

AMPHETAMINE-INDUCED PRESSURED SPEECH

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Abstract

Amphetamine comes to its climax in the amphetamine psychosis which, with its delusions and hallucinations, is no less than schizophrenia, or rather paranoid schizophrenia when the delusions are auditory, as they usually are. But in the beginning, when things are not all black, amphetamine abuse gets the consumer into a series of hypomanic episodes characterized by euphoria, alertness, an overwhelming sense of well-being and, in terms of communication, a speech that, excessive as it is, could be described as pressured, with the speaker giving in to his flight of ideas and an overcoming sense of distractibility.

Keywords: *amphetamine, hypomania, mania, flight of ideas, pressured speech.*

1. LIFE-ON AMPHETAMINE

If finally coming to an amphetamine psychosis that, with its delusions and hallucinations, is nothing short of paranoid schizophrenia, amphetamine abuse comes with a series of hypomanic episodes, accompanied by euphoria, alertness and a sense of well-being while lowering anxiety and social inhibitions, and increasing energy, self-esteem and sexuality (BECK et al., 1993). The consumer's mood, in the meantime, is "cheerful, enthusiastic and expansive," the cheerfulness often having "an infectious quality about it" and, more often than not, "little insight" into the problem in question (BLACK & ANDREASEN, 2014). Take for an illustration the case of Dean Moriarty, the emblematic beat in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*:

As LuAnne, the chick he was banging regularly, had whored a few dollars together and taken to her heels - "the whore!" - Neal Cassady was now with Jack Kerouac, for him to show him how to write. The conformists all around decided he was "a madman" 'cause he was moving and speaking, actually sticking to everything with

"the energy of a benny addict" (KEROUAC, 1957). "In those days" he didn't quite know "what he was talking about," he was "a young jailkid all hung-up on the wonderful possibilities of becoming a real intellectual," and he liked "to talk in the tone" and use the words, but "in a jumbled way," that he had heard from "real intellectuals." He wasn't "so naive as that" in all other things, though, and it didn't take him long to become "completely in there with all the terms and jargon." The truth of the matter is that he was "simply a youth tremendously excited with life," and though he was "a con-man," he was "only conning because he wanted so much to live and to get involved with people" who would otherwise turn a deaf ear to him. Which is why he started talking, with "a kind of holy lightning" that was flashing from "his excitement and his visions," which he described "so torrentially that people in buses looked around to see the overexcited nut" (KEROUAC, 1957). They were instantly attracted to him, simply because people are readily interested in "the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue center light pop and everybody goes 'Awww!'" (KEROUAC, 1957).

Now Neal worked "like a dog in parking lots." He was, truth to say, "the most fantastic parking-lot attendant in the world," he could back a car "forty miles an hour into a tight squeeze" and stop "at the wall," jump out, race "among fenders," leap "into another car," circle it "fifty miles an hour in a narrow space," back

"swiftly into a tight spot," hump, snap the car with so much emergency that "you see it bounce as he flies out"; then clear to "the ticket shack," sprinting "like a track star," hand a ticket, leap into "a newly arrived car before the owner's half out," leap "literally under him as he steps out," start "the car with the door flapping," and roar "off to the next available spot," "arc, pop in, brake out, run"; working like that "without pause eight hours a night, evening rush hours and after-theater rush-hours," in "greasy wino pants with a frayed fur-lined jacket and beat shoes that flap" (KEROUAC, 1957).

And then, Neal went to Denver and met LuAnne in a soda fountain. She was only fifteen and wearing jeans and "just waiting for someone to pick her up." "Three days and three nights of talk in the Ace Hotel, third floor, southeast corner room, holy memento room and sacred scene of [his] days - she was so sweet then, so young, hmm, ohh!" (KEROUAC, 1957).

And then, Neal went out and played "baseball with the kids in the sooty field by the Long Island railyard." He also played basketball "so frantically" the younger boys told him to take it easy, "You don't have to kill yourself!" They bounced "smoothly all around" him and beat him "with ease." He was sweating. "At one point" he fell "flat on his face on the concrete court." He "huffed and puffed" to get the ball from the boys, but they "turned and flipped it away." Others "darted in and smoothly shot over his head." He "jumped at the basket like a maniac," and the younger boys just reached up and grabbed the ball from his sweating hands and "dribbled away." He was "like hotrock blackbelly tenorman Mad of America back-alley go-music trying to play basketball against Stan Getz and Cool Charlie." They thought he was "crazy" ... Later in the afternoon Neal and Jack went "back home playing catch from each sidewalk of the street." They also tried "extra special catches, diving over bushes and barely missing posts." When a car came by Jack "ran alongside and flipped the ball to Neal" just barely behind the "vanishing bumper." He "darted and caught it and rolled in the grass," and flipped it back for Jack "to catch on the other side of a parked bread truck." Jack just made it "with his meat hand" and threw it back so Neal had "to

whirl and back up and fall on his back across the hedges..." (KEROUAC, 1957).

2. SPEECH-ON AMPHETAMINE

While becoming "more social and gregarious," with an increased interest in sex, with "less sleep than usual," amphetamine abusers may also experience "an increase in the cognitive speed" - they tend to "talk excessively," driven as they are by pressured speech, by a "rapid flow of thought" or rather by "flight of ideas." They answer questions "at great length," continue to talk "even when interrupted," sometimes "even when no one is listening." Their speech is "fast, loud and emphatic," oftentimes derailing distractedly and incoherently, skipping "from one topic to another," shifting topics "in response to some stimulus in the environment" (BLACK & ANDREASEN, 2014). Take, for an illustration, the same case of Dean Moriarty.

Walking with Neal was fun simply because he was talking incessantly about everything imaginable, for instance about "the inscriptions carved on toilet walls in the East and in the West": "They're entirely different; in the East they make cracks and corny jokes and obvious references, scatological bits of data and drawings; in the West they just write their names, Red O'Hara, Blufftown Montana came by here, date, real solemn," the reason being the enormous loneliness that differs just a shade and cut hair as you move across the Mississippi" (KEROUAC, 1957).

Or he was telling in every possible detail the story "of what he did in LA," how he "visited a family, had dinner, talked to the father, the sons, the sisters - what they looked like, what they ate, their furnishings, their thoughts, their interests, their very souls." It took him "three hours of detailed elucidation," and having concluded this he said: "Ah, but you see what I wanted to really tell you - much later - Arkansas, crossing on train - playing flute - play cards with boys, my dirty deck - won money, blew sweet-patato solo - for sailors" (KEROUAC, 1957).

A few years back he sold encyclopedias in Oakland, and "nobody could turn him down": "He made long speeches, he jumped up and

down, he laughed, he cried." One time he broke into "an Okie house where everybody was getting ready to go to a funeral." He "got down on his knees and prayed for the deliverance of the deceased soul," whereupon all the Okies started crying. He sold a complete set of encyclopedias. He was, indeed, "the maddest guy in the world." He used to get "next to pretty young daughters" and feel them up "in the kitchen." This very afternoon he had "the gonest housewife in her little kitchen" - "arm around her, demonstrating." "Ah! Hmm! Wow!" (KEROUAC, 1957).

He just passed "the tip of Florida" when he went right on with his own tale, how he had started "at nine, with a girl called Milly Mayfair in back of Rod's garage on Grant Street - in Denver," and how his aunt was yelling out the window, "What are you doing down there in back of the garage?" Oh, if he'd only known LuAnne then! Wow! "How sweet" she must have been "at nine." He tittered maniacally; he stuck his finger in her mouth and licked it; he took her hand and rubbed it over himself" (KEROUAC, 1957). From time to time he stopped and started to philosophize about what "a good old wife" must needs be: "Now you see, man, there's real woman for you. Never a harsh word, never a complaint, or modified; her old man can come in any hour of the night with anybody and have talks in the kitchen and drink the beer and leave any old time. This is a man, and that's his castle" (KEROUAC, 1957). And when his old woman is naughty, why shouldn't he discipline her?, like he once or twice did it himself, hitting LuAnne "on the brow on February twenty-sixth at six o'clock in the evening - in fact six-ten," because he remembered he had to make his "hotshot freight in an hour and twenty minutes" (KEROUAC, 1957). He was not to regret it, not one little bit. He had gone crazy over her and spent "months haunting her apartment, where every night she had a different sailor in," and he peeked down "through her snail slot" and "could see her bed." There he saw her "sprawled in the mornings with a boy." He then trailed her "around town," because he wanted absolute proof that she was a whore" (KEROUAC, 1957). A whore she was indeed, and that is why his treatment of her, by his hands, was less than

gentlemanly. Short of gentlemanly was his speech in what she was concerned, as well.

The aforementioned character, extracted from Jack Kerouac's panoply of amphetamine-induced behaviours, could have been extracted from Emil Kraepelin's "manic predispositions" who, although "brilliant, but unevenly gifted personalities with artistic inclinations," charming us by "their intellectual mobility, their versatility, their wealth of ideas, their ready accessibility and their delight in adventure, their artistic capability, their good nature, their sunny mood," put us in "an uncomfortable state of surprise by a certain restlessness, talkativeness, desultoriness in conversation, excessive need for social life, capricious temper and suggestibility, lack of reliability, steadiness, and perseverance in work, a tendency to building castles in the air" (KRAEPELIN, 1976).

Or, he could have been extracted from Karl Jaspers' "euphoric temperaments," to be seen in the "abnormally cheerful" individual who "bubbles over happily," is "blissfully light-hearted about everything that happens to him" and is "contented and confident" while, fond of "extremes" and never loath of "a restless life," reacting "quickly and in a lovely fashion to every kind of influence," lighting up "immediately" while his excitement is dying down "equally fast" (JASPERS, 1949).

Or, he could have been extracted from Hagop Akiskal's "hyperthymic character," cheerful, overly optimistic, more often male than female, talkative, extraverted, self-assured and filled with plans and ideas," needing "little sleep" and possessing "the kind of energy which leaves others gasping," because driven along by "gregariousness, indefatigability, and the ability to handle highly successful situations with relative ease" (AKISKAL, 1992).

Or, he could have been extracted from Eugen Bleuler's manic types, whose thinking is "flighty," while they jump "by by-paths from one subject to another," with their ideas "running along very easily" because of "the more rapid flow of ideas, and especially because of the falling off of inhibitions" (BLEULER, 1924).

Mania and amphetamine consumption are then connected in more than one way. They rely, for a start, on "high levels of energy and

enthusiasm, a tendency to take risks, an underlying restlessness and discontent"; they both are further connected with the artistic personality in "their finely tuned senses, a need to impose order or chaos, and a range and intensity of emotional experiences" common to all these three temperaments (JAMISON 2004).

When elated, actually, the manic-depressives show "greater increased verbal and associative ability"; in a similar manner, when given only a mild dose of amphetamine, the normal subjects "improve on tests of associative fluency," with the amphetamine still lower than mania, however" (WELCH et al., 1946). Extrapolating further, we will conclude that amphetamine consumption and fluency of thinking and speaking is, up to a point, linear (JAMISON, 2004) the more elevated the mood of the consumer, the more fluent and diverse the thinking and speaking. Too much elevation, however, results in fragmented thinking and speaking. Flight of ideas goes hand in hand with pressured speech.

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