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Dennis, F. *Injecting Bodies in More-Than-Human Worlds*. London: Routledge. 2019. 248pp £120.00 (hbk) ISBN 978-1138609556

A major perk of contributing to the *Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness Book Prize* is engaging with texts you may otherwise miss. One such book – Fay Dennis’ first monograph – was a genuine pleasure to read. On the one hand, Dennis wields a classic social science sensibility: dispelling taken-for-granted, and unsophisticated, narratives of the phenomena in question – in this case, prevention initiatives and drug use as pleasure or misfortune. Yet on the other, Dennis breaks new ground by drawing upon STS and new materialist sensibilities to surpass hierarchical conceptualisations of drug use, namely, by staying with the foggy inter-relatedness of drug-using bodies, substances, and settings. Dennis connects creative qualitative research with post-structural and post-humanist thinking to make sense of the human and non-human arrangements of drug-use. In so doing, she provides unique insights into the complex world of injecting drugs, carefully mapping out how bodies are thought, lived, and intervened-with. Dennis skilfully takes us past the governing, yet limited, principles of rationality, control, and addiction, and into the murky and choppy waters of assemblages, affects, pleasures, and harms.

Dennis begins her book by sketching out the ‘generalities of pleasure and misfortune’ (p.1) which circulate in powerful outlets (e.g. media, policy, research) and plague common conceptions of drug-use. In the midst of such minimalism, Dennis stakes her claim: let us hear the stories of users, often omitted from dominant narratives on drugs, to do justice to the complex entanglements of bodies, substances, and worlds. I would prefer a punchier introduction, but given the intellectual pay-off, its length is understandable and likely to satisfy others. In what follows, Dennis, by noting how bodies are always in a process of becoming, details her approach to injecting bodies which is as much theoretical as it is methodological. Her inclusion of body-mapping, in which participants map their bodies with respect to their actions and feelings in the drug ‘event’ (drawing on Cameron Duff), is one of Dennis’ standout contributions. The remarkable hand-drawn body maps of Ajay (p.70), Lucy (p.74), Reggie (p.88), Sandra (p.114), Mya (p.118), Meg (p.129), Carlos (p.130), Jon (p.134), Silvie (p.137), and Malik (p.169) animate their desires, affects, and embodiments in ways unlikely to be possible when relying solely on verbal or fieldnote data.

Chapters 2-5 essentially trouble popular, though naïve, conceptions of ‘pleasure’ (CH2 and CH3), ‘harm’ (CH4) and ‘recovery’ (CH5). Dennis’ treatment of pleasure is nuanced and perceptive, showing a paradox in which pleasure is addictive, but addiction *itself* cannot be recognised as pleasurable. This tension and collision of seemingly incompatible, yet entangled, feelings prompt Dennis to call for thinking *with* pleasure in considering drug treatment policy and practice. This must also recognise how pleasure in the injecting event is relational, including substances, equipment, space, time, and other bodies. Moving beyond purely individualised interpretations of such moments, Dennis explores how drug use in more-than-human worlds constitutes an assemblage of socio-material collectives that can be pleasurable, but also shift in challenging ways, such as Lucy’s metaphor of the ‘tilting water glass’ whereby the drug event is beyond her control (p.75). Recognising the drug event as a fragile affair reliant on a delicate balancing of bodies, forces, and technologies is a fitting seg-way into Dennis’ subsequent claims: that drug-use becomes part of participants’ embodiment which, in some cases, offer benefits for their own wellbeing, yet is threatened by stigma and marginalisation. Here, drug ‘effects’ are entangled in webs of pleasure *and* harm, moving us beyond normative and abstracted thinking of drug-use as fundamentally destructive and its users as in need of intervention (i.e. nonparticipation). Dennis’ final empirical chapter outlines service providers’ attempts to promote an alternative method of intervention which refuses absolute ways of knowing drug-using bodies and how to treat them. Working *with* habits, for Dennis, enacts a more intimate and ethical commitment

which pushes against prescriptive principles guiding the recovery agenda. The conclusion unites Dennis' arguments to advance her case for considering drug-using bodies not in binary ways (addiction/pleasure, harm reduction/recovery), but with reference to participants own wor(l)ds, which stay with the tensions, to make injecting bodies 'better' (p.188).

A note of caution, rather than a personal objection, for readers: this is, on occasion, a dense read. Building an argument on sturdy, but intricate, theoretical foundations of new materialism, with frequent citations to Deleuze and Guattari, may attract some readers whilst possibly perplexing and deterring others. I felt that Dennis' extensive, and impressive, knowledge of the literature is both a blessing and curse. This body of work is handled with care and precision, and this serves as a persuasive introduction to materialist and more-than-human analyses (and its use with empirical data). Yet this faithful allegiance may turn off less receptive audiences and, for me, it occasionally risked swamping, and reducing the force of, what is truly excellent and unique data (I was already convinced of the value of theoretically scaffolding the data in this way). Nonetheless, I really enjoyed this book. It is a compelling and thoughtful analysis which shines a light on more imaginative understandings of drugs, drug-using bodies, and drug-related effects. Dennis' text undoubtedly belongs on the bookshelf of scholars of critical drug studies and/or harm-reduction strategies. I would add, too, that scholars broadly working on health, illness, and embodiment – and particularly those using creative qualitative methods – have much to gain from Dennis' insights.

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