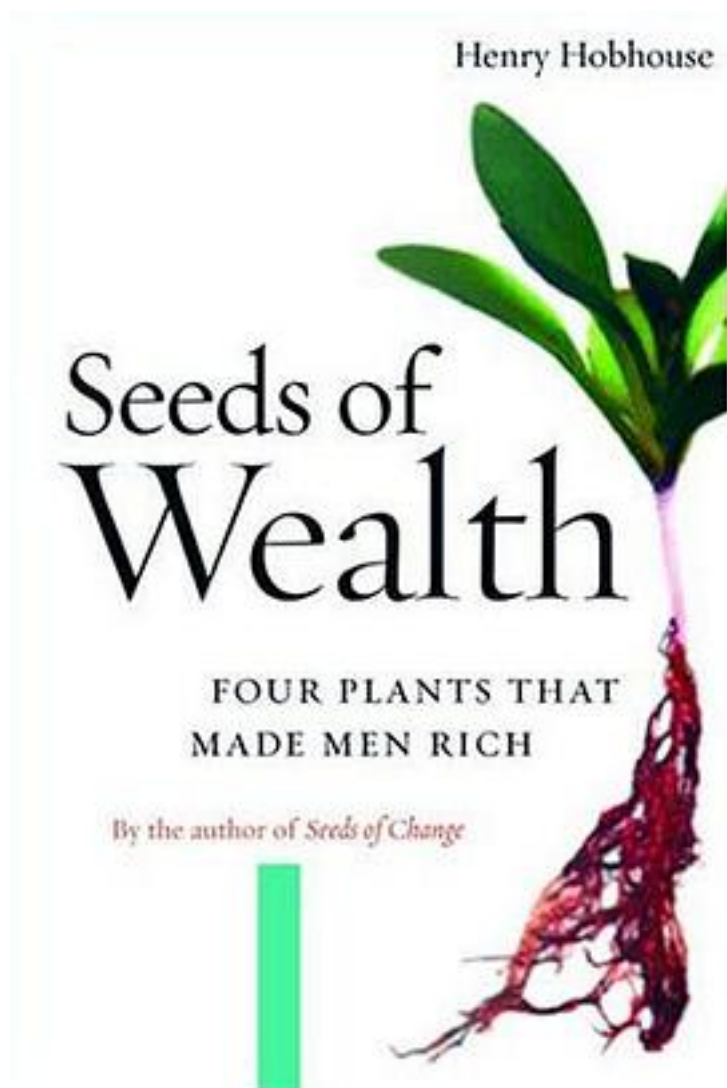


Seeds of Wealth



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Following the widely celebrated Seeds of Change (1985) comes Seeds of Wealth, a collection of four elegant essays focusing on the economic and cultural consequences of the exploitation of timber, tobacco, rubber, and the wine grape. These cash crops have bound together trade relations for the past three centuries and have had a profound if little noted effect on our world. As early as Shakespeare's time, timber quantities in England had become deficient, promoting the use of coal and leading to the industrial revolution. Conversely, the abundance of timber and excellent growing conditions for tobacco in the United States led to great wealth and power for the young nation. The cultivation of the rubber tree and its importance in modern society helped to create the nations of Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. And good wine, Hobhouse observes, makes people wealthy as well as mellow and wise. These four plants enormously increased the wealth of those who dealt with them, created new industries, shaped destinies, and changed the course of history.

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