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## Drugs and the Future

Brain Science, Addiction and Society

2007, Pages 485-506

## Chapter 17 - Life Histories and Narratives of Addiction

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012370624-9/50020-7>

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### Publisher Summary

Addiction has a generally low profile in literature, but addictive themes are apparent in modern biography and memoirs and sometimes assume an organizing role in extended narratives. Many addiction narratives move beyond a strictly scientific view of addiction. The addict's illness is perceived as a psychological and emotional journey in which the sickness of the physical body gathers less significance. Addiction narratives inherently tend to moralize the experience of addictive processes, diminishing in the process consideration of the physical or physiological aspects of addiction. Concerning the effects of using psychoactive substances, the accounts considered in this chapter constitute a rich repository of narratively framed experiences and consequences in later lifetime. The contemporary addiction story is the confessional narrative of a sick self, one that requires treatment. Achieving health is the quest of many such addiction narratives. One of the most striking features of addiction narratives from a clinical point of view is their lack of interest in the part played by environmental factors in the formation of the addiction. In such a way, addiction narratives demonstrate that addiction is not specific to personality, gender, or class. Rather, addiction has the power

addiction is not specific to personality, gender, or class. Rather, addiction has the power to afflict many individuals. The substance of addiction may in the end be only a contingent means to an end.

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Life histories and narratives of addiction, philological judgment individually repels mathematical analysis.

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