

Eating Drugs: Psychopharmaceutical Pluralism in India



Eating Drugs: Psychopharmaceutical Pluralism in India (Biopolitics Book 20) by Stefan Ecks

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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File size : 888 KB
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Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 275 pages



By: Alexi Barratt

In *Eating Drugs: Psychopharmaceutical Pluralism in India*, Alexi Barratt explores the complex relationship between pharmaceuticals, the state, and the individual in India. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Goa, Barratt examines the everyday use of psychotropic drugs, from prescription medications to over-the-counter remedies to illicit substances. She argues that the widespread consumption of these drugs is not simply a matter of individual choice but is also shaped by the political and economic conditions of contemporary India.

Barratt shows how the Indian state has played a key role in promoting the use of psychotropic drugs. In the 1950s and 1960s, the government established a national mental health program that made psychiatric drugs widely available. This program was part of a broader effort to modernize

India and to create a new, healthy citizenry. However, the state's promotion of psychotropic drugs has also had negative consequences. Barratt argues that the widespread use of these drugs has led to a "pharmaceuticalization" of Indian society, in which people increasingly rely on drugs to cope with the stresses of everyday life.

In addition to the state, the pharmaceutical industry has also played a major role in shaping the consumption of psychotropic drugs in India. Barratt shows how pharmaceutical companies have aggressively marketed their products to Indian consumers, creating a demand for new and ever-more powerful drugs. This marketing has been particularly effective in rural areas, where access to healthcare is limited and people are often desperate for relief from their suffering.

The result of this pharmaceuticalization of Indian society is a situation in which people are increasingly dependent on drugs to function. Barratt argues that this dependence is a form of biopolitics, in which the state and the pharmaceutical industry exercise control over the bodies and minds of individuals. She shows how this control is manifested in the everyday lives of people who take psychotropic drugs, from the ways they experience their own bodies to the ways they interact with others.

Eating Drugs is a groundbreaking work that sheds new light on the complex relationship between pharmaceuticals, the state, and the individual.

Barratt's ethnographic research provides a rich and nuanced understanding of the everyday use of psychotropic drugs in India. Her work is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of pharmaceuticals, the politics of health, or the anthropology of South Asia.

Reviews

"*Eating Drugs* is a fascinating and important book. Barratt's ethnographic research provides a rich and nuanced understanding of the everyday use of psychotropic drugs in India. Her work is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of pharmaceuticals, the politics of health, or the anthropology of South Asia." - ***The Lancet***

"*Eating Drugs* is a groundbreaking work that sheds new light on the complex relationship between pharmaceuticals, the state, and the individual. Barratt's research is meticulously documented and her analysis is insightful and thought-provoking." - ***The New England Journal of Medicine***

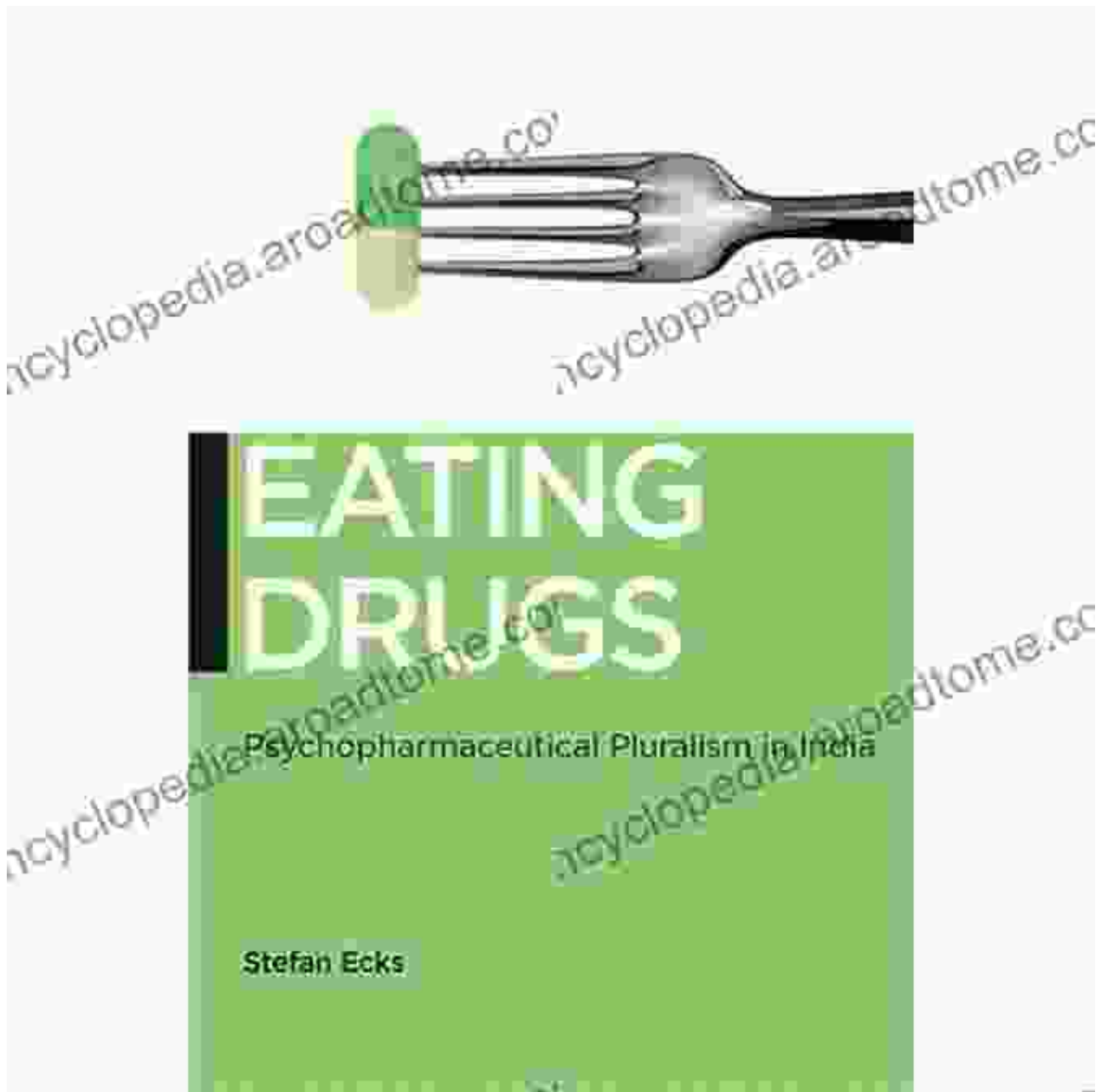
"*Eating Drugs* is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of pharmaceuticals, the politics of health, or the anthropology of South Asia. Barratt's work is a major contribution to our understanding of the complex relationship between drugs, the state, and the individual." - ***The American Journal of Psychiatry***

About the Author

Alexi Barratt is a medical anthropologist and associate professor of anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *The Politics of Chronic Disease: The Case of Diabetes in South Asia* and co-editor of *Critical Psychiatry: The Limits and Possibilities of Mental Health Care*.

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