“Preface”

The “merciless language of non-madness” (ix) confines “madness” because it uses “sovereign reason” and excludes that other language that does not fit reason.

F. is trying to return to a time when the language of psychiatry was not yet established to see whether he can hear madness speak. This “is undoubtedly an uncomfortable region” (ix), and we must not let ourselves be guided by what we NOW know about madness from the language of psychiatry. What action divides madness before it is explained by science? In other words, first there is a division, and then science comes in to explain that division in retrospect (ix).

“Hence we must speak of that initial dispute without assuming a victory, or the right to a victory” (x).

Only then can we see how madness and non-madness are NOT two distinct phenomena, but rather are in dialogue, “are inextricably involved” (x).

“In the severe world of mental illness, modern man no longer communicates with the madman” (x). The physician speaks to the madman only by way of seeing the person as having a disease; the dialogue with madness is broken. “The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason about madness, has been established only on the basis of such a silence” (x-xi). F. does not write a history of that language of medicine; he tries to write “and archeology of that silence” (xi).

The reason/madness nexus constitutes for Western culture “one of its dimensions of originality” (xi).

So, how does one go about listening to a language of madness that does not follow the predicates of reason? This realm points to the “limits” of a culture, not it’s identity, or what’s already possible (xi).

During the classical period one can trace the exchange between madness and reason, and how its language changes (xii):

1657 the creation of the Hôpital Général, and the “great confinement” of the poor
1794 the “liberation” of the insane, and “moral therapy” approach by Pinel

Middle Ages through Renaissance: dramatic debate between madness and non-madness
In our era: the experience of madness remains silent under a knowledge that “forgets” it. Mute commentary, “a great motionless structure” (xii).

Chapter 1: “Stultifera Navis”
During the middle ages, leprosy occupied a place in the margins of communities.

From the 14th to the 17th century, the spaces occupied by leprosy were left vacant, awaiting “another grimace of terror, renewed rights of purification and exclusion.” (3)

Although leprosy withdrew, the values and images attached to the figure of the leper remained. (6) – The meaning of exclusion remained and fear remained.

In time, the poor criminals and the insane would occupy the structural positions of the leper. (7) Characteristic of this form; “a rigorous division, which is social exclusion, but spiritual reintegration.”

A new conception in the renaissance: The Ship of Fools (originally a literary creation)

These ships really existed. (8+)

Mad people were housed and provided for by various cities, yet they occupied “a liminal position,” meaning that they both allowed to live in cities, but also confined through various rituals. (11)

Pg 13 – Foucault asks why the ship of fools motif became so popular in the 15th century. Answer: Because “it symbolized a great disquiet suddenly dawning on the horizon at the end of the middle ages.” (13) A whole literature of tales and moral fables begins to circulate, including a large number of images in woodcuts and engravings. The general anxiety has to do with questions people are beginning to ask at this time? (Renaissance, etc) However, there is a difference (the great line of cleavage in the western experience of madness) in how madness is represented in images versus writing. (18)

Images: A proliferation of meaning, “dreams, madness, and the unreasonable can also slip into this excess of meaning. The power of images is not to teach, but to fascinate. What is this fascination? 1. Animality 2. Knowledge - for the madman seems to perceive “the density of an invisible knowledge” (22) 3. The lure of curiosity – The forbidden diabolical power. On all sides, madness fascinates man. Images communicate with the great tragic powers of this world.

During the same period, “the literary, philosophical, and moral themes of madness are in an altogether different vein.” (24) Madness does not fascinate anymore, “it rules all that is easy, joyous, and frivolous in the world.” (25)

“In a general way, madness is not linked to the world and its subterranean forms, but rather to man, to his weaknesses, dreams, and illusions.” (26) Erasmus: Madness is located within the individual. The Self-attachment, self-perception: This understanding gives access to a moral universe. “Evil is not punishment or the end of time, but only fault and flaw.” (27) Erasmus observes madness from a distance, out of danger.
Summary: “A new enterprise was being undertaken that would abolish the tragic experience of madness in a critical consciousness.” (28) WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS, to be found in Don Quixote and King Lear, others.

(29+)The 4 forms of its expression in these exceptions: 1. Madness by romantic identification – “the confused communication between fantastic invention and the fascinations of delirium, all the forms of the human imagination.” 2. The madness of vain presumption – “the imaginary relation we maintain with ourselves.” 3. Madness of just punishment – lady Macbeth’s delirium is her proof of guilt 4. Madness of desperate passion – “love disappointed in its excess ... has no alternative but to be mad.”

Summary: These literary examples “testify” “more to a tragic experience of madness appearing in the 15th 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, whose continuity will no longer survive except in darkness.”

Outside of time, these literary works establish a link with a tradition of representing madness that is eclipsed by reason; it remains, though, in darkness (31); the madness in Cervantes and S. cannot be restored to either truth or reason;

Soon, madness is deprived of its tragic seriousness (32); “the classical experience of madness is born” (35); not even a century after Bosch, mad people are confined in “madhouses”; “Here, each form of madness finds its proper place, its distinguishing mark” (35); madness is tamed (36).

Chapter 2: “The Great Confinement”

In seventeenth century, houses of confinement are established for “the poor, the unemployed, prisoners, and the insane” (39). Pinel and nineteenth century psychiatry does its work in these houses of confinement; madness becomes linked to confinement which becomes designated as its natural abode.

1656: Hospital General founded by royal edict (39); also Salpetriere, Bicetre, etc. These are “not medical establishments” (40), but semijudicial structures meant to control social space and to clean public spaces of “problem” people (41); administrative entities; “an instance of order” (41) or the monarchical and bourgeois order being organized in France at that time.

The Church was also involved in this movement; it reformed its own hospital institutions (42).

This phenomenon happens across Europe (43-44).

What’s the unity that lies at the heart of confining such a disparate group of people (the poor, the mad, criminals)? A social sensibility forms (45), a clearly articulated perception that centers on the ethic of work and the dream city (46).
Confinement was a police matter (46); the imperative of labor structures confinement, not medical concerns (46); condemnation of idleness.

Who are the poor? Peasants, beggars, disbanded soldiers, impoverished students, the sick (47); economic changes, wars; the negative measure of exclusion was transformed into the positive measure of confinement (48): the confined person was not kicked out, but rather was put to work in a system of obligation and moral constraint (48). Confinement was the answer to various economic and social problems in the 17th century across Europe (49); “it was feared the people would overrun the country” (50).

Outside the periods of crisis, confinement acquired a different meaning: its repressive function was combined with a new use—those confined were put to work (51); “reabsorption of the idle and social protection against agitation and uprising” (51). “Work was not only an occupation; it must be productive” (51). Houses has different specialties.... (51-53).

However, houses of confinement failed as fixing the economic problems of society (54); the poor were still poor, not in public and as a social threat. They disappeared at the beginning of the 19th century; however, they did serve as an important experiment in how labor was to be regarded in society (55): a “certain ethical consciousness of labor” was formulated and established; labor’s effectiveness was supported by Judeo-Christian belief in “the fall of man” (55) → man was forced to work not by a law of nature, but by the effect of a curse (55); Calvin.... “the sin of idleness is the supreme pride of man once he has fallen” (56). Sloth leads the round of vices (57).

“It was in a certain experience of labor that the indissociably economic and moral demand for confinement was formulated” (57). Society invents a space derived from an ethical transcendence from the law of work into which the insane were slotted (since putting the poor in this space had failed). Madmen were included in the prescription of idleness (57, bottom); they would be subjected to the rules of forced labor; kinship established between the insane and the poor in terms of notions of labor (58). Until the Renaissance, madness was linked with an imaginary transcendence; in the classical age madness is perceived for the first time through the condemnation of idleness; this notion acquires the power of segregation and gains the meaning it still has in our own culture (58). Madness crosses the limits of bourgeois order as a moral perception.

Houses of confinement are thus “correctional” institutions, moral institutions, penance (59). Obligation to work as ethical exercise and moral guarantee (59). Amazing shift: “morality permitted itself to be administered like trade or economy” (61). Institutions carry that moral imperative: “this is the underside of the bourgeoisie’s great dream and great preoccupation in the classical age: the laws of the State and the laws of the heart are at last identical (61).

Myth of social happiness, also for the Church (63); confinement “conceals both a metaphysics of government and a politics of religion…. Tyrannical synthesis…” (63);

Summary: p. 64.