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PARANOIA

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THE POLITICS OF A SYMPTOMATOLOGY: PARANOIA AND ADDICTION

Rik Loose

KEYWORDS: *Paranoia, Addiction, Castration, Schizophrenia, The Phallus*

Introduction

When Lacan suggests that drug-use and addiction afford the subject a break from the phallus, and thus from castration, he is not saying that this subject has rejected castration, but rather, that this subject has managed to avoid or to sidestep the effects or consequences of castration.¹ Alternatively, we could say that addiction is a way of suturing the division of the subject, but it is a way that can leave an enormous scar. The price to be paid for drowning the object *a* in a sea of jouissance is the unstoppable reiteration of the One of the body that can be touched or affected (for some) by drugs, alcohol, pornographic images, or whatever else one can become addicted to. This reiteration is not so much a symptom in the conventional sense, although as Jacques-Alain Miller says, it lies at the root of it,² but it is a devastation of the subject and his or her body. Lacan's suggestion begs the question about addiction and psychosis.

If addiction is a suturing of the wound of castration of the neurotic subject then perhaps in the same (general) vein we can say that addiction in schizophrenia affords the subject the experience of a more or less consistent body, and thus it functions as a kind of glue that binds the fragmented elements of the body and its organs together. Jacques-Alain Miller writes that "Lacan considers the so-called schizophrenic to be specified by the fact that for him the problem of using organs is especially fraught and so he has to turn to other means besides the aid of established discourses."³ Addiction

in this case is an admission that the effects sought by the subject are due to the lack of castration to become overwhelmed by these experiences, predominantly

The curious situation therefore seek an effect of the effect they pursue in a manner that brings to a halt. On this basis schizophrenic addicts and neurosis, the object of the body, and thus the and singular. No subject in precisely the same way studies on cocaine.⁴ For consistency of the body, this question it is important the subject and in clinical of psychosis is not entangled. Nonetheless, the relation and paranoia is not a clinic of excess.

Paranoia and Add

Unlike addiction, the element of Lacan's thinking is beyond the scope of the connection of paranoia, and excess play important are demonstrating an internal and external "solution" to the effect of jouissance. In Other towards the One

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1. Jacques Lacan, "Culture aux Journées d'Études des Cartels," (1975) *Lettres de L'École Freudienne de Paris* 18 (April 1976): 268.

2. Jacques-Alain Miller, "Reading a Symptom," *Hurly-Burly*, no. 6 (2011): 152.

3. Jacques-Alain Miller, "Psychotic Invention," *Hurly-Burly*, no. 8 (2012): 261.

4. Sigmund Freud, "Craving for Narcissism," *Collected Papers*, vol. 2, New York: Stonehill, 1974, pp. 171-172.

POLITICS OF SYMPTOMATOLOGY: ADDICTION

Rik Loose

Castration, Schizophrenia, The Phall...

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in this case is an administration of the unlimited jouissance experiences of the body through the effects of the object of addiction. Perhaps we can say that the effects sought after by schizophrenic addicts administer the jouissance of the body by way of a substitute for the lack of castration. When, due to the lack of castration, the object *a* is not extracted, the subject tends to become overwhelmed by fragmented and unregulated jouissance experiences, predominantly located in the body.

The curious situation with schizophrenic subjects, who are addicted and therefore seek an effect from the object to which they are addicted, is that the effect they pursue adds to the jouissance experience of the subject but in a manner that brings the enigmatic and perplexing jouissance experiences to a halt. On this basis we can say that the jouissance-effect obtained by schizophrenic addicts acts like a minus (a temporary $-\Phi$). As in the case of neurosis, the object of addiction touches on the radically singular One of the body, and thus the effect pursued by addicts is always subject-specific and singular. No subject experiences the effect of their object of addiction in precisely the same way, as Freud already noticed in his pre-analytical studies on cocaine.⁴ But if addiction affords the schizophrenic subject a consistency of the body, what does it afford the paranoid subject? In posing this question it is important to be sensitive to the fact that at the level of the subject and in clinical reality the relationship between these two forms of psychosis is not entirely straightforward (as the case of Schreber illustrates). Nonetheless, to say something about the connection between addiction and paranoia is of interest in a time when our work must incorporate a clinic of excess.

Paranoia and Addiction

Unlike addiction, paranoia has always been prominent in the development of Lacan's thinking. To trace the trajectory of his thinking on paranoia is beyond the scope of this paper, especially as our interest concerns the connection of paranoia with the modern clinic in which jouissance, addiction, and excess play important roles. The politics concerning the symptom are demonstrating an increasing preference for products, objects, gadgets, and external "solutions" (to suffering) that have the capacity to produce an effect of jouissance. In other words, there is a clear shift away from the Other towards the One of the jouissance of the body, a shift that was

4. Sigmund Freud, "Craving for and Fear of Cocaine," (1887) in R. Byck ed., *Cocaine Papers* (New York: Stonehill, 1974), 174-175.

anticipated by Lacan in the last period of his work. However, this is not to suggest that paranoia seen through the prisms of the imaginary and the symbolic (and their connection to addiction) are of any less importance.

Regarding the imaginary, Lacan indicates that the ego is paranoid. It is based on an identification with the other (*a'*), an identification that is internalized. It means that there is no authentic self, which can be threatening as we find ourselves confronted with the image of an alien other within ourselves. Based on Freud's logic that what is good is incorporated and what is bad is expelled, we understand that this image is pushed to the outside. From there, the ego becomes a persecutory and threatening object. The use of jouissance-producing objects can serve to alleviate this threat as it manages to eclipse the ego.

Regarding the symbolic, Lacan indicates in his analysis of Schreber that paranoia concerns the exclusion of the subject from the symbolic order as a result of the failure of the paternal metaphor. Paranoia concerns a failure of phallic signification in response to the desire and jouissance of the Other who then becomes threatening. The signifier is unable to restrain the proliferation of the imaginary and the latter is let loose on the interpretative activities of the subject in relation to the Other. The use of objects that readily lend themselves to the production of a jouissance-effect serve to compensate for the non-functioning of the signifier, i.e., for the lack of phallic signification. It serves to erect a dam of jouissance-effects against a threatening, overwhelming, and invasive meaning attributed to, and emanating from, the Other.⁵

In "The Symptom and the Body-Event," Jacques-Alain Miller suggests that Lacan concentrated on the imaginary and the symbolic in his analysis of the case of Schreber in order to take issue with theories that ignored the importance of the imaginary, language, and speech. He was aware of the movements of libido (of jouissance) in this case but left this to one side to focus on these neglected aspects: "The result is that, in this construction, the proper movement of the libido which is evidenced in a sensational way by Schreber is obliterated."⁶ Miller also suggests that this libido is regulated by a logic that follows the movement of a "fort-da" between subject and Other.⁷ In other words, for the paranoid subject the problem of jouissance plays out predominantly within the field of the social bond and is located in the Other.

5. In this (classic) period of Lacan's work the signifier functions as a limit to jouissance. However, this relationship can also be inverted by saying that jouissance procured from an object can form a limit to the proliferation of meaning arising from the signifier or, at least, render meaning temporarily irrelevant.

6. Jacques-Alain Miller, "The Symptom and the Body Event," *Lacanian Ink*, no. 19 (2001): 37.

7. *Ibid.*

The Turn to the O

In Lacan's last teaching language are now considered language we find (alway for) enjoyment rather than *Lalangue* concerns the precisely, it concerns the belongs to the living body that Lacan has arrived at. There is a non-relational fact of the jouissance of lead there. All roads lead do without the Other present in language and

This One is at the ve closed from it and thus primary. In the Borromean imaginary cannot hold of the subject and thus consistencies together su. What are the implications to paranoia by saying the same thing.⁹ One of back to his earlier thinking posed by the ego as other so far as a subject knots the real, he is supported symbolic and the real are that paranoid psychosis the same thing implies that into each other with the v

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8. Jacques-Alain Miller, "The Turn to the O," *Lacanian Ink*, no. 34 (2019): 68-71.

9. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar*, trans. A.R. Price (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

10. *Ibid.*

The Turn to the One in Paranoia and Addiction

In Lacan's last teachings *jouissance* becomes a basic fact. Speech and language are now considered to contain *jouissance*. Under and within language we find *lalangue* which is language or speech as material of (and for) enjoyment rather than as a vehicle for meaning or communication. *Lalangue* concerns the connection between language and the body; more precisely, it concerns the body being affected by language. This *jouissance* belongs to the living body. In his "Six Paradigms of *Jouissance*" Miller writes that Lacan has arrived at a point where "psychoanalysis does not work." There is a non-relation between *jouissance* and the Other and the basic fact of the *jouissance* of the One of the body implies that in a sense all roads lead there. All roads lead to the One, the One-all-alone that will have to do without the Other.⁸ The implication is that there is a fault or failing present in language; a hole at its very core.

This One is at the very centre of the speaking body, the Other is foreclosed from it and thus psychotic functioning has become a little more ordinary. In the Borromean Knot, because of this hole, the real, symbolic, and imaginary cannot hold together in a way that works for the psychic reality of the subject and thus a fourth ring is needed to knot the other three consistencies together such that this psychic reality can be (re-)established. What are the implications of this for paranoia? In *Seminar XXIII* Lacan refers to paranoia by saying that paranoid psychosis and personality are one and the same thing.⁹ One could conclude from this remark that Lacan has come back to his earlier thinking on paranoia in that it is based on the threat posed by the ego as other. Following on from this passage Lacan says, "In so far as a subject knots together as three, the imaginary, the symbolic and the real, he is supported only by their continuity. The imaginary, the symbolic and the real are one and the same consistence, and it is in this that paranoid psychosis consists."¹⁰ The three registers being one and the same thing implies that they are not separate entities but run seamlessly into each other with the One always implicated.

It is not so easy to read what Lacan says here. At the very least, we can conclude that paranoia is not a symptom or *sinthome* in the sense of a fourth ring that "repairs" the failure of the knot. Perhaps we can also conclude that paranoia is the knot in the form of the trefoil shape which implies, as Lacan

8. Jacques-Alain Miller, "Six Paradigms of *Jouissance*," (1999) trans. J. Haney, *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, no. 34 (2019): 69–71.

9. Jacques Lacan, *The Sinthome: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XXIII*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. A.R. Price (Cambridge, Polity, 2016), 41.

10. *Ibid.*

seems to suggest with the use of the word “consistence,” that the paranoid “solution” is to create an imaginary consistency for the hole in the symbolic and the ex-sistence of the real by making all three one and the same thing.¹¹ In this way, the jouissance that circulates so clearly between subject and Other, as Miller said about the Schreber case,¹² can be called to a halt and located in the space of the Other in such a way that Lacan can write the following: “The subject receives its own message in an inverse form, which means here its own jouissance [*i.e., as One*] in the form of the jouissance of the Other.”¹³

Can objects of addiction produce such an effect of jouissance for the paranoid subject that it manages to separate the three registers while also functioning as a fourth ring, a sinthome, that knots the three together? That seems unlikely. The trefoil structure of paranoia implies the possibility of the subject being invaded by limitless streams of meaning and/or jouissance. The limitlessness of paranoid psychosis and addiction are compatible because the latter treats the real of the former with the real. They coexist happily but with disastrous consequences for the subject’s relationship to his or her body and the social bond.

Conclusion

In paranoia the subject is confronted with a potential evil Other, with the jouissance of the Other. This jouissance has no buffer because it is ultimately related to the jouissance of the One of the body and is experienced as limitless because of the lack of phallic signification. Addiction, the use of drugs, can provide the illusion of consistency in the face of this threatening jouissance of the Other. The experience of this jouissance is contained. Paranoia has a spatial quality, there is a distinct outside that enters the inside. Jouissance-effects of objects of addiction are ultimately subject-specific but there is also a more generic aspect to this effect. In cases of paranoia an effect can be the temporary establishment of the semblance of an object *a* by condensing the jouissance of the Other in a specific location at the point where the object of addiction has an effect on the jouissance of the Other, namely, in the body. Analysts who work with paranoid addicts should respond in a way that allows for the dissolution of meaning that has become concrete and real. Only then can the analyst be established as the semblance of an object that can function as a refuge in the stream of the jouissance of the Other.

11. *Ibid.*, 31. The trefoil knot binds R, S, and I together in a continuous way making three crossings such as we do when we make an overhand knot.

12. Jacques-Alain Miller, “The Symptom and the Body Event,” *op.cit.*, 47.

13. *Ibid.*