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PROLOGUE

The quickest way to get an idea of what goes on in this book is to scan its list of contents and its epigraphs. The first of those epigraphs is Derrida's remark "But it is Kierkegaard to whom I have been most faithful . . ." The book seeks to discover the nature of that fidelity via reflections on faith in the field of religion but also on what, in imitation of Derrida's title *Margins of Philosophy*, my title calls margins of religion. The "between" of the subtitle is that of Kierkegaard and Derrida, as it were, synchronically face to face. That preposition also works diachronically. Part 1 focuses on Kierkegaard, but there are interventions throughout from Derrida. Part 2 treats of Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari, Heidegger, Sartre, and Levinas, with a view to showing how through their writings some of the topics raised in part 1 are transmuted and transmitted to Derrida, whose writings are focused on in part 3. A main topic in the interim chapters is negation considered with a view to bringing out how the simplicity of the antithetical oppositions between the negative and the positive in classical and dialectical logic and between apophatic and cataphatic theology is complicated by a certain quasi-transcendental affirmation that is presupposed by those oppositions. The topic of the sharpness or otherwise of the traditional distinction is already introduced during the examination in chapter 1 of the debate between Kant and Hegel on the logic of borderlines. That debate widens throughout the rest of the book, culminating in chapters that hover over the threshold of ontology and what Derrida christens [*sic*] hauntology.

The book is oriented by the citation of texts. How could it be otherwise with one that aims to be faithful to Derrida in the way he declares he has been faith-

ful to Kierkegaard? But how, with a book that aims in some way to be faithful to Derrida and Kierkegaard, could it not be affected by pathos? In the first chapter in particular the reader will find much more textual analysis than pathos. Potential readers for whose taste this chapter may be too dry (Derrida would say SEC) may prefer to skip to chapter 2 or to part 2. Before following either of these routes they might skim through the epilogue, which is in part retrospective. One reader of a draft of the book found it rewarding to read the first three chapters, then the last chapter, then resume part 1. Readers who reach part 3 will find the desert dryness watered by tears. More of these were to come after Jack Caputo used that word (and its homonym) in the title of a distinguished book he devoted to the work of Derrida.

The last in my list of epigraphs, Derrida's comment "These questions can be posed only after the death of a friend," presides especially over part 3, from the beginning of the biographical and thanatographical chapter 13 to the last paragraphs of the epilogue. Pursuing clues given by Caputo and Hent de Vries, chapters 13 and 14 comprise a single continuing argument aimed at exposing an oversight on my part that seemed to place two friends of mine in conflict with each other.

Chapters 15 to 17 experiment with what Derrida writes about "religion in general" to help find room for a notion of the religious that need not depend, unless only contingently and historically (but what does saying this mean?) upon instituted religions. I dare to think that this notion of the religious between the quasi-transcendental and the historical, by investing priority (but what does saying this mean?) in truth over propositional truth and in singularity over universal law, saves the religious from the up-to-a-point justified condemnations (for instance those of Richard Dawkins) to which the religions are exposed. I say "saves." This book is another book about the varieties of religious experience, but without being, as William James's Gifford Lectures are, a book about the variety of religions. It is a book about a variety of salvations. And it is one that is prejudiced, I confess, in favor of that variety of salvation implicit in the remark "There is another world, but it is (in) this one," attributed to Paul Éluard and Rilke. I find this remark acknowledged by neither. Whatever the source and whatever its author (if it has one) intended (see chapter 15, note 22), I interpret this sentence in the spirit of Nietzsche and of a remark that I do find in the writings of Rilke: "What insanity to side-track us toward a Beyond, when we are here surrounded by tasks and expectations and futures! What treachery to purloin the images of actual delight so as to sell them behind our backs to Heaven! O it is high time the impoverished earth collected all those loans we have raised on its splendour, in order to furnish something 'beyond the future' with them, etc." Belief in that fabulous thither side has been all too conducive of late and of old to the commission of crimes in the here and the

now. Paradoxically, that belief is fostered, as Derrida, Kierkegaard, and not a few theologians and philosophers throughout the ages have maintained, by a naively this-worldly conception of time incapable of crediting time's out-of-jointness, incapable of imagining eternity as other than continuation, other than the chronology of one generation succeeding another, other than secular periodization.

I question the assumption that the secular and the religiousness of religions constitute an exhaustive dichotomy. To help me make out my case for doing this I draw on what Derrida writes about the unexpectedness of the futurity of a certain democracy. I draw also on Wordsworth's (not Kant's) idea of the sublime to hint at an aesthetical [*sic*] archi-sublimity that fits the idea of the oncomingness of democracy about which Derrida wonders whether it might embrace the nonhuman (the nonhuman beings that were much on my mind when I wrote *The Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience* and *Seeing Through God*). Democracy thus outlined and freed from the reputations Nietzsche and Francis Fukuyama impose on it is the wide and political extreme of the religious imagination [*sic*]. What I say toward the end of the book about imagination goes back to what in the first chapter I discover Kierkegaard saying about madness. Co-opting as another of my epigraphs Karen Armstrong's words "The imagination is the chief religious faculty," I amplify in this book what I said in *The HypoCritical Imagination*, having profited in the interim from reading Fiona Hughes's *Kant's Aesthetic Epistemology: Form and World* (2007) and Brian Elliot's *Phenomenology and Imagination in Husserl and Heidegger* (2005), both of which I found *génial* and congenial.

The sharp end of democracy, where a democracy impinges on its citizens, is our experiences of birth, and copulation, and death (the death of a friend, say), at once the most bodily and at the same time most spiritual events we undergo or witness. I argue that they and other connected rudimentary occasions or practices or dispositions can be religious in the way Kierkegaard and Derrida explain through the "experience" of the necessarily secret and almost silent moment of address. These singular *Grenzmomente*—unless they are *Schrankenmomente*, as distinguished in the first chapter—are minimally predicative (said) and maximally addressive (to say). One key to my carnate account of, in Durkheim's phrase, "the elementary forms of religious life" (as distinguished from religions) is a sentence in the marriage service in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer: "With my body I thee worship." Although that is a sentence that is uttered within the context of a rite of a particular church, I use it as a clue to a sense of the religious that asks to be saved from being either confined to organized religions or deemed to be a delusion by a secularism captive to an uncircumspect idea of itself. I am grateful to an anonymous reader of a draft of this book for suggesting that other keys I might use in it are offered by

Feuerbach, for instance the remark in the “Concluding Application” of his *The Essence of Christianity* to the effect that what I call the archi-sublime is already announced in the materially real water and wine and bread, whatever may be said about their ritually consecrated varieties. In the chapter entitled “Eucharistics” I employ this remark to enable me to distinguish an interpretation of it I endorse from one I do not, one where I prefer to be guided by Derrida. Feuerbach preaches a humanism. While declining to preach secularism, theism, or atheism, I decline also humanism, including Levinas’s humanism of the other human being. In their mindfulness of God or human beings all these -isms are overly unmindful of the world.

Gratitude, which I distinguish from saying Thanks, is a vital ingredient in the sense of the religious pondered in the following chapters. In them I argue that gratitude can attach itself to most of the bodily and even digestive events that I would include in my uncluding list of possibly religious occasions (the list “birth, and copulation, and death” that T. S. Eliot has his Sweeney draw up is very much too short), events like being overcome beside a cradle by tears of joy or of grief beside a grave, gut-reactions that are not necessarily *Gott*-reactions and not necessarily manifestations of this or that structured religion, but religious responses testifying to a conviction that, to express it in words I steal from an archbishop of Canterbury, the world is more than it is. This world is more and other than it is, but not on account of another world than this.

On the Borderline of Madness

Absolute Wisdom

The citation with which Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* concludes licenses the reader of that book to read it through the lens of Aristotle's teaching in *Metaphysics* 1072b that philosophy is thinking as such and thinking in the fullest sense, where

thinking as such deals with that which is best in itself, and that which is thinking in the fullest sense with that which is best in the fullest sense. And thinking thinks on itself because it shares the nature of the object of thought; for it becomes an object of thought in coming into contact with and thinking its objects, so that thought and object of thought are the same. For that which is *capable* of receiving the object of thought, i.e. the essence, is thought. But it is *active* when it *possesses* this object.¹

There is much talk here of the object of thought. In a phrase that owes something to Parmenides, Aristotle tells us that, where thought of the best and of the fullest is concerned, thought and the object of thought are the same, *tauton nous kai noēton*. If he had left it at that, the thought in question would be noetically-noematically representative. However, he also tells us that this thought is active and that its highest and fullest object is God. But if, at least for this loftiest and deepest thought, thought and the object of thought are the same,

the object of thought must be active, that is to say living. So the objecthood that belongs to what Aristotle refers to as the object of thought, *noētos*, would be that of what Hegel calls an *Objekt*, an objective, as contrasted with that of a *Gegenstand*, something standing over against the thinking. The so-called object, that is to say the objective, could then be *noēsis*, thinking, as when at 1074b of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle says that thinking of the most excellent of things is thinking of thinking, *noēsis noēseōs*, and as when in §237 of the *Logic* of the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel explicitly borrows this expression from Aristotle to characterize the Absolute Idea. Saying that the logic that treats of that Idea in the *Encyclopaedia* and in the *Science of Logic* is concrete is another way of saying that it is a thinking of itself, not a thinking about itself or about anything else. Hegel observes that if we wish to speak of matter and form in this context we must say that the matter is pure thought and therefore absolute form itself.² As the realm of pure thought logic is “the realm of truth as it is without veil.” Hegel’s notion of truth here is to be contrasted with Heidegger’s notion of truth as un-concealing accompanied by concealing. After all, what Hegel is talking about is God’s truth. The absolute truth that is the content or matter of absolute thought is “the exposition (*Darstellung*) of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind.”³ So Hegel is able to write that the *Logic* of the *Encyclopaedia*, the latter’s first part, is applied in the other two parts under the titles *The Philosophy of Nature* and *The Philosophy of Mind*. On the other hand this “lesser” *Logic* and the “greater” *Science of Logic* look back to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, of which Hegel says that it is “the first part of the System of Philosophy.”⁴ The Absolute Idea expounded in those systems of logic presupposes the pure science of Absolute Wisdom or Absolute Knowing in which this latter work culminates. But in the *Phenomenology* this science has already been deduced. It is a result deduced through a series of mediative negations of negations in which competition is converted into cooperation and, starting with the simplest opposition of immediate consciousness of an object, representational consciousness is superseded, *aufgehoben*.

The principle of formal logic that a double negative yields a positive is enough to remind us that in dialectical logic *Aufhebung* is a transition in which what is lost is at the same time saved. But how saved? Whereas innocent consciousness takes immediate sensory consciousness of an object to be the richest experience we can have, Hegel tells us that the mature human being has learned that “philosophical knowledge is the richest in material and organization, and therefore, as it came before us in the shape of a result, it presupposed the existence of the concrete formations of consciousness such as individual and social morality, art and religion.”⁵ Consider individual morality. To what extent is the concreteness here attributed to it saved? If by concreteness is meant the becoming one and the same of this form of consciousness and its object, that

is a way of saying that in its original form it is lost. Is it well lost? Take religion. Is the loss of its pictorial representations when it gives way to philosophical knowledge a loss that experience no less mature than philosophy would prefer to endure in some non-philosophical way, a way in which separateness is saved? The question may be put in terms of Hegel's summary definitions of Logic as the Idea in and for itself, of the Philosophy of Nature as the science of the Idea in its otherness, and, thirdly, of the Philosophy of Mind as the science of the Idea come back out of that otherness.⁶ Might it be important to save an otherness that is not the otherness of the Idea, an otherness that does not come back out of its otherness? The question would be whether to consciousness and its representational apprehension there might be an alternative that, while still leaving consciousness behind, hence without being what Hegel calls "unhappy consciousness,"⁷ not only opens out on to the fully rounded totality of circles of philosophy as the love of wisdom, but welcomes an alterity that pierces that circle of circles from an outside that is other than the outside thought of in Hegel's philosophy of nature, morality, art, and religion, other even than the outside from which, for an Aristotle other than the one we have spoken of so far in this chapter, active reason, *nous*, comes in from outside like a god. Let us ask this question first in relation to Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel's concepts of morality, religion, and God, making our way into this critique via what these authors say about insanity, which should be a good guide to what they think about reason.

The Higher Madness

One of Kierkegaard's most common ways of issuing a warning against commonness is to say that it would drive you mad. Yet saying that someone is mad is one of his most common ways of distinguishing someone's uncommonness. Precisely the borderline between commonness and uncommonness might provoke one to say that "a borderline is precisely a torment for passion."⁸

Under the heading "Literary Quicksilver" Kierkegaard declares that what he is to say under it may be described as "A Venture in the Higher Madness with *Lucida Intervalla*."⁹ He then cites as an epigraph a couplet from Oehlen-schlæger's *Dina*:

I will not sing along in harmony
But grate as a strange dissonance.

Strange dissonance indeed, strange absurdity, because the very first paragraph of the text that begins after this quotation states that it will be difficult to distinguish the venture in the higher madness from the intervals of lucidity. They

will be found to stand alongside each other peacefully, he says. Apparently, then, there will be a harmony, albeit a strange one, as though the two were on the point of suddenly coalescing into a unity, communicating with each other like two drops of quicksilver, like mercury, which gets its name from or gives its name to the god of communication between heaven and earth. The so-called higher madness is evidently a deep madness, deeper, 17,000 fathoms deeper, than the level at which one opposes peace of mind and mental derangement. That this is so, that here the higher is in one sense—though, as we shall discover, not in another sense—the lower, is suggested by entries in Kierkegaard’s *Journals and Papers* dating from some time in 1839 stating that the higher madness is “the most concrete of all categories, the fullest, since it is closest to life and does not have its truth in a beyond, the supraterrrestrial, but in a subterranean below, and thus, if it were a hypothesis, the most grandiose empirical proof of its truth could be made.”¹⁰ We are then told that it is by way of this category that the transition is made from abstract madness to concrete madness. On the one hand it may be expressed in the formula “the unity of madness (*Galskabs*) in the duality of all creation (*Alskabs*),” borrowed from the work by the poet Jens Baggesen ominously entitled “The Abracadabra of the Untimeliness of the Ass,” *Asenutidens Abracadabra*. On the other hand, this category of the higher madness may be expressed speculatively (and speculative idealism is what is here being mocked) in the formula “the unity of all creation in the duality of madness.” These formulae are written in entries of the *Journals and Papers* that relate to the book attributed to Nicolaus Notabene entitled *Prefaces*, which consists of eight prefaces followed by a very brief postscript. Is this an allusion to the prefatory and introductory parts of the works of Hegel in which comments are made about the anomalous status of prefaces and their relation to the texts that follow them? That this is an allusion to the speculative system is confirmed by the *Writing Sampler*, attributed to A. B. C. D. E. F. Godhaab, which is printed after *Prefaces* in the same volume of *Kierkegaard’s Writings* and contains only a preface to eight more prefaces followed by a postscript that repeats (backwards) almost verbatim the first sentence of the first preface: “Finally, please read the following preface, because it contains things of the utmost importance.” This is a Joycean riverrun repetition (forward) to the broken circularity of another speculation on the Speculative system, Derrida’s guying and gaying of Hegel in generative and degenerative chiasmus with Genet in *Glas*.¹¹

But what of the chiasmus of the two formulae cited above? We can only speculate as to how that might work. Perhaps the creation is both unity and duality because it is the whole of what is created and implies a creator. This duality of the creator and the created is at the same time a multiplicity insofar as, to speak with Leibniz, the goodness of the creator implies the greatest possible variety and difference in his creation. To speak with Kierkegaard, all creation

implies multiplicity, that is, whatever you wish, “*Quodlibet* or the loonier the better.”

The duality of the higher madness is implied in its being a “pathos-filled transition—a dialectical transition,”¹² from abstract madness to concrete madness, these being not disconnected insanities, but species falling under a genus that is the unity of higher madness.¹³

It so happens that the entry in which these distinctions are made is followed immediately in the English edition of the *Journals and Papers* by one dating from three years later in which reference is made to the *Meditations* of Descartes. This is a happy accident. For madness is at stake in these *Meditations*. Furthermore, it is around the treatment of madness in them that turns the debate between Derrida and Foucault concerning the history of madness in the Age of Reason and the question whether madness is deeply embedded in reason and philosophy. Derrida acknowledges Kierkegaard as another contributor to this debate when he takes as an epigraph for his discussion of Foucault the assertion of Johannes Climacus in *Philosophical Fragments* that “the moment of decision is folly,” “*Afgjørelsens Øieblik er en Daarskab*.”¹⁴ What Kierkegaard contributes to this discussion of reason and philosophy and history cannot be appraised independently of his response to Hegel, as the terms reason, philosophy, and history announce. Before reminding ourselves where Hegel stands on some of these questions let us quickly take note of some of the distinctions made by the philosopher to whom Hegel in his turn is responding, “the honest Kant” who anticipates Kierkegaard by denying reason in order to make room for faith and of whom Kierkegaard says that he declares the relationship to God to be a mental derangement.¹⁵

The Limits of Reason

Hegel is discontented with the way Kant draws a line between understanding (*Verstand*) and reason (*Vernunft*). Because Kierkegaard is ultimately concerned with what he contrasts with both reason (Danish *Fornuft*) and understanding, no serious misunderstanding may result from translating his word “*Forstanden*” by “reason,” as in the Swenson version of the paragraphs of the *Philosophical Fragments*, which is changed, however, in the Hong and Hong translation to “understanding.”¹⁶ At issue with Kierkegaard is the question of philosophical translation from understanding or reason to religion regarded as exceeding both, as madness or folly or foolishness, where the second and third of these are the translations of “*Daarskab*” given respectively by Swenson and the Hongs. But Hegel’s difference with Kant turns on the prior question whether, like drops of quicksilver—or indeed “two drops of water” (*Critique of Pure Reason* B319)—

understanding flows into reason or whether they remain discrete. It turns also therefore on this discretion, on how a *discrimen*, a borderline, is to be conceived, on what it is to be on a border or at a limit or frontier. And here this philosophical question of translatability across a line brings us up against a question of textual translation that cannot be as easily passed over as may be the question of textual translation raised above in connection with Kierkegaard.

At B322 of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant writes, in Kemp Smith's translation, "as regards things in general unlimited reality was viewed [by former logicians] as the matter of all possibility, and its limitation (negation [*Negation*]) as being the form by which one thing is distinguished from others according to transcendental concepts."¹⁷ Kemp Smith's words "unlimited reality" translate "*unbegrenzte Realität*," and his word "limitation" translates "*Einschränkung*." Although in B322 Kant is speaking of pre-Critical logicians, and it is arguable therefore that an ambiguity is tolerable in this context, he himself does not use one and the same root word. To do so would be to blur a distinction made at B789, at B795, and in §57 of the *Prolegomena* between what following Kemp Smith's translation of the *Critique* would have to be called a bound, a *Schranke*, and what following that translation would have to be called a limit, a *Grenze*. In P. G. Lucas's translation of the *Prolegomena* the terms are reversed.¹⁸ Provided they are employed consistently, it does not matter much which pairing we prefer. I follow Lucas's because, as we shall soon see, it enables us to maintain a continuity of usage from Kant to Hegel. Postponing the question whether this enables us to maintain a continuity of usage from them both to Kierkegaard, and postponing a question raised by Kant's repetition of the word or particle "*gleich*," let us consider the distinction made in §57 of the *Prolegomena*.

Boundaries (*Grenzen*)—in extended beings—always presuppose a space which is come across outside a certain determined place and encloses it; limits (*Schranken*) do not need any such thing (*dergleichen*), rather are they mere negations (*Verneinungen*) which affect a magnitude in so far as it does not have absolute completeness. But our reason sees as it were (*gleichsam*) around it a space for knowledge of things in themselves, although it (*ob sie gleich*) can never have determined concepts (*bestimmte Begriffe*) of them and is limited merely to appearance.

Thus, as Kant goes on to explain in the sentence immediately following this paragraph, "As long as knowledge by reason is homogeneous (*gleichartig*)," as in mathematics and the natural sciences, we have mere *Schranken*, limits, with the ever-open possibility of knowledge being extended beyond a particular point it has reached. But, he observes in the sentence immediately preceding the paragraph just cited, "although (*obgleich*) it cannot be refuted" or grounded in intuition, the idea of a being that somewhere serves as a *Grenze*, a bound, to this infinite or indefinite extendibility of mathematical and physical knowledge

is demanded by reason. However, he goes on to say a few paragraphs after the one just cited, this demand of reason can lead only, “as it were (*gleichsam*) to the contact of filled space (phenomenal experience) with empty space (the noumenal, the unknowable).” The “as it were” signals that the connection between filled and empty space is being invoked only as an analogy to illustrate the difference between the sheer negativity of a limit, a *Schranke*, and the positivity of a boundary, a *Grenze*. A surface is the boundary of a three-dimensional physical volume, but it is still spatial; a line is the boundary of a surface, but it is still spatial; a point is the boundary of a line, but it is still spatial. Here what is beyond each boundary is homogeneous (*gleichartig*) with the boundary. It is therefore a better analogy for Hegel’s account of reason than it is for Kant’s. For although Kant says that a boundary belongs to both sides of what it bounds, on one side are the concepts that have a constitutive use only over indefinitely extendible experience of the spatio-temporal, whereas on the other side are the ideas of reason whose legitimate use is not constitutive but regulative. For Hegel reason is constitutive on both sides of a given bound. That is to say, what Kant calls a boundary, a *Grenze*, and contrasts with a limit, a *Schranke*, is assimilated to a limit by Hegel. Hence, according to Hegel, understanding and reason have between them a limit, not a boundary, which they have according to Kant’s definitions. If Kant goes as far as to say that a boundary participates in what lies on both sides of it, the line between a boundary and a limit becomes unstable according to Hegel. It is more like a colon than a period. It is to be compared not with a wall but with a passageway (a *pas-sageway*, to the topic of which we shall pass in chapter 13 below), however narrow or aporetic. That is what the etymological derivation of the word “limit” from Latin “*limes*,” meaning either limit or passage, would lead us to think.

To say with Hegel that there is a limit between understanding and reason is to say that they are not utterly heterogeneous. Reason, Hegel argues, is the truth of what Kant calls understanding. Understanding finds that it is not opposed to reason, but is an immature form of it. In the supplement to §386 of the *Philosophy of Mind* Hegel writes:

We make ourselves finite by receiving an Other into our consciousness; but in the very fact of our knowing this Other we have transcended this limit (*Schranke*). Only he who does not know is limited (*beschränkt*); whereas he who knows the limit knows it not as a limit of his knowing, but as something known, as something belonging (*Gehörenden*) to his knowledge; only the unknown would be a limit of his knowledge, whereas the known limit on the contrary is not; therefore to know one’s limit means to know of one’s unlimitedness (*Unbeschränktheit*). But when we pronounce mind to be unlimited, truly infinite (*unendlich*), this does not mean that mind is free from any limit whatsoever; on the contrary, we must recognize that mind must determine itself (*sich bestimmen*) and so make itself finite, limit (*beschränken*) itself. But

the abstract understanding (*Verstand*) is wrong in treating this finitude as something inflexible, in holding the difference between the limit and the infinitude to be absolutely fixed (*fest*), and accordingly maintaining that mind is *either* limited or unlimited. Finitude, truly comprehended, is as we have said, contained in infinitude, the limit in the unlimited. Mind is therefore *both* infinite *and* finite, and *neither* merely the one *nor* the other; in making itself finite it remains infinite, for it reduces-raises (*aufhebt*) the finitude within it to what is merely ideal, merely appearing (*nur Erscheinendes*).

It reduces-raises it to what is a merely appearing moment, one could say, in order to give notice of the violent reinterpretation which that term will undergo when with Kierkegaard it becomes the *Øieblik* that resists the reduction of the either-or to the both-and. For Kierkegaard the Critical Kantian case for resisting the both-and is not violent enough. It relies on the distinction between the constitutive and the regulative uses of reason, from which it follows that Kant's notion of the mathematical borderline (*Grenze*) can be used only as a sensuous and therefore not unmisleading picture (*Sinnbild*) in his attempt, as he puts it at the beginning of §59 of the *Prolegomena*, to fix the limits (*Schranken*) of reason in respect of its appropriate use. The proper use is non-constitutive, regulative, practical, analogical, symbolic: thinking or faith rather than theoretical knowledge. Therefore reference to a highest being would tell us nothing about the being. It would tell us only something about the relationship of that being to the world of which we have phenomenal knowledge, so that we regard the latter as if it related to a highest being in the way that a clock relates to its maker.

Hegel's response to this is that Kant the philosopher is obliged to admit that he knows the appropriate use of reason unrestricted by the forms of sensibility and understanding to be regulative: "[H]e who knows the limit knows it not as a limit of his knowing, but as something known, as something belonging to his knowledge." So the content of Kant's claim is in conflict with his making it. He has failed to take account of his own use of speculative reason as a philosopher.

Here, then, the question of the limits of reason is one with the question of the limits of philosophy. And the question of frontiers within philosophical reason, whether they be borders or limits, flows into the question whether the apparent others of philosophical reason are ultimately other than it. Either-or or both-and or either-or and both-and? *Aut-aut* or *vel*?

Of the many others that might be suggested as candidates for being the other of philosophical reason let us now consider one, madness, bearing in mind Kierkegaard's references to lunacy, insanity, and folly or foolishness cited in the first section of our discussion. We shall find it necessary to be more precise about some of these expressions if certain misconceptions of Kierkegaard's maniology are to be avoided. We return to this question in due course via a

remark made in the section of *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* in which Kant classifies the different kinds of what he refers to generally as *Verrückung*, or, as I shall provisionally and usually say, madness.

Madness

Madness, Kant notes, is a *Versetzung*, a distancing and displacement, that is to say a change of place: a *kinēsis*, to use the term Kierkegaard transports to the psychological sphere from Aristotle's *Physics*. Note too that the provisional translation of "*Verrückung*" and "*Verrücktheit*" by "madness" is supported by the fact that the term "mad" comes from "*mutare*," to change, to alter. It is thus more informative than the privative term "insanity" and less questionably theory-laden than the term "lunacy." "Folly," it may be remarked in anticipation, straddles mental deficiency in the form of foolishness or stupidity, and mental illness. It may be a deficiency of theoretical or practical knowledge or it may be a non-cognitive deficiency of mind. The latter kind of deficiency may be such as to leave room only for causal explanation. The former kind of deficiency may take on a moral tinge, as when it is asked in the Koran, "who turns away from the religion of Abraham except they who debase their souls with folly [befool themselves, *safaha*]?" (Sûrah II, 130). In the *Philosophy of Mind*, also under the heading Anthropology, Hegel gives his own classification of the different varieties of madness, uses the terms "*Verrückung*" or "*Verrücktheit*" for the genus, and underlines the notion of distancing conveyed by it when he writes that in madness the mind is split within itself, is *mit sich selber entzweiten*, schizzed (§402, *Zusatz*; see also below, chapter 8).

Hegel prescribes a talking cure for this splitting. We must humor the patient, appeal to his or her reason and prudence. In general patients may deserve considerate treatment (*rücksichtvolle Behandlung*) because their rational and moral nature is not entirely destroyed. If someone believes he is Mahomet, tell him he will not be confined provided he promises not to abuse his freedom by being a nuisance to others. Or appeal to the insane person's practical reason. For instance, if he believes he has fragile glass feet, get him to think he is being attacked by robbers. That way he'll very soon find how useful his feet are for running away. Hegel, like Kant, observes that madness may have either a psychological or a physical cause. Where the cause is physical the cure may be physical too, as when someone is cured by falling on his head. But generally the most effective treatment is the talking cure, in which an appeal is made to the patient's reason. Presumably that is what Hegel would prescribe for the madman of Descartes's first Meditation, who believes he has a head made of earthenware or glass.

Does this mean that Hegel's philosophy does not exclude madness from reason or from the full-blossoming of reason known as philosophy? Or does it point rather to the apparently opposite conclusion that Hegel does exclude madness from reason and philosophy by refusing to face the full blossoming of madness? Answers to these questions can be approached by reflection on the difference between Derrida's and Foucault's readings of the first Meditation.¹⁹

Why does Descartes put aside the hypothesis or pseudo-hypothesis that he, Descartes the philosopher, might be as mad as the madman who thinks his head and feet are made of glass? Descartes does this, Derrida says, because he believes that it is not the philosopher but the man in the street or the field who cannot contemplate the possibility that he himself might be mad. Descartes himself reserves the hypothesis that he might be mad only until the hypothesis of the evil genius makes it relevant to bring it back into play in order to show that, although the evil genius could be instrumental in making me in particular think that I am sane when I am in fact insane, the possibility of that deception (like the possibility of the hypothesis that I am always dreaming) is included within the possibility of a general deception contrived by the evil genius. The scope of the systematic deception contrived by the evil genius is wider because it brings into doubt not only beliefs based apparently on sensory experience and the imagination, but also beliefs based apparently on the intellect, for instance the propositions of arithmetic. This increase in scope of the range of beliefs is matched by an increase in force of the thought that whether my feelings or thoughts are all placed in me by a deceiving trickster, I am feeling or thinking, and that while doing so I can be quite certain that I exist. What I still cannot be certain of is that I can count on the truths of arithmetic and rules of inference when I am not thinking about them, when they are written down for the benefit of others and for myself at some later moment. In order that they may be able, in Hegel's phrase, to stand the test of time, to sustain the possibility of rigorous science, they need the support of a valid argument from my existence to the existence of a non-deceiving God. It is only at this stage, Derrida says, that Descartes turns his back on madness as manifested in the hypothesis that I am always dreaming and in the even madder hypothesis that I am always being systematically deceived by an evil genius. However mad I am, while I think that I think, I exist. So Descartes does not need to discount madness. Philosophy as such cannot discount it. So Hegel's philosophy of philosophy cannot. It cannot exclude it even by the talking cure, by appealing to the madman's reason. For reason has its own moment of madness. Before moving to the question of the nature of this moment we must return to the two questions posed above about Hegel in order to ask what answer we should expect Foucault to give to them on the basis of his reading of the first Meditation of Descartes. Would he say that Hegel's philosophy includes madness in reason and in the full blossoming

of reason known as philosophy, what we found Aristotle calling thinking in its fullest sense, or would he say that Hegel excludes madness from reason and philosophy by refusing to face the full blossoming of madness?

There is some evidence for concluding that Foucault would emulate Hegel by drawing both of these seemingly opposite conclusions. For, on the one hand, he seems to express a Romantic Rousseauistic nostalgia for a pure *esprit sauvage* of madness reminiscent of Lévi-Strauss's invocation of alternative concrete logics to account for the behaviour of Bororo and other so-called primitive tribes.²⁰ On the other hand, Foucault refers precisely to the discussion in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind/Spirit* of Rousseauistic sentimentalism in order to applaud Hegel for returning madness to the fold of philosophy, from which, Foucault argues, it had been expelled by Descartes. Where Derrida takes Descartes to be saying that it is the vulgar who would find the hypothesis of madness untenable and for that reason drops it, but only temporarily, from consideration, Foucault maintains that in the first Meditation it is Descartes the philosopher himself who refuses to allow that the madman can think. Neither skepticism nor its refutation can be grounded on the thought that the insane take themselves to have heads made of pottery or glass, for once I entertain that thought I shall inevitably discover myself supposing that I myself might be mad. Does not Descartes write, "I should not be any the less insane were I to follow examples so extravagant"? Following examples so extravagant would mean that I could not think, whether to argue for skepticism or for its refutation—or indeed to be able to know that I was following these examples. That is why, according to Foucault, Descartes turns his back on this self-refuting hypothesis in order to consider the hypothesis that I might always be dreaming. So, in contrast with Montaigne, Descartes does in philosophy what was done by the political and social powers-that-be in the seventeenth century, namely, exile the insane in asylums from which, as far as philosophy is concerned, they await liberation by Hegel. The passage in the *Phenomenology* of which Foucault must be thinking in telling this story is one that has a similar content and dialectical pattern to that of many other passages in the *Phenomenology* and *Encyclopaedia*, for example the paragraph cited above from the *Philosophy of Mind*. Like this paragraph from the *Philosophy of Mind*, the passage in the *Phenomenology* makes explicit reference to madness, but there are more unexplicit allusions to forms of madness in the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopaedia* than readers usually acknowledge. It is arguable that madness is a key to the reading of these works.²¹

It is also arguable that madness is a key to the reading of the works of Kierkegaard and his pseudonymous and anonymous authors, provided we allow for a displacement of madness, a displacement of displacement, a derangement of derangement, as we move from Hegel to Kierkegaard. This movement from one movement to another, from one *kinēsis* to another, from one moment to

another (from *Augenblick* to *Øieblik*), can be traced only if we take time to read Hegel very closely.

The context of Hegel's explicit references to madness in the *Phenomenology* is a treatment of the figure of consciousness that purports to see the law of the heart as the only way to the welfare of humankind. Hegel's treatment has reached the stage of declaring his diagnosis when, under the heading "The Law of the Heart and the Frenzy (*Wahnsinn*) of Self-Conceit," he writes:

The heart-throb for the welfare of humanity therefore passes into the ravings of an insane self-conceit (*das Toben des verrückten Eigendünkels*), into the fury (*Wut*) of consciousness to preserve itself from destruction; and it does this by expelling from itself the perversion (*Verkehrtheit*) which it is itself, and by striving to look on it and expressing it as something else. It therefore speaks of the universal order as a perversion of the law of the heart and of its happiness, a perversion invented by fanatical priests, gluttonous despots and their minions, who compensate themselves for their own degradation by degrading and oppressing others, a perversion which has led to the nameless misery of deluded humanity. In this its derangement (*Verrücktheit*), consciousness declares its individuality (*Individualität*) to be the source of this derangement and perversion, but one that is alien (*fremde*) and accidental (*zufällige*). It is the heart, however, or the singularity (*Einzelheit*) of consciousness, that would be immediately universal, that is itself the source of this derangement, and the outcome of its action is merely that *its* consciousness becomes aware of this contradiction. For the True is for it the law of the heart—something merely *intended* (*Gemeintes*) which, unlike the established order, has *not stood the test of time*, but rather, when tested, is overthrown. This its law ought to have reality; the law, then, is for it *qua* reality, *qua* valid ordinance, its own name and essential nature; but reality, that very law *qua* valid ordinance, is on the contrary immediately for it something which is not valid. Similarly, its *own* reality, the heart *itself* as singularity of consciousness, is for it its essence; but its purpose is to establish that particular singularity as a *being* (*seiend*). Thus it is rather itself as *not* singular that is immediately for it its essence, or its purpose has the form of a law, hence the form of a universality, which it is for its own consciousness. This its Concept becomes by its own action its object; thus the heart learns rather that its self is not real, and that its reality is an unreality. It is therefore not an accidental and alien individuality, but just this heart, which in all its aspects is, in its own self, perverted and perverting.²²

Thus the heart learns that it has to take the step of becoming a head. One wonders whether that step might have to be made on feet of which at least one is made of glass, and whether the head itself or at least one of its eyes may be glass too. For is it not possible that the figure of madness outlined in this part of the *Phenomenology* is a metaphor for the moments of destruction, going under, breakdown, sacrifice, and metaphorization that the mind is called to endure patiently in some or all of the other crises of alienation and recuperation or cure of the *Phenomenology*, so that the *Phenomenology of Mind* would be a phe-

nomenology of going out of one's mind or of the mind's going out of itself along with a therapy for this? That would be in a very old tradition, a tradition as old as Plato, as old as philosophy itself, the tradition to which Derrida maintains that Descartes belongs, notwithstanding Foucault's attempt to exile Descartes from it, to commit him to an asylum as though he were mad—which would be one way, against Foucault's own intentions, of bringing Descartes back into the philosophical fold, if we may assume that not only the phenomenology of mind but philosophy itself is a philosophy of psychosis, a psychopathology.

Precisely that is what philosophy is according to the moral that Derrida draws from his meditation on Descartes's first Meditation and from what Foucault writes about that Meditation and about the history of madness (for despite their different readings of that Meditation Derrida concludes that "Michel Foucault teaches us to think that there are crises of reason in strange complicity with what the world calls crises of madness").²³ "Philosophy," Derrida writes, "is perhaps the reassurance given against the anguish of being mad at the point of greatest proximity to madness. This silent and specific moment could be called *pathetic*,"²⁴ a "first passion."²⁵ On the other hand, Derrida refers to "Danger as the movement of reason menaced by its own security,"²⁶ and maintains that it is *pathos* that secures *logos*—reason and philosophy—from this danger. Is this then a reaffirmation of the law of the heart which Hegel says is mad, *verrückt*, because it claims self-contradictorily both that it is immediacy and that it is an objective (*seiend*) reality? Derrida seeks to avoid such a reaffirmation by affirming that the moment of *pathos* in question is silent. But does not this formulation of the difficulty only underline the difficulty raised by Hegel for the proponent of the law of the heart? It is the difficulty that Foucault himself raises for his project of an archaeology—a *logos*—of the silence of madness. Is the only way out of this difficulty, Derrida asks, "to follow the madman down the road of his exile"? Or could one

perhaps say that the resolution of this difficulty is *practical* rather than *formulated*. By necessity. I mean that the silence of madness is not *said*, cannot be said in the *logos* of this [Foucault's] book, but is indirectly, metaphorically, made present by its *pathos*—taking this word in its best sense. A new and radical praise of folly whose intentions cannot be admitted because the *praise* (*éloge*) of silence always takes place *within logos*, the language of objectification.²⁷

The language of objectification is the stumbling-block the defenders of the law of the heart place in their own path when they maintain that the immediacy of feeling is an objective reality. It is to be heard already in the gloss Hegel puts on the term "individuality" used of the one who experiences the allegedly immediate feeling. For this term gets its sense, like all linguistic sense, from the universality to which it is opposed. The individual is posed or posited, and

thereby deposed and deposited, in the same dimension of reality as the universal to which it is opposed. So is a new Erasmus who seeks to write a *Praise of Folly* bound to discover that he has written instead a *Praise of Sanity*? If Hegel's psychopathology seems to entail this, so too already does Kant's if it insists that "[t]he one universal characteristic of madness (*Verrücktheit*) is loss of *common sense* (*sensus communis*) and substitution of *logical private sense* (*Eigensinn*) (*sensus privatus*)."²⁸ It becomes clear at once from the example of madness Kant gives—the case of someone seeing or hearing something no one else sees or hears—that the privacy he intends is a privacy that is only contingently private and that in principle can and should be made public. As with Hegel, no matter how resistant may be the madman's stubbornness (*Eigensinn*), his claims must be put to the test of time, that is to say to the test of corroboration. As with Hegel, the sense of this private sense is still logical and the logic is the logic of representation. The privacy and silence of the *pathos* to which Derrida alludes would be on the borderline of that logic, a disturbing nonsense on the threshold (*limen*) of sense which endangers that sense and causes *logos* to tremble. We can expect to learn more on the alternative geometry of that line and what it is to be on it when from what he says about the *pathos* and silence of madness in connection with Foucault and the *cogito* of Descartes Derrida turns to the fear and trembling of Johannes de silentio and that author's author.

Imprudence

That author's author writes in an entry in his journals and papers: "They say that experience (*Erfaring*) makes a man wise. This is very unreasonable talk. If there were nothing higher than experience, experience would drive a man mad (*gal*)."²⁹ That craziness would be a lower madness in comparison with what we may call, borrowing the phrase from the second section of this chapter, the higher madness. The higher madness would be that madness of which Kierkegaard speaks in connection with the Apostle Paul.

It is easy enough to defend the use of prudence in achieving something by appealing to Paul, who, after all, also used prudence. Well, let's take that. A life which has qualitatively and totally secured its own heterogeneity as madness (something, in fact, achieved by acting in total opposition to prudence), such a life can use prudence without any danger. But it is dangerous for a person not so distinguished to act prudentially, for then prudence makes capital of him *in toto*. Such a person has not secured for himself any heterogeneity (which, relative to Paul, is achieved only by acting decisively against reason at some time). Religious people do not think this. Religious persons undistinguished in this way religiously defend acting prudentially by appealing to Paul, without noticing or wanting to notice that the "total madness" ("*totale Galskab*")

of Paul's life, that is, its dissimilarity with prudence, adequately safeguarded him, while their crumb of religiosity drowns in the total prudence (*totale Klogskab*) of the world and the secular mentality.³⁰

Applying to this Derrida's reference to "Danger as the movement of reason menaced by its own security," one could say that Paul is protected from the menace of the security of his prudence by the danger of the heterogeneity he has secured through his madness. The theoretical counterpart to practical total prudence would be ancient Greek contemplation or modern Germano-Greek absolute knowing, the *sagesse* or *savoir absolu* of which the author of *Glas* (*Glasskab?*) is no great friend.³¹ Paul took it for his first mission to preach to those for whom the basis of his teaching is described as an offense or a stumbling-block. As Johannes Climacus, the pseudonymous author of the *Philosophical Fragments*, observes in a footnote, the Greek expression for this is *skandalizesthai*, in the middle voice. On the one side the offense is a suffering. "Christianity is really all too joyous, and therefore really to stick to Christianity a man must be brought to madness (*Afsindighed*) by suffering."³² We say, "He is offended." But the passive voice of this expression is crossed by the active voice of the equally apt expression "He takes offense." (Even more dramatic is the equivocity of the Welsh "*digio*" which means both to offend and to take offense. Such Abelian oppositions, as I shall call them, will be treated below in chapter 11.) This equivocity is manifested also in the words "passion" and "*pathos*." A passion may be regarded either as passive or active. It is this equivocity that gives rise to what Climacus calls an acoustic illusion. This is the illusion that the offense has its source in the understanding, and not in the paradox. (Compare Hegel's objection to philosophers who cannot see their way to granting that contradiction may be objectively real. And compare Derrida's interpretation of that other melancholy Dane's statement that the time is out of joint.)³³ The activity indicated by the fact that we say of someone that he takes offense leads us to mistake the understanding, perhaps the understanding and reason of the philosopher, for the origin of the activity, whereas the initiative is with the paradox itself. In a paragraph of complex and convoluted etymological resonances that prefigures such paragraphs in Heidegger and reveals the comedian within the passionately serious Dane, the words "moment" ("*Øieblik*") and "wonder" ("*Under*") are pronounced, words that Heidegger will adopt. But when Heidegger adopts the second of these words it translates Greek "*thaumazein*." That that is the wonder in which philosophy begins is what we are told by the Greeks. That is the moment that Socrates can know, if only what he knows at that moment is that he knows nothing. And when he begins to teach that we know nothing Socrates is opening the way for another beginning, a beginning in the moment of decision which remains foolishness to the Greeks, for instance those Corinthians to whom Paul directed his message after it had become a stumbling-block for the Jews.

The Jews were offended, but their memory of the story of Abraham and Isaac on the chosen land of Mount Moriah meant that the story of the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ would not be foolishness to them, not *mōria* (1 Corinthians 1:23), meaning (as in its derivative “moron”) the kind of dementia that is less a mental derangement than a lack of understanding or of reason. The latter is a typically Greek category, notwithstanding the Platonic acknowledgment that the love in the love of wisdom, in philosophy, is a god-inspired *mania*. For, whatever may be said about this *mania* under the name *furor* when the degrees of madness described in the *Phaedrus* are harnessed via Plotinus to Christianity by, for example, Ficino, knowledge of the universal continues to be the end that Platonism and Neoplatonism seek. What Plato calls *mania* stands to *thaumazein* as what Paul calls *mōria* stands to intellectual *stupor*, the stupidity that is a moment of the moment of wonder, an *Øieblik* of the *Øieblik* of *Under*. The Jews have already learned that there are things that surpass understanding. They have had to accept that the categories of knowledge have been shaken by the category of paradox. But for them the paradox of the incarnation is a paradox too far, a paradox that affronts not just their understanding, but their religious faith, with the exception of the one among them named Jesus and renamed Christ and the other among them named Saul and renamed Paul, the one whose shortness of stature is not an occasion for puffing himself up unless put under pressure by the Corinthians. The folly he tries but fails to avoid—compare verse 6 and verse 11 of 2 Corinthians 12—is *aphrōn*, the mindless excess of self-glorification. For although he takes second place to no one in apostolic authority, he cannot forget the thorn in his flesh and the infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses he is called to suffer for Christ’s sake.

This description matches that which Kierkegaard gives of himself, except that he never pretends that he is an apostle and often questions whether he dare call himself a Christian. Only by adopting a position he calls “armed neutrality,”³⁴ denying that he is a Christian and that he has had a revelation, can he deceive another into an awareness of the truth of Christianity. Let us not be deceived about deception. It is required by the indirect communication that is the only kind of communication that Socrates found was appropriate for him and that Kierkegaard finds necessary to his aesthetic and poetic mode of addressing the person who is confused over the difference between the religious and the aesthetic.³⁵ Kierkegaard humors this person, rather as Hegel humors the madman.

Nor will Kierkegaard and many of his pseudonymous writers go so far as to claim for themselves the title of religious genius. The religious genius has in common with the apostle that he is put under pressure and that he is mad. Of genius generally, Kierkegaard writes, citing Seneca, *De tranquillitate*, 17, 10:

Nullum unquam exstitit magnum ingenium sine aliqua dementia. The explanation is very simple. In order truly to be a great genius a man must be the exception. But in order that there shall be seriousness (*Alvor*) in being the exception, he must himself be unfree, forced into it. Herein lies the significance of his *dementia*. There is a fixed point at which he suffers; he cannot ever run with the crowd. This is his anguish. His *dementia* perhaps has nothing at all to do with his real genius, but it is the pain by which he is tormented into isolation—and he must be in isolation if he is to be great, and no man is able freely to hold himself in isolation; he must be constrained if he is to be serious.³⁶

The great genius is driven out of his mind because he is driven out of society. He must be driven out of society if he is to be driven out of his mind. This is because the mutation that madness implies also implies muteness; it prohibits at least direct communication. It is true that one way of maintaining an inner secrecy is constantly to indulge in talk. Kierkegaard cites Talleyrand's remark to this effect.³⁷ He refers to Talleyrand also, however, as an instance of a man of genius who might have become a great religious genius if he had not devoted himself to a career in the public world. Perhaps his clubfoot was a divine sign of this, comparable with Paul's shortness of stature and the thorn in his flesh—comparable too with what Kierkegaard called the thorn in his own flesh and with the spindly legs which protruded so far below his trousers that they provoked taunts from the burghers of Copenhagen. The spindly legs are but the outward physical sign of the inward spiritual splinter.

A genius equipped with all possible capacities, with power to dominate all existence and to make men obey him, discovers in his consciousness one little sticking point, one bit of madness (*Galskab*). He becomes so indignant over it that he decides to kill himself, for to him this one little point is not an externality (for example, being lame, one eyed, ugly, etc.; such would not concern him) but has an element of spirit and thus would seem capable of being removed in freedom—therefore it goads him.³⁸

When in the entry in the *Journals and Papers* reproduced before this last one Kierkegaard writes of the great genius, it is the religious genius that he means. That this is so is made clear when he writes elsewhere of the sentence cited from Seneca that it is “the secular expression for the religious thesis: one whom God blesses religiously he *eo ipso* execrates in a secular way. So it must be: the first has its basis in the boundaries (*Grændse*) of existence (*Tilværelse*) and the second in the doubleness (*Duplicitet*) of existence (*Tilværelsens*).”³⁹ Here, while anticipating the need to come back to ask in precisely what sense the religious is opposed to the secular, we come back to the notion of boundary (*Grenze*), Kant's definition of which was compared with Hegel's definition of limit (*Schranke*) in the third section of this chapter. We discovered there that

Hegel questions Kant's treatment of the line between understanding and reason as a barrier. When we come to the line between, on the one hand, understanding and reason and, on the other hand, what Kierkegaard means by religion, religion is no longer what it remained at its furthest development for both Kant and Hegel, within the boundaries of reason alone, where Passion is the history of the suffering of reason. With Kierkegaard the passion of religion must remain the suffering of the existing singular individual. Not any suffering whatsoever. Not the pain of toothache or of disappointed desire for worldly good fortune. The passion of religion, specifically of *imitatio Christi*, is the suffering of the doubleness of existence.⁴⁰ That doubleness or duplicity is described when, in a note mentioning that he has introduced the new pseudonym Anti-Climacus, he writes that "this is precisely the intimation of a halt; that is, the dialectical way of making a halt: you point to something higher which critically forces you back within your boundaries (*Grændse*)."⁴¹ The intimation of a halt is not the arrival at a halt. The dialectical way of making a halt is what Kierkegaard sometimes means when he uses the word "interesting" as a border category (*Grændsekategori*) or *confinium*. The word "*confinium*" is one that he frequently uses because, like the "inter" of "interesting," its first syllable indicates a duplicity. So that the dialectical way of making a halt is always the *dia-*, the *via*, the through and thoroughfare of a turning point on life's way, ultimately the life of a singular individual, therefore in a concrete historical situation, *in discrimine rerum*.⁴² This brings us to another turning point in our discussion, a return to Derrida's analysis of Foucault's *History of Madness*, a supplementary either-or on the Kierkegaardian confines of the scriptural and post-scriptural.

Passion

Derrida argues that a history of madness calls for a history of history, and a history of history and of madness cannot assume that what historicity is goes without saying. An account of historicity is called for, a *logos* of it, a philosophy of it. We have seen that Derrida argues too that such an account reveals that from the beginning philosophy is not simply contaminated by madness, but is quasi-conditioned by it. That is to say, the meaninglessness of madness is what makes philosophy and meaning and language possible, though at the same time it makes them impossible if philosophy and language are conceived as a systematic totality of pure sense, pure science, and pure reason. However, if this is so, it requires to be asked, as Foucault does not, whether the "classical," Cartesian moment at which Foucault maintains madness is excluded is at best an example in the sense of a sample, rather than an example in the sense of an exemplar and paradigm.

Kierkegaard is alive to the difference between objective historiography and existential historicity. The latter is for him the transfiguration of the temporal by the eternal. It is therefore neither pure factuality nor pure eternity. Its history is not to be understood retroactively as, say, “pagans before Christianity.”⁴³ Although and because he stresses this difference, a question similar to the one Derrida puts to Foucault must be put to Kierkegaard. He writes that “the possibility of offence is the dialectically decisive factor, is the ‘borderline’ (*Grændse*) between paganism, Judaism-Christianity,”⁴⁴ where, always punctilious on matters of punctuation,⁴⁵ instead of using a conjunctive “and” Kierkegaard prefers to use a comma (“paganism, Judaism-Christianity”) to stand for the decisive factor (*komma* comes from *koptō*, to cut). An implication of his not being primarily concerned with the chronological sequence of “pagans before Christianity” is that he does not limit paganism to what precedes Judaism-Christianity historiographically, say the *Weltanschauung* of the ancient Greeks, of which he sees Socrates to be one of the earliest critics. Rife in his contemporary Denmark was what he calls Christian paganism. Perhaps that is why in the sentence just reproduced he writes “borderline” in quotation marks. This may be in order to mark a less decisive cut that could be marked by “and,” where Judaism-Christianity could be mentioned in the same breath as paganism or Mohammedanism or Hinduism or Buddhism and so on. Alternatively, the relation between any one of these and Judaism-Christianity might be marked, as in the cited sentence, by a decisive comma, or by a hyphen (grammatically intermediate in force between the comma and the “and”?) such as marks the discontinuity in the continuity of Judaism-Christianity. We do not have to question Kierkegaard’s right to opt his own options. Nor do we have to deny that in saying this we are speaking, as he would say, aesthetically. But he himself and his pseudonymous authors demand that an account of the stages of life’s way be given that is dialectical in the sense of reflective but not dialectical in the sense of the System of Hegel. Now Heidegger’s thinking of the epochs of being is another way of challenging Hegel. It may be said, as Levinas says, that this is still too close to Hegel for comfort, too close to provide comfort, because it springs from *thaumazein* understood as wonder at the being of there being anything at all (*thauma-sein?*). We might instead, taking as point of departure what Heidegger writes about *Ereignis*, explore with Derrida the chance that both systematic philosophy or metaphysics and the thinking of being have always been on the borderline of madness or of what Levinas goes as far as to call psychotic obsession, possession and persecution by the human or other other—an astonishing eventuality Kierkegaard touches on when in *The Book on Adler* he writes that religion is not something one has, but something one is had by, a circumstance to which we shall return in our last chapter.⁴⁶ But religion is something one may be had by in the sense that it may be that by which one is taken in. This

possibility is necessary for religion. Religion is necessarily on the borderline of madness. It is always exposed to the chance that its God or its god can be explained away either in the language of rational justification, for instance the rationality of Hegel which talks the madman out of his madness, or in the language of causal explanation, or in both of these languages, as is the case with a feature of sentences reproduced in the third section of this chapter from §57 of Kant's *Prolegomena*, to which we promised to come back.

In the compass of a few sentences Kant has recourse again and again to the word "*gleich*." It is as though the sound of the word is dictating its use, as though he has lost control of his senses. Do we have here then a phenomenon for which only a causal explanation can be given? Not if his sentences make sense. And they do make sense, even though a purely causal theory ("echolalia"?) may have to be invoked to explain why Kant expresses this sense precisely in this seemingly obsessive way. As Kant's own philosophical theory maintains, accounts in terms of reasons and accounts in terms of causal explanations are not incompatible. But both types of account are objective. Therefore to give either kind of account of what Kierkegaard calls his inward subjective passion is to miss the point, what one of his titles calls "the point of view of my work as an author." He may well agree with Kant that the relationship to God is a kind of mental derangement (*Sindssvaghed*),⁴⁷ but the subjectivity of this derangement places it as far beyond the range of all rational or causal accounting as the singular according to Aristotle is beyond scientific knowledge. Subjective passion is unaccountable, being ultimately the condition of accountability. The madness of subjective passion is the madness of the idiot in the etymological sense of the term *idios*, the singular and solitary individual Kierkegaard calls *den Enkelte*, hence for him first of all the author who signs himself S. K. or SK or SAK.⁴⁸

There is both an enormous risk and an enormous security about this subjective passion. It is the passion of choosing myself absolutely. The ab-solution performed is ab-solution with a hyphen, that is to say, it is separation. It is the unbinding of myself in my binding myself to myself. What I unbind myself from is this and that, what Eckhart and Angelus Silesius call things. These things are things of the world. Moreover, these things include what we call God, insofar as God is regarded as a thing, albeit a highest thing. In the archaic script of Silesius's *Der Cherubinischer Wandersmann* God's name is written *GOtt*. There is a God or a god that must go. This is that God that exists—or does not. And the risk of the non-existence of this God is the chance of SK's eternal salvation. Not a duration in time but an endurance in eternity, Kierkegaard's eternal salvation is not contingent upon the contingent or necessary existence of God. "By itself, to have a genuine concern for one's eternal salvation (as Christianity requires), this alone is an enormous weight compared to the manner of living that leaves the eternal an open question."⁴⁹ That question ceases to be open when I choose

the absolute. “And what is the absolute? It is I myself in my eternal validity.”⁵⁰ This validity is not undermined by the non-existence of God. My idiocy saves me from the madness by which I might be said to be gripped if I persisted in believing I heard a voice (as Abraham believed he heard God’s voice bidding him take Isaac into the land of Moriah and then, on Moriah, the voice of an angel of the Lord bidding him not to lay his hand on the lad) when there was no one there to speak (as “there was no voice, nor any that answered” when on Carmel at Elijah’s behest the people called upon Baal [1 Kings 18:26, 29]).⁵¹ My choice of my eternal validity is self-validating. This does not mean that its validity is independent of how I comport myself toward others. The faith in which the choice of myself is made is what saves ethical works from the pure universality of Kantian *Moralität* and the mere public custom of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*.

In this way Kierkegaard’s choice of himself does what in Levinas’s teaching on the ethical is performed by my being elected by the other. In Levinas’s writings the other may be the human other or God, yet the metaphysical or empirical existence of the other as God is as beside the point for Levinas as it is for Kierkegaard. What Levinas calls psychosis, like what we have called the idiocy of the Kierkegaardian subject, is immune from exposure to the sort of madness we might diagnose in the case of someone who persists in believing that he is being addressed when there is no one there to address him. Now the doctrines that Kierkegaard and Levinas propose are not doctrines that hold only for themselves. As Derrida asks rhetorically, when Levinas writes in reference to the system of Hegel “It is not I who do not accept the system, as Kierkegaard thought, it is the other,” “Can one not wager that Kierkegaard would have been deaf to the distinction?”⁵² That is to say, Kierkegaard does not deny that there are other subjects capable of passionate subjectivity like himself. Kierkegaard is speaking of subjectivity in general. He knows, to quote Derrida again, that “[t]he name of a philosophical subject, when he says *I*, is always, in a certain way, a pseudonym.” Derrida again: “The other is not myself—and whoever has ever maintained that it is?—but it is *an* Ego, as Levinas must suppose in order to maintain his own discourse.”

Nevertheless, there remains a difference between Levinas’s and Kierkegaard’s conceptions of the Ego. What Levinas calls the psychism of the ego, mine or another’s, is its being addressed by another. The self owes itself to its being addressed, even accused and persecuted by another, and primarily by another human being, where it is only through the other human being that one can make sense of the word “God.” It is by the other that the self’s egoity becomes ethical, and this holds too for the other. The psychism of the other is psychotic, being chosen and possessed by yet another. With Kierkegaard, however, the self chooses itself. It remains egological, if not egoistic. With Kierkegaard selfhood is affect or passion. With Levinas it is the affect of affect, the passion of passion

before the face of another. In the first place this face is the face of another human being. The other is my center of gravity. Kierkegaard's stress on subjectivity and inwardness makes it difficult to see how for him the center of gravity could be other than oneself. Where he does say things suggesting that my choice of myself is also my being chosen, as when he writes "I can say that I choose the absolute which chooses me,"⁵³ the absolute that chooses me may be God, but it is not the other human being. Where for Levinas the move to God is made through the other human being, the human being comes after and through God for Kierkegaard. Now although I may be wrong in supposing that the call of this human being is more urgent than the call of that one, there is no room for mistake as to whether another human being calls. My ethical responsibility is unconditional. Not so according to the doctrine of Kierkegaard, not if by the ethical we mean not purely universal morality or public custom, but the religiously ethical that is moved by passionate choice of the self. For if the choice of the self is a response to the voice of God we are back with the risk that I am imagining that voice, imagining it [*sic*], one might say. I am on a borderline not only of the madness from which, according to Hegel and Kant, I may be turned by reasoning. I am on the borderline not just of the psychosis which, according to Levinas's humanism of the other human being, is both passion and the rationality of rationality, rationality par excellence, his ultra-passive version of the ultra-active intellect that according to Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias comes into the mind and the world as if from outside as if it were a God. I am on the borderline not simply of the idiocy of excommunication implied by Kierkegaard's notion of the singular individual, the borderline of the *dementia* that "perhaps . . . is the pain by which he is tormented into isolation." All three of these madnesses are in their different ways conditions of ethicality. But ethicality is under threat once I find myself on the borderline of the madness of fancying I hear someone who is not there. This is not a reassertion of the thought that for ethics to grow up it must pass through the test of being suspended. After the test of which Abraham's decision to sacrifice his son is a paradigm, ethics is given back transfigured. There is a transfiguration of ethicality too when its universality is interrupted by the singularity of one's being faced by another human being. In this humanistic transfiguration of the ethical there is a transfiguration also of the metaphysical. The metaphysical becomes the ethical. But the metaphysical retains its traditional sense when it posits God as a being, albeit highest being, believed in on the basis of experience. To cite again Kierkegaard's words, "They say that experience makes a man wise. This is very unreasonable talk. If there were nothing higher than experience, experience would drive a man mad."⁵⁴ If to base belief in God on belief of the objectively historical facts of Christianity is to court a lower madness, the higher madness is to choose to believe in God in a way that is independent of

the objectively historical facts because in the passionately subjective choice of oneself made in this choice to believe in God the historical is the contemporary. The choice is a choice against objectivity for subjectivity, against the crowd for isolation, for passion, for suffering: “really to stick to Christianity a man must be brought to madness (*Afsindighed*) by suffering.”⁵⁵ And this brings us back finally to the peaceful coexistence of madness and lucidity referred to in the second section of this chapter on the borderline of madness. We have treated of madness at some length. We have spoken only indirectly of the *lucida intervalla*. Where lies the borderline between madness and lucidity?

A man is already brought to suffering as soon as he is brought to isolation, for isolation is contrary to the urge toward direct communication that is natural to the human being. Direct communication is the propounding of propositions, the declaration of beliefs and opinions, *doxa*. But “really to stick to Christianity” is to be struck by the paradox of the God-man, to be offended by it. Christianity is not a belief, a teaching. A teaching or a doctrine is such as a Greek may find foolish, a contradiction in terms, even a madness, but only a lower because abstract madness. The madness of Christianity begins to become concrete when the Jew, for instance Peter, is scandalized by the thought of God become man; as we have already observed, according to Kierkegaard “the possibility of offence is the dialectically decisive factor, is the ‘borderline’ (*Grændsen*) between paganism, Judaism-Christianity.”⁵⁶ To this scandalous offense to reason the Christian responds with belief that is not the overcoming of intellectual and therefore abstract doubt, but a passage through a suffering of the paradox.⁵⁷ Why a suffering of the paradox? Why does the paradox of the God-man bring pain? Because this paradox is not an abstract formal contradiction, but the suffering willingly accepted when God becomes abased as a suffering servant, and because Christianity is concrete this-worldly *imitatio Christi*. That is what it means for Christ to be one’s contemporary. It means that the Christian is patient in the passion which in his human way, and “confirming at every moment the chasmic abyss between the single individual and the God-man over which faith and faith alone reaches,”⁵⁸ he shares with the passion of the God-man.

And the passion is a passing. It is a passing through madness. The higher madness is a transition. To what is it a transition? Not to the lucidity in which one recognizes that what seemed to be madness was not madness at all. That would be a return to the lucidity of the purely universal and to the possibility of communicating it directly. That would be a return to Hegel and to Greece. The transition of the higher madness is rather a transition to grace. It is a transition to the space in which direct communication is bent through ninety degrees by irony and humor. Kierkegaard tells of Lucretius, “a Roman poet who was mad but had his more lucid moments and devoted these very moments to his poem

De rerum natura.⁵⁹ Lucretius was a heathen. This may explain why he could not do what the poet of Christianity can do, write “both in and out of season,” both in his intervals of madness and in his intervals of lucidity, so that “it will be hard to distinguish the one from the other.” It will be hard to distinguish the one from the other because the intervals of lucidity are intervals in madness and the intervals of madness are intervals in lucidity, as the movement of a blink or a wink (*Øieblik*) is a moment both of darkness and of light. Lucidity here is the lucidity of madness, madness’s lucidity. Madness here is the madness of lucidity, lucidity’s madness. Here the borderline of madness is neither simply a *Grenze* nor simply a *Schranke*, neither as defined by Kant nor as defined by Hegel in the passages reproduced in the third section of this chapter. For although in the transition across this line lucidity is not left behind, any more than spatiality is left behind by the line that is the border of a square, the lucidity to which one moves is not like that to which reasoning would bring the madman according to the cure prescribed by Hegel. If the lucidity to which humoring brings the madman is still a madness it is only what in the immediately preceding section of this chapter we decided to call a lower madness. When the transition is made not by humoring but by humor, *logos* is crossed with *pathos*. The *Logos* is the Passion, the Word is existed as suffering, is lived as death on the Cross. The line of the borderline of madness that is crossed in becoming a Christian is never finally crossed. The Cross remains an eternal crossing. This eternal crossing of the Cross that saves is eternal salvation. The suffering without end, without point, without *telos* and without pause, period, or stop (*Standsning*), is the eternal rest.⁶⁰ The line between eternal suffering and eternal salvation is invisible. This is why a reader of Kierkegaard can write of a *pathos* of “feeling absolutely safe. I mean the state of mind in which one is inclined to say ‘I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens.’”⁶¹

Wittgenstein, the reader of Kierkegaard just alluded to, writes also that some things one is inclined to say must be consigned to the secrecy of silence. And those servants of the secrecy of silence who bear the name Soren Kierkegaard or pseudonyms like Johannes de silentio would affirm with their countersignatures that the higher madness is in danger of being reduced to the lower if whatever is written on the borderline of madness is said directly, without a sense of irony and humor.