Addiction Trajectories

Eugene Raikhel and William Garriott (eds). Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013. 360 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8223-5350-8. $94.95.

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Biomedical, social, and psychological research on drug use and dependence is not new. However, the topic of "addiction" itself is emerging as an increasingly popular subject of research. Despite the prevalence of an addiction studies discourse between biosciences and social sciences, these different approaches remain non-cohesive and without a unifying theory (Oksanen 2013). Addiction is a global phenomenon with a large range of settings and therapies, as well as political, social, and embodied meanings. With this premise, Eugene Raikhel, an anthropologist at the University of Chicago in the Department of Comparative Human Development, and William Garriott, an anthropologist at Drake University in the Department of Justice Studies, compiled a collection of chapters in order to approach the concept of addiction as a category of human experience. Raikhel and Garriott join nine other scholars with various expertise in anthropology, psychiatry, sociology, science, and technology in presenting a holistic approach to addiction studies. *Addiction Trajectories* is a sterling compilation of ethnographic fieldwork intersecting contemporary issues of bioscience, psychology, and socio-political subjectivity to consider addiction as a meaning-making process.

At the heart of this book is the concept of trajectory, defined by Raikhel and Garriott as "the directed (yet contingent) movement of people, substances, ideas, techniques, and institutions along spatial, temporal, social, and epistemic dimensions" (2013:2). In the Introduction, the editors organize their argument into categories—epistemic trajectories, therapeutic trajectories, and experiential/experimental trajectories. The editors provide a useful summary of how these categories are overlapping vectors within the subsequent chapters. Raikhel and Garriott paint a picture of contemporary addiction that is as varied as it is transformative. They do not claim to make a unified theory of addiction; however, it appears that their "common concern with what we have called 'addiction trajectories'" (2013:32) is processual. The process of addiction links sociocultural and material contexts to the mental, physical, and behavioral changes that occur when a person goes from drug experimentation (for example) to addict. Oksanen (2013) makes the

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connection between Deleuzian philosophy on how desire produces reality to the process of addiction. Drawing upon a theoretical translation of Giles Deleuze, the concept of trajectory can be used as a heuristic that is equally applicable to ongoing addiction research and the subjective experience of an addiction.

Chs. 1–5 center on the ethnographic narratives of the addict. Each chapter offers an in-depth exploration of how historical context presumes culturally sanctioned trajectories of addiction. Most often, the therapeutic regimes are at odds with the subjective experience. Angela Garcia (ch. 1) pairs the Freudian concept of individual in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1989[1917]) with a Peter Sacks (1985) interpretation of elegiac poetry to understand the interconnectedness of personal and social embodiment of loss and death for heroin addicts living in New Mexico's Española Valley. Garcia draws upon the trajectory of her informant Alma Gallegos to illustrate how cycling between heroin relapse and detoxification is the repetitive sequence that helped Alma to make meaning of the loss she experienced in her past. Natasha Dow Schüll (ch. 2) moves away from psychopharmacology and into extensive research on gambling machine addiction in Las Vegas to emphasize the "double bind" addicts confront when therapeutics reproduce the experience of an addiction. Schüll argues that the susceptibility of technology resonates with the experience of the consumer. Likewise, Todd Meyers (ch. 3) argues that the contemporary American conception of addiction and therapy are used and modified within the private world of the addict. Set in Baltimore, Meyers describes the correspondence between the media's response to the illegal selling of a new heroin replacement drug, buprenorphine, with adolescents' fidelity to self-monitored opiate replacement therapy to demonstrate the blurred line between subjective experience and expression.

Helena Hansen (ch. 4) compares pharmaceutical replacement treatment in the United States with Evangelical Protestantism in Puerto Rico to show how these different routines of therapy take part in a similar "biosociality" (Hansen 2013:121) through culturally accepted notions of individualism and agency. Hansen's cross-cultural analysis is an excellent example of how significant context is to the historical variations of epistemology (brain disease versus moral failing) and therapy (transformation of body versus transformation of spirit) in addiction. Anne M. Lovell (ch. 5) writes a compelling chapter about transnational addiction evident in the *toxicomanes* (Russian and Eastern European drug abusers) who travel to Marseille for access to social drug treatment services. In a historical perspective, Lovell contrasts the residual criminalization of *toxicomanes* in Soviet narcology to the biologization of addiction (and subsequent citizenship

of the toxicomanic) in French National solidarity. The result is a movement of biopolitical bodies and hybrid identities for the *toxicomanes* that resembles the instability of the biological model of addiction.

The second half of the book spends more time focusing on ethnographic accounts that make up the technological side of the narrative, such as therapeutics, criminality, and neuro-imaging. Chs. 6–9 show how competing frames of rhetoric cause tension within the socio-political system where addiction is problematic. E. Summerson Carr (ch. 6) promotes an alternative linguistic analysis of contesting "scripts" in American addiction treatment methods: the psychoanalysis of denial at Fresh Beginnings, an American addiction-treatment program, versus oral contradiction-resolution of motivational interviewing (MI). She argues for a more semiotic interpretation of addiction in anthropology. Eugene Raikhel (ch. 7) travels to St. Petersburg with an in-depth exploration of how the Soviet/Post-Soviet contest in Russia has produced tension between the increasingly westernized idea of a medicalizing addiction and the former belief that addiction was a pathological behavior and subsequently subject to penal and therapeutic institutions. Raikhel offers an effective account of the "management of belief": how the limited understanding of disulfiram treatment for alcohol addiction promotes remission over recovery and often involves fear tactics and placebos. In a similar fashion, William Garriott (ch. 8) examines the criminal justice system's response to crystal methamphetamine addicts in West Virginia to demonstrate the tension between a communal perception of addictive knowledge systems and the outcome of their collective action. For this community, meth is equivalent to criminal behavior via addiction (their association with addict's cognitive pursuit for more drugs). Despite the campaign to identify and criminalize meth addicts, the collective believes these efforts are in vain. Nancy D. Campbell (ch. 9) makes use of the current trajectory of neuro-imagery to highlight the assumptions this method makes about the social and political subjective meaning-making that dominates American rhetoric of addiction. Campbell interprets the experience of a leading neuro-imagery expert, Anna Rose Childress, on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* to argue that although the emerging neuroscientific explanation of addiction is more empathetic, it does not translate in an American psyche that includes ideologies of free will, choice, and morality.

The book is about the ambiguity surrounding addiction, the addict, and why anthropologists should care. It concludes with a chapter on what is at stake for anthropology and addiction and an Afterword to sum up the major arguments. A. Jaime Saris (ch. 10) recognizes that for anthropology to make a meaningful analysis of addiction, there first needs to be a mutual basis of understanding that includes *both* the biomedical model and the capitalism-

induced fabrication of choice. Using a historical construction of our modern concept of addiction, Saris argues for an anthropological critique of addiction studies that distinguishes the difference between a commitment to ethical/ moral choice or "will" and the more abstract—how our thinking has been "*committed* to (seized by) choice" (2013:280). In the Afterword, Emily Martin explains this as the historically specific conceptualization of "what it means to be free" (2013:292). Although *Addiction Trajectories* uses the trajectory as a heuristic, this book initiates future directives for a combined *anthropological* perspective of addiction.

Addiction Trajectories fits into the subfield of medical anthropology. The drawback of this is that such a placement does little to suggest reconciliation of social, psychological, and biomedical perspectives. In addition, with the book's focus on ethnographies that are confined to cultural anthropology, some readers might be disappointed that this book lacks non-Western ethnographic examples. In ch. 9, Campbell introduces the readers to the more modern neurobiological model of addiction based on learning and salience (attractiveness), but in ch. 10, Saris acknowledges the value of this neuroscientific model as potentially promising for a unified theory of addiction (2013:280). A chapter on the neuroanthropology of addiction would have been very useful. Neuroanthropology examines how the brain and culture interact. Using ethnography, Danel Lende (2012) has described how social patterns of life intersect habitual drug use through brain mechanisms that regulate salience to social context and memory formation. In sum, he has already proposed a neurocultural model of addiction.

While the editors go into great length about how they apply trajectory to addiction, it is potentially problematic that the word itself implies a connotation of a drug-induced experience. In the film *The French Connection*, there is a scene where the chemist is testing the purity of heroin and says, "Lunar trajectory, junk of the month club, sirloin steak." This is a pre-existing use of the concept trajectory as it relates to the subjective experience of drug use. The experience of a drug high or drug trip can be completely experimental (or beneficial), and not necessarily lead a person through the process of addiction.

Therefore, it is necessary to recognize and acknowledge that there is a biomedical distinction between the non-addictive and addictive use of drugs, albeit a muddy one. Although this distinction is fundamental to the entirety of *Addiction Trajectories*, ch. 2 is exemplary in the application (it is also the only chapter that is not about addiction to drugs). Schüll's interpretation of machine gambling addiction suggests that everyone is already on the trajectory. Identity creation, as prescribed by cultural ideals of "choice" and "will," is something that is to be desired: addiction and

compulsion are normal. As Schüll points out, there exists a balance between behaviors that are susceptible to addiction. In this perspective, "*anything can addict*," and "*anyone can become addicted*" (Schüll 2013:69). Addicts, like any consumer, continuously self-modulate their behavior, searching for some elusive state of equilibrium known as recovery.

In conclusion, *Addiction Trajectories* makes a strong argument for addiction as deserving of continued analysis within anthropology. The authors provide an inclusive demonstration of research that situates addiction studies on a trajectory with room for continued change and transformation. Medical anthropology and cross-cultural psychology scholars will benefit the most from reading *Addiction Trajectories*. However, it is appropriate for any non-scholars interested in the subject who are willing to brave the anthropological language.

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