CHAPTER IV

Don Quixote's Madness and Modernity

Old Madness and the Sacred

The traditional fate of the fool in general, and the madman in particular, was no better than that of the rogue. In fact, it could be argued that it was much worse. Madness has usually been seen as a more radical form of marginal existence (in the sense of differentiation or distance from the social norm) than roguery. And in premodern society this deeper marginality automatically meant a deeper association with the old sacred. The process of desacralization that brings about modernity had to operate at an even deeper level.

In other words, if it was difficult enough to rescue the literary rogue, the picaro, from its traditional victimizing representation, as we have just seen with the aid of the two contrary approaches of Alemán and Quevedo, it should have been even more difficult to do it with a madman. Cervantes did not have it any easier than either one of the two masters of the picaresque. But he succeeded where they failed. And I would also like to suggest that the fact that he succeeded with a madman rather than with a rogue (that he was

dealing with madness rather than with delinquency or criminality) may itself have meaningful implications worth exploring.

I think that even today it is easier to admit that a rogue is not always, inevitably, a rogue than it is to admit that a madman is not always, inevitably, a madman. Even today, the general view seems to be that madness encompasses the totality of the individual human being more tenaciously, more radically, than roguery or even criminality. In fact, when criminal behavior reaches a certain degree of violent inevitability, we associate it with madness: then we call the criminal a psychopath or a sociopath. In premodern, tradition-bound society, this totalizing character of madness is inseparable from its association with the sacred (indeed, social historians have addressed this association for over a century now). Madness was conceived as something that struck from above or from outside and turned the individual into a special, different kind of human being, a very ambivalent human being. On the one hand, the madman was too dangerous to approach, not only dangerous to individuals, but dangerous to the social body; the madman was a witness to the possibility of a total collapse of the community, a complete breakdown of all cultural differences. On the other hand, the madman was also the carrier of the antidote to that same disease. He held the secret of the defense against that collapsing danger. In other words, the madman was clearly a sacrificial figure. His erratic behavior bore the mark of "the sacrificial crisis," in Girardian terms.

To the best of my knowledge, Anton Zijderveld, a sociologist, has the deepest understanding of the sacrificial character of folly or madness in a primitive community. This is how he describes it:

> [In] his myths and rituals "primitive" man transfers himself to the primeval time prior to history in which he becomes the contemporary of the gods and shares their work of creation. This again throws light on the eerie behaviour of the ceremonial fool: he is the representative of the primeval chaos, the "tohowabohu" which existed prior to the creation of the cosmos. The anarchic behaviour of these ritual clowns demonstrates in a lively manner what the raw material has been, out of which the gods once created the cosmos, the present order—nature, society, culture. It is indeed a regression—a mythic "mimesis" of "illud tempus". . . . Ceremonial folly . . . is a dangerous activity, which can only be executed anonymously [i.e., with masks] and ritually. But it is also a necessary activity. . . . The behaviour of these revolting fools . . . demonstrates, in a vivid and very concrete manner, what would happen to the participants in soci-

ety should they decide to abandon their culture . . . : they would change into cultural protoplasm [i.e., complete undifferentiation], into witless and revolting monsters. (148–49)

Fools and madmen have also been perceived as possessing a particularly penetrating kind of knowledge, even prophetic powers. It is this ambivalent sacred status that keeps the madman, an object of public scorn and derision, a scapegoat figure, also at the center of political and social power, in the role, for example, of the court jester, the double of the prince, a double who, in more primitive times, was literally a sacrificial substitute.

In the history of the Christian world this primitive sacred ambivalence of the madman undergoes a rather peculiar transformation or adaptation; it may become grafted, as it were, onto the idea that the wisdom of God is folly to the world, that the Incarnation is "folly to the Greeks," and more specifically on the Pauline description of the apostles as "fools for Christ's sake":

As I see it, God has put us apostles at the end of the line, like men doomed to die in the arena. We have become a spectacle to the universe, to angels and men alike. We are fools on Christ's account. . . . Up to this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, poorly clad, roughly treated, wandering about homeless. . . . We have become the world's refuse, the scum of all; that is the present state of affairs. (1 Corinthians 4.10–13)

This state of affairs is, of course, not something that Saint Paul appreciates for its own sake. He is not deliberately seeking to be roughly treated or to become "the world's refuse, the scum of all," although he would gladly suffer all of that and more for Christ's sake. But historically, this foolishness for Christ's sake becomes something like a vocation, a special calling, leading to a deliberate decision to become a fool, a madman—something which, in practice, becomes easily confused with the real thing. Reading the accounts of holy fools, it is by no means always easy to separate real madness from its simulated counterpart, for, simulated or not, madness was perceived as a sign of the sacred. The phenomenon was particularly prevalent in those areas where Eastern Christianity flourished, but it was also present in other parts of the Christian world, like Ireland. In Russia these holy fools occur as late as the sixteenth century. In the words of John Saward,

The greatest era of the *yurodivye*—fools for Christ—in Russia is the sixteenth century. Nearly all travellers to Muscovy at this time mention them, including the Englishman, Giles Fletcher, who wrote as follows:

> They have certain hermits, whom they call holy men, that are like gymnosophists for their life and behaviour. . . . They use to go stark naked save a clout about the middle, with their hair hanging long and wildly about their shoulders, and many of them with an iron collar or chain around their necks or midst, even in the very extreme of winter. These they take as prophets and men of great holiness, giving them a liberty to speak what they list without any controlment, though it be of the very highest himself. So that if he reprove any openly, in what sort soever, they answer nothing, but that it is *po graecum*, that is, for their sins. (23)

"*Giving them a liberty to speak what they list without any controlment.*" What reader familiar with Cervantes's *Exemplary Novels* would not think of *El licenciado vidriera* when reading this passage about the Russian fools? And yet there is a fundamental difference. Tomás Rodaja, the Licenciado Vidriera, is not presented to us as a holy man. Even though people flock to him to hear his wise and witty pronouncements, there is nothing sacred about him or his wisdom. The ironic narrator makes us ponder why nobody pays attention to this wise man once he has been cured of his madness. The reader is left wondering about the reason why people would listen to a madman and not to a sane person. Clearly, the sacred halo has worn out, or lost its meaning, for the question remains hanging in the air without an answer.

But the fact that the question comes up is in itself significant. It means that, historically speaking, Cervantes is still close to a very old view of madness, but one that is rapidly changing into something else, something new, as it loses its old association with the sacred and increasingly portrays its object, madness, as strictly human.[1] The case of the Licenciado Vidriera is by no means the only one in which we clearly see the new as it emerges from the old. Think, for example, of the image of mad Cardenio as we first meet him in the wild reaches of the Sierra Morena mountains. He is "half-naked," "his

1. Is Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* not indebted as well to the old ambivalence? According to Willeford, "Erasmus's notion of madness as folly, and as a blessing, is crucial to his whole enterprise of ironic praise. The notion entails a rhetorical trick that complements that by which he has banished the dangers of madness: having convinced us of the blessing of madness, he plays with the various senses in which this blessing may be understood. Sometimes, for example, he regards such madness, satirically, as equivalent to vanity and self-delusion; and at other times he regards it as analogous to a transformation of consciousness that would allow us to see things more truly. And, quite generally, he is at pains to keep us from knowing for certain in what sense he is, at a given moment, praising folly. As a result of these pains, and despite the subtle logic of his ironies, we feel that in the *Praise of Folly* madness is a unitary and contagious force, as it was in folk belief" (25).

legs and feet bare; . . . his thighs . . . clad in a pair of breeches . . . so tattered that in many places his skin showed through"; he is very swift, "leaping from rock to rock and from bush to bush with extraordinary agility"; "his hair long and tangled." Shortly thereafter the old goatherd will tell Don Quixote and Sancho how the wild young man took the goatherds' food by force and "ran into the mountains at an amazing speed," and how "several of our herdsmen spent almost two days looking for him in the roughest part of this mountain, and finally found him hiding in the hollow of a huge cork-tree."

The different elements that form this image of mad Cardenio have all been identified by Ó Riain as typical structural components of madness in the sagas of the *gelta*, or Irish holy mad- or wild men. Saward, who wants to show the similarity between the Irish holy madmen and their Eastern counterparts, quotes Ó Riain as follows:

> In order to facilitate our comparison with the Eastern evidence it will be useful to reproduce Professor Ó Riain's list of the structural components of madness in the sagas of the *gelta*.
>
> (A) THE OCCASIONS OF MADNESS: (i) the curse of a sacerdos; (ii) a battlefield experience; (iii) *consumption of contaminated food or drink* [applicable to the Licenciado Vidriera]; (iv) *the loss of a lover*.
>
> (B) THE STATE OF MADNESS: The madman (i) *takes to the wilderness*; (ii) *perches on trees*; (iii) collects firewood; (iv) *is naked, hairy*, covered with feathers or *clothed with rags*; (v) *leaps* and/or levitates; (vi) *is very swift*; (vii) *is restless and travels great distances*; (viii) *experiences hallucinations*; (ix) has a special diet.
>
> (C) THE OCCASIONS OF RESTORATION TO SANITY: (i) *intervention of a sacerdos* [I do not think the intervention of the priest qualifies, in the case of Cardenio, but it does, up to a point, in the case of the Licenciado]; (ii) consumption of blessed food or drink; (iii) the act of coition. (40–41)

Saward adds the following comment after quoting Ó Riain: "In section (A), while madness in the East does not follow a curse, it usually follows self-accusation or conviction of sin; folly for Christ's sake has a strong penitential aspect." Here I can do no better than to repeat Cardenio's explanation to the herdsmen when he met them during one of his tranquil periods: "He greeted us courteously, and in a few polite words begged us not to be surprised to see him wandering about in that state; for he had to do so to fulfill a certain penance which had been laid on him for his many sins." And, of course, we should not forget that this is the occasion for Don Quixote's sudden decision

to do penance for his lady Dulcinea in imitation of Amadís, and also to turn mad in imitation of Roland.

Desacralization of Madness

But, once again, in spite of the formal similarities, there is nothing sacred or holy about mad Cardenio. He does not inspire awe or reverence, only pity and compassion. The herdsmen are only trying to do something for his own good, to help him, and, if they can, to take him to the nearest town where someone can try to cure him. It would be absurd to imagine that, for example, he could perform miracles. Cardenio's madness is a sad and strictly human affair.

This desacralization of madness is happening almost everywhere in the Christian West by the second half of the sixteenth century. It would take a little longer in the East. According to Saward, "[T]he last Russian fool for Christ's sake was canonized in the seventeenth century. After this period the fool became suspect not only during his lifetime but also after his death; not even the cultus of the *yurodivye* was sufficient for the Church to admit another subversive to the ranks of the blessed" (23).

It is important to realize that the old view of madness became suspect to Christian minds of all persuasions (Catholic and Protestant alike, as well as Eastern Orthodox) specifically and explicitly because of its underlying and profound association with the pre-Christian or non-Christian sacred. The Christian Church knew that "throughout the Middle Ages, folly functioned as a disguise for ancient forms of magical paganism" (Zijderveld, 40). But the Church could not just ban madness, or declare it a dangerous fiction, as the Church tried to do in the case of the theater, which was also accused of having pagan sacrificial origins.

What happens, then, to the old view when it becomes desacralized? The threat of a catastrophically contagious spread and violent collapse is still there. What has disappeared is the good, or, rather, the remedial, side of the violence, the foundational function and meaning of the catastrophic crisis. That violence, that crisis, is now bad and only bad. It does not have God's approval. Therefore, it is no longer sacred. The Christian God does not emerge from, and thereby sanctify, such violence. But if God is not behind the crisis, the crisis itself loses its ultimate inevitability. It is no longer the last word.

Furthermore, if it does not have God's approval, the crisis does not have to be—or, at the very least, there has to be some way to avoid it, or to minimize it, or to get out of it. In this sense, the fact that such catastrophic violence has no redeeming qualities whatsoever (because God is not in it) must have produced an extraordinary sense of relief.

In other words, desacralization in no way minimizes or hides the danger posed by madness. Quite the opposite, it allows its evil and destructive power to come into view like never before. And the danger, as we just saw, is not only to the individual human mind, but to society as a whole. The final collective crisis, which had always lurked behind the old view of madness, is still there, although now transformed into a purely man-made catastrophe. The spectacle of the individual madman is not only still capable of triggering the fear of an apocalyptic breakdown, it can do it now with unprecedented clarity, because the veil of the sacred has been removed from it.

Michel Foucault has noticed this apocalyptic conception of madness in the transition from the Middle Ages to what he calls the "Classical Age." He describes it as "tragic" or "cosmic":

> Le thème de la fin du monde, de la grande violence finale n'est pas étranger à l'expérience critique de la folie telle qu'elle est formulée dans la litterature. Ronsard évoque ces temps ultimes qui se débattent dans le grand vide de la raison:
>
> Au ciel est revolée et Justice et Raison,
> et en leur place, hélas, règne le brigandage,
> la haine, la rancoeur, le sang et le carnage.
>
> Vers la fin du poème de Brant [*Das Narrenschiff*, or *The Ship of Fools*, 1494], un chapitre tout entier est consacré au thème apocaliptique de l'Antechrist: une immense tempête emporte le navire des fous dans une course insensée qui s'identifie à la catastrophe des mondes. (32–33)
>
> (The theme of the end of the world, of the great final violence, is not alien to the critical experience of folly such as it is formulated in literature. Ronsard evokes those final times that rage inside a great void of reason:
>
> Justice and Reason have flown back to heaven,
> And in their place, alas, there reign brigandage,
> Hatred, rancor, blood, and carnage.
>
> Toward the end of Brant's poem an entire chapter is devoted to the apocalyptic theme of the Antichrist: an immense storm carries the ship of fools on a senseless course, which is identified as a universal collapse.)

Indeed, Foucault thinks that both Cervantes and Shakespeare are still witnesses to this cosmic conception of madness:

Et sans doute, sont ils, l'un et l'autre [Cervantes et Shakespeare], plus encore les témoins d'une expérience tragique de la Folie née au XVe siècle, que ceux d'une expérience critique et morale de la Déraison qui se développe pourtant à leur propre époque. Par-déla le temps, il renouent avec un sens qui est en train de disparaître, et dont la continuité ne se poursuivra plus que dans la nuit. (47)

(Doubtless, both [Cervantes and Shakespeare] testify more to a tragic experience of madness appearing in the fifteenth century, than to a critical and moral experience of Unreason developing in their own epoch. Outside of time, they establish a link with a meaning about to be lost, and whose continuity will no longer survive except in darkness.)

I think he is basically right, even though there is nothing "fascinating" about this "cosmic" experience of madness in Cervantes or Shakespeare, in the sense in which Foucault also says that, in the fifteenth century "la folie fascine l'homme." If this fascination may have been true in the fifteenth century, that is no longer the case for Cervantes or Shakespeare. But in reading Ronsard's verses, one cannot help but think of Cardenio's sonnet in Sierra Morena:

> Santa amistad, que con ligeras alas,
> tu apariencia quedándose en el suelo,
> entre benditas almas en el cielo
> subiste alegre a las impíreas salas:
> . . . .
> Deja el cielo, ¡oh amistad!, o no permitas
> que el engaño se vista tu librea,
> con que destruye la intención sincera;
>
> que si tus apariencias no le quitas,
> presto ha de verse el mundo en la pelea
> de la discorde confusión primera.
>
> (1.27.303)
>
> (O holy friendship that with nimble wing,
> thy semblance leaving here on earth below,
> with blessed souls in heaven communing,
> up to the empyrean halls dost go,
> . . . .

> Leave heaven, friendship, or do not permit
> deceit to wear thy robes,
> with which it destroys an earnest will,
>
> For if you do not take your semblance from deceit,
> the world will soon return to the violence
> of its primeval chaotic confusion.)

As "holy friendship" ascends to its blessed place in heaven, it leaves below only its appearance, a fraudulent friendship that looks like the real one. It is this deceiving appearance, rather than an absence of friendship—an empty space that could be easily detected—that causes, in the words of Cervantes, "la pelea de la discorde confusión primera." But, clearly, the living sign of such violent confusion, through which the world would regress to its primeval chaos, is the dark and violent madness of Cardenio, at the root of which is something all too human, the story of a deceitful friendship. And let us keep in mind the explicit and deliberate connection Cervantes establishes between the furious madness of Cardenio and the laughable, imitative madness of Don Quixote. We laugh at Don Quixote, but beyond the literary madness of the Manchegan knight, the figure of furious Cardenio looms like an ultimate and devastating horizon, an apocalyptic possibility.

What Cervantes sees in the madman, therefore, is an anticipation, an individual sample, of what can easily spread, like a public scandal, to the entire community and threaten its very existence. There is no fundamental difference here between the nature of the threat posed by madness to the individual mind and to the community, between individual insanity and collective insanity. From this "tragic" or "cosmic" perspective, it could be said that individual insanity is fundamentally the individual experience of a collective crisis.

The Modernity of the Newly Desacralized View

As it turns out, this desacralized "cosmic" view may actually be, in some respects, more modern or anticipatory than we might have imagined. "Emergent madness is a collective event lived in solitude," says Henri Grivois (1999, 120), head of psychiatry at Paris Municipal Hospital (Hôtel-Dieu); "to be mad is not only the feeling of being uniquely in contact with all humanity, whether

as alienated from it or as uniting all of it in oneself. . . . It is [also] to infer that one occupies a unique place in the human world. It is the feeling of being encircled by everyone" (1999, 105). No wonder he calls emergent or nascent psychosis elsewhere "un mythe sacrificiel" (a sacrificial myth) (2001, 177).

Today there can be no doubt about the interindividual roots of madness. "The place where madness is born . . . is also the place where we all live together" (Grivois, 1999, 117):

> Patients admit the interpersonal origin of their travail. It is even the single point they never question. They feel a tacit participation of others in the most secret part of themselves . . . they hesitate to attribute to themselves alone what they do and think, while what happens around them seems to be entirely dependent on themselves. While at the same time being dictated by others, guided, carried, curbed by the movement of the world, patients have also the feeling of directing it, in a spiral without end or beginning. (Grivois, 1999, 107)

Of course, it is madness to see oneself as the center of a world in which everybody conspires against one, and in which everything also depends on one; a world in which one's self is both annihilated and placed at the center of everything. But, as Grivois suggests, that does not mean that such an individual maddening experience is totally devoid of all referential value, that it refers to nothing at all beyond itself, or to nothing that makes any sense whatsoever. For the structure of this maddening experience of the individual appears to reproduce the basic structure of the collective insanity that moves the victimizing crowd to transfer onto its random victim the responsibility for everything. If these observations of modern psychiatry are correct, then the voice of the madman echoes the collective, undifferentiated voice of the victimizing crowd.[2] He sees himself just as that uniform and unanimous crowd sees him. And his experience includes the anguished feeling of not having a voice of his own, of not being able to say "I" with enough confidence that it is he indeed who says it. Perhaps this, or an anticipation of this, is what Quevedo might have discovered in his picaro, so lacking in selfhood, as we have just seen, so desperate to join the crowd, if Quevedo had first discovered the

2. "[L]a foule de la psychose . . . 'est tout sauf une société, ne serait-ce que du fait de son illimitation et de son absence totale de différenciation'" (Grivois, *Le fou et la mouvement du monde*, 129). The quote within the quote is from *Mécanismes mentaux, mécanismes sociaux. De la psychose à la panique*, ed. H. Grivois et J.-P. Dupuy, 9–10.

madness of that victimizing and folkloric crowd that he so willingly joined. The point is that there seems to be enough clinical evidence to suggest that the desacralized, though "tragic" or "cosmic," view of madness that contemplates the possibility of a catastrophic expansion of madness beyond the individual is far from arbitrary, is more than purely poetic hyperbole.

Maybe now we can understand better what it meant for Cervantes to break with the crowd, to save the madman from his immemorial fate. It was not only an act of compassion—which indeed it was—but also a revolutionary change in perspective, in focus: from public danger to individualized danger. Madness, that old threat of veiled and disturbing origin, capable of driving human society to a state of violent "primeval confusion," became more directly, more urgently, focused now on the individual human being, the one to be saved; the one, that is to say, seen precisely at the center of that "primeval confusion," toward whom all fingers used to point as the carrier of the threat—that same one toward which all eyes also turned in awe, in reverential fear. If Cervantes could see the "primeval confusion," the victimizing crowd in panic, through the individual madness of Cardenio, he could also see the situation in reverse: he could see the individual breakdown beyond the "primeval confusion." Such confusion, the sway of the crowd in panic, was not enough to block his view of the individual human being, the individual madman, who was both a victim of the crowd and a member of it. The violence of the "primeval chaotic confusion" became more than the collective image of the immemorial fear of an origin lost in time. It became present as an individual state of mind: the state of mind of the madman. And by turning his attention to the cure of the individual, Cervantes also made a first step toward curing the community of its old sacred fear, the cause of its own sacrificial madness, the collective violent confusion that demanded the expulsion of the mad victim.

Inevitably the madman, desacralized, ceased to be a monolithic embodiment of madness, all mad and nothing but mad, and therefore with nothing to be saved in him. Genuine compassion (not prescribed, not ritual, not cathartic) for the victim of the multitude does not see the madman as all mad, as all of one piece. Instead, it sees him as worth saving. Furthermore, that which is worth saving in him is precisely what the violent "confusion" of madness threatens with destruction: his individuality, his singular self. That is to say, compassion grants him distinctness, singularity, selfhood, while

madness threatens to turn him, from inside himself, into what the multitude, driven by the sacred fear of collective madness, sees when it looks at him, namely, a sacrificial projection, an embodiment, of its own collective insanity. Therefore, from the point of view of genuine compassion, the old sacrificial equation was turned around: the carrier of the threat of madness was not the individual human being as such, as a singular self, but the multitude, the mimetic crowd, insofar as it is constituted of and driven by the old fear of the collective crisis, the apocalyptic breakdown. The madman, in his madness, succumbs to that old and sacred fear, to the spirit of the sacrificial multitude, the spirit of Satan. He joins the crowd against himself.

Don Quixote, "Mad in Patches," *Un Entreverado Loco*

At the beginning of the novel Cervantes tells us that Alonso Quijano "had utterly wrecked his reason" (*rematado ya su juicio*). But very soon we find out that that is certainly not the case. Had that been the case, the novel *Don Quixote* would have been impossible to write. A Don Quixote who was conceived as already completely mad when the book began would have only produced something like Avellaneda's novel, as we saw already, or nothing at all, if his madness were something like the furious madness that took hold of Cardenio. You cannot build a work of art on the basis of such madness. We should remember that, after a while, Cervantes had to drop the all-embracing fury of Cardenio's madness in order to be able to keep him in the novel as a meaningful character. Likewise he will simply ignore that initial statement about Don Quixote, who will, in fact, turn out to be *un entreverado loco*, a madman in patches or streaks, with many lucid intervals, as Don Diego de Miranda's son told his father.

Don Quixote is mad, but not totally so, and therefore not hopelessly or inevitably mad. It was undoubtedly a stroke of artistic genius on Cervantes's part to conceive him in this manner. As I just said, total madness would have meant the complete miscarriage of *Don Quixote*'s literary modernity. But it is equally doubtless that the idea of a partial or incomplete madness is essential to a desacralized and compassionate view of the madman, a view fundamentally interested in the possibility of saving him from his madness—a view, that is, fostered by the desacralizing process that rescues the social victim from his immemorial fate.

Thus if these two things go together, the artistic genius of the novelist and his interest in saving the madman from his madness, it should come as no surprise to learn that a similar change in the historical view of madness, from total to partial, should characterize the first scientific efforts to study madness with a view to cure it. Modern literature and modern psychiatry are not the same thing. But I believe it is most revealing to see that the same historical process that was at work in the development of one was also at work in the development of the other.

Speaking of one of the founders of modern psychiatry, Philippe Pinel (1745–1826), and of his *Traité médico-philosophique sur l'aliénation mentale ou la manie* (1801), Gladys Swain wrote the following:

> Cést une *dimension réflechie*, pourrait-on dire, que Pinel introduit dans la folie: pas de pleine coïncidence de l'aliéné avec lui-même au sein de l'aliénation, mais un rapport de soi à soi maintenu en dépit de la menace de son annulation présente comme horizon de l'aliénation. Et les implications d'un tel déplacement de la problématique doivent être soulignées. Ainsi sont rendus dès lors virtuellement pensables le *conflit* interne en jeu dans l'aliénation et l'aliénation elle-même comme manifestation d'un conflit. Qu'est-ce qui transparait en effet au travers de cette tension mettant l'être subjectif en question, sinon cette singulière capacité d'essence du sujet à se porter contre lui-même, seulement poussée à son paroxisme dans l'aliénation?
>
> Autant que l'aliéné est concu comme enfermé totalement dans son état, rien de plus est discernable dans ses actes et ses propos que la pure extériorisation d'un dérèglement, échappant par définition à la sphère du sens. (85–86; emphasis in the original)

> (Pinel introduced what we might call a *reflective dimension* in [the concept of] madness: the alienated [subject] does not fully coincide with himself within his alienation. A relationship is maintained from himself to himself in spite of a threat of collapse, which is made present as alienation's own horizon. And the implications of such a displacement in the approach to alienation ought to be emphasized. Because now it becomes possible to think of the internal conflict at stake in alienation, as well as to think of alienation itself as the manifestation of a conflict. What is it that actually transpires through this tension that questions the subjective being but this singular essential capacity of the subject to drive himself against himself, only pushed to its limits in alienation?
>
> As long as the alienated is conceived as totally enclosed within his condition, nothing can be discerned in his acts and intentions but the pure exteriorization of a derangement, which by definition escapes the sphere of sense.)

Quite clearly, for this modern psychiatrist and historian, the fundamental change in the conception of madness that allowed for the possibility of a new and scientific conception of mental alienation occurred when madness was no longer seen as a monolithic entity:

C'est sur une idée quant à l'être de la folie . . . que s'est fondée la connaissance [moderne] de la folie; c'est autour de cette idée et à sa poursuite que s'est jouée son histoire. *Elle surgit dans l'ouvrage de Pinel avec la critique de l'idée d'une folie complète.* L'aliénation mentale n'est jamais totale: l'aliéné conserve toujours une distance à son aliénation. (22; my emphasis)

(It is on the basis of an idea about what madness is . . . that modern understanding of madness is built; the history of this understanding is tied to this idea and its development. *It appeared for the first time in the work of Pinel with the critique of the notion of total madness.* Mental alienation is never total: the alienated always keeps a distance from his alienation.)

She brings none other than Hegel's testimony in support of her discovery concerning Pinel's fundamental contribution. According to Hegel, Swain avers,

[Avoir] découvert ce reste de raison dans les aliénés et dans les maniaques, l'y avoir découvert comme contenant le principe de leur guérison . . . c'est là un titre qui appartient surtout à Pinel, dont l'écrit sur cette matière doit être consideré comme le meilleur qu'on possède. (39–40)

(The discovery of this remnant of reason in the insane and the maniacs, and to have discovered it as holding the principle of their cure . . . that is a title that belongs above all to Pinel, whose writing on this matter ought to be considered the best we have.)

The conceptual centrality and the historical relevance of this new critique of the old idea of "complete madness" can hardly be exaggerated. But Swain wants equally to emphasize its profound originality, its radically unprecedented character:

[Ce] qu'il importe . . . de souligner, c'est le lien intime du fait psychiatrique tel qu'il se met en place à la charnière des XVIII^{e} et XIX^{e} siécles, et de ce qui constitue l'originalité profonde de la societé qui advient alors: sa capacité à se penser sans garant dans l'au-delà et à se justifier dans son organisation sans recours au sacré. Ce qui émerge à ce tournant comme conditions nouvelles d'abord de la folie émerge sous le coup d'une rupture sans précédent dans l'histoire humaine et au sein d'une société radicalement distincte de toutes celles qui l'ont précédée. (52)

(What must be emphasized is the intimate connection between the psychiatric event such as it occurs at the turn of the century from the 18th to the 19th, and that which constitutes the profound originality of the society that emerges at that time: its capacity to view itself without warranty from the world beyond, to justify itself within its own organization without recourse to the sacred. What emerges at that time as the new conditions of madness does so under the impulse of a break without precedent in human history and inside a society radically different from all those that preceded it.)

In other words, the crisis of the old idea of "complete madness" is intimately tied to a profound process of desacralization undergone by European society—tied, therefore, to the emergence of a type of society "without precedent in human history." Swain explains what she means by a "desacralized society" ("une société qui cesse de se mirer dans son Autre pour se voir"; a society where "l'univers sensible n'est plus censé être habité par une virtuelle et permanente manifestation de l'au-delà."), but she is not very precise about when and how such a totally unprecedented society could have come about. In spite of the historical proximity of Pinel's treatise to the French Revolution, she is careful not to put much emphasis on this order of events. The French Revolution serves only as "a convenient benchmark" ("un repère commode").

Nevertheless, we learn that when that "liminal experience of the Other within oneself," which, according to Swain, is madness ("cette expérience-limite de l'Autre en soi-même qu'est la folie") becomes separated, disengaged, from the experience of the sacred, as the absolute Other ("Dieu créateur et législateur suprême," "l'invisible," "l'ailleurs"), that is to say, when the other becomes human and only human, the door is open for the establishment of the therapeutic relationship between physician and patient, which will form the basis for the medical treatment of alienation. Even though, in order to be properly therapeutic, the relationship must go beyond the purely medical, because it is a relationship that, while demanding the traditional authority of the medical doctor, requires that he or she not act as one. "[La demande] naît dans la relation médicale; elle ne peut viser sa satisfaction que dans une relation qui soit le contraire de la relation medicale" (56). One would be tempted to say that what the alienated patient demands is the kind of human relationship that he or she finds very difficult to maintain. At any rate, it seems perfectly clear that the desacralization of madness not only revealed an internal conflict, a subject divided against itself, but also a fundamental crisis in the very structure of intersubjective, or interindividual,

relationships, a subject in conflict with the human other. And, as we already saw in Grivois, the individual crisis cannot be separated from the interindividual one: the conflict with the other and with oneself are two aspects of the same phenomenon.

Swain's insistence on the radical novelty of this new conception of madness, and of the social context in which it happens, is truly amazing. This revolution in thinking is a break not only with what immediately preceded it, but with the way humanity had conceived itself from the beginning (". . . brisant bien plus qu'avec ce qui précédait immédiatement: avec la façon dont l'humanité s'est pensée depuis ses origines . . ."; 51). And she knows, of course, that, in this regard, her view is totally opposed to that of Michel Foucault in his *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, whose interpretation—she admits—is "la plus forte, à la fois la plus nourrie et la plus subtile, la plus étayée et la plus réfléchie qui ait été donnée du destin social de la folie dans l'Occident moderne et du sort qui lui a réservée la pensée médicale" (29; the strongest, both the most fulfilling and the most subtle, the most expansive and the most reflexive that has ever been given of the social history of madness in the modern West, and of the role that medical thinking has assigned to it). It is opposed to Foucault, because, in Foucault's view, nothing fundamental happened with Pinel and his disciple Esquirol at the turn of the century from the eighteenth to the nineteenth. The scientific objectivity of the psychiatric domain was, in his view, a direct result of the social and epistemological expulsion of madness that occurred *à l'âge classique* more than a century before, as Swain recognizes ("pour Foucault . . . le foyer du sens est en l'occurrence du côté de ce geste originel d'exclusion où s'est décidé pour toute une époque le destin de la folie"; 30; for Foucault . . . what is really meaningful in this case has to do with that original gesture of exclusion that decided for a whole epoch the destiny of madness). Swain thinks Foucault is an excellent example of how difficult it is at times to perceive the novelty of a given historical development.

But there is much more to it than that. It is not simply that Foucault seems to be incapable of perceiving the radical novelty of the new critique of the old notion of total madness, what we must understand (and I am not sure that Swain herself does) is that Foucault's discovery of the historical expulsion of madness to the margins of society is itself inseparable from the old notion of total madness. The crisis of that old notion, and the crisis of the logic

that drives the expulsion, are one and the same. The revolutionary novelty of which Swain speaks occurs precisely at the expense of the logic of expulsion. Therefore, if the old notion, in one way or another, had always been part of the way humanity had taken account of itself from its very beginning, then the expulsion was also there, in one way or another, from that same beginning. And my argument is, of course, that what is really at stake in the desacralization perceived by Swain is precisely the social and mental mechanism of expulsion. That is the mechanism that ceases to be anchored in the sacred and, as a result, loses its ultimate justification, thereby forcing the members of the new society to become aware of its ultimate arbitrariness. The vision of those alienated human beings, many of them chained to a wall, locked up for life, becomes increasingly intolerable.

Swain laments the fact that the famous story about Philippe Pinel liberating the insane from their chains at Bicêtre (which she proves never really happened) has taken precedence over his theoretical accomplishment, that is to say, the development of the idea that alienation is never total (47). However, there is a profound historical logic in the process that grants precedence to the liberating gesture over the theoretical or ideological accomplishment. Because the liberation, a direct manifestation of the desacralizing of the mechanism of expulsion, is indeed the basis for the development of the new idea of mental alienation, and not the other way around.

On his part, Foucault is well aware that the mechanism of expulsion that he discovers operates at the most basic level in the constitution of human society. The gesture that expels madness and the madman is one of those "obscure" gestures—he tells us—whereby a human culture constitutes itself by expelling something, which becomes, in the eyes of that culture, the "Outside":

> On pourrait faire une histoire des *limites*—de ces gestes obscurs, nécessairement oubliés dès qu'accomplis, par lesquels une culture rejette quelque chose qui sera pour elle l'Exterieur; et tout au long de son histoire, ce vide creusé, cet espace blanc par lequel elle s'isole, la désigne tout autant que ses valeurs. Car ses valeurs, elle les reçoit, et les maintient dans la continuité de l'histoire; mais en cette région dont nous voulons parler, elle exerce ses choix essentiels, elle fait le partage qui lui donne le visage de sa positivité; là se trouve l'épaisseur originaire où elle se forme. Interroger une culture sur ses expériences-limites, c'est la questionner aux confins de l'histoire, sur un déchirement qui est comme la naissance même de son histoire. (iv)

(It would be possible to write a history of *limits or margins*, of those obscure gestures, necessarily forgotten as soon as they are made, whereby a culture rejects something that will become the Outside. All along its history, this void it has dug out, this blank space by which it isolates itself, identifies it as much as its [cultural] values. Because the culture receives its values and maintains them within the continuity of its history. But in this region of which we want to speak, the culture makes its essential choices, creates the separation that gives it the face of its identity; there lies the original density where it forms itself. To question a culture about its limit experiences is to question it at the margins of its history, about a tearing apart that is like the birth itself of its history.)

The problem is that, for Foucault, at that deep level where those culture-creating "obscure gestures" of expulsion operate, nothing fundamental ever happened, at least not in the history of the West. The expulsion of the madman that, in his view, characterizes the end of the Middle Ages simply substitutes the madman for the leper of the previous era. In other words, there have been changes in the way Western society has justified to itself its expulsion of madness, and these changes have produced certain cultural by-products, and even beneficial side effects. But no change at all has occurred in the fundamental operation of the mechanism of expulsion itself.

One of the purely modal changes, to which we will return in a moment, occurs *à l'âge classique*, that is, from the end of the sixteenth century through the seventeenth century. At that time, it looks "as if madness had been *desacralized*" ("la folie, aux XVII[e] siècle, est comme desacralisée"; 76). What Foucault calls the "tragic" character of madness disappears, and the old madness becomes *déraison*, unreason. It is as such, as unreason, that the classical age, the Age of Reason, expels madness. But it does not quite expel it in the old way, by throwing it out of the city, where, half-hidden from view, it roams unchecked, and from where it continues to haunt the consciousness of the city. Instead, it builds a wall around it. This is the age of "the great confinement":

L'internement détache la déraison, l'isole des ces paysages dans lesquels elle était toujours présente et en même temps esquivée. . . . Par ce seul mouvement de l'internement, la déraison se trouve dégagée. . . . Et la voilà par conséquent, *localisée*; mais dégagée aussi de ses ambiguïtés dialectiques et dans cette mesure-là cernée dans sa *présence concrète*. Le recul nécessaire est pris maintenant pour qu'elle devienne objet de perception. (127)

(Confinement segregates unreason, isolates it from those landscapes where it was always present and at the same time avoided. . . . By this movement of confinement alone unreason finds itself detached. . . . And therefore there it is, *localized*; but detached also from its dialectical ambiguities, and to that same extent contemplated in its *concrete presence*. A necessary retreat is now taken so that unreason may become an object of perception.)

It is as such, desacralized, reduced to silence, as pure "object of perception," that madness, having now become "unreason," will develop, according to Foucault, into a scientific object. This means that psychiatric science has no right to proclaim itself the liberator of the old madman, as if it were innocent of any participation in the old expulsion, because it owes its very existence to the most recent manifestation of that expulsion, "the great confinement."

S'il est vrai que l'internement circonscrit l'aire d'une objectivité possible, c'est dans un domaine déjà affecté des valeurs négatives du bannissement. L'objectivité est devenue la patrie de la déraison, mais comme un châtiment. Quant à ceux qui proffesent que la folie n'est tombée sur le regard enfin sereinement scientifique du psychiatre, qu'une fois libérée des vieilles participations religieuses et éthiques dans lesquelles le Moyen Age l'avait prise, il n'est faut pas cesser de les ramener à ce moment décisif où la déraison a pris ses mésures d'objet, en partant pour cet exil où pendant des siècles elle est demeurée muette; il ne faut pas cesser de leur remettre sous les yeux cette faute originelle, et faire revivre pour eux l'obscure condamnation qui seule leur a permis de tenir sur la déraison, enfin reduite aux silence, des discours dont la neutralité est à la mesure de leur puissance d'oubli. (129)

(If it is true that confinement circumscribes the area of a possible objectivity, it is within a domain already touched by the negative values of the expulsion. Objectivity has become the fatherland of unreason, but as a punishment. With regard to those who believe that madness did not come within the purview finally serene and scientific of the psychiatrist, until it was liberated from the old religious and ethical attachments in which the Middle Ages had placed it, one must continue to bring them to that decisive moment when unreason took on its objective measures, by departing for that exile where it has remained mute for centuries; one must continue to place before their eyes that original fault, and revive for them the dark condemnation that alone made it possible for them to have with regard to unreason, finally reduced to silence, a discourse the neutrality of which was a measure of their capacity to forget.)

Fundamentally, therefore, nothing has changed. The new scientific detachment is still the direct heir of the entire history of expulsion:

Elle s'instaure dans un mouvement de proscription qui rappelle, qui réitère même celui par lequel les lépreux furent chassés de la communauté médiévale. (129)

(It installs itself within a movement of proscription which recalls, which even reiterates, the one by which the lepers were chased from the medieval community.)

To be sure, if the new science were nothing but that, pure detachment, cold objectivity, Foucault would be right. But is it, really? Historically speaking, it is impossible to separate the development of the new scientific way of looking at madness from the long sustained efforts to liberate the madman, to soften his isolation, to recover and strengthen his basic humanity. In other words, it is impossible to separate the birth of the new science from the modern accelerated erosion of the expulsion mechanism.

Gladys Swain is much more sensitive than Foucault to the connection between the new science and the liberating movement, which she explicitly links to the desacralization of the new society, as we have just seen. But she does not go far enough in her critique of Foucault's blindness. In the end, the desacralizing change that she sees at work in the development of the new science is still essentially ideological: society, somehow, changes its idea of the Other, of that which is other to it; somehow it stops believing in the sacred character of otherness and, as a result, it can see the existential otherness in the experience of madness as a purely human phenomenon. To which Foucault could rightly respond that such an ideological change in the perception of otherness is in no way an argument against the existence or the effectiveness of the social expulsion of madness. Isn't the expulsion itself a mechanism for the creation of otherness? Why does Swain assume that desacralization of the Other would change anything fundamental, and, in particular, why would it stop or interfere with the logic of the expulsion? I think that Swain's text provides an inadequate answer to these questions because she never demonstrates any fundamental connection between the sacred and the expulsion.

In other words, nothing of a purely theoretical or ideological character would touch the core of the social and cultural expulsion of which Foucault speaks. I think he could always maintain the historical priority of the expulsion over theory or ideology. He might even claim priority for the expulsion over the sacred itself, although in that case he would have to explain the connection between the two, just as he does in the case of theory and ideology.

But for that he would need a theory of the sacred, which he does not have.

But, in a sense, all this is beside the point. It is certainly not my intention to engage in a full-fledged critique of Foucault's view of history. The fact is that while it is true that "[o]ne could make a history of limits, of those obscure gestures, by which a culture expels something, which becomes the Outside," one can also write a history of the eventual erosion of all such "limits." As Foucault knows better than most, the history of those expelling gestures is a history of fear. But it is also possible to write a history of hope.

Take, for example, the expulsion of madness in the form of the "great [classical] confinement," which Foucault considers the historical and epistemological ground on which modern psychiatry rests. Let us assume that he is right, that there would have been no scientific objectivity in regard to madness, or "alienation," without this expulsion. Still, not even Foucault can hide the fact that the new science of the troubled mind has contributed in a very significant way to undermine the inhumanity of the expulsion, and therefore to liberate both society and its alienated members from all kinds of fearful taboos. For the new scientist not only sees the object of his study, human alienation, much more clearly, he also sees the suffering of the alienated human being with the same degree of additional clarity. So, even if he is right, we must ask, what has prevailed in the end, the logic of the expulsion—rooted in fear—or its opposite? From the point of view of the "confined" madman, the answer is not in doubt. Therefore, if Foucault is right, if it was the "great confinement" that made the new science possible, that means that even the expulsion can be made to work against itself, that even its victories can be ultimately placed in the service of its enemy. For the real enemy of the expulsion of madness, the one who bears witness against it, is not Nietzsche or Artaud, but the spirit of hope.

Even though he is right when he detects in Cervantes a "cosmic" sense of madness, Foucault does not understand the hopeful intention that drives Cervantes's novel. Even though Cervantes is in full agreement with his age that the roots of madness lie in a defect of the will rather than of the rational faculty ("[À]l'âge classique] c'est dans la qualité de la volonté, et non dans l'intégrité de la raison, que réside finalement le secret de la folie"; Foucault, 168), he is no witness to the spirit of expulsion that, according to Foucault, leads to the classical modality of the "great confinement." Nor is this defect of the will necessarily associated with "evil intention" or "wickedness" in

Cervantes's view, even though Foucault is still largely right in his appreciation of the difference between the medieval conception of madness, in which it is linked to mythical or imaginary forms of evil, and that of the age of Cervantes and Shakespeare, in which madness still "communicates with [Evil] through the more secret channels of individual choice and evil intention" (168; communique avec [le Mal] par les voies plus secrètes du choix individuel et de l'intention mauvaise).

One of the things Cervantes insists on throughout the *Quixote* is that the knight, even though a fool, never means ill to anybody. He meant well both as Alonso Quijano, *el bueno*, and as Don Quixote de la Mancha. As we said in the Introduction, Foucault's observation applies much better to Avellaneda's conception of Don Quixote's madness. And this means that he misses the character and meaning of Cervantes's geniality, his intelligent and clear-sighted compassion. And, in a more general sense, he misses what is of paramount importance in Cervantes: the study of interpersonal relations, which in Cervantes is inseparable from an understanding of the roots of madness. For, as Cardenio tells us, at the root of his madness lies the fact that "holy friendship" has gone to heaven, leaving a deceitful appearance below. It is always "holy friendship" that vanishes from the scene as soon as madness appears, and whatever takes its place is, by definition, not to be trusted. In other words, a lot more than a change in the victimizing of the fool, from expulsion from the city to confinement, was taking place in Christian Europe at the time.

Foucault's Misreading of Cervantes and Shakespeare

This is why I think Foucault is ultimately wrong regarding the conception of madness that can be found in Cervantes and Shakespeare:

> In Shakespeare or Cervantes, madness still occupies an extreme place, in that it is beyond appeal. Nothing ever restores it either to truth or to reason. It leads only to laceration and thence to death. Madness, in its vain words, is not vanity; the void that fills it is a "disease beyond my practice," as the doctor says about Lady Macbeth; it is already the plenitude of death; a madness that has no need of a physician, but only of divine mercy ["More needs she the divine than the physician. God, God forgive us all!"].) (31)[3]

3. A shorter version of Foucault's *Folie et déraison* appeared in English with the title *Madness and Civilization*, translated by Richard Howard (New York, 1965). The quote is from this translation. Previous passages from *Folie et déraison* did not appear in the English version.

What makes Foucault think that Lady Macbeth's madness is, in Shakespeare's eyes, "beyond appeal . . . already the plenitude of death"? When the doctor says that "[t]his disease is beyond my practice" or that "she needs the divine more than the physician," he is not saying that she is completely beyond hope. As a matter of fact, he refers to such a hope, following the words just quoted:

> This disease is beyond my practice. Yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds. (5.1.54–56)

Of course, the reader should remember that Lady Macbeth appears to be walking in her sleep, for though "her eyes are open . . . their senses are shut." And the doctor knows he is not just witnessing a simple case of sleep-walking. Otherwise, why would he add that "she needs the divine more than the physician," why would he ask God "to forgive us all"? He knows that

> Foul whisp'rings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
> do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
> to their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
> (5.1.66–68)

He knows that Lady Macbeth's disease is of the soul and not of the body. There is nothing that he, a "Doctor of Physic," can do about it. But that does not mean that nobody can. People with that kind of disease "have died holily in their beds." But they have to repent, since it is guilt that is driving them mad. And that is something nobody can do for them; the patient alone must do it for himself, as the same doctor will tell Macbeth:

> Macbeth.
> How does your patient, doctor?
> Doctor.
> Not so sick, my lord,
> as she is troubled with thick-coming fancies
> that keep her from her rest.
> Macbeth.
> Cure her of that!
> Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
> pluck from her memory a rooted sorrow,
> raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> and with some sweet oblivious antidote

cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
which weighs upon her heart?
Doctor.
Therein the patient
must minister to himself.

(5.3.37–46)

If there is a text in Shakespeare where it is particularly inappropriate to see madness as something "beyond appeal" or "already the plenitude of death," it is probably *Macbeth*. Because there the cause of madness is perfectly explicit: a haunting and unshakeable sense of guilt deriving from what is described as a most "unnatural" and hideous crime: the murder of a just and generous king by his most trusted vassal, and all the subsequent murders commited to cover up the first one. The cure for such a madness was always ready at hand: a remorseful and public admission of guilt and a readiness to accept all its consequences. In fact, the suggestion was already there in the exemplary death of the Thane of Cawdor, "a gentleman—says the king—on whom I built an absolute trust," who betrayed his country and his king, which is what Macbeth (appearing before the king as he finishes pronouncing those words) will do. If we had any doubts about this suggestion, we should remember that the first thing the king does when he hears of Cawdor's treason is to transfer the title "Thane of Cawdor" to Macbeth. The contrast between the old and repentant Cawdor, asking for forgiveness and facing his own death "as 'twere a careless trifle," and the new Cawdor, the unrepentant Macbeth, haunted till the end by a maddening sense of guilt, is undeniable and striking.

What is typically Shakespearian is the idea that this maddening sense of guilt is something new. It did not happen "i' th' olden time," that is to say, among "gentiles." This is how Macbeth puts it:

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden time,
Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal;
Ay, and since too, murders have been performed
Too terrible for the ear. The time has been
That, when the brains were out, the man would die.
And there an end. But now they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools. This is more strange
Than such a murder is.

(3.4.75–83)

He is hallucinating. He sees the ghost of his latest victim, Banquo, rise up before him and take his place at the banquet. Nobody else sees the ghost, of course. It is a purely inward experience, prompted by Macbeth's inner sense of guilt. That is what pursues him. In the old days, if you murdered somebody, somebody else might come after you, the next of kin, for example, or the gods who favored the murdered one, or the Harpies from hell. But this is different. It is the very image of your crime that pursues you: the murdered one rises up and comes after you. That is the strange thing, not the murder itself, but the fact that you cannot get rid of it.

And that means that the old system, in which the murder and its aftermath remained external to you, where it was assimilated and explained by the system itself, is not working any more. In the old system you had to be on guard, of course, against the consequences of your crime. But you did not go mad from guilt. What is new is not what Macbeth did, but Macbeth's madness because of what he did. And this madness, in Shakespeare's eyes, has extraordinary historical significance because it is inseparable from the fact that the old system has collapsed, which is to say that Macbeth is no longer an old figure, but one who has already been "gospelled," to use his own words. He belongs to a new time in which human violence against humans finds no transcendant justification and is therefore turned back upon its human agent. Murder becomes a mirror for the murderer. Macbeth can no longer see himself without seeing his crime. He is terrified of what he did, and so he keeps on killing, not so much in order to defend himself from others, but to defend himself from himself—that is to say, in order to hide his murderous violence from his own sight, which only compounds his problem endlessly.

The reason for Macbeth's madness after he has killed the king is the same that makes Hamlet hesitate constantly in the face of his supposedly "sacred" duty to kill King Claudius in order to avenge the death of his father. Macbeth's real madness is what truly lies beyond Hamlet's fake madness. His antics, his paralysis of the will, his obsessive desire to put on a show, in every sense of the word, in the hopeless hope that if he pretends strongly enough the show itself will become reality, do nothing but testify to the fact that such a "sacred" duty is no longer sacred. Revenge, even of the most "sacred" kind, the one demanded by a murdered father, has lost its ultimate justification. His revenge has been hopelessly "dulled" (see Girard, *A Theater of Envy*, 271). He has also been "gospelled."

Madness in Shakespeare is not something of unknown or mysterious origin that for unknown and mysterious reasons strikes a human being without warning, and "without appeal," like an irrevocable death sentence, "the plenitude of death." And it is precisely because it is *not that*, because it is not entirely without hope, that a recourse to "divine mercy" is possible. This recourse to divine mercy is not at all what Foucault imagines. It is not a gesture of despair, not a way of saying "this is hopeless, there is nothing we can do, it's entirely in God's hands." Quite the contrary: it is a sign of hope. It is a way of saying that something can still be done, that we can petition God for help in order to do something that *we* still can do. Maybe "the patient" cannot do everything by himself, but he can certainly ask for God's help. For that is precisely the way "the patient must minister to himself." In Shakespeare a madness without hope is simply hell, or an existential anticipation of it. Which means that "the patient," perhaps like Macbeth, who tries to fight the problem without God's help—that is, without repentance—may in fact keep accelerating the maddening vicious circle in which he has trapped himself beyond all hope. At this juncture the only pertinent question would be whether "the patient" has now reached the point when divine mercy becomes to him a diving board from which he takes the final dive headlong into hell, into eternal hopelessness. I do not know if Shakespeare asked himself that question or not. But there is no doubt that he believed in the possibility of a Christian resolution for madness. We see a clear example of that possibility in the case of mad Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*.

The Cure of Madness and the Death of Don Quixote

Of Don Quixote, too, it can be said that "he needs more the divine than the physician." For it is by the mercy of God that he is saved at the last moment:

> He woke up and cried out loudly: "Blessed be Almighty God, who has vouchsafed me this great blessing! Indeed his mercies are boundless, nor can the sins of men limit or hinder them."
>
> His niece . . . asked him: . . . "What mercies are these, or what sins of men?"
>
> "The mercies, niece," answered Don Quixote, "are those which God has shown me at this moment, mercies to which, as I have said, my sins are no impediment. My judgment is now clear and free from the gloomy shadows of ignorance with which

my ill-starred and continuous reading of those detestable books of chivalry had obscured it.

. . .

Now I am the enemy of Amadís of Gaul and of all the infinite brood of his progeny. Now all profane histories of knight errantry are odious to me. I know my folly now, and the peril I have incurred from the reading of them. Now, by God's mercy, I have learnt from my own bitter experience and I abominate them."

God saves him, by clearing his judgment, by freeing him from his ignorance, but not because God perhaps thought that it was a pity for such a nice guy to have an unsound mind. God's help simply means that mad Don Quixote was on his way to hell. Madness took him away from God. He was moving toward Amadís instead of moving toward God, placing Amadís in God's place, turning Amadís into a god. The newly restored Alonso Quijano's acknowledgment of God's mercy is also an act of repentance. He now detests books of chivalry, which he declares to be "abominable," as he detests his own sins. Madness is not morally neutral in Cervantes's eyes any more than it was in Shakespeare's eyes. It may not be driven by deliberate malice, but it is definitely a form of evil, and its roots are within the human heart. It is precisely because of its moral character, that is to say, because it does not imply a complete loss of inner freedom, an inevitable and predetermined process ("Sans recours. Rien ne la ramène jamais à la verité ni à la raison," writes Foucault), that Don Quixote's madness may be remedied; and in the search for such a remedy, the will and the acts of the individual play a fundamental role, even if Cervantes is also convinced—as I think he was—that the individual alone cannot extricate himself from the terrible labyrinth in which he has placed himself, even if Cervantes was convinced, therefore, that divine mercy was necessary.

What we have to understand is that such a hope, based on deep religious convictions, becomes, historically speaking, the necessary prelude for the development of a scientific attitude regarding mental alienation. That kind of science becomes possible only when one believes in the possibility of a cure on the basis of a human decision (including the decision to ask God for help, accompanied by the proper attitude), because the disease in question is also of human, not sacred, origin. To Cervantes and to Shakespeare, the possibility of finding a scientific cure for madness would have seemed the most natural and marvelous thing in the world. It would have never occurred to

either of them that hope in science and hope in God were incompatible, as Foucault appears to believe.

Without denying at all the historical reality of the "great confinement"—a modern, attenuated manifestation of the old expelling mechanism—I do not think that is where we can find the ultimate key to the historical possibility of a science of the mind that would look for experimental methods to cure madness. I think that Foucault remains blind and insensitive to a very different kind of attitude regarding madness, an attitude that is almost contemporary to the dates of the "great confinement," and of which both Cervantes and Shakespeare offer a clear and striking testimony. Foucault neither sees nor understands what they saw and understood. On the other hand, he sees and understands perfectly what somebody like Avellaneda sees in madness. However, if we are to choose the "heralds of the new age," *buccinatores novi temporis*, I think we would do much better with Cervantes and Shakespeare than with Avellaneda.

To be sure, it is both tempting and quite possible to read Don Quixote's sudden and full recovery from his madness at the end of the novel as something miraculous, a direct intervention of God on behalf of a good man who had never meant to do an evil thing. But such an intervention simply consists in making Don Quixote see himself, understand himself, return to himself. In other words, the miracle would be that of Don Quixote's conversion. Because the cure for his madness is a reordering or restructuring of his understanding and his will in the direction of clarity and hope, an overcoming of anguish, a peaceful reencounter with himself. What more could the most advanced psychiatric intervention hope for or achieve?

Whether or not we call this conversion and cure a miracle is not very important. What is important is to understand that the possibility of this cure and conversion is something inherent to the way Cervantes conceives of Don Quixote's madness. Within Cervantes's conception it is practically impossible to imagine an ending such as Avellaneda's, with the madman locked up in an insane asylum. I think everybody would agree with that. And if this is so, which of these two ways of conceiving madness anticipates better the spirit of modern psychiatry? I do not think there can be any doubt about the answer.