



ADDICTION THEORY NETWORK

ATN Webinar: Defining Addiction - From Devotion to Dogma Featuring: Rebecca Lemon

When? 17/02/2023; 1600-1730 Edinburgh; 1700-1930 Berlin 1100-1230EST NYC; 0800-0930 Los Angeles

The free event will be held via MS Teams. Those interested in attending must register via:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/a2131366-fc90-4840-85d2-c94b5655657d@09358691-4d8e-491c-aa76-0a5cbd5ba734>

Please forward this advertisement to interested colleagues and friends.

Event description:

This webinar builds on the recent ATN conversations considering paradigm shifts in the study of addiction. Specifically, I aim to support the adaptive and multiple models introduced by both Bruce Alexander and Hanna Pickard by turning to the longer history of the term “addict.” Here we find a buried and forgotten, but nonetheless significant, sense of addiction as an admirable ability. Addiction is a kind of intense attachment that not just anyone can experience. To unfold this longer history, I will begin with the first uses of the word “addict” in the English language, at the time of the English Reformation in the 1530s. A truism insists that earlier eras viewed addiction from a moralizing lens. But this is incorrect. In fact, the first understandings of addiction in English were positive: it was a virtue to be cultivated.

But the admirable sense of addiction as deep attachment became pathologized, I argue, over the course of the Reformation: the material world was increasingly condemned, and appetites had to be managed. In the process, the concept of addiction became linked to the sinful world of desire. This compelling story of how a mode of devotion became pathologized helps reveal the layers of addiction and (at the risk of being excessively dramatic) of life itself. In a modern era that prizes individual freedom above almost all else, the human desire for commitment, attachment, and even obsession can be forgotten on the one hand or condemned on the other. From this history of addiction, I will then turn – if time allows – to speak about a 2022 journal issue I edited on humanist approaches to the multiplicity of Addictions, spanning from the 16th to 21st centuries.

This event is for anyone interested in historical and contemporary approaches to addiction. Rebecca Lemmon will speak for approximately 45 minutes and there will then be opportunity for questions and discussion. Please note that a recording of the Webinar will be made available online.

Speaker: Rebecca Lemon

Rebecca Lemon is Professor of English at the University of Southern California. She is the author of three books: *Addiction and Devotion in Early Modern England* (2018), *Treason by Words: Literature, Law, and Rebellion in Early Modern England* (2006); *Shakespeare’s King Richard III: Language and Writing* (2018). Prof Lemon also recently co-edited a special issue on humanist approaches to the study of addiction from the sixteenth through twenty-first century: “Addictions,” with the Duke University Press journal *English Language Notes*. Her work both *Addiction and Devotion* and the special journal issue strives to challenge conventional theories of addiction by tracking its longer history from the 16th century. This work has been featured in a range of venues, including popular radio broadcasts, political blogs, podcasts and scholarly reviews. website: <http://www.rebeccalemon.org>

Organisers: Addiction Theory Network (ATN)

Please see <https://addictiontheorynetwork.org/> for more information about the ATN and contact Derek Heim (heimd@edgehill.ac.uk) for any queries regarding our webinar series.