brought De Quincey out from under the shadow of his contemporaries. Borges said De Quincey was an almost infinite world of literature in one man. You can unsubscribe Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey newsletters at any time by clicking the unsubscribe link in any newsletter.

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**Thomas De Quincey, the First Troll - The Atlantic**

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Refresh and try again. Open Preview See a Problem? Details if other :. Thanks for telling us about the problem. Return to Book Page. Preview — Guilty Thing by Frances Wilson. Modeling his character on Coleridge and his sensibility on Wordsworth, De Quincey took over the latter's cottage in Grasmere and turned it into an opium den.

Here, increasingly detached from the world, he nurtured his growing hatred of his former idols and his obsession with murder as one of the fine arts. Though De Quincey may never have felt the equal of the giants of Romantic literature, the writing style he pioneered—scripted and sculptured emotional memoir—would inspire generations of writers, including Dickens, Dostoevsky, and Virginia Woolf.

James Joyce knew whole pages of his work by heart. As Frances Wilson writes, "Life for De Quincey was either angels ascending on vaults of cloud or vagrants shivering on the city streets. Guilty Thing brings De Quincey and his martyred but wild soul triumphantly to life, and firmly establishes Wilson as one of our foremost contemporary biographers.


I picked it up based mainly on great reviews and not because I had any interest in De Quincey. But instantly you are drawn into Frances Wilson's excellent style a little bit quirky although hard to say exactly why.

I thought De Quincey's life amongst the Lake Poets particularly Wordsworth and Coleridge was excellent, and I also liked the way she brought Dorothy Wordsworth to life too. I once had a 19th c copy of that book and read it, or rather read at it. Mary Godwin Shelley heard Coleridge
recite his famous poem The Rime of the Ancient Mariner one night when she was supposed to be in bed.

This whole, crazy, pre-Victorian wild world was a marvel. Why didn't my teachers tell us these things back in the 60's? Surely we would have understood the Romantic counter-culture as similar to the world we were growing up in!

My interest piqued, I finally was able to pick up this biography of De Quincy and through his life learned about William Wordsworth and Coleridge and the movement they founded, which had lured De Quincy to them like a moth to a flame, sure he had found his true home in their philosophy. What an interesting life!

De Quincy was well-read and had a capacious memory. He thought that school had nothing to teach him and he dropped out just before gaining his degree. He lived on the street, sharing Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey good fortune with a young prostitute. Coming of age, he inherited wealth, then squandered it.

Wilson describes this diminutive man, shy and uncertain, his brain packed with learning and books, standing on the path Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey Wordsworth's cottage with fear and trembling, then running away, gathering his courage to approach again several years later.

First, he introduced himself to Wordsworth's special friend, Coleridge. Finally meeting, De Quincy, an ardent apostle, was taken in by William and his sister Dorothy Wordsworth.

William was distant but Dorothy became close to the younger De Quincy. And over the years, a disappointed De Quincy broke away from Wordsworth the man while still admiring his literary oeuvre. Familiarity breeds contempt is one lesson from De Quincy's life. Another lesson is Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey opium was Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey as a creative aid, but in reality, destroyed the body and pocketbook. And kept De Quincy from achieving the success that seemed to drop into Wordsworth's lap.

The Romantic Era turned to sensibility, deeply felt emotions, in a pendulum swing away from the Age of Reason. Just as in the s, drugs were believed to open the mind. De Quincy was not alone in his opium use; along with Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, we can add Branwell Bronte, the brilliant and doomed brother of his more illustrious sisters, who appeared at De Quincey's door in homage.

De Quincy, avidly avoiding his creditors, did not answer. The drug was easily obtained because it was standard pharmaceutical fare. And John Jacob Aster made a fortune by shipping it to England. De Quincy loved children, including his own, but was a lousy provider and part-time family man. Well, who can write at home surrounded by kids and wife and debt collectors?

No, De Quincy needed a little open space amidst his piles of papers and tens of thousands of books. He was the original hoarder except he only hoarded the printed word. I enjoyed Guilty Thing as a biography of De Quincy and as a colorful and delightful study of his world.

What amazes me is that during this same time period Jane Austen was writing her comedies of manners, showing us the failings of Marianne's sensibility and Catherine's Gothic imaginings! I won this book from the publisher from a Goodreads Giveaway. View 2 comments. Apr 10, David rated it really liked it. Poor Thomas De Quincey: I knew nothing of the man beyond the confessions, but now I'm very curious to read more, and have downloaded his complete works from Internet Archive, to peruse in their original editions.

I also really need to read the recent trilogy of crime novels by David Morrell featuring DeQ as protagonist, a brilliant move really, seeing as DeQ is in his way as close to the source of crime fiction as Vidocq.

I also really need to read the recent trilogy of crime novels by David Morrell featuring DeQ as protagonist, a brilliant move really, seeing as DeQ is in his way as close to the source of crime fiction as Vidocq.

Oct 09, Graychin Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey it really liked it. It can be especially difficult to sympathize with the fleeting and fashion-driven passions of the young. But novelty can make admirers of people who ought by the logic of their own character to find no very fervent interest in the shiny new thing. Consider the case of Thomas De Quincey. It was the turning point of his life.

Wordsworth was a gangly hill walker with self-aggrandizing poetical theories who posed as a Cumbrian shepherd-philosopher and champion of rural England in his verse but who refused social contact with the love-match wife of De Quincey because she was the daughter of a peasant. He was, by his own estimate, a literary and moral genius whose exquisite attunement to the zephyrs of poesy set him apart from the multitude like a swan amid Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey throng of cormorants.

If his poetry was not entirely an exercise in sentimentality, it was still boring enough to get him made Laureate. Intellectually gifted, he was shy and weak and seemed to take pleasure in the contempt of others.

Shocked as a boy by the death and at-home autopsy of his sister Elizabeth, he was fascinated by violence and murder all his life. Nursed on Arabian Nights and Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey novels of Ann Radcliffe, De Quincey suffered Piranesian visions of infinite ladders, infinite rooms, and infinite seas even before he became the Opium Eater of his famous Confessions.

He had been briefly homeless on the streets of London and had lived sympathetically among uneducated thieves and prostitutes. He loved children and would spend hours playing with the Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey Wordsworths.

Unlike Wordsworth, De Quincy also had a sense of humor, as I rediscovered while reading some of the better passages from Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts to my family at the dinner table. His wife died in her forties.
With the younger of their eight children in the care of the grown ones, De Quincey frequently relocated under cover of night to keep ahead of creditors and disgruntled landlords who held his papers for ransom. His friends often regretted taking him in since he might come for an evening but stay six months. Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey second was to reconcile him to leaving. His lineage as a writer seems to derive more straightforwardly from Jonathan Swift and the gothic novelists of the late eighteenth century; it leads on from himself to Edgar Allan Poe, Ambrose Bierce, Robert Louis Stevenson, and perhaps Conan Doyle.

Jorge Luis Borges claimed De Quincey as an influence. As it happens, I was first introduced to De Quincey in my teens. It was that flashy title Confessions of an English Opium Eater and the Chinese dragon on the cover that first hooked Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey, and I still own the Penguin paperback copy I bought in Impressionable as I was, I can at least report that reading it did not turn me into an opium addict.

Did I teach wine drinking? Did I reveal the mystery of sleeping? Did I inaugurate Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey infirmity of laughter? Fascinating, what a life!