

Postgraduate Study Day/ Journée d'étude

Mapping addiction: deviant bodies and marginal spaces

cultural, repressive and imaginary geography of narcotic intoxication

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If, as Michel Foucault suggests, we conceive of the modern world as a complex layering of heterogeneous spaces, or heterotopias, if, indeed, we “live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another”, spaces that are undeniably *other* to one another, then the geography of addiction is, by essence, heterotopic (Foucault, 1984). It is also, by definition, subversive. Our reading of the spatiality of addiction is inherently dependent on its framing as being *other* and “borderline” – it is deeply rooted in our perception of its ambivalent relation to mainstream spaces. Defining the conceptual and physical geography of addiction almost inevitably implies etching the outlines of an irregular self – exceptional or corrupted –, a seditious counterculture, a diseased body, a subjugated mind, or a lawless individual; addiction is understood and practiced as an intrinsically norm-violating behavior and, therefore, routinely circumscribed to a seldom-challenged place of deviance (Becker, 1963). In short, drug use is still regarded as a marginal practice, confined to marginal spaces.

Mapping addiction, however, means considering the variable geometry, both imagined and genuine, of drug use and drug cultures within wildly different environments as well as questioning their relationship to abstract and concrete spatialities through the lens of a wide range of fields of study, from history to psychology and sociology to medicine. Indeed, the very porosity and instability of the boundaries which ordinarily circumscribe, categorize or define drug practices, drug users and drug substances require close attention to be paid to the shifting cartography of social, political and cultural paradigms. For example the evolving attitudes and institutional responses to specific substances (from 18th century Gin Acts, 20th century anti-narcotic legislation to the more recent question of decriminalization and legalization of cannabis), the differing perceptions of recreational drug users according to gender, class and race (from backstreet junkies to heroin chic, from drug squats to music festivals), the level of toleration of legal or illegal drug practices (alcohol abuse, legal highs, the “spiritual” use of substances such as ayahuasca or LSD, the recreational consumption of cannabis), the desire to contain, control and cure drug (ab)users or, conversely, to legitimize their

practices. These questions may be studied in the context of different societies, past and present, as well as through the media, literature and popular culture of the English-speaking world.

Researchers may wish to consider, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Mapping a concept: defining the notional space of addiction.
- Defining, naming, classifying: typification and classification of drugs and drug users.
- Urban/rural spaces and drug use: cartography of inner-city dens and squats, rural areas as new/old drug centers.
- Communal spaces and drug use: gatherings, exchanges, bonding and spatial appropriation and delimitations of drug subcultures.
- Addiction as a physical/mental prison: bondage, freedom and redefinition of intimate spaces
- The road to recovery: the geography of rehab treatment, harm reduction programs and community support systems.
- Criminalization and containment, heterotopia of deviation: repressive spaces as an institutional response to the problem of addiction.
- Prisons, asylums, reformatories, rehabs and hospitals: from imprisonment to freedom?
- Drugs and the porosity of borders: Marketing, trafficking, policing.
- Under the influence: the perception, questioning and transgressing of boundaries while under the influence of drugs (the body, the self, the material world, political space); drug consumption as psychological, metaphysical or spiritual experimentation.



We invite 300 words abstracts in English for 20-minute papers. Please submit your abstract along with a short biographical notice to Irène Delcourt (CENA, idelcourt@umistra.fr) and Tim Heron (SEARCH, t.heron@umistra.fr) by **February 23 2020**. Papers will be given in English.