MADNESS IN EXPERIENCE AND HISTORY

Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology
and Foucault's Archaeology

Hannah Lyn Venable

"Merleau-Ponty's precision analysis of the lived body and experience, and Foucault's sweeping yet detailed history of psychiatric disorders have much to tell us about our understanding of psychopathology. Hannah Lyn Venable brings these two thinkers together to flesh out the connections between the phenomenological dimensions and the larger social and cultural structures, and to provide new, fresh insights into what is missing in contemporary medical accounts of madness."

—**Shaun Gallagher**, *Lillian and Morrie Moss Professor of Philosophy at University of Memphis, author of* How the Body Shapes the Mind

Madness in Experience and History

Madness in Experience and History brings together experience and history to show their impact on madness or mental illness.

Drawing on the writings of two twentieth-century French philosophers, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Michel Foucault, the author pairs a phenomenological approach with an archaeological approach to present a new perspective on mental illness as an experience that arises out of common behavioral patterns and shared historical structures. Many today feel frustrated with the medical model because of its deficiencies in explaining mental illness. In response, the author argues that we must integrate human experiences of mental disorders with the history of mental disorders to have a full account of mental health and to make possible a more holistic care.

Scholars in the humanities and mental health practitioners will appreciate how such an analysis not only offers a greater understanding of mental health, but also a fresh take on discovering value in diverse human experiences.

Hannah Lyn Venable, PhD, works in ethics and continental philosophy, especially existentialism, phenomenology and post-structuralism. Her articles have appeared in the journals *Foucault Studies*, *Religions*, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* and *Philosophy & Theology*. She has taught at the University of Dallas, Texas State University and Trinity University, and is now an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Mary.

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To my beautiful Hadarah

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Preface

During my year of living in Paris while working on this project, I would often follow the same streets and frequent the same cafés where Merleau-Ponty and Foucault had walked and visited about half a century earlier. With my head filled with phrases from their writings, I would reflect on the scenes of Paris around me knowing that it was in this urban milieu that many of their ideas first originated and grew. I sometimes discovered traces of their presence that still lingered in the city. In visiting the Collège de France, for example, I encountered Merleau-Ponty's famous phrase from his inaugural lecture inscribed in large gold letters across the top of a conference room: *Non pas des vérités aquises mais l'idée d'une recherche libre* ["Not already-acquired truths, but the idea of free research."][1] As I stood there staring at the inscription, I was reminded of the personal impact that Merleau-Ponty made in that place. I found Foucault's presence, among other places, still in the memories of people there. In speaking with an older lady who was renting her apartment to us for a few days, I learned that she had been an acquaintance of Foucault and part of his social circle. "What was he like as a person? Was he nice?" I asked. "No, he wasn't nice," she replied somewhat indignantly, "but he was intelligent and well-spoken." The streets and people of Paris provided a geographic context for the work of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault, and it is in this same location, years later, that this project also began to take root and grow.

Although Paris provided the perfect milieu for the growth of this project, it only came to fruition because of the many people who supported me along the way. I would like to thank Chad Engelland, Philipp Rosemann, Emmanuel Falque and Scott Churchill for all the time they have spent discussing my project with me, reading my work and providing

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1. In the English translation of this inaugural lecture, this phrase is "not of giving to its hearers already-acquired truths, but the idea of free investigation." See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *In Praise of Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. John O'Neill (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 3.

Part I

Introducing the United Approach

Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point. [The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing.][1]

The madman is not the man who has lost his reason. The madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason.[2]

Despite his advancements in math and physics, Blaise Pascal recognizes that scientific and rational explanations are insufficient in fully capturing human experience. Pascal draws out the mysterious elements buried in the hearts of the human which no rationality can completely explain nor justify. Our rationality is essential to our humanness, but rationality itself cannot account for its own origin. There is something else behind rationality that manifests in those secret "reasons" of our hearts that the rational cannot comprehend.

In a similar way, G.K. Chesterton points to the way rationality can manifest in nonrationality when we consider the reasons that are still present in someone considered mad. It is not that a madman has entirely lost his reason; in fact, there are usually perfectly understandable reasons for his behavior, even if the reasons do not match reality. By citing examples of mental disorders, Chesterton points to the use of an extreme rationalism by the madman as an analogy for the untenable position of a rationalist skeptic. Both Pascal and Chesterton expose the influence of the rational on nonrational behavior, provoking us to reconsider our understanding of human rationality.

To begin our quest of rethinking madness and human rationality, I first define the key terms "madness," "rational" and "nonrational," and introduce the chosen methods, phenomenology and archaeology, that are used in this book. Next, in the first chapter, I argue for three insights

1. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), Fragment 423, p. 127.
2. G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 17–18.

that can only be gained by an approach to madness that integrates experience in history and demonstrate how these insights avoid some of the problems of modern psychology. For each insight, I draw on contributions from Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and Foucault's archaeology to give an initial picture for how they can be brought together in unity.

Introduction

This project faces the challenge of analyzing madness or mental illness from two diverse perspectives: human experience and human history. No one will deny the impact that experience and history have on our view of madness, but it is rare to find an approach which sees the intertwining of experience and history as the key to a greater understanding of mental illness. I take up this approach and argue that we must integrate human experiences of madness with the history of madness in order to have a full account of mental health and to make possible a more holistic care.

For a description of the individual's experience of madness, I draw from the phenomenological approach of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who supports his account with documented studies and observations from psychology. For an expression of the historical perspective on madness, I turn to the archaeological approach of Michel Foucault, who supports his account with selected historical records and events. To accomplish the integration between them, I pair the phenomenological insights with historical structures demonstrating how an understanding of the distorted experience of madness is further illuminated by the cultural perceptions of madness. This process brings together the phenomenological idea that madness is intrinsic to human experience with the historical awareness that madness arises out of cultural structures. We find a reciprocal relationship between how historical structures define madness and how humans express experiences of madness. The validity of this relationship is confirmed by performing an analysis on the connections between historical and current descriptions of madness.

Ultimately, this type of analysis brings to light not just a greater understanding of mental health but points us to the value found in diverse human experiences. It pushes against the medical model which often makes a stark contrast between "abnormal" and "normal" humans and shows how it stems from an even deeper philosophical division between the notions of the "rational" and the "nonrational." While these categories can be helpful in discussion, such sharp dichotomies do not exist, neither experientially nor historically, and need to be broken down in order to have a deeper understanding of mental illness and common

human experience. When we see the common way that we experience the world and the shared manner in which we are shaped by history, we are reminded of the equal value that should be given to all human life.

Exploring the role of rationality in humanity has been an important theme throughout philosophy. From Aristotle's priority of the rational part of the human soul over the nonrational parts, to Camus's description of the fundamental absurdity (or nonrationality) of human life, philosophers over time have grappled with how humans relate to the nonrational. Our thinkers, Merleau-Ponty and Foucault, however, are primarily concerned with one particular narrative about human rationality which originated with Descartes and which has arguably influenced the modern understanding of the human more than any other. They both believe that his account of the rational, or at least the interpretation of his account, contains grave errors, leading to mistaken assumptions about the human and mistaken assumptions about the notion of nonrationality.

In his famous *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes attempts to prove his own existence by establishing that he is "a thing which thinks."[1] The priority for Descartes is on the thinking quality of the human and thus the rationality of the human mind. Modern philosophy (often called "rationalism") latches on to this understanding of the human such that the human is defined exclusively by its ability to think, ability to be rational, resulting in a definition which fails to consider the significance of the behavior and role of the body. Merleau-Ponty is concerned that the Cartesian split between the mind and body reduces the human to a rational mind sitting on top of a nonrational body and that this devalues the body by seeing it only in terms of an animal or a machine.[2] Furthermore, the Cartesian model focuses entirely on the autonomy and power of the individual human mind, neglecting how constructions and structures of society also shape the human. This problem is part of what drives Foucault's concerns: he aims to show how the understanding of the rational and the nonrational, and even the identity of the human, change according to the shifts in history.

In addition to the Cartesian method, they are also responding to the Kantian tradition which reconfigures the split between the mind and the body into the divide between the phenomenal (material) and noumenal (immaterial) worlds. Although they see Kant as offering a good starting place, his reformulations still do not bring a unity to human

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1. René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Laurence J. Lafleur (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1951), Second Meditation, p. 26.
2. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*, ed. Dominque Seglard, trans. Robert Vallier (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003). We will discuss this more in Ch. 2, A.

experience. In the spirit of Pascal, as seen in the opening quote to Part I, our thinkers seek to demonstrate that the human cannot be defined solely by a rational mind, because the heart of the human has reasons which cannot always be explained. They use their respective investigations into madness, according to the phenomenological and archaeological approaches, to expand the definition of the rational and to go beyond the division between the rational and the nonrational itself. Merleau-Ponty calls on twentieth-century philosophers to "explore the irrational and integrate it into an expanded reason [*raison élargie*]."[3] Foucault accepts Merleau-Ponty's invitation to enlarge the rational and carries out this quest through his examination of the nonrational in the history of madness.[4] They continue to use vocabulary related to rationality, such as reason and logic, and those related to nonrationality, such as unreason, the pre-rational and the irrational, but they do so in order to tease out the relation and tension between the rational and the nonrational and to point to a unity that transcends them in what they will later call "flesh."[5] In this same way, each use of "rational" and "nonrational" in this book will always be placed in its proper context and always with the purpose of expanding our vision of them, pushing back against this false binary.

A. Perspective From Experience: Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology, literally meaning the "study of phenomena," rests on the human's perspective of and relation to the world. Working in the phenomenological tradition, Merleau-Ponty sees that it is only as a human that we understand the world and it is as a human that we have access to knowledge. We cannot be some kind of god, as Merleau-Ponty repeats, who is apart from the world, viewing it from above, because we are intimately "attached to [the world]" and dependent on this attachment.[6] For Merleau-Ponty, philosophy begins and ends with the human;

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3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Hegel's Existentialism," in *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 63.
4. See Frédéric Gros, *Foucault et la folie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 30.
5. We will discuss their shared approach to rationality in the opening to Part IV and their shared idea of flesh briefly in Ch. 7, B.2.
6. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2012), 228. See also 317, 375, and 391. The phrase "is attached to it" (*tient à lui*) comes from *tenir à* which can be translated in many ways including "attached to," "hold to," "care for," "fit with" and "fit into." These phrases indicate the emotional and physical aspects of my connection to the world: I am attached to, holding onto, caring for, fitting with and fitting into the world. See 535n21 for Landes's comments on this.

philosophy retains significance only as it relates to the human, because we cannot go beyond the human context of the world.

Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, plays the largest role in shaping Merleau-Ponty's understanding of what it means to practice phenomenology. After doing work in the philosophy of math, Husserl later develops the method that he calls, "transcendental phenomenology" in his *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, published in 1913.[7] Husserl's method starts with the way we intuitively grasp the world and demonstrates how many of our ideas and beliefs about the world come from these initial encounters and experiences. By reflecting on these first encounters, we then create rational categories and connections to make sense of our experiences. This is not to say that we project the rational connections on to our experiences, but we are drawing out of the experiences a sense that is already present in them. To sketch it in basic terms, Husserl's method first highlights the way we experience objects of the world in a "natural" way in order to then study the structures that establish the objects of the world in our consciousness or our self-awareness.[8] This shift, called "transcendental reduction," results in the investigation known as "eidetic intuition" where one recognizes the forms (from the Greek *eidos*) that are implicit in human experience.

Merleau-Ponty clearly follows the general principles of this method by beginning with the human's initial attachment to the world and then reflecting on how this primordial attachment impacts our experiences and perceptions of the world. He opens his *Phenomenology of Perception* by building on Husserl's work in phenomenology including the "eidetic method" which he defines as "phenomenological positivism grounding the possible upon the real."[9] Thus, we should be aware of the great impact Husserl's general approach to philosophy has on Merleau-Ponty, such that Merleau-Ponty owes his direction and orientation more to him than perhaps any other philosopher. But with that said, there are two reasons that Merleau-Ponty does not apply Husserl's method in a precise and literal way. First, Merleau-Ponty is not strictly a scholar of Husserl, even by his own admission. In his only piece of writing specifically on Husserl, entitled "The Philosopher and

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7. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (London: Routledge, 2010).
8. See Ch. 2, A for further discussion on the definition of consciousness. See also Christian Beyer's definition of "transcendental phenomenology" which "focuses on the essential structures that allow the objects naively taken for granted in the 'natural attitude' to 'constitute themselves' in consciousness." See Christian Beyer, "Edmund Husserl," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/husserl/.
9. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxxi.

His Shadow," Merleau-Ponty seeks to uncover the "unthought-of ele-
ment" in Husserl and admits that it may "seem foolhardy on the part
of someone who has known neither Husserl's daily conversation nor his
teaching" to attempt this.[10] This is not to say that he was not well-versed
in Husserl's texts, as is shown in Ted Toadvine's extensive chronologi-
cal account of Merleau-Ponty's references to Husserl in all his works.[11]
In fact, Merleau-Ponty's consideration of Husserl is not just found in
his earlier works, but "increases rather than diminishes" over time.[12]
Even with this increase of interest, however, Toadvine summarizes,
"Merleau-Ponty was certainly not a Husserl scholar in any strict sense
of the term."[13]

In addition to not having the full technical knowledge of Husserl's
work, the second reason for his looser application of Husserl's method
is due to his own conviction on how a philosopher ought to be appropri-
ated. In "The Philosopher and His Shadow," he opens with a beautiful
explanation on this:

> Establishing a tradition means forgetting its origins, the aging Husserl
> used to say. Precisely because we owe so much to tradition, we are in
> no position to see just what belongs to it. With regard to a philosopher
> whose venture has awakened so many echoes . . . any commemoration
> is also a betrayal—whether we do him the highly superfluous homage
> of our thoughts . . . or whether on the contrary . . . we reduce him too
> strictly to what he himself desired and said.[14]

There is a fine line to walk, Merleau-Ponty says, in how we respect a phi-
losopher who has gone before us. We must find the "middle-ground"
between crediting a philosopher with all of our thoughts, when they are
actually our own original ideas, and taking a philosopher literally, by
constraining our thoughts to the philosopher's exact words.[15] Merleau-
Ponty sees in Husserl's philosophy a way of approaching the world which
arises from Husserl's own thought but goes beyond his thought at the

10. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Philosopher and His Shadow," in *Signs*, trans. Richard
C. McCleary (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 160. Merleau-Ponty
did attend Husserl's "Paris Lectures," later published as the *Cartesian Meditations*, in
1929 but it was, unfortunately, before he knew German, as Toadvine documents: Ted
Toadvine, "Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl," in *Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Hus-
serl*, ed. Ted Toadvine and Lester Embree (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers,
2002), 229.
11. Toadvine, "Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl," 227–86.
12. Toadvine, "Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl," 228.
13. Toadvine, "Introduction," in Toadvine and Embree, *Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl*, xvi.
14. Merleau-Ponty, "The Philosopher and His Shadow," 159.
15. Merleau-Ponty, "The Philosopher and His Shadow," 159.

same time, something that is "wholly his [Husserl's] and yet opens out on something else."[16]

Although Merleau-Ponty draws on many aspects of Husserl's philosophy such as the general principles of transcendental phenomenology, as mentioned above, there are two key ideas that influence Merleau-Ponty and play a role in this project in particular. First, Merleau-Ponty follows Husserl in using the method of *epoché* or bracketing in order to focus on the first-person experience of the world. By putting aside theories and opinions about objects of the world, the philosopher can consider the description of the experience first and learn about the basic way humans interact with the world. While Husserl sees bracketing as producing final results, Merleau-Ponty, in contrast, will emphasize that it is a process which is never completed and will be ongoing for the philosopher. Secondly, Husserl's notion of the *lifeworld*, found in *Ideas II*, is also an important notion for Merleau-Ponty. The "lifeworld" signifies for Husserl all the aspects of the environment that surround a person, including both people and objects which bring any kind of meaning to him or her.[17] Building on this expansive idea of a subject's lifeworld, Merleau-Ponty seeks to explore other disciplines to further describe and capture the environment around us.[18]

Thus, by following the "spirit" of Husserl's philosophy, as opposed to the "letter" of it, Merleau-Ponty has the freedom to profit from Husserl's method but, at the same time, make it uniquely his own.[19] Merleau-Ponty still centers his study on the human experience of phenomena, according to a first-person perspective, but he seeks to understand experience by turning to studies done in other disciplines. This is because Merleau-Ponty sees phenomenology as not just one way of seeing things, but a method which allows for the possibility of seeing things from many different angles. Emmanuel Falque writes that phenomenologists, like Merleau-Ponty, "who boast of having eyes to see . . . recognize that they often don't see what others see, which contributes all the more to the richness and plurality of phenomenologies."[20] Merleau-Ponty's openness to other perspectives and other disciplines, as a

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16. Merleau-Ponty, "The Philosopher and His Shadow," 160.
17. Beyer, "Edmund Husserl": "Husserl . . . characterizes the environment [of the lifeworld] as a world of entities that are 'meaningful' to us in that they exercise 'motivating' force on us and present themselves to us under egocentric aspects."
18. For an in depth account of the relationship between Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, please see the chapters in the edited volume: Toadvine and Embert, eds., *Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl*.
19. Toadvine, "Merleau-Ponty's Reading of Husserl," 237.
20. Emmanuel Falque, *The Metamorphosis of Finitude: An Essay on Birth and Resurrection*, trans. George Hughes (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 33.

way of exploring what others may see, provides a richness and expansiveness to his phenomenology.

It is through this unique approach to phenomenology that Merleau-Ponty concentrates on disciplines which provide insights into the experience of the human body, as opposed to the experience of consciousness in early Husserl. As Emmanuel de Saint Aubert writes, we must distinguish Merleau-Ponty's focus on embodiment from Husserl's focus on pure consciousness and in so doing, we can continue to discover fruit from his method in areas such as neurology, psychology and psychoanalysis.[21] Perhaps following Husserl's later thoughts on the body in *Ideas II*, Merleau-Ponty centers his phenomenology around the body and looks to other studies to complement it. For this project, it is the way Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology draws from psychology, in particular, which gives us insight into the topic of madness and the nonrational.

B. Perspective From History: Foucault's Archaeological Approach

Foucault's interest in studying the structures of history through a kind of "archaeology" was fostered in the French intellectual environment of the 1950s and 1960s where he studied and trained. Among the many figures who influenced him, Merleau-Ponty arguably played the largest role in his philosophical training. Not only did Foucault faithfully attend many of Merleau-Ponty's lectures, including those on psychology, but he also took up the same problems regarding the human subject as Merleau-Ponty, which ended up orienting Foucault's entire philosophical trajectory (see Chapter 6, A). In regard to his interest in the philosophy of science, Foucault's intellectual training was also cultivated and supported by Georges Canguilhem (see Chapter 4, C.2). Gary Gutting and Johanna Oksala note: "Canguilhem sponsored Foucault's doctoral thesis on the history of madness and, throughout Foucault's career, remained one of his most important and effective supporters."[22] And it is likely that Canguilhem's emphasis on historical structures is what drew Foucault away from a strictly phenomenological perspective.

In this intellectual background, Foucault develops his archaeological approach in his "first archaeological work," the *History of Madness,*

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21. Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, *Être et chair: du corps au désir: l'habilitation ontologique de la chair* (Paris: Vrin, 2013), 17: "Pour Merleau-Ponty, la 'merveille des merveilles' n'est pas le pur Je et la pure conscience (Husserl), mais le corps humain et sa puissance d'incorporation."
22. Gary Gutting and Johanna Oksala, "Michel Foucault," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/foucault/.

as Elisabetta Basso calls it.[23] Following the meaning of archaeology as a digging up and studying places and artifacts of human history, Foucault sees his method as a way of excavating the hidden structures that support the construction of cultural institutions and practices. Foucault drops hints that he is moving toward an archaeological method in the text of the *History of Madness*. In the preface, he expresses this as his main motivation: "The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue by reason about madness, could only have come into existence in such a silence. My intention was not to write the history of that language, but rather draw up the archaeology of that silence."[24] Rather than repeating the mainstream history of psychiatry, Foucault wants to dig up the structures that are found in the gaps of that history, in the places that have been silenced. These hidden places include the "archaeology of that alienation" of those who have been pushed outside of society and whose voices have not been heard.[25] His archaeological approach is particularly "historical" in the *History of Madness* because he relies on historical records of events, documents and accounts that relate to madness.

Despite his extensive study, it is well-known that scholars, particularly English-speaking ones, have accused Foucault of relying on false and inaccurate information in his "histories" and thus have been reluctant to call him a "true historian" or his approach "historical." Speaking specifically about Foucault's 1961 *History of Madness*, H.C. Erik Midelfort, for example, states that Foucault's "arguments fly in the face of empirical evidence" and Lawrence Stone, in the *New York Review of Books*, writes that Foucault is "unconcerned with historical detail of time and place or with rigorous documentation."[26] However, as Colin Gordon argues, many of these criticisms are unfounded because they were based on the 1965 abridged English version entitled *Madness and Civilization*, which left out passages of an important historical nature documented in the

23. See the "Sketch" for Elisabetta Basso, "À Propos d'un Cours Inédit de Michel Foucault sur L'analyse Existentielle de Ludwig Binswanger (Lille 1953–54)," *Revue de synthèse* 137, no. 6 (2016): 38.

24. Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (London: Routledge, 2006), xxviii.

25. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 80. See also his reference to an "archaeology of knowledge" at p. 246.

26. H.C. Erik Midelfort, "Madness and Civilization in Early Europe: A Reappraisal of Michel Foucault," in *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments, Vol. IV Section 1: History of Forms of Rationality*, ed. Barry Smart (London: Routledge, 1995), 126; Lawrence Stone, "Madness," in Smart, *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, 138. Lawrence Stone is the only English critic to whom Foucault actually responds. See Foucault's response and then Stone's response to Foucault: Michel Foucault and Lawrence Stone, "Comment on Madness, by Lawrence Stone," in Smart, *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, 147–55.

original French version, *Folie et déraison*.[27] Even with the full version, some remain skeptical on the historical validity of Foucault's claims.[28] While we do not have the space here to defend each of Foucault's historical references, there is good evidence that these criticisms can be addressed and that, at least, generally speaking, we can view his research as historically reliable.[29]

And yet, it is also important to recognize that the aim of the historical work that Foucault is doing is not primarily to provide a comprehensive list of historical facts with absolute precision (which is why certain small inaccuracies are not necessarily significant), but to look at the hidden structures and larger movements of history. Gary Gutting explains Foucault's archaeological approach well: "Foucault is not making empirical generalizations about what people thought or did; he is trying to construct the categorical system that lay behind what was no doubt a very diverse range of beliefs and practices."[30] Unlike Roy Porter in his *Anatomy of Madness* who uses historical data to support his "interpretive schema," Foucault draws on data as "illustrations" for his schema.[31] In other words, Foucault cites historical data not to prove his claims, but to paint a picture for us of the current environment; for example, he does not give an exhaustive account of the actual activities in places of confinement across Europe in the seventeenth century, but he chooses several examples which seem to best illustrate and capture the historical structures that he hopes to expose. The "historical" aspect of his approach seeks to find unity in complex practices in each age, knowing that the resulting general characteristics will not perfectly fit all situations, but that they will give us insight into how some of these practices came into being.[32]

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27. Colin Gordon, "*Histoire de la Folie*: An Unknown Book by Foucault," *History of Human Sciences* 3 (1990): 3–26.

28. H.C. Erik Midelfort, "Reading and Believing: On the Reappraisal of Michel Foucault," in *Rewriting the History of Madness: Studies in Foucault's 'Histoire de la folie'*, ed. Arthur Still and Irving Velody (London: Routledge, 1992), 105–9; Andrew Scull, "Michel Foucault's History of Madness," *History of the Human Sciences* 3, no. 1 (1990): 57–67.

29. For an excellent overview and persuasive response to the debate of Foucault's historical validity, see Colin Gordon's second article: Colin Gordon, "Rewriting the History of Misreading," in Still and Velody, *Rewriting the History of Madness*, 167–84. Also, see Gutting's helpful overview at the beginning of his article: Gary Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 49–56.

30. Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness," 63.

31. Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness," 64. See Roy Porter, W.F. Bynum, and Michael Shepherd, eds., *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry, People and Ideas*, Vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 1986) for their version of the history of madness.

32. It should also be noted that while the English title of Foucault's book is the rather bold, "History of Madness," it is technically focused on the history of madness in Western Europe. This is not to say that his method and insights could not be applied to other

Although he does employ an archaeological approach in the *History of Madness*, he still uses phenomenological language throughout the work with the repeated use of "perception," and "experience" (one of the most frequently used words in the book), and even "structure of perception" to show the melding of the two methods.[33] Some scholars have even overlooked the structuralist elements and simply called this an applied work of phenomenology. David Matza writes, for example, that this is the "first successful attempt to actually apply the phenomenal method, rather than simply commending it, promoting or elaborating it."[34] But, more accurately, it is a work creating a bridge from experiences of phenomenology to structures of archaeology. Philip Barker explains,

> It is phenomenological to the extent that Foucault's aim is to reconstruct the "experience" of the mad, in some sense or other as lived experience. . . . It is structural in so far as Foucault uses oppositions with which he orientates his work, in particular the opposition between reason/unreason.[35]

Foucault's continued use of phenomenological language to discuss the lived experience of the mad is precisely what helps link his account with Merleau-Ponty's, although he is, at the same time, pushing beyond the phenomenological by pointing to structural oppositions found in the archaeology, such as the tension between reason and unreason.

C. Defining Terms

"Madness," in this project, means roughly a "state of brokenness in mental and bodily capacities." It may seem at first that the use of the term "madness" is rather outdated or even a bit offensive. Clearly, "madness" is no longer applied today in any kind of socially appropriate way and may immediately bring to mind images of characters of old such as Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, becoming like an animal and eating grass for seven years, or King Lear, mythical Celtic king, losing his sanity and dwelling in a cave. Such folk images are actually part of my

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cultures outside of Western Europe, but we must recognize that the term "history" in Foucault's work and in this project should be generally qualified as *European* history.

33. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 277. See Jean Khalfa's comment on phenomenological vocabulary in his introduction: Jean Khalfa, "Introduction," in Foucault's *History of Madness*, xx.

34. David Matza, "Review of 'Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason'," in Smart's *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, 74. See also R.D. Laing who states that Foucault is using the "phenomenological method:" R.D. Laing, "The Invention of Madness," in Smart's *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, 76.

35. Philip Barker, *Michel Foucault: Subversions of the Subject* (London: Routledge, 1993), 47.

motivation for choosing the word "madness" for the title of this project, because "madness" contains certain colloquial meanings which remind us of the broadness and ambiguity of human experience, unlike other more technical terms such as "mental disorder," "mental illness" or "psychopathology." I will, however, be using these other labels as well, especially when we look at the applications of this project in modern psychology, but they should all be considered under the more general colloquial use of "madness."

Furthermore, "madness" (*la folie*) is the term around which both Merleau-Ponty and Foucault center their discussions of psychopathology, and so it captures their particular approaches to the topic. Foucault uses the term "madness" much more than Merleau-Ponty, however, because he wants to step beyond the language of psychology and look at cases of madness from the outside, challenging the idea that madness is a fixed object throughout history. Merleau-Ponty, by contrast, is willing to dialogue with psychology, using its vocabulary and categories in order to study it but also reform it from the inside. Looking at particular psychological cases, he tries to make sense of the patient's experiences and struggles in light of the description and diagnosis of the medical practitioner.

To understand the meaning of the "nonrational," I start by seeing how the terms "rational" and "nonrational" are linked: the rational, according to the accepted modern understanding derived from the Latin *ratio*, means something that has reason, explanation or order; and correlatively, the nonrational, is something deficient or lacking in reason, explanation or order. This project views the term "nonrational" as the umbrella term for all types of deficiencies in reason where each type of the nonrational displays a *lack* of reason, but this lack can manifest itself in different ways. I identify four types of the nonrational: the pre-rational, the irrational, the supra-rational and the unrational, but I will only discuss two of them in this project: the pre-rational and the irrational, because they are the ones which arise in Merleau-Ponty and Foucault's discussion of madness.[36]

The "pre-rational" manifests itself in experiences that take place before or prior to the rational. The pre-rational can be seen as missing out on the order and clarity of the rational, not because the experiences are necessarily nonrational themselves, but because in the moment, the person is not consulting the rational lens and is instead relying on

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36. See my article for further discussion on the types of the nonrational: Venable, "At the Opening of Madness: An Exploration of the Nonrational with Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and Kierkegaard," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 33, no. 3 (2019): 475–88. Briefly, the "supra-rational" lacks the rational, because it is above or goes beyond the rational. The "unrational" (not discussed in the article) is the unhuman element of nature, devoid of the rational entirely.

passively received experience. It is only after a pre-rational experience that a rational reflection can take place. This can be seen particularly in habitual behavior, such as driving a car, where our bodies perform actions in the background behind our explicit attention.

The "irrational" lacks rationality due to it being contrary or opposed to the rational. Irrational actions are performed in opposition to a present rational fact, like a man speaking to his imaginary friend even though in external reality there is nobody there. But the irrational can also be seen in actions which are done in opposition to the moral standards of a given society. In some cultures, for example, behaviors, such as blasphemy or homosexuality, have been considered "irrational" because they are against their societal moral codes.

Although this project focuses on the notion of the "nonrational," the nonrational can be understood only in how it is linked to the "rational." The terms "rational" and "nonrational" are helpful in organizing our material and will be used throughout this project, but this language is for the sake of the discussion only. Ultimately, I argue that a strict dichotomy between the rational and the nonrational is untenable for it is only in an integrated understanding of the rational and nonrational that we can gain a proper sense of their placement in human experience. As G.K. Chesterton points out in the opening quote to Part I, the madman still has reasons by which to justify his thoughts and behavior. A man who complains of the pain of a shoe entering his head does so because of the reason that he is experiencing it, even if in reality it is only a hallucination. As we will see over and over again, both phenomenologically and historically, the rational is never far from the nonrational, and the nonrational is never far from the rational; madness reveals not an entire lack of the rational, but a brokenness in the relationship between the rational and the nonrational in human experience.

D. Outline of Project

Here in **Part I**, in Chapter 1 I introduce all the primary themes for the project by first describing some problems of modern psychology and how an approach to madness that integrates experience in history can respond to them. In **Part II**, I draw on Maurice Merleau-Ponty to present a phenomenology of the pre-rational (Chapter 2) and a phenomenology of madness (Chapter 3). After introducing the idea of wholeness through the eyes of Aristotle, I demonstrate the importance of viewing the human as an undivided whole who, through common patterns, can access all forms of human experience, even experiences of madness. In **Part III**, I draw on Michel Foucault to offer an archaeology of the irrational (Chapter 4) and an archaeology of madness (Chapter 5). After opening with human restlessness according to Augustine, I present the value of considering madness in the context of the shifting historical

perceptions and of acknowledging the hidden roots underneath the modern discipline of psychology.

In **Part IV**, I first put forward all the problems to this united approach between our two thinkers (Chapter 6) and then argue for their synthesis by showing not only their compatibility but how they fill in each other's gaps, making their union both critical and effective (Chapter 7). I conclude this project in **Part V** by arguing that the integrated approach reveals value in diverse human experiences, such as experiences of mental disorders, and can offer greater support to patients of mental health. To provide specific help to practitioners, I demonstrate how to apply these insights to three modern mental disorders (Chapter 8).

In closing, I will remark that while the focus topic of this project is on madness, the drive behind this study is more than to provide a reflection on the phenomenon of madness or the notion of the nonrational. The goal is rather to gain a deeper understanding of the human and to set a foundation for a profound appreciation for the worth and value of the human, whether considered normal or abnormal, mad or sane, because of the shared experiential and historical structures of the human condition. This motivation is in the spirit of both Merleau-Ponty and Foucault whose primary interest was never ultimately in madness itself nor the rational and nonrational themselves, but in the unique value and freedom that can be found in human experience.

1   The Case for Unity

Integrating Experience in History

After living in hospitals since her early twenties due to severe schizophrenia, Marilyn was moved at the age of fifty-two years to a smaller care home. Here she met Louis Phillips, a mental health nurse, who cared for her with the help of the other staff at the home. Marilyn exhibited challenging behaviors, including frequently refusing to bathe or dress, urinating in front of open windows, and carrying around bags of stuffed paper and tissues as her treasured possessions. Her relationship with her family appeared strained: after her mother would visit her, she would laugh and then slap herself saying "naughty girl." After more than nineteen years as a mental health nurse in the U.K., Phillips describes her interactions with Marilyn and reflects on the kind of care administered at the home. She writes how the staff were understandably most concerned about fixing Marilyn's behaviors to encourage proper hygiene and general cleanliness, but that "no emphasis was placed upon what Marilyn's body indicated in terms of her *lived* experience."[1] To do so, the staff should have asked questions such as: What does her bodily behavior indicate about her view of the world? And what are her motivations behind these behaviors? Not only were her bodily experiences overlooked, but it was also easy to ignore social structures that could be affecting her, such as the influences coming from her family. Could it be that the bodies of patients, suggests Phillips, are "inscribed by popular discourses about mental illness?"[2] What if we were to consider the social and historical structures that were contributing to her illness?[3]

Taking up this challenge from Phillips, this first chapter presents the case for why we should approach madness or mental illness from an integrated account of experience and history. Modern science has

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1. Louise Phillips, *Mental Illness and the Body: Beyond Diagnosis* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 2, italics hers.
2. Phillips, *Mental Illness and the Body: Beyond Diagnosis*, 20.
3. Drawing briefly on Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and others, Phillips goes on to suggest ways of applying bodily and social experiences to schizophrenia. I will refer to her work again in the final chapter.

taught us many new and helpful things about mental illness, but in doing so, it has made us liable to several pitfalls due to its narrow focus. As a result, for patients like Marilyn, we excel at managing behavior and meeting physical needs, but we refrain from searching for deeper motivations and influences behind the behavior. Here I will describe three key insights from an integrated approach that expand how we regard mental illness and help us avoid some drawbacks of modern psychology. For each insight, I weave together key points from Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and Foucault's archaeology that address madness. First, to evade the pitfalls of individualism and determinism, we explore the way history is expressed in experience by linking historical structures in the history of madness to characteristics of experiences of madness. Secondly, to steer clear of the stark division between the normal and the abnormal, we see that intelligible explanations of human behavior and social constructions go beyond the categories of the rational and the nonrational and, thus, the categories of the normal and the abnormal. And lastly, to counter the view that mental illness is only a biological sickness, we pay attention to the loss and tragedy of madness which often goes unacknowledged. While subsequent chapters will defend the roots and complementarity of our two approaches, the purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate why the integration is so important and how it impacts our view of the human and madness. And, although there will be some brief examples for how these insights can be applied to mental illness, the final chapter is where a full discussion on application takes place.

A. History Expressed in Experience

Part of the modern psychological project is an increased attention to individual care. This includes one-on-one counseling sessions and tailored treatment plans for each patient. While this focused individual care has many benefits, one of the pitfalls is to start viewing mental illness according to a radical individualism which locates the source of a mental disorder in the individual and places the primary responsibility on the individual to be cured. In many ways, isolating the individual is easier than trying to untangle the complicated web of how familial, societal and historical structures may be shaping and influencing the individual's experience of the disorder. Psychiatrist Arthur Kleinman writes on the individualism found in mainstream modern psychiatry: "There is a bias in psychiatry in the very way knowledge is created, so that social causes and social remedies are minimized and even denied. Prevention . . . is configured as the choices and behaviors of individuals."[4] Through a

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4. Arthur Kleinman, *Rethinking Psychiatry: From Cultural Category to Personal Experience* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 75.

study on the history of madness, we can combat this bias in psychiatry by exposing how the community, present and past, contributes to the ways that mental illness is defined and diagnosed.

But, if we only explore the way history has shaped madness, we may encounter the problem of an extreme determinism which views social structures as the sole cause of a mental disorder. Under this view, an individual cannot escape the way history has determined for that person to live; in cases of madness, the constraints of society dictate the individual's diagnosis and experience of the disorder. Our response to this problem is to look at how these historical factors manifest in experiences of mental illness. History is not "a struggle already decided in the heaven of ideas," as Merleau-Ponty states, but tells of the freedom found in experience.[5] When we pair historical structures with experiences of individuals, we discover not how we are enslaved to history, but how we may actually break free from the constraints of society. Foucault writes that his role is "to show people that they are much freer than they feel" because an awareness of historical structures creates a "space of freedom" empowering people to make changes.[6]

To counter the pitfalls of individualism and determinism, I will offer two historical structures that arise out of Foucault's history of madness and show how they are reinforced by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological patterns. First, madness has historically been defined by the cultural perception of the rational just as we can rationally analyze and understand an individual's experience of madness. Secondly, madness has historically signaled cultural displays of the nonrational just as the nonrational plays an essential part in all human experience. I will demonstrate how the rooting of these historical structures in phenomenological patterns gives us an account of madness that recognizes both the significance of historical community, contra individualism, and the freedom of the individual, contra determinism.

1. Madness Defined by the Cultural Perception of the Rational

Looking at trends from the sixteenth century onward in Europe, we can sketch the first historical structure that madness tends to be defined by the cultural perception of the rational. Society modifies its understandings of the rational over the ages, and yet, in each age, we

5. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, " 'Materials for a Theory of History', from 'Themes from the Lectures at the Collège de France, 1952–1960'," in *In Praise of Philosophy and Other Essays*, 97.
6. Michel Foucault, "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault, October 25, 1982, Interview by Rux Martin," in *Technologies of the Self: Seminar with Michel Foucault,* ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 10–11.

see the tendency to employ the rational to make sense of madness. This historical reliance on the rational to define madness gains further validity when we see how it is grounded in the phenomenological principle that there is rational access to madness through human experience. Certainly, the social constructions of the rational and the phenomenological senses of the rational are not identical, but the inclination to find order and make sense of madness connects the historical and the experiential together. In reflecting on experience, we see how the use of reason gains an entrance to madness because madness already contains a sense of meaning and intelligibility in it. This is owing to the fact that madness is not separate from the human, but is an integral part of the human experience, arising out of it and being central to it.

Let's take, for example, how madness is viewed in the classical age, roughly the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, and the modern age, roughly the nineteenth century to today.[7] In the classical age, the rational, as the herald of the "moral," was used to define madness as "immoral," because of its displays of the nonrational.[8] Thus, someone considered mad was judged to be evil and deserved to be locked away; this resulted in the great confinement of the seventeenth century where large amounts of people were imprisoned in Europe for the crime of madness.[9] Shifting from classical rationality which established morality to modern rationality which depicts normalcy, we find that the modern age employs the rational to categorize those who are "normal" and those who are "abnormal."[10] Modern rationality tells us that madness is actually something that can be fixed and controlled through scientific treatments and medications. In each age, the role of the rational changes in how it interacts with madness, but it is still a perception of the rational that tries to define and understand madness according to a kind of order and logic.[11]

Phenomenologically, we find that the cultural tendency to define madness according to a certain kind of rationality comes from the

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7. See Chapter 4 for an in-depth look at the cultural constructions of madness according to the perceptions of the rational and the nonrational.
8. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 133: "moral order"; 152: "immorality of the unreasonable."
9. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 44–77.
10. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 129: "psychopathology . . . in relation to . . . a normal man;" 489: "placed the patient in a milieu that was both normal and natural . . . by men of reason." Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–1975*, ed. Valerio Marchetti, Antonella Salomoni and Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2003), 60: "abnormal individual."
11. Some may argue that Foucault would oppose finding common themes in the rational and the nonrational throughout the ages, but, as I argue in the next section and more extensively in Chapter 4, Foucault does point to certain characteristics that return in different variations throughout the ages.

actual ability of the individual to make sense of madness.[12] To support this, we turn to Merleau-Ponty's crucial passage on madness where we see that madness, perception and other experiences of the nonrational "despite all their differences, are not self-enclosed; they are not islands of experience without any communication and from which one cannot escape . . . [they open] onto a horizon of possible objectifications."[13] Although experiences of madness are different from what is expected, they are not cut off from common experience; they provide connections among humans and reveal a shared horizon of human experience. Because the individual can understand madness to a certain extent through one's rational capacity, it follows that society as a whole will continue to try and define madness by its perceived understanding of the rational.

We can demonstrate the place of the rational in disordered behavior by considering the experiences of hallucinations and homesickness. In both cases, we utilize the rational to discover a shared horizon of nonobjective space.[14] In hallucinations, we can rationally show that the objects of the hallucinations are not actually there, and, in fact, the patients themselves can often differentiate between imaginary objects and real objects even while continuing to experience the hallucination. In the same way, in homesickness, we can rationally demonstrate that we are not geographically at home even if we feel that our hearts are still there. Due to the common experience of feeling like we are in a place different than reality, as seen in homesickness, we can make sense of the more unusual experience of an altered reality in hallucinations.

The role of the rational seen phenomenologically demonstrates how humans are "condemned to meaning," as Merleau-Ponty states; it points to the human need to make some sense of the world, even sense out of the disordered experiences found in madness.[15] It follows that the need to find meaning, arising out of the human's capacity for the rational, would play out in the historical trends of society. Society also searches as a whole for the meaning behind madness using its own understandings of the rational to judge it and categorize it accordingly. Connecting the significance of the rational in individual experience with historical practices allows us to see the way both the individual and society take part in the construction of mental illness.

12. See Chapter 3 for a detailed analysis on our rational access to disordered behavior and experiences of madness.
13. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 305, translation slightly altered.
14. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 298–300.
15. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxxiv.

2. *Madness Signals Cultural Displays of the Nonrational*

Drawing again on observations beginning in the sixteenth century, we can formulate a second historical structure that madness continues to signal cultural displays of the nonrational in each age. Despite the changes in the treatment of mental illness over time, certain nonrational qualities, displayed in different ways, continue to appear in relation to madness and cannot be fully eliminated. Society remains concerned about the unexplainable and mysterious qualities of madness and, even in attempts to hide them or eradicate them, these nonrational elements remain critical to our understanding of the history of madness. The nonrational as an essential aspect of human experience is confirmed not only in historical accounts of madness but also in phenomenological studies of human behavior. Again, we cannot equate the cultural displays of the nonrational with the phenomenological descriptions of the nonrational, but we can see the complementarity between the two as both indicate the significant role played by something unexplained by modern reason in human experience.

Let's consider cultural displays of the nonrational in the Renaissance and in the classical age. In the Renaissance, roughly the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, Foucault famously describes the wandering "ships of fools" as the cultural exhibit of the nonrational.[16] The fools or mad people on the ships represented the "dark night" of the nonrational, a force to be feared but also necessary to human experience.[17] In the classical age, displays of madness signaled the nonrational and were morally condemned, because they were seen as similar to those of an animal, a nonrational creature. Such people were like "beasts filled with snarling, natural rage" whose behavior included actions of "animal violence" and who needed to be caged in order to be kept under control.[18] Across time, society appears to be obsessed with different nonsensical displays of madness such as wandering dark ships, savage humans or other strange phenomena.

The importance of the nonrational as displayed in these historical manifestations is expressed even clearer in the daily experience of the nonrational in human behavior. From a phenomenological standpoint, the human capacity to perform tasks and to respond to events without thinking illustrates the critical role that the nonrational plays in human experience. This is easy to see in simple actions, such as driving a car or playing a musical instrument, where we have developed habits that respond to the world without using our rationality in the moment. But the phenomenological analysis of the human goes even deeper than that

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16. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 8.
17. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 28.
18. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 147.

and illustrates that our relation to the world contains aspects of the non-rational embedded in it; in other words, human life is not possible without the capacity for the nonrational. This is because the nonrational, in the form of the pre-rational, is the ground by which we can access and encounter the world. "Human life is defined by this power," as Merleau-Ponty writes, "that it has of denying itself in objective thought, and it draws this power from its primordial attachment to the world itself."[19] Our primordial, pre-rational attachment to the world provides the base level for us to form habits and behaviors in order to live in and make sense of the world.

This nonrational power of the human is still present in cases of disorders of madness, but it will be distorted in various ways. Repression, often associated with dissociative amnesia, represents an example of the nonrational, especially the irrational, where certain memories or unfulfilled desires or plans have been unconsciously pushed out of person's mind. In repression, actual time moves on, but the person remains stuck in one particular moment prior to the memory or failed plan, for, as Merleau-Ponty writes, "impersonal time continues to flow, but personal time is arrested."[20] A woman, for example, after losing a man she loves to cancer, can still be unconsciously waiting to be in a relationship with him, even if outwardly she functions in real time. It goes against reason for this woman to continue to hope to be with her love as it is an "impossible future," and yet, this expression of irrationality is a key characteristic of some mental illness, especially for those who have experienced severe traumatic events.[21] Although the nonrational helps us understand reality, as seen in the primordial connection to the world, it can also distort reality in cases of madness; in this situation, the woman acts out of a distorted sense of reality due to the influence of the nonrational.[22]

The need for the nonrational in daily life and the displays of it in disordered behavior justifies the continual presence of the nonrational elements in the history of madness. Notice that in both the phenomenological studies and historical studies the nonrational is not necessarily something negative. Phenomenologically, our pre-rational ability to make sense of objects is actually essential to us grasping the world. Certainly this capacity can exhibit negative aspects such as a loss of memories in repression, but these distortions teach us about the fragility and uniqueness of the human. Even in history, the presence of the nonrational is not always negative: it can push us toward the bright light of

19. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 341.
20. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 85.
21. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 85. The quote is from Merleau-Ponty, but I have supplied the example.
22. This is not to say that her disorder is only due to the nonrational, but, as I will discuss in the next section, it is from a broken relation between the rational and the nonrational.

truth, as was believed in the Renaissance, it can be a reminder of human brokenness, and it can be a way to break free from imposed societal constraints. Madness will continue to signal nonrational elements because the nonrational must always have a place in human life; human life is impossible without it.

Seeing how historical structures of madness are displayed in experience enables us to avoid the pitfalls mentioned at the opening of the section. To evade individualism, we place a mental disorder in the light of shared human experiences and in the context of larger historical structures; it is then insufficient to describe it only in terms of one individual's experience. By acknowledging that madness arises out of common experience, we are given the courage to relate to those struggling with mental disorders, because we know that we can rationally access and make sense of their experiences to a certain extent. They become not isolated individuals, but human beings acting out of common patterns and being shaped, like ourselves, by the historical structures around us. A diagnosis is not just a description of an individual, but also a reflection of how certain behaviors have been viewed over time. For example, to apply this to obsessive compulsive disorder, we would explore how the distorted behaviors mirror normal patterns and how the diagnosis may include its old historical classification as an immoral disease of a "deranged mind."[23]

This also means that we cannot give in to determinism. Human life cannot be fixed in a purely rational way, because elements of the mysterious nonrational play an essential role in experience and history. When we recognize how the fascination with the nonrational has affected our view of madness and how we rely on the nonrational in daily human behavior, we can apprehend how historical structures and phenomenological patterns impact our lives. To address mental disorders, we bring to light these hidden structures and patterns so that patients can be aware of their context but also free themselves from it. Knowing that the nonrational is not always something negative allows people to accept and appreciate some of the challenges in disordered behavior, but at the same time, learn how to respond to them in healthier ways.

B. Beyond the Rational–Nonrational Divide

To make sense of mental disorders, our modern world often makes a stark contrast between normal, healthy people and abnormal, sick people. The strange behavior of people with mental disorders is explained on the grounds that they are sick and, thus, cannot conform to the norms of society. Georges Canguilhem writes how the modern idea of the "abnormal"

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23. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 133.

appears to be logically justified, because we claim to first have the idea of "normal" and then deduce the opposing idea of the "abnormal." But, as Canguilhem argues, this is not how the "abnormal" is developed in reality: "it is not paradoxical to say that the abnormal, while logically second, it is existentially first."[24] The abnormal is the existential drive behind the normal: through experiences of the "other," such as brushes with tragedy, madness and absurdity, we decide what is abnormal, and then we quickly come up with a definition of the normal in order to avoid the discomfort of these experiences. Abnormal, then, is what first appears to us outside the boundaries of comfortable, standard living.

Due to how modernity labels the rational as the normal and the nonrational as the abnormal, we arrive at an even deeper problem that comes out of this division. Those that are seen as abnormal due to their mental illness are also seen as nonrational. Even in everyday conversation, it is easy to speak of normal behavior as rational while abnormal behavior as nonrational. This can lead to a dehumanizing effect on those diagnosed with mental disorders: if the primary identity for the human is rationality, then those who are considered nonrational may be seen as less than human. This can devalue their unique experiences and diminish their dignity. But equating madness with nonrationality is disproven again and again by our integrated study on madness. The nonrational plays a deep role in all human behavior and history, not just cases of madness, and it is always found in relation to the rational. By seeing this relation present in both experience and history, we can also break down the division between the normal and abnormal, allowing us to find value in many diverse human experiences.

To avoid the pitfall of these stark divisions, I will describe how human behavior and historical events cannot be placed decidedly in one category or the other—whether it be the normal or the abnormal, or the rational and the nonrational—pulling us beyond these divisions. I will demonstrate how the integration, rather than separation, of the rational and nonrational is illustrated first, by the indivisibility of the human, and second, by the complexity of the historical context of madness.

1. The Human as Indivisible

To have an accurate explanation of human behavior, ranging from normal to abnormal, we must accept that the human participates fully in each action as a whole being. Merleau-Ponty writes that we need "to treat the human subject as an indivisible consciousness [*une conscience*

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24. Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological* (Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 1991), 243. Canguilhem gives a detailed account of the meaning and root for both normal and abnormal in this work which heavily influenced Foucault.

indécomposable] that is wholly present in each of its manifestations."[25] The word *indécomposable* illustrates how the human is something that cannot be divided into parts, broken down, taken apart or separated; the human is thus *inséparable* and *non fragmentable.* The manifestations of the body directly reveal the intentions of the consciousness, making the body not a shell for the mind, but an attestation to the unity of the human. To summarize this phenomenological idea, the indivisible consciousness acts as the unbroken function of the human to go after meaning or purpose; it accomplishes the fluid integration of the body and the mind, the rational and the nonrational.

Habits are an excellent example of this fluid relationship between the rational and the nonrational in human behavior. We discussed in the previous section how habits signal the importance of the nonrational (specifically, the pre-rational), because when I perform a habit, I am "doing without thinking"—where I am not explicitly guided by the mind, but by the body. And yet, habits are also linked to the rational, because each habit is oriented toward a certain goal or meaning, even if the mind is not aware of it in the moment. When I drive a car, I do so to arrive safely at a destination; when I play an instrument, I do so to create beautiful music. Think also of the goal inherent in the habit of color recognition learned as a child. When a child pre-rationally recognizes colors by placing red objects in a red bin or blue objects in a blue bin, the child is, in fact, also seeking after the rational by taking the lived moment of observing colors and subjecting it to classification.[26] The act of learning colors only makes sense when we see the unity in the child's behavior: the nonrational takes up the bodily experience of colors, while being directed by the rational, which aims at the categorization of objects.

Even in cases of mental disorders, this relation, although dysfunctional, is still activated. A man, diagnosed with schizophrenia, acts nonrationally when he talks to an imaginary person, but his behavior is still rational to a certain extent: he engages in conversation for the reason that he sees a person in front of him as a result of a hallucination. His action shows the tension between the nonrational, seen in speaking to someone not actually there, and the rational, seen in speaking to someone that appears (at least to him) to be there.[27] Another example is seen

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25. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 122. Original French: Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), 152. For a full discussion on this section of text, please see Ch. 2, A.

26. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 154–5.

27. What is interesting to note, however, is that the rational in disordered behavior can often allow patients to distinguish between the real and the fantastical. This man could likely explain that his conversation partner is not present in the same way as other people are, but, nevertheless, he still experiences his presence and decides to converse with him.

in a study on a patient, Schneider, who suffers from neurocognitive disorders due to a brain injury.[28] Even though the patient's vision was not affected by his injury, he is only able to describe the physical characteristics of an object, such as those of a pen, and cannot immediately identify the object as a pen.[29] This is because objects for him are "devoid of the primordial signification obtained through coexistence": they are missing the pre-rational meanings that humans intuitively understand through their bodies.[30] His "general intelligence is intact," but there is something broken in how his intellect takes up his initial sensations.[31] The patient's awareness of the world is not completely gone, as he eventually perceives the object as a pen, but it is only after he walks through a series of logical deductions. Both the pre-rational, the initial glimpse of the pen, and the rational, the recognition of what it is, are there, but they are delayed due to the effect of the brain injury on his entire body.

Thus, the indivisibility of the human is confirmed in studies of normal and abnormal behavior, showing how the rational and nonrational are mutually dependent on each other. From this, we cannot define mental illness as a complete loss of rationality, because rationality is something interwoven into the very fabric of the human, something that is always present with the nonrational in all types of behavior. Merleau-Ponty writes that "rationality is not a fortuitous accident that would bring dispersed sensations into agreement with each other."[32] Rationality is not a separate part of the human that appears by chance to organize our impressions of the world. Understanding the unity of the human allows us to transcend the division between the rational and the nonrational, as Merleau-Ponty explains in a lecture: "Human being is not animality (in the sense of mechanism) + reason. . . . And this is why we are concerned with the body: before being reason, humanity is another corporeity."[33] A human is not animal plus reason, nor an object plus subject, because at the core of the human there is something deeper than reason, another corporeity (later called "flesh"), which points to this deep integration of the mind and body. As Merleau-Ponty later writes, the human, as flesh, has a "double belongingness to the order of the 'object' and to the order of the 'subject.' "[34] Flesh gives voice to something already present in these phenomenological descriptions: it speaks to how the human belongs to

28. Studies on the patient, Schneider, are used throughout Merleau-Ponty's writings. Key sections are found at: Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 105–40, 157–60, 174, 201–2. See Ch. 3, C.2 for detailed discussion.
29. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 132.
30. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 135.
31. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 136.
32. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 61.
33. Merleau-Ponty, *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*, 208.
34. Merleau-Ponty, " 'The Intertwining—The Chiasm' from *The Visible and the Invisible*," in *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*, ed. Thomas Baldwin (London: Routledge, 2004), 254.

a unity beyond the object and subject, beyond the body and mind, and beyond the rational and nonrational.

2. *In the Milieu of Madness*

Historical records and events provide the context surrounding madness and reveal how it is viewed in the public and private spheres. Once the environment is set, the cultural perceptions of the rational and the nonrational rise to the surface, manifesting differently in each age but always linked together in some way. These manifestations are not indisputable historical facts nor historical "discoveries," as Jean Khalfa reminds us, "but historical constructions of meaning" according to the changing treatments of those with mental illness.[35] As we have already seen, each historical age tries to define madness according to a perception of the rational, but we will now see how the rational cannot escape the perpetual relation to the nonrational.[36]

Foucault's milieu of madness begins in the age of the Renaissance where the nonrational, as something dark and illusory, functioned as a necessary contrast to the brightness and reality of the rational; each brought further clarification and understanding to the other.[37] Even those traveling on the ships of fools were reminders of how someone could give into the darkness and illusion present in this world.[38] In theater productions during this time, such as George de Scudéry's *Comédie des comédiens*, the concrete of the rational is woven together with the chimerical aspect of the nonrational "leading to a constant process of exchange between reality and illusion."[39] During the classical age, greater contrast was made between the rational and the nonrational, representing the division between the moral and immoral, and seen in the great confinement.[40] A place of confinement was upheld as a "moral institution" meant to purge society from any elements of insanity, hiding away the signs of the nonrational.[41] Thus far, both the Renaissance and the classical ages have some versions of the rational and the nonrational as part of their respective constructions of madness. With the nonrational of the past hidden away in the classical age, it was eventually forgotten so that in the modern age, the "mad" are viewed, not as tragic

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35. Khalfa, "Introduction," XIV.
36. I discuss Foucault's milieu of madness in depth in Chapter 4. For a helpful overview, please refer to: Chart 4.1, "Foucault's Milieu of Madness."
37. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 28: "dark night"; 40: "exchange between reality and illusion"; 142: "light of day."
38. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 8.
39. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 40.
40. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 133, 152.
41. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 73.

wanderers of the Renaissance nor immoral outsiders of the classical age, but as abnormal individuals in need of medical aid.

When we arrive at the modern age, we seem to hit an anomaly in the pattern: while both of the previous ages relied on some interaction between the rational and the nonrational to construct madness, in the modern age, the nonrational is nowhere to be found. The modern heralding of the rational, as the objective, the scientific and the normal suppresses the nonrational allowing it to be alienated, exiled and silenced.[42] Modernity tells us that madness is simply something not normal and attempts to rid madness of its ties to the dark and immoral aspects of the nonrational of the past. There may still be a link in vocabulary between the "abnormal" and the "nonrational," as discussed in the opening to this section, but the meaning of the "nonrational" has been stripped of any deeper connotations and reduced to the idea of sickness. As the nonrational is ignored by society, there is "rupture in a dialogue" between the rational and the nonrational and the nonrational is "reduced to silence."[43]

But, as Foucault argues, the "great silent wounds [*déchirements*] within man" are still there in the modern age and will erupt from time to time in society to remind us of the historical roots of the nonrational.[44] The nonrational—in its torn, ripped and broken aspects, as seen in the deep meanings of the French *déchirement*—can never be entirely severed from the rational and is consistently found in relation to madness. Foucault points to unexplained experiences of patients, strange events at mental institutions and artistic expressions as indicators that the deep nonrational asserts itself in unexpected places even in modernity. For example, there is the artist, Antonin Artaud, a twentieth-century French dramatist, whose willingness to explore the hidden darkness of the human eventually drove him to madness; his life can be seen as a sign of the nonrational erupting in modern life.[45]

From this brief overview, we see that a clear-cut division between the rational and the nonrational is untenable from an archaeological approach to history. The idea of the rational changes with each cultural shift varying from the metaphor of light to the standard of morality to the picture of normalcy. The nonrational also morphs in accordance with cultural norms differing from a reminder of darkness to the stain

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42. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 159: "objective pathology"; 91: "scientific and medical knowledge of madness"; 129: "psychopathology . . . in relation to . . . a *normal* man"; 103: "unreason first alienated itself . . . unreason exiled and silenced itself."

43. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxviii: "rupture in a dialogue"; 104 and 158: "reduced to silence."

44. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 530; Original French: Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 654.

45. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 352.

of immorality to the definition of abnormality. To be clear, even these rough characterizations of the cultural perceptions cannot capture all of the many changes that have taken place over the ages.

And yet, we are not left with a meaningless jumble of historical events as there is a certain unity to be seen in this milieu of madness. Even in the fluctuations of history, there is still a constant connection between the strange, mysterious elements of human life and the human desire to order and make sense of them. This means that tracing these two themes under the cultural constructions of the rational and the nonrational can be beneficial because it brings to light their interconnection. But it also pushes us to go beyond these categories in order to see a unity in history which transcends them. Just as Merleau-Ponty later calls for a unity in human behavior under the notion of flesh, Foucault eventually points to his own version of flesh as a way to synthesize historical experience. Flesh, for Foucault, unifies the discursive practices of society and the techniques of the self, bringing together the practices which act on the self with those which are acted by the self.[46] Already laden in the milieu of madness, there is a demand to make sense of the cultural trends that defies the modern categories of the rational and the nonrational.

It is no coincidence that both a study of experience and a study of history point to the integration of the rational and the nonrational and help us steer clear of making a stark division between them. As we saw in the previous section, history can be expressed in experience and this is the case again here. The pairing of these forces in each social construction of madness can be grounded in the human experience of being caught up in the lived relation of them. Philosophically speaking, the breaking down of this false binary is then validated by intertwining the reports of experience and history showing how they both call for a greater unity.

More concretely, exposing the relation between the rational and the nonrational through our united approach breaks down the practical barriers placed between "normal" and "abnormal" people. Those with mental disorders are "not to be thought of as 'normal' minus some capacity," as Philipa Rothfield comments.[47] We must not see those with mental disorders as "missing the rational" or "lacking the normal," because humans have a shared way of accessing the world. William Hamrick puts this well stating that "the difference between the normal and

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46. Foucault's understanding of flesh can be found in his final volume of the *History of Sexuality* series which is entitled, *The Confessions of the Flesh* (*Les aveux de la chair*): Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. IV: Confessions of the Flesh*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 2021).

47. Philipa Rothfield, "Living Well and Health Studies," in *Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts*, ed. Rosalind Diprose and Jack Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2014), 222. She is speaking here specifically of the patient Schneider.

the abnormal is one of degree rather than one of kind."[48] As opposed to creating separate kinds or categories, we view the normal and the abnormal on the same spectrum, while acknowledging that the abnormal has a greater degree of intensity and confusion in experiences.

History further illustrates the flexibility in these categories by showing how society often changes the qualifications for what is considered normal and abnormal.[49] In the classical age, for example, irreligious acts, such as expressions of blasphemy or atheism, were considered "abnormal" and arising out of madness, while today, we would not connect such actions with mental illness.[50] Applying this insight to the disorder of schizophrenia, we can feel a greater connection to patients beyond the label of the "abnormal schizophrenic" by valuing them as humans who operate in similar but broken ways to us and by remembering how views on disorders, such as schizophrenia, have changed over time. Although the categories of the rational and the nonrational may help explain madness, they ultimately fail since human experience cannot ever be completely reduced to any kind of classification.

C. Awareness of Loss and Tragedy

The explosion in medical advancements in the last hundred to two hundred years has motivated many to approach mental illness according to a purely medical model. The results are seen in the abundance of research on the biological factors associated with disorders and the discovery of medications that often alleviate many symptoms. With such an emphasis on medical solutions, another pitfall in modern psychology is to view mental illness as only a biological sickness. Even if some are aware that alternative paths may help in recovery, medication is seen as the primary way to "fix" the problem. In a psychological study, one doctor tells his patient just diagnosed with major depressive disorder that "a few sessions of psychotherapy can really help, but meds are what will get you better."[51] This statement typifies a common response by many in mainstream psychology who look primarily to medication to provide a cure.

No one doubts the biological factors in mental disorders or the important aid of medication, but to reduce mental illness to only physical causes misses key aspects found in patient experience. Even

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48. William S. Hamrick, "Language and Abnormal Behavior: Merleau-Ponty, Hart and Laing," ed. Keith Hoeller, *Merleau-Ponty and Psychology, A Special Issue from the Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry* 18, nos. 1, 2 & 3 (1982–1983): 201.

49. I am using the terms "normal" and "abnormal" here somewhat anachronistically by looking back at what things were accepted by society and what were not. As introduced in this section, the terms typically refer to ideas of modernity.

50. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 92–3.

51. Kleinman, *Rethinking Psychiatry*, 85.

as early as the 1950s, there was a realization that medical answers were not enough. Rollo May, for example, writes of how many in the psychological community feel frustrated with the gaps of the medical model when confronted with "the sheer reality of persons in crisis whose anxiety will not be quieted by theoretical formulae."[52] Many practitioners feel that it can be difficult to address the depth of anxiety felt by many struggling with mental illness when they only use the tools offered by modern medicine.

To overcome the pitfall of a reduced understanding of mental illness, I will first discuss a fuller sense of loss found in phenomenological descriptions of mental illness. Second, I will describe how madness has been a historical reminder of tragedy over the ages. In this way, while not ignoring the information gained from the medical model, we are able to fully acknowledge the range of suffering felt in mental illness and see it as a link to the tragedy present in human experience.

1. *Types of Loss*

A phenomenological account reveals several types of loss in disorders: holistic loss, functional loss and personal loss. Beginning with holistic loss, we recognize that the disorder must be seen as something that affects the whole person. Even though the disorder will often manifest in specific behaviors and situations, phenomenological studies demonstrate how it colors the way that a person interacts with others and experiences the world in general. Because a phenomenological account sees each action as coming from the whole of a person, a loss in one area will detract in some way from all of behavior. The detraction may sometimes be obvious and other times almost imperceptible, but the awareness of its far-reaching effect will push us to look for it in new places. Consider again the patient Schneider whose neurocognitive disorders affect how he "sees" objects despite having no actual vision impairments.[53] Another example is found in the experience of a phantom limb, sometimes present in somatic symptom disorders, where a person still feels sensations, ranging from itchiness to severe pain, from a missing limb. This strange phenomenon is best explained according to the way humans relate to their bodies as a whole, rather than as a set of parts. Because of this, it can be difficult to incorporate the loss of a limb into the general sense of one's body all of the time, resulting in sometimes feeling as if the limb is still present (see Chapter 3, C.1).[54]

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52. Rollo May, "The Origins and Significance of the Existential Movement in Psychology," in *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*, ed. Rollo May, Angel Ernest and Henri F. Ellenberger (New York: Basic Books, 1958), 3.
53. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 132.
54. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 83.

   The phenomenological approach does not do away with the specific effects of a disorder, because it also acknowledges the functional loss that takes place. The functional loss of a disorder refers to the primary way that the disorder is displayed in behavior. We can think of the loss of memories in dissociative amnesia or the loss of sleep in sleep–wake disorders as examples of functional loss. What we find, however, is that by placing the functional loss in the context of holistic loss, we actually have a better sense of *why* certain behaviors are taking place. Merleau-Ponty writes that "a specific disorder should always be put back into context of the total behavior."[55] To illustrate this, Merleau-Ponty discusses a study on the changes in reflex behavior for those with pathological conditions. In normal positions, the patients would demonstrate the proper reflex response, but if there was a change in position, such as bending the knee or making head movements or laying on their stomachs, they would no longer be able to perform the reflex.[56] The study demonstrated that by understanding the "nervous system as a whole," the scientists were better able to explain how pathological conditions hampered these simple reflexes (see Chapter 2, C.1).[57] In a similar way, we can look at how the functional loss of memories in the case of dissociative amnesia, for example, relates to the patient's general ability to recall information. This will provide further insight into the full effect of the disorder and offer better support for the patient in dealing with the specific lost memories.

   Lastly, there is a personal type of loss, where there is deficit seen in relationships or in a general dissatisfaction with life. For some dealing with mental illness, it can be too difficult to maintain any kind of close relationships, especially romantic relationships.[58] Others, like the patient Marilyn, mentioned in the opening to this chapter, are stuck with dysfunctional family connections without much capacity to escape. For some, there is a general inability to fully experience the usual joys and pleasures of life. Merleau-Ponty describes those with melancholy, now linked to major depressive disorder, as settling into death, making it their home, but "still mak[ing] use of the structures of being in the world in order to do so."[59] Although difficult to quantify, some struggling with depression feel that they have lost the joy of life in the world and are inhabiting a realm of death. Notice, however, that this loss is not a complete loss of the world, as they still pull on common structures of the world in order to provide content for their extreme grief.

55. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Alden L. Fisher (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1963), 64.
56. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 20. This study is drawn from the work of Kurt Goldstein.
57. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 21.
58. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 158–60.
59. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 306.

A phenomenological analysis of loss provides a perspective on individual experiences that is often missed in conventional medical accounts. And yet, just as historical structures were given further credence by being rooted in phenomenological patterns, reciprocally, a phenomenological sense of loss is expanded and enhanced when placed in a wider historical framework. Moving beyond a focus on the individual, an archaeological approach to history sees the loss in madness on a grander scale matching it to the tragic force felt by entire communities.

2. Deep Tragedy

Tragic motifs often found in a historical analysis of madness include unexplainable suffering, intense pain, deep anguish, unanswered questions and incurable wounds.[60] Summarizing many of these themes toward the end of the *History of Madness*, Foucault writes of how madness makes us face "a void, a moment of silence, a question without an answer, opening an unhealable wound [*un déchirement sans réconciliation*] that the world is forced to address."[61] Encountering the phenomenon of madness provokes the world to reflect on its brokenness and to admit that words do not offer satisfactory explanations; it makes us feel as if some wounds will never be healed and some differences will never be reconciled. It acts as a metaphorical weight resting on a whole community and reminding us that all is not right in the world.

Even though they are reflected in different ways over time, these themes repeat in each age, linking madness to an "overarching nonrational."[62] How madness is viewed and treated may change, but its connection to the dark aspects of the nonrational appear to stay the same. The overarching nonrational unifies the diverse traits of the nonrational which stretch across time, weaving together the common threads that run between them. Foucault calls the presence of the nonrational in madness a "massive repetition" which creates "links with its previous incarnations down the ages."[63] Whenever we study cases of madness, we find an atemporal or "untimely" quality of the nonrational in them that acts as an "unconditional return," a force that cannot be snuffed out.[64] While madness may break away from the nonrational to be quantified and placed in a temporal framework, the nonrational will not submit to such

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60. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 115–6, 530, 537. See also Gros, *Foucault et la folie*, 36.
61. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 537; French: 663.
62. Drawing on Foucault, I argue in depth for my idea of an overarching nonrational at Ch. 4, D. This should be seen as different from the dynamic perceptions of the nonrational which change in each age.
63. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 363.
64. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 363–4.

treatment and keeps returning to the narrative of madness, sometimes in unexpected places.

While the idea of the overarching nonrational may sound too mythical at first, there is concrete confirmation of these repeated themes in the study of several key social structures that intersect with madness, such as unemployment, idleness, poverty, sexuality and religion (see Chapter 5, B). Consider the link between madness and poverty in the classical age and in present day. In the classical age, Foucault writes that "madness is seen against the social horizon of poverty, the inability to work and the impossibility of integrating into a social group."[65] Due to the priority of the moral as the rational, poverty received an ethical condemnation, because the poor were not fully honoring their moral obligation to work; they did not have the rationality to recognize how the "obligation to work . . . was both an ethical exercise and a moral guarantee."[66] Any connection to poverty, then, was a sign of madness marking the poor as black spots, unwanted blemishes in society.

Today, poverty, at least explicitly, is no longer considered a moral failure, but it remains a sign of brokenness in society and represents a complex social problem that is extremely difficult to resolve. And yet, in a similar way, the influence of poverty on mental illness remains critical, causing some to say that it is "one of the most significant social determinants of health and mental health, intersecting with all other determinants."[67] Although many studies have been published demonstrating the tie between poverty and increased mental illness, some psychiatrists lament that they "receive little training in assessing and intervening in poverty."[68] Because the primary focus remains on the biological factors of mental illness, deeper systemic issues, such as poverty, become overlooked in psychiatric training and practice despite the critical roles they play in the development of mental illness.

Widening the lens on mental illness to include social structures, like poverty, allows us to recognize the greater tragic element in mental illness, an element that has not been eradicated over time. Not only are people dealing with bodily suffering in mental illness, but often their suffering connects both directly and indirectly with other social problems. Understanding how these social structures have affected our view of madness in the past and how they are affecting it today gives us a window into the gravity of the suffering felt by individuals and the community around them. Certainly, loss is sensed on an individual level, as we saw in the phenomenological account, but the

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65. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 77.
66. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 73.
67. Kevin M. Simon, Michaela Beder, and Marc W. Manseau, "Addressing Poverty and Mental Illness," *Psychiatric Times* XXXV, no. 6 (June 2018): 7.
68. Simon, Beder, and Manseau, "Addressing Poverty and Mental Illness," 7.

weight of it can often feel disproportionate to an individual's specific experience; the historical lens shows how the weight of tragedy for an individual can also be due to a communal sense of suffering and loss. Poverty is perceived as a loss for the whole community, and seeing its impact on mental illness helps explain the heavier burden placed on some with mental illness.

A larger reality that includes a phenomenological sense of loss and an archaeological account of tragedy aids us in avoiding the pitfall of reducing mental illness to only a biological sickness. By considering phenomenological descriptions, we discover a better analysis for the types of loss experienced in mental illness and especially how the disorder affects the person as a whole. This helps us not to segregate the consequences of the disorder into one area of a person's life, but to take the time to talk through and search for all the ways it may play out in other areas that may seem unrelated. Sometimes the loss in a disorder feels heavier than even phenomenological descriptions can account for and thus are best seen in the light of the historical trends related to madness. When placed in relation to a communal sense of tragedy, we recognize that the suffering in mental illness does not just come from a biological cause, but also from social structures that tap into certain tragic elements repeated over time.

To apply these ideas of loss and tragedy to a mental disorder, we can think back to the patient mentioned at beginning of the section who was recently diagnosed with major depressive disorder. Although the doctor believed the cure was found primarily in medication, the patient wanted a wider perspective and stated this after his counseling session: "Depression may be the disease, but it is not the problem. The problem is my life."[69] While medications may be one way to address the disorder, we must also consider how the loss of joy is affecting this patient in all areas of life and how the weight of sadness is linked to a larger sense of tragedy.

D. Conclusion

We have seen how three key insights from an integrated account of experience and history overcome many pitfalls in modern psychology. By recognizing how madness connects with common human experience and arises out of a shared historical context, we no longer give into an individualism that assumes the causes and solutions of a mental disorder depend on the individual alone. We situate people in a communal context, not because they are determined by the structures of society, but because through this awareness they gain greater knowledge of their condition and discover their freedom to rise above it. Second, through

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69. Kleinman, *Rethinking Psychiatry*, 87.

the study of the dialectical relation between the rational and the nonrational, we do not succumb to the stark division between abnormal people, as those with mental disorders, and normal people, as those who are healthy. This allows us to find a unity beyond these divisions, placing humans on a flexible spectrum rather than in rigid categories. And finally, by acknowledging the loss and tragedy that can be felt in mental illness, we do not accept a truncated medical explanation of mental illness, but are able to see how this pain impacts individuals and communities in a greater way.

Let's return to the patient Marilyn mentioned at the opening. Under the medical model, we easily justify placing the primary emphasis on controlling her behavior to keep her physically clean and to stop her being a nuisance to others. And while certainly some of these measures were necessary, a more difficult, but perhaps more rewarding path, would have been to help her dig underneath these behaviors and explore how her experience and background were influencing her. For example, we could begin by finding ways the motivations behind her behaviors mirror shared motivations in other nonrational behaviors of humans. We could also follow how the diagnosis of schizophrenia has influenced her own identity, due to the way others have viewed and treated her, and even how the diagnosis affects how she sees herself. Tying her behaviors back to common human experiences and placing her disorder in the historical context could allow us to better grasp her dysfunctional actions and help her to free herself from some of her burdens.

Looking ahead now, I suggest that to gain full access to the three insights described in this chapter, we must first see the roots of the phenomenological approach of Merleau-Ponty (Part II) and of the archaeological approach of Foucault (Part III) and then justify why these two approaches are compatible (Part IV). With this foundation, we can apply this united approach to specific mental disorders (Part V). What we will find is that an expanded view on madness not only provides insights into those diagnosed with mental illness, but also insights into the common human experience itself. We become aware of how our own experiences reflect certain historical structures, we humble ourselves recognizing how we rely on the nonrational in daily life, and we face the way that tragedy continues to plague our human existence. With greater compassion and sympathy, we open our minds to the value in diverse human experiences and receive a deeper understanding of the fragility found in all human life.

Part II

Merleau-Ponty

Madness and the Pre-Rational

> Therefore what we seek is the cause [*aition*], i.e. the form [*eidos*] . . . and this is the substance [*ousia*] of the thing. . . .
>
> Since that which is compounded out of something so that the whole is one, not like a heap but like syllable—now the syllable is not its elements, *ba* is not the same as *b* and *a*, nor is flesh fire and earth . . . but also something else, and the flesh is not only fire and earth or the hot and cold, but also something else. . . .
>
> But it would seem that this "other" is something, and not an element, and that it is the cause [*aition*] which makes this thing flesh and that a syllable. . . . And this is the substance [*ousia*] of each thing (for this is the primary cause [*aition*] of its being).[1]

In Book Zeta of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle seeks after the cause or reason (*aition*) for something to exist, and he calls this the form (*eidos*) of a thing. The form of something points to the very heart of the being of a thing, its actual substance (*ousia*). To understand the whole of something, whether it is a syllable or flesh, we know that it is not just a heap, but that there is a "something else" which brings unity to it. This "something else" is, ultimately, what Aristotle is seeking: it is its form (*eidos*). For Aristotle, the form is what brings the elements together to make it a whole, such as bringing two letters into one sound of a syllable or the forces of nature into one flesh of a living creature. We may give an excellent description of a turtle, for example, including its physical characteristics and usual behaviors, but what makes it one distinct living creature is all of those qualities united together to which we give the name "turtle."

1. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), Bk. VII, Ch. 17, 1041b6–9, 11–18, 25–27, p. 811. Greek: Aristotle, *Metaphysics, Books 1–9 (Loeb Classical Library)*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), 396, 398.

I believe that Aristotle's idea of the "whole as greater than the sum of its parts" is foundational to an understanding of human experience. Although phenomenology will use different vocabulary—moving away from words such as "cause" or "substance"—this idea of wholeness implicitly permeates the phenomenological approach to the world, especially its view of the human.[2] Phenomenology pushes back against improper conceptions of the human, which diminish the human to a description of parts and ignore the "something else" that forms the human into a whole. Rather than a heap of materials, the human being is a united whole designed to seek after meaning in all experiences of the world.

In the spirit of Aristotle's idea of wholeness, our phenomenological approach to madness begins by considering the human as a unity, an indivisible being that cannot be reduced to its parts. In Chapter 2, I detail how the human as a whole relies on the pre-rational in everyday experiences, such as jerking the knee, driving a car or enjoying a work of art. The ability to do things without thinking or pre-rationally is integral to all human experience, whether considered normal or abnormal, and part of the common way that we live in the world. Turning to a phenomenology of madness in Chapter 3, I find that madness arises out of this shared way of experiencing the world instead of being something separate from it. The same patterns in normal behavior mirror patterns in disordered behavior, such as the spatial disorientation found in homesickness and in hallucinations.

The phenomenological approach, therefore, confirms the need to go beyond divisions in our understanding of mental illness and provides insights into human experience as a whole, owing to the unity of the human and the shared way that we encounter the world. Throughout Part II, we will be primarily drawing on Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, but we will also include *The Structure of Behavior*, as well as some of his later writings, to establish a perspective of madness based on experience.

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2. Merleau-Ponty will still use the word "form," however, when speaking of behavior, as we will see (Ch. 2, C.1). While not explicit, I believe that his notion of the form or structure of behavior complements Aristotle's notion of form.

2 Phenomenology of the Pre-Rational

Human behavior opens the world to us; it is the portal by which we understand ourselves and our environment, as Merleau-Ponty writes: "The world, inasmuch as it harbors living beings, ceases to be a material plenum consisting of juxtaposed parts; it opens up at the place where behavior appears."[1] To access the human world, we must stop to look for the emergence of behavior. In *The Structure of Behavior* and *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty demonstrates that an accurate and complete explanation for human behavior only comes when we accept the notion of the human as whole being—where each action includes all of the human.

Merleau-Ponty states this principle of human wholeness, in perhaps the clearest way in all his writings, in a discussion on abstract movement disorders in the *Phenomenology of Perception*: here, he writes that we need "to treat the human subject as an indivisible consciousness that is wholly present in each of its manifestations [*à traiter le sujet humain comme une conscience indécomposable et présente tout entière dans chacune de ses manifestations*]."[2]

Using this statement as a guide, I will first describe how human behavior comes from an indivisible consciousness due to the integration of the mind and the body (A). In this unity, I will define and place the pre-rational capacity and demonstrate its integral role in common human experience (B). Lastly, I will demonstrate how this unity is confirmed in everyday behavior as seen in reflexes, habits and art (C).

A. The Unity of the Human: An Indivisible Consciousness

To describe the human as an integrated mind and body, Merleau-Ponty uses the phrase, *indécomposable conscience*, translated here as "indivisible consciousness." *Indécomposable*, translated simply as "indecomposable"

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1. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 125.
2. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 122; French: 152.

other places, means something that cannot be divided into parts, broken down, taken apart or separated; it refers to the French concepts of inseparability (*inséparable*) and nonfragmentation (*non fragmentable*). The word *conscience* is a bit more complicated, carrying with it all sorts of philosophical baggage. Although the French word *conscience* can mean "having a sense of right and wrong" as it does in the English, Merleau-Ponty's use clearly reflects more of the idea of self-awareness as represented in the word "consciousness." Developing Husserl's idea of consciousness as always a "consciousness of something," Merleau-Ponty offers this definition of consciousness linking it to the body in *Phenomenology of Perception*: consciousness is a "being toward the thing [an object in the world] through the intermediary of the body."[3] In other words, a consciousness allows a body to be oriented toward the things in the world in accordance with specific goals; for the human, these goals will be based on the weaving together of the rationality of the mind with the intentionality of the body.

As we summarized in Chapter 1, an indivisible consciousness can be defined as the unbroken function of the human to go after meaning or purpose; it is what accomplishes the fluid integration of the body and the mind, the rational and the nonrational. Merleau-Ponty describes this uniquely human integration in the section on "The Human Order" in *The Structure of Behavior*:

> A normal man is *not* a body bearing certain autonomous instincts joined to a "psychological life" defined by certain characteristic processes—pleasure and pain, emotion, association of ideas—and surmounted with a mind which would unfold its proper acts over this infrastructure. The advent of the higher orders, to the extent that they are accomplished, eliminate the autonomy of the lower orders and give a new signification to the steps which constitute them. This is why we have spoken of a human order rather than of a mental or rational order.[4]

Rather than the higher orders of the mind controlling one aspect of the human and the lower orders another, the higher orders seep into the lower instincts, transform them and provide them a completely new meaning. The human has an indivisible consciousness because of the inseparable relationship between the higher and lower orders. Even the lower orders, while similar to other animals, are still different by being distinctly colored by being human.

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3. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 140. See Husserl, *Ideas*, 119.
4. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 180, italics mine. We will put aside the reference to the "normal man" for now as we will discuss the distinctions between "normal" and "abnormal" in the next chapter (Ch. 3, D.3).

This distinction between the higher and the lower orders is not to create a division between human existence and natural or animal existence, as Scott Churchill points out, but to show how human existence is actually "emerging from nature."[5] This is because the human order "is founded upon, while taking up and transforming" the lower orders, the vital order and the physical order.[6] Merleau-Ponty further describes this integration in the *Phenomenology of Perception* when discussing the lower orders, as the "the elementary" and the higher orders, as "higher-level functions"; he argues that "the elementary event is already invested with a sense" from the higher orders, because the higher orders want to "achieve a more *integrated* mode of existence."[7] The higher orders, representing the rational of the human, give meaning to the lower orders, representing the non-rational, allowing the human to be a united whole, seeking after a cohesive set of goals.

This integration of the rational and the nonrational is only possible because of the way the mind cannot be divorced from any action of the body. Merleau-Ponty argues that the mind sinks all the way down to every part of the human, entirely saturating all of human behavior. In *The Structure of Behavior*, he writes:

> Mind is not a specific difference which would be added to vital or psychological being in order to constitute man. Man is not a rational animal. The appearance of reason and mind does not leave intact a sphere of self-enclosed instincts in man. . . . Man can never be an animal: his life is always more or less integrated than that of an animal. . . . One does not act with mind alone.[8]

Because the mind is not something added on top, it cannot leave the animal instincts of the human untouched. Labeling a human as a "rational animal" allows the misperception that a human is simply an animal with the added bonus of reason. Although Merleau-Ponty may be thinking of Aristotle here in his use of "rational animal," I see his notion of the human as whole as complementing Aristotle's, as we discussed in the opening. Rather, I think that Merleau-Ponty is more concerned about the Cartesian idea of the human, for it is here that rationality is seen as a fortunate addition rather than an intrinsic part of the human, as we will discuss more in a moment. He writes in *Phenomenology of Perception*:

5. Scott D. Churchill, "Nature and Animality," in Diprose and Reynolds, *Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts*, 176.

6. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 180. We will discuss the relationship of the animal and human in the next chapter (Ch. 3, D.2).

7. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 10, italics mine.

8. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 181.

"Rationality is not a fortuitous accident that would bring dispersed sensations into agreement with each other."[9] In his course on nature years later, he continues to support this view: "*Reciprocally, human being is not animality (in the sense of mechanism) + reason. . . .* And this is why we are concerned with the body: before being reason, *humanity is another corporeity.*"[10] A human is not animal plus reason, because at the core of the human there is something deeper than reason, another corporeity (later called "flesh"), which points to this deep integration of the mind and body.[11]

And finally, in his "Eye and Mind," published right before his death, he writes on how perception, as seen through an analysis of painting, also illustrates the human as a whole:

> The body's animation is not the assemblage or juxtaposition of its parts. Nor is it a question of a mind or spirit coming down from somewhere else into an automaton: this would still suppose that the body itself is without an inside and without a "self." There is a human body when, between the seeing and the seen, between touching and the touched, between one eye and the other, between hand and hand, a blending of some sort takes place.[12]

The body is not a machine nor is it a shell filled with a spirit; the human has life like a flame, which animates the body, keeping it in the tension between an object and a subject, the touching and the touched, the seeing and the seen.[13] Eric Matthews describes the integration of the human like this: "There are not 'minds' and 'bodies;' there are only *human beings* who form various projects in relation to the environment in which they find themselves and who realize those projects by making appropriate

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9. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 61.
10. Merleau-Ponty, *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*, 208. I have viewed Merleau-Ponty's handwritten notes for this lecture at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) in Paris (Boîte NAF 270000—XVII Collège de France, 1959–1960, "Cours de jeudi, Nature et logos: le corps humain"). In his notes, usually written in black, he would underline certain sections with different colors, most likely for emphasis. The italics in the quote represent the words that were underlined with red in the original. French: "*Réciproquement, l'human n'est pas animalité (au sens de mécanisme) + raison*— Et c'est pourquoi on l'occupe de son corps: avant d'être raison *l'humanité est autre corporéité*" (p. 37 in manuscript). Notice the emphasis, especially on the last phrase "l'humanité est autre corporéité," demonstrating how important it is to see that humanity must have another bodily sense, a sense beyond the animal and the rational.
11. Heidegger maintains a similar critique against the notion of "rational animal." For a helpful response to this critique, please see Engelland, " 'Rational Animal' in Heidegger and Aquinas," *Review of Metaphysics* 71, no. 4 (2018): 723–53.
12. Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," in Baldwin, *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*, 295.
13. See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 94 for the famous hand-touching-hand example which we will discuss in the next section.

bodily movements."[14] We must recognize that each movement arises from the body as a blend and by doing so, we will find that human behavior confirms this integration of the indivisible consciousness.

By positing his notion of human integration, Merleau-Ponty is explicitly responding to Cartesian dualism which tends to place the mind on top and the body below. He claims that Cartesian dualism cannot adequately explain human behavior, because it separates human actions into two categories: nonrational instincts and rational actions. Neurological studies, psychological studies and phenomenology all demonstrate, he argues, that nonrational instincts are always transformed by the rational—oriented by the rational toward particular goals. But also that rational actions must include corporeity; before even accessing reason, I am already a body encountering the world. This is why, as seen in the last part of our quote, the indivisible consciousness must be "wholly present in each of its manifestations."[15] The manifestations of the body directly reveal the intentions of the consciousness, making the body not a shell for the mind, but actually the very identity of the human. Following his contemporary Gabriel Marcel's exact phrase of "*Je suis mon corps* [I am my body]," Merleau-Ponty writes, "I am not in front of my body, I am in my body, or rather I am my body."[16] In contrast to Cartesian dualism, we cannot think of the human as anything other than an *embodied* rationality, where the body and mind of the human work together to encounter the world.

Thus, by studying human behavior, we gain access to the whole of the human because each movement of the body represents the meanings and goals sought after by the human. Merleau-Ponty states, "Our body is not an object for an 'I think': it is a totality of a lived significations that moves toward its equilibrium."[17] Instead of the human as an "I think" as Descartes may have wanted, Merleau-Ponty sees the human as an "I can."[18] All of our actions reach toward certain goals that make up a unified set of meanings ("totality of lived significations") and are directed toward a common purpose (an "equilibrium"). Nick Crossley describes this well:

> Merleau-Ponty is not questioning the existence of either perceiving subjects or perceived objects, but he is decentring both by showing

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14. Eric Matthews, *The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 69.

15. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 122.

16. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 151. See Gabriel Marcel, *Metaphysical Journal*, trans. Bernard Wall (London: Rockcliff, 1952), 332–3. See also Donald Landes's notes at 527n10 and 529–530n2; and Matthews, *The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty*, 4 for references to Marcel's influence on Merleau-Ponty.

17. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 155.

18. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 139, 328. As Merleau-Ponty notes, this phrase "I can" (*ich kann*) is taken from Husserl's unpublished material. See also Donald Landes's note at 523n97.

each to be derivative upon a prior interaction between body and environment. And in doing so he is revealing, contra Descartes, that our primordial way of being-in-the-world, whilst active, nevertheless predates and predetermines the subject/object dichotomy. . . . Prior to consciousness our bodies plunge forward blindly into an unknown environment in an attempt to make basic perceptual sense of that environment, seeking out a point of stable equilibrium.[19]

Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on our primordial way of inhabiting the world is what brings unity to the subject–object division of the human. Here we find that our bodies blindly go forward—not blindly in the sense of haphazardly but due to our lack of vision—seeking out a point of purpose and stability. Each "I can" action pulls together the human into a cohesive whole. Think of the phrase, "*I can* run," where the interplay between the mind telling the body where to go and the repetitive action of the legs are interwoven. Or think of the phrase, "*I can* play the piano" where the knowledge of the music integrates with muscle memory of the fingers. The "I can" statements ultimately demonstrate for Merleau-Ponty the unity of the human, a unity that is displayed in every manifestation.[20]

Merleau-Ponty's discussion on the unity of the human shows both his emphasis on the nonrational, as we will explore further in the next section, but also his stress on the rational. We must note that the rational remains significant in Merleau-Ponty's method and analysis. He demonstrates respect for the rational by closing his preface to *Phenomenology of Perception* with this reminder: philosophy (specifically, phenomenology) plays an important role in revealing the rationality of the world. We should not avoid reason nor should we view reason as a problem to be solved, he writes, because by practicing philosophy we can help reveal the "mystery of the world and the mystery of reason."[21] Philosophy shows us that the world is not a place of absurdity, but actually a place of order and meaning, "everything [in the world] has meaning [*sens*]."[22] Thus, whether we as humans choose it or not, "we are condemned to meaning [*sens*]"; we can relate to the world only in

19. Nick Crossley, *The Social Body: Habit, Identity and Desire* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 71–2.
20. For an excellent article on how this unity plays out in motor intentionality, see Gabrielle Benette Jackson, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty's Concept of Motor Intentionality: Unifying Two Kinds of Bodily Agency," *European Journal of Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2017): 1–17. Note, in particular, her articulation on how agency can be understood according to a certain triangulation.
21. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxxv.
22. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxxiii. The French *sens* can be translated either as "sense," "meaning" or a "direction."

a meaningful way.[23] The rational then helps explain our relation to the world, as he writes: "There is a logic of the world that my entire body merges with."[24] M.C. Dillon confirms Merleau-Ponty's appreciation of reason arguing that he primarily practices ontology because his project is a "search for the logos or meaning of things."[25] Rather than ignoring reason, Dillon shows how Merleau-Ponty explores phenomena in order "to accord to phenomena some kind of positive ontological status."[26] Thus, an understanding of the integrated human is not to privilege the nonrational over the rational, or vice versa, but to illustrate their intricate collaboration.

B. Placing the Pre-Rational in Human Experience

With this presentation of the unity of human, we can now place the pre-rational and judge to what extent it influences human behavior. The nonrational character of the human, for Merleau-Ponty, refers to the functions of the human which are either prior to reason, which I call the "pre-rational," or against reason, which I call the "irrational."[27] Because Merleau-Ponty predominately studies the presence of the pre-rational, we will focus on that form of the nonrational in Part II, but we will address the irrational more thoroughly with Foucault in Part III. Merleau-Ponty appears to distinguish between these two types of the nonrational when he states that to explore the pre-rational or the "pre-scientific life of consciousness" is not to acquiesce to some kind of "irrational conversion" but rather to practice "an intentional analysis."[28] In a later passage, he again distinguishes between these two forms when speaking of the "phenomenal layer," the layer of initial sensations of an experience: "We shall not say that it is irrational or anti-logical. . . . We must simply say that the phenomenal layer is, literally, pre-logical and will always remain so."[29] Phenomenal experience is not irrational or contrary to logic, but *pre-logical*, one of the terms that we will discuss in a moment, in that it comes prior to reason and logic.

Pushing back against the constraints of modern rationality, as Chapter 1 discussed, an exploration of the pre-rational is needed to provide a fuller picture of human experience. In a discussion on subjectivity, Merleau-Ponty notes: "Perhaps there are, either in each sensory

23. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxxiv.
24. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 341. See also p. 50 ("a lived logic").
25. M.C. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 4.
26. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, 4.
27. Please see the introduction for the discussion on the types of the nonrational.
28. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 59.
29. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 287.

experience or in each consciousness, some 'phantoms' that no rational-ity can explain away [*réduire*]."[30] Humans, whether considered normal or abnormal, have certain "phantoms," certain mysterious elements, in our experiences that cannot be reduced (from *réduire*) to a rational explana-tion. The human self is then a work in progress, something incomplete: "My voluntary and rational life thus knows itself to be entangled with another power that prevents it from being completed and that always gives it the air of a work in progress [*d'une ébauche*]."[31] As a sketch or rough draft, as the French literally says, I write out the narrative of my life, drawing from the powers of the rational and the nonrational and creating a meaningful whole beyond them.

It should be noted that Merleau-Ponty does not specifically use the terms "nonrational" or "nonrationality" (*nonrational* or *nonrationalité*) or "pre-rational" (*pré-rationnel/pré-rationnelle*) in *Phenomenology of Percep-tion*, but he does use "pre-logical" (*prélogique*), "primordial" (*primordial/primordiale*), "originary" (*originaire*), "the unreflected" (*l'irréfléchi*) and "pre-personal" (*prépersonnel/prépersonnelle*). Each of these terms relate to the notion of the pre-rational, and thus, for the ease of our discus-sion, we will consider each as a way to define the pre-rational and place them under the umbrella of the nonrational. In this section, we will see how the pre-rational is situated in our primordial relation to the world, how the pre-rational is understood as the unreflected, and how the pre-rational must be pre-personal, but not subhuman.

1. Primordial Relation

Building on Husserl's exposition of the primordial world, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes how the human's prior relation to the world is best signified in the *primordial* aspect of the human. The word, "primordial," coming from the Latin *primus* meaning "first" and the Latin verb *ordiri* meaning "to begin" refers to what is at the very beginning of human experience. Human experience begins with a world already there and the human already attached to it. My primordial encounter with world is precisely here in that I find the world given to me and that I am connected to it. An awareness of this first encounter must necessarily take place after-wards. Once the human even recognizes that there is a beginning, it is no longer the beginning; such a recognition has to be a later step. This later step of awareness is then dependent on the primordial encounter that has already taken place.

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30. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 228; French: 265. See Scott Marratto, *The Intercorporeal Self: Merleau-Ponty on Subjectivity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012), 48–54 for a detailed discussion on these phantoms in human experience.
31. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 362; French: 404.

An awareness of perception, for example, is dependent on the primordial relation that we have with the world. If we try to understand perception, or any other human behavior, without recognizing the dependence on the primordial operation, we will fall short: "We are thus drawn outside of reflection, and we construct perception rather than revealing its proper functioning; we once again miss the primordial operation that impregnates the sensible with a sense and that is presupposed by every logical mediation and every psychological causality."[32] The content for our perception, the content for our reflection is being drawn from the first ways that we operate in the world. Any attempt to give a logical explanation or an emotional appeal is fueled by the initial ways that we experience the world.

The primordial relation, then, is the source for all perception and for everything in human experience; it is how we encounter *what is* or *being* itself. We apprehend reality because of the givenness of human experience. He states, "Perceptual experience shows us, however, that these facts are presupposed in our primordial encounter with being, and that being is synonymous with being situated."[33] We are already situated, already placed, already in a world; reality is in front of us. Being is thus given to us by our primordial attachment to the world, but then to understand and reflect on being is the next step, which is a step that all humans must take. This is what makes us human, that we can recognize this attachment to the world, but also objectify and reflect on the attachment: "Human life is defined by this power that it has of denying itself in objective thought, and it draws this power from its primordial attachment to the world itself."[34] The power to produce objective thought, ultimately to reason, is drawn from the way we are already related to the world.

Even later on, in "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," published seven years after *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty continues to recognize the dependence that humans have on the nonrational primordial horizon: "All perception, all action which presupposes it and in short every human use of the body is already *primordial expression*."[35] All acts of the body are an expression of our primordial attachment to being as seen in our interaction with others, our relation to the natural world, our participation in art and our habitual behaviors, as we will see in the next section. We must remember, though, that, even in a study of human behavior, our primordial attachment to the world can never be

32. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 35.
33. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 263.
34. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 341.
35. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," in *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, ed. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 267, italics his.

completely exposed. Merleau-Ponty reminds us, "The primordial level is on the horizon of all our perceptions, but this is a horizon that, in principle, can never be reached and thematized in an explicit perception."[36] This attachment is something prior to reason, and while we can gain access to it through reason, it takes place without recourse to rationality, and thus can never be fully explained.

2. Unreflected

To explore the primordial relation even further, Merleau-Ponty describes it is as something prior to reflection, something that contains within itself the reservoir of the *unreflected*.[37] He writes:

> Originary perception is non-thetic, pre-objective, and preconscious experience. Thus, let us say *provisionally* that there is a matter of knowledge that is merely possible. Empty and determinate intentions emerge from each point of the primordial field; by actualizing these intentions, analysis will arrive [1] at the object of science, [2] at sensation as a private phenomenon, and [3] at the pure subject who posits them both. These three terms lie only on the horizon of primordial experience. . . . Thus, reflection only fully grasps itself if it refers to the unreflective fund it presupposes, upon which it draws.[38]

Here we see another term for the pre-rational, the "originary" (*originaire*), meaning something original that has "always been there," and Merleau-Ponty links it here with the same qualities of the primordial: they both describe something that is not thematized, something that is prior to objectivity and something that is prior to consciousness or awareness.[39] In this originary space, there are many empty intentions, many uncategorized points of experience and it is only upon gathering up these intentions that we start to make sense of human experience. Through this reflection, we come to find that the human is either (1) a scientific object, (2) a private subject or (3) both. Options 1 and 2 are not viable options for Merleau-Ponty because they result in either pure empiricism (1), where the human is reduced to a mechanical object, or intellectualism (2), where the human is only a mind; both of which do not accurately account for human experience. But, as

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36. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 264, translation slightly altered.
37. See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 360 where he calls the world an "inexhaustible reservoir from which things are drawn."
38. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 252.
39. Thank you to Emmanuel Falque for suggesting *originaire*, for Merleau-Ponty, as "always been there."

Merleau-Ponty laments throughout his works, many thinkers fall into options 1 or 2 because they ignore the primordial horizon of the human. By advocating for option 3, Merleau-Ponty argues that I can see myself as an object and as a subject but also that I am above both of these descriptions as a "pure subject," a being who has the ability to postulate both.

This is illustrated by Merleau-Ponty's famous hand-touching-hand example. When my left hand touches my right hand while my right touches an object, my right hand is acting both as what is touching and what is being touched (an object). The right hand is an object for the left hand, but it is the touching instrument for the outside object. Merleau-Ponty's point in this example is that the body, like the right hand, can never only be an object, because it is also always the subject experiencing the world. Instead, he argues, we must recognize the place of the unreflected, which is part of this primordial horizon, and only in this way, can we see the human as an embodied creature, who can reflect on the human as a subject and an object, but who is also a being that transcends these categories as an integrated whole.[40] Foucault will object that Merleau-Ponty does not successfully overcome the dualistic pull between the human as an object and subject, the empirico-transcendental doublet as he calls is, and we will address this objection in Chapter 6 (Chapter 6, B.1).

For now, the point is that through reflection on the primordial field, we can see the human in the fullest sense, beyond the subject and object divide, and this demonstrates how the human relies on an area of a field, known as the unreflected. To understand what Merleau-Ponty means by the unreflected, we can consider the term in French, *l'irréfléchi*, which literally means "that which has not yet been reflected upon."[41] Notice that the unreflected, then, is not something entirely opposed to reflection, because it contains things which have the *potential* to be reflected upon. In the same way that the pre-rational is not necessarily against the rational (as the irrational is), the unreflected is not against the reflected, but is the one prior to the other in their relationship. Merleau-Ponty devotes several sections to working out the unique relationship between the unreflected and reflection in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, but here we will summarize a few points which are pertinent to the pre-rational in human behavior.[42]

Essentially, the unreflected and reflection form a reciprocal relationship, entirely dependent on each other, revealing the dependence of the human on both the rational and the nonrational. For me to access the

40. See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 94.
41. See Landes's note at Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 493n20.
42. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 38–47, 60–5, 250–2.

unreflected, I must rely on my rational capacity for reflection, and yet to have material for this reflection, I am dependent on the unreflected, an aspect of the nonrational. When I perform an act of reflection, I am then drawing from the fund of the unreflected, for, as he points out in his introduction, "my reflection is a reflection upon an unreflected."[43] The experience of touch, for example, can confirm this. Without reflecting, my fingers touch the edge of a table and my body knows that the table is a hard surface. Upon this sensation, however, I can then reflect on the fact that the table is hard, but my reflection is dependent on the initial unreflected sensation of the table on my fingers. Thinking through this simple process, as well as other more complex human behaviors as we will see later on, allows us to be aware of our radical "dependence on an unreflected life."[44] Shaun Gallagher puts this well: "If the body itself is doing the perceiving, then such prenoetic [unreflected] operations provide specific conditions that shape perceptual consciousness. The body and its natural environment work together to deliver an already formed meaning to consciousness."[45] Through the indivisible consciousness, Gallagher discusses how the unreflected life of the human impacts the life of thought: I take in the unreflected sensation and deliver the content, laden with meaning to the consciousness for the purpose of reflection.

The purpose of placing the unreflected in the nonrational is not to root human experience in something obscure, but in fact precisely the opposite: to show that the unreflected can be at least partially uncovered through the act of reflection. The unreflected acts as reservoir of untapped phenomena waiting to be taken up and explored. For Merleau-Ponty, this is central to the practice of philosophy: the "true role of philosophical reflection," he argues, is to bring us "face to face" with the unreflective life.[46] It is important for us to practice philosophical reflection, because this is the only way for us to come to know the unreflected: "we know the unreflected itself only through reflection and it must not be placed outside of reflection like an unknowable term."[47] As with the primordial relation, the unreflected can never be completely laid bare, because it will always retain some ambiguity and mystery, but recognizing its place in human experience and pushing it to the limits of our understanding is crucial to exposing the nonrational and to practicing philosophy.

43. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxiii.

44. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxviii.

45. Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 139. Gallagher cites Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 341 ("there is a logic of the world that my entire body merges with") in support of this claim.

46. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 34.

47. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 45.

3. Pre-Personal Horizon

Lastly, the pre-rational of the human must be *pre-personal*, because pre-rational experiences come without an awareness of personal identity. Experiences of birth and death describe the "pre-personal horizons" of human experience: my identity is based on these pre-personal circumstances, my birth and my death, because they are necessary to write my own story.[48] Merleau-Ponty states, "My history must be the sequel to a pre-history whose acquired results it uses."[49] Just as I incorporate aspects of my birth and my future death into my being, even though they are beyond my memory, I also incorporate the pre-personal aspects of sensations.

Merleau-Ponty argues that all sensations are like birth and death, because all have elements of something given and something beyond my personal responsibility. Merleau-Ponty uses the example of the sensations of vision:

> To say that I have a visual field means that I have an access and an opening to a system of visible beings through my position, and that they are available to my gaze in virtue of a kind of primordial contract and by a gift of nature, without any effort required on my part. In other words, it means that vision is pre-personal.[50]

Without any work or effort on my part, my eyes give to me what is in front of me. My initial acquisition of this vision happens, without my personal intervention, but will only have meaning when it is understood as an act of a person. Thus, we find that I rely on the pre-personal givenness of human experience, through both circumstances and sensations, to create my identity: "my personal existence must be the taking up of a pre-personal tradition."[51]

The term "pre-personal" raises a general question about the ultimate source for the pre-rational of the human. How can the pre-rational be something prior to a person or without a person? Does the reservoir of the unreflected lead us to something beyond, or perhaps, below the human? To make things more complicated, Merleau-Ponty sometimes refers to the idea of the pre-rational as a "milieu of generality" and as a "system of anonymous 'functions' that wraps each particular focusing into a general project."[52] The language of the "pre-personal," the "general" or the "anonymous" provokes two primary critiques against Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the nonrational. First, as implied

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48. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 223.
49. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 265.
50. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 224.
51. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 265.
52. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 224, 265.

above, we wonder if Merleau-Ponty sees the deepest level of human experience as something nonhuman, and somehow composed of a general fund of circumstances and sensations which produces individuals. We could even see this general fund as some kind of universal mind or general force which determines and directs humans.[53]

Second, there is another critique against Merleau-Ponty's idea of the "anonymous" body raised particularly by feminist thinkers. The primary concern is that by Merleau-Ponty positing a general or anonymous function, he is supporting something universal or foundational at the basis of human experience. Feminist scholars often want to avoid any kind of universal commonalities which connect one human to another, because this may give preference to a kind of universalized male understanding of the human. For example, Judith Butler writes, "Merleau-Ponty's conception of the 'subject' is additionally problematic in virtue of its abstract and anonymous status, as if the subject described were a universal subject or structured existing subjects universally."[54] Holding to anything universal about the human body, for Butler, does not adequately address gender and ultimately devalues women. Julia Levin agrees with this interpretation and argues that Merleau-Ponty's idea of "an anonymous embodiment and primordially shared consciousness" cannot be accepted, because it places something universally shared at the basis of human experience.[55]

To respond to the first critique, we begin by clarifying what Merleau-Ponty means by the anonymous, pre-personal quality of human experience. Although these terms could connote something subhuman or disconnected from a human, this is not what Merleau-Ponty has in mind; the source for the nonrational cannot be outside of human experience. The anonymity of the nonrational can only be understood on an individual level, even it if it something that provides common structures to human experience in general. He offers this description of the anonymous in the *Phenomenology of Perception*:

> My life must have a sense that I do not constitute, there must be, literally, an intersubjectivity; each of us must be at once anonymous in

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53. Gallagher gives an example of the kind of vocabulary that could be used when we view human behavior as ultimately coming from a subpersonal place. See his chart for the three different vocabularies for describing the interaction of the body and the mind. Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 244.

54. Judith Butler, "Sexual Ideology and Phenomenological Description: A Feminist Critique of Phenomenology of Perception," in *The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy*, ed. Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), 98.

55. Julia Levin, "Bodies and Subjects in Merleau-Ponty and Foucault: Towards a Phenomenological/Poststructuralist Feminist Theory of Embodied Subjectivity" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Penn State University, 2008), 179.

the sense of an absolute individuality and anonymous in the sense of
an absolute generality. Our being in the world is the concrete bearer
of this double anonymity.[56]

These two aspects of anonymity, individual and general, are funds that
I have not created, but which I draw on to become myself. Thus, the non-
rational, although containing general aspects, can only be understood
through an individual in a personal way. This is why he calls it something
"*almost* impersonal," because it will always retain something personal.[57]

Our experiences as humans demonstrate this tension between the
personal and the impersonal. As we will see with pre-rational actions,
such as habits, they can still be reflected on and understood in accord-
ance with my goals as an *individual* person. Thinking in terms of dreams,
madness and perception, we "do not have the right to level out all expe-
riences into a single world, nor all modalities of existence into a single
consciousness."[58] Although these experiences, including the experience
of madness, are part of our shared human experience, as we will explore
more in the next chapter, we must always remember that each human
begins in a personal place, and while drawing from a general fund, expe-
riences can be only understood in terms of a personal consciousness.

In response to the second critique, it is true that the anonymous is
pointing to something common, something shared in human experi-
ence. As Merleau-Ponty put it above, it is anonymous also in the sense
of an "absolute generality." Although feminist scholars may find this
problematic, it does in fact help ground the human experience in a
shared world and allow for intersubjectivity: it points to the communal
aspect of human interaction. This is because by showing that there are
general or anonymous functions behind human behavior, it reveals to
us how human behavior follows similar patterns. We are thus linked
together by our shared way of encountering the world and can under-
stand human behavior, even disordered behavior, because of these
shared patterns. Scott Marratto writes that it is Merleau-Ponty's notion
of anonymity represents intersubjectivity, and his "anonymity" means
something "intercorporeal": "the sense of anonymity is also the mark
of a certain primitive kinship between my body and the bodies of other
selves."[59] Marratto gives a simple example to illustrate the strong power
of the intersubjective: I hold a wine glass in a delicate way even when
I am alone because of the way I am responding to others and even

56. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 474.
57. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 86, italics his.
58. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 303.
59. Marratto, *The Intercorporeal Self: Merleau-Ponty on Subjectivity*, 8–9. Marratto continues
    to explore the theme of anonymity as intercorporeal throughout his work; see also
    141–64.

incorporating their bodily movements into myself.[60] Each action, even small gestures of the hand, can be traced back to a human source. In contrast to Husserl's idea of the "intuitive givenness," where the environment of the experience is not taken into account, as Marratto writes, Merleau-Ponty considers the spatial and temporal aspects, the "dynamic structure of the field" of human experience which allows for connection to others.[61]

Merleau-Ponty further confirms this understanding of the anonymous as way for a relating to others in his later work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, where he writes of the connection between two people: "An anonymous visibility inhabits both of us, a vision in general, in virtue of that primordial property that belongs to the flesh, being here and now, of radiating everywhere and forever, being an individual, of being also a dimension and a universal."[62] The anonymous contains the primordial contents that provide shared meaning and patterns allowing intersubjectivity between one individual to another. He ultimately calls this kind of connection, a connection to the "flesh" of the world, something that goes beyond the categories of the rational and the nonrational, the individual and the other.

Instead of linking human experience to something beyond or below the human, Merleau-Ponty's notion of anonymity is intended to connect the source of the nonrational to something human itself. The anonymous must be made personal and taken by the individual to have meaning, but it also demonstrates how we can have access to other people's experience. Due to anonymous or general functions of human behavior, we can recognize the shared patterns in human experience and engage in intersubjectivity. This point is particularly important when we turn to Foucault's account of the nonrational, because while he will show the dynamic quality of the nonrational across history, Merleau-Ponty helps make sense of his descriptions of the nonrational by grounding them in general principles of human behavior.

C. Unity of the Human Confirmed in Behavior

The unity of the human, including the essential presence of the prerational relation, is best confirmed by looking directly at studies of human behavior; here we will discuss three studies on reflex behavior, habitual behavior and artistic behavior.

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60. Marratto, *The Intercorporeal Self*, 9.
61. Marratto, *The Intercorporeal Self*, 120–1. It could be argued that this idea of the "dynamic structure of the field" is more related to Husserl's later thoughts in *Ideas II*.
62. Merleau-Ponty, " 'The Intertwining—The Chiasm' from *The Visible and the Invisible*," 259.

1. *Reflex Behavior*

In *The Structure of Behavior*, Merleau-Ponty walks through studies of both animals and humans and argues that it is only by recognizing the form (or structure) of behavior that we can properly understand it. He advocates for the *Gestalt Theory* which looks at behavior as a cohesive whole arguing that other methods which reduce behavior to either mechanical processes (where behavior becomes only a thing) or spiritual explanations (where behavior becomes only a transcendent idea) ultimately fall short.[63] He writes, "Behavior is not a thing, but neither is it an idea. It is not the envelope of pure consciousness. . . . I am not pure consciousness . . . behavior is a form."[64] Rather than viewing behavior only as a thing with parts or as an exterior shell of pure spirit, we need to conceive of behavior as a form. In doing so, the form of the behavior will then function like a grid through which patterns can be identified and better understood; it is a grid entirely connected to and inseparable from the organism. Similar to Aristotle's form [*eidos*] as a whole greater than its parts, Merleau-Ponty defines forms as a "transposable wholes" and "total processes whose properties are not the sum of those which the isolated parts would possess."[65] Viewing behavior as a form, then, provides unity to the individual; as he writes, form is "the internal and dynamic unity which gives to the whole the character of an indecomposable [*indécomposable*] individual."[66] Using the adjective, "*indécomposable*," again (which is here translated simply as "indecomposable"), Merleau-Ponty reiterates how reflecting on behavior, as seen in reflexes, according to a form reveals the way an individual is an indivisible whole.

After citing examples of reflexes from Goldstein's *The Organism*—such as the reflexes of a man's leg when the kneecap is hit—Merleau-Ponty argues that the "classical" explanation for reflexes which starts from the outside (the cause) and moves toward the inside (the source of the response) is clearly not sufficient.[67] "Reflexes," Merleau-Ponty argues, "cannot be decomposed into elementary reactions."[68] When a man's kneecap is hit, for example, there are two possible responses: a man's leg will move outward, if the legs are crossed, but it will move inward, if the legs are passively extended. If we view the initial position of the legs as causes separate from the actual response, Merleau-Ponty argues,

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63. *Gestalt* literally means "the whole." See Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 33–51, for his presentation of the theory.
64. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 127.
65. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 47.
66. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 142.
67. By "classical," Merleau-Ponty is referring to the Cartesian rationalistic approach to science and not the classical Greek approach. See Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 10–33 for his more detailed critique of the "classical" approach.
68. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 12.

then we will end up with messy scientific explanations of reflex behavior, represented in a "mosaic of autonomous processes which interfere with and correct each other."[69]

A better explanation for the reflex of the man's leg starts with the inside, the whole of the nervous system, which then allows one to see a unity to the responses of the individual depending on the stimulations. He states:

> It would be more in conformity with the facts to consider the central nervous system as the place in which a total "image" of the organism is elaborated and in which the local state of each part is expressed— in a way which must still be made precise. It is this image of the whole which would govern the distribution of the motor influxes, which would immediately give them the organization to which the least of our gestures gives witness.[70]

Rather than seeing a response of a man kicking outward as canceling out the response of kicking inward, we look at both responses as part of the same process, but only one is performed depending on the overall state of the individual. If the individual has a "preferred state" of being passive, where the leg is extended in a relaxed fashion, then the response will be a bending inwards, but if the preferred state is more active, where the legs are crossed, the leg jerks outward.[71] Thinking about the image of the whole and the preferred state of the organism allows the scientist to see all the various responses as part of the same system. Thus, each movement of the body, even the smallest ones, gives witness to the overall structure of the motor reflex system.

Not only do nerve reflexes point to a unity of the nervous system, they also reveal the way the higher and lower powers are integrated in the human; in fact, it is the mind (or brain, as he also calls it here) which directly organizes the reflex response. This is demonstrated, Merleau-Ponty argues, by the responses of subjects with brain damage: they do not respond to certain stimulations in the same way as those without brain damage even though their knees are unharmed. For example, subjects with brain damage may not extend the leg upon the hitting of the knee-cap when there are other conditions present that would normally not affect the result. Such conditions could include bending the knees, laying on their stomachs or moving their heads in certain ways.[72] Thus, even though the localized region around the knee is completely functional,

69. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 23.
70. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 23.
71. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 28.
72. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 20.

a person with a mental disorder may not give the proper reflex response. Reflex responses are not due to "some local inhibiting device, but by the nerve and motor situation in the whole of the organism" and it is the brain which "assumes a positive role in the very constitution of reflex responses."[73] Even from the simple example of the hitting of the kneecap, we learn that the higher powers of the mind play a role even in the smallest gesture. He concludes, "the appearance of reason and that of the higher nervous system transforms the very parts of behavior which depend on the middle brain and appear the most instinctive."[74] The example of the kneecap, as well other reflex responses, are best understood by considering the whole of the person and confirm the way that rationality transforms every part of the human, even the parts that appear more instinctual.

2. Habitual Behavior

As we discussed briefly in Chapter 1, habitual behavior reveals the role of the pre-rational in human behavior, because habits are done prior to reflection and reason. Just as the pre-rational in general is not opposed to the rational, a habit is not necessarily contrary to reason, for when I perform a habit, I am "doing without thinking"—where I am not guided by the mind, but by the body. We may first think of habits only in terms of "bad" habits, such as overeating or biting nails, but the idea of habit, as *hexis*, arising out of Aristotle's ethics, can also be a positive characteristic that cultivates virtue for a person, when done under the proper training.[75] Although Merleau-Ponty still does not refer to the Aristotelean tradition directly, habit provides insight into the value and capacity of the human body, as it does for Aristotle. More explicitly, Merleau-Ponty relies on the etymological root of habit (French: *habitude*), which is the Latin verb *habere* meaning "to have" or "to hold," and sees habit as something that we have but also something that can have a hold on us. In discussing Merleau-Ponty's notion of habit, Clare Carlisle offers this helpful definition: the habit is "the way in which one has or holds oneself."[76] This manner of having and holding oneself is precisely how we encounter the world; habits, or "stable dispositions," as Merleau-Ponty writes, demonstrate that "the body is our general means of having a world."[77] Habit is way of describing the type of pre-

73. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 20.
74. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 21.
75. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1999), Bk. 2.1, 4–6, pp. 33–5, 38–44.
76. Clare Carlisle, "Creatures of Habit: The Problem and the Practice of Liberation," *Continental Philosophy Review* 38 (2006): 22.
77. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 147.

rational encounter that we have with the world; it is what allows us to have a hold on the world and access the world.

Merleau-Ponty offers many everyday examples of habitual behavior in *Phenomenology of Perception*: dancing, typing, using a cane, playing an instrument such as an organ, recognizing colors for a child, moving while wearing a hat, passing through a door and driving an automobile.[78] We can easily identify with habitual behaviors, because they are behaviors that we perform all the time. In driving a car, even in a new area of town, my body automatically knows to brake for slowing cars, put on my turn signal, or stop at a red light, usually without even thinking about it. Or when I type words on a keyboard, I know which keys to press to form the words without consciously telling my fingers what to do. Merleau-Ponty draws his examples from both normal adult behavior as well as abnormal behavior. The reliance on habitual pre-rational behavior is true for all humans, whether or not they are struggling with physical or mental disabilities.

Underneath everyday habits, however, there is a deeper habit that provides the basis for all habitual behavior. This is the human's very first habit, the human body itself; for Merleau-Ponty, the human body does not just have habits, but actually is habit.[79] He claims, "My own body is the primordial habit, the one that conditions all others and by which they can be understood."[80] Without a way to integrate experiences, the world becomes a jumbled heap of sensations, randomly thrown at the human. The body, as habit, orders the sensations of the world for me; it is what imposes on me the perspective of the world. Accepting the images that my eyes transmit to my brain or lifting objects up and setting them down according to the force of gravity are examples of the way my body acts as a habit when I encounter the world. Merleau-Ponty illustrates the body as habit by a study on blind man with a cane because he believes that the cane becomes to the blind man what the body is to the human. Without vision, the blind man incorporates the cane into himself in order to move; in this way, his body plus cane acts as a habit to engage the world. The cane is "no longer an object that the blind man would perceive, it has become an instrument *with* which he perceives."[81] We can apply this same principle to the body as habit; my body is no longer an object of perception like the cane is no longer an object of perception, but my body has become the habit with which I perceive. The gaze of perception is like a "natural instrument comparable to the

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78. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 143–8, 153–5.
79. Carlisle points out that Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze are the only two philosophers to make this radical jump. See Carlisle, "Creatures of Habit: The Problem and the Practice of Liberation," 20.
80. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 93.
81. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 154, italics his.

blind man's cane" through which we develop new styles of encountering the world.[82]

The body, as the first, most basic habit, is the platform of nonrational behavior upon which other habits can be built. The process of growing habits is continuous because habits are always in a state of renewal. Drawing from Merleau-Ponty's ideas of embodiment, Edward Casey discusses the importance of habit and shows how both in the Latin *habere* and the Greek *hexis*, there is this idea of renewal. In the Greek idea of *hexis*, for example, as we referenced with Aristotle, habit allows for a type of self-formation of character which can lead to virtue; it has, as Casey puts it, an "active continuance," an "active matter" which is "to have or hold one's being in the world in certain ways."[83] In other words, a habit is not an unchanging, mundane action repeated over and over again, but describes how the human body is always changing, adding and perfecting itself. Merleau-Ponty writes, "Habit expresses the power we have of dilating our being in the world, or of altering our existence through incorporating new instruments."[84] Our body acts as the first habit by which we access the world, and then through the body, we begin creating our way of being in the world by adding and perfecting additional habits.

Habits are not a set of random acts but are constantly being perfected and directed toward specific meanings.[85] Because the rational and the nonrational have a reciprocal relationship, as we have seen, habits, formed prior to the rational, develop meaning in accordance with this reciprocal relationship: the meaning given to habits comes from the body, but can be understood and articulated by the mind. Expanding on the example given in Chapter 1, we will look to the passage discussing a child learning his or her colors to demonstrate the kind of meaning that the body grasps in habitual behavior:

> Learning to see colors is the acquisition of a certain style of vision, a new use of one's own body; it is to enrich and to reorganize the body schema. As a system of motor powers or perceptual powers [i.e. habits], our body is not an object for an "I think": it is a totality of lived significations that moves toward its equilibrium.[86]

Applying the distinction between the "I think" and the "I can" discussed earlier, we can see how color recognition represents an "I can" moment where the child acts as a whole toward a given purpose. Color recognition

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82. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 154.
83. Edward Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 150.
84. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 145.
85. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 144, 148.
86. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 154–5, brackets mine.

reveals how the body attempts to facilitate our encounter with the world by taking lived moments (i.e., seeing certain colors) and placing them into categories. When children learn their colors, they can make better sense of the world because they know how to categorize objects according to set criteria: these objects are red so they go in the red bin, these objects are blue so they go in the blue bin, etc. The desire for color organization comes from the body's goal of equilibrium, making sense of colored objects provides stability and unity in the world.

Ascribing "goals" or "set meanings" to human behavior can make us uncomfortable, because of Merleau-Ponty's explicit rejection of teleology. Veronique Foti, for example, writes that Merleau-Ponty not only "refuses to return to teleology," but rejects any ontological structures or "natural hierarchies" that relate to it.[87] While Foti is right to highlight Merleau-Ponty's criticism of teleology, it is important to note that his concern is specifically against the rigid causal language often associated with teleology. Although behavior is not based on pre-determined causes and effects, he does argue that behaviors seek after certain goals and ends, as we have seen in the texts above, and that humans always act in a way that seeks after something, a meaningful something. This is clear from the very beginning of the *Phenomenology of Perception* where he writes: "There is not a single word or human gesture—not even those habitual or distracted ones—that does not have a signification."[88] Every action, including habit, has both meaning and direction (as seen in the French *sens*). Furthermore, we should remember his "finalistic vocabulary" from *The Structure of Behavior* where the structure of each organism is oriented toward a "preferred behavior" or "preferred state."[89] In opposition to Foti, I do think there is a kind of *telos* in his account of human behavior because of the way he emphasizes the preferred meaning and orientation for actions. Although Merleau-Ponty does oppose a causal teleology, I believe that his emphasis on meaning-oriented behavior posits a dynamic ontological structure on human behavior.

The ontological structure of habit is not imposed on the body by the mind, but is actually coming out of the body's interaction with the world. Thus, the meaning that is sought after is a meaning grasped first by the body. Habits go beyond mere animal instincts displaying their humanness in the meaningful goals found in each behavior and yet, it is not a mental understanding which guides the human, but a bodily understanding which Merleau-Ponty calls "a certain modulation of motricity" of the body.[90] This is why habit represents the nonrational in human

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87. Veronique Foti, "Merleau-Ponty's Vertical Genesis and the Aristotelian Powers of the Soul," *Phenomenology: Japanese and American Perspectives* (1999): 43.
88. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxxii.
89. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 28, 50, 51.
90. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 145.

behavior so clearly because it displays something uniquely human, without explicit access to human rationality.

3. Artistic Behavior

In a similar way, our relation to art gives a further illustration to the unity of human behavior and the significance of the pre-rational relation. We see this both in the way the human participates in art and the way the human creates art. Beginning with the first, we find that when we participate in art, we respond in a way that represents our primordial connection to the world. In the preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty is already thinking about how the practice of art mirrors the practice of phenomenological philosophy. He writes that philosophy is like art in that it actualizes truth; in other words, it exposes truth easily overlooked.[91] In his essay, "Cézanne's Doubt," published the same year as *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty looks particularly at the work of Paul Cézanne to illustrate the way that art expresses the truth of the primordial relation of the human. For him, Cézanne's paintings portray the world not as stable and fixed, but rather as a shifting, dynamic environment. He writes that Cézanne "did not want to separate the stable things which we see and the shifting way in which they appear; he wanted to depict matter as it takes on form, the birth of order through spontaneous organization . . . Cézanne wanted to paint this primordial world."[92]

Cézanne's *Still Life with a Curtain*, for example, depicts objects not as standing right in front of us ready for analysis, but rather as I normally experience them in the moment. (See Image 2.1: Artistic Behavior and the Nonrational.) It is as if I am walking across the room and as I glance to the side, I immediately apprehend a table that looks slanted from my angle; the fruit on the table appears slightly misshapen, and the linen of the tablecloth gives the illusion of movement. The painting reveals how I intuitively grasp the environment around me without pausing to reflect; I am instantly connected to the world due to my primordial relation to it. Clive Cazeaux describes this well, "Merleau-Ponty wants to show that the colours, patterns, and textures of sensory experience, *before they are the qualities of objects*, are the thick interactions which manifest the disclosive, intentional structure of experience."[93] My behavioral response to art shows how I interact with the object primordially even when I have not completely connected the qualities of the objects to the objects. The experience that we have in encountering art mirrors the experience that

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91. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxxiv.
92. Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," in *Sense and Non-Sense*, 13–14.
93. Clive Cazeaux, "Introduction," in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, ed. Clive Cazeaux (London: Routledge, 2000), 76.

Image 2.1 Artistic Behavior and the Nonrational

Source: *Still Life with a Curtain* by Paul Cézanne (1895), public domain.

we have in encountering the world; we immediately grasp the significa-
tion of the art or of the world before being able to reflect upon it and
articulate it.

In "Eye and Mind," Merleau-Ponty continues to emphasis how art, espe-
cially painting, brings us face to face with our immediate connection to
the world. Thomas Baldwin writes that "Eye and Mind" shows how paint-
ing "is the attempt to catch the ways in which the visible world shows itself
to us."[94] Painting has the ability to capture ways that my body intuitively
experiences meanings of the world which I may take for granted. During
a drive through the countryside, for example, I continually take in the
environment around me without necessarily thinking about it. A paint-
ing of the countryside, however, can force me to reflect on what I actually
experience when I encounter the landscape. It can unearth the "fabric of
brute meaning," as Merleau-Ponty puts it; it can show me the immediate
sense of the things around me that is given before any kind of reflection.[95]
Reflecting on the painting of the countryside could then bring to light the
freedom and awe that my body feels in such an environment. The more we
allow ourselves to experience art, the more we will recognize how much of
the world we intuitively, nonrationally, grasp.

94. Thomas Baldwin, "Introduction," in Merleau-Ponty's "Eye and Mind," 291.
95. Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," 293.

While Merleau-Ponty writes extensively on painting as a means for revealing the nonrational, he also sees participation in other art forms as providing a similar experience. Music, as he writes in *The Visible and the Invisible*, reveals the underlying world, because it always must contain what is not heard as well as what is heard; each piece consists of a set of played notes as well as a set of notes not played. The unplayed notes are what reveal the depth of the music because they bring out the ones that are played: a simple five note melody "presents to us what is absent from all flesh; it is a furrow that traces itself out magically under our eyes without a tracer . . . being limited very precisely to these five notes."[96] Mirroring how Foucault points to the hidden gaps as way to reveal the true structures of human society, as we will discuss later, Merleau-Ponty writes how it is the *lack* in art that brings out the meaning of the art. In a piece of music, our experience is shaped according to what we do not hear, what is left out; all notes played at the same time do not make a melody. In a similar way, our experience of the world rests on what we do not see, on what is not always present, which is the hidden nonrational relationship that we already have to the world.

Ultimately, our participation in art reflects the primordial way that we are brought to *what is*, to being itself. As we saw in the beginning, being is given to us because of our primordial attachment to the world; and thus, since art reflects this attachment, it also provides us with a vision of being. Merleau-Ponty writes in "Eye and Mind":

> I would be at great pains to say *where* is the painting I am looking at. For I do not look at it as I do at a thing; I do not fix it in its place. My gaze wanders in it as in the halos of Being. It is more accurate to say that I see according to it, or with it, than I *see it*.[97]

Participation in art can be more than simply regarding an object on a wall, but can be the means by which we apprehend and appreciate our relation to being.

The artistic experiences of the nonrational are true not only for a person participating in art, but also for a person creating art. Throughout the creation process, the artist can reflect on how the subject of his or her artwork is inspired by the initial connection that we have with the world. The behavior of an artist also reveals a particular aspect of the nonrational which we find specifically in the *creation* of art. An artist creates a work of art through an act of expression; this act of expression comes from the nonrational and is guided by the rational.

In "Cézanne's Doubt," Merleau-Ponty writes, "Art is not imitation, nor is it something manufactured according to the wishes of instinct or good

96. Merleau-Ponty, " 'The Intertwining—The Chiasm' from *The Visible and the Invisible*," 265.
97. Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," 296, italics his.

taste. It is a process of expressing."[98] Because art is a process of express-
ing, looking at the way an artist expresses his or her ideas, we can learn
about the act of human expression in general. Referring back to the
landscape painting, the artist may be expressing the feeling of freedom
that he or she experienced in the countryside when creating the paint-
ing. We can see the link, as articulated in "Eye and Mind," between bodily
expression and artistic expression: the bodily response of an experience
can lead to the artistic expression in a work of art.[99] Every act of human
expression, then, including habitual, artistic and all others, is built on
our nonrational, primordial connection to the world: again, "All percep-
tion, all action which presupposes it and in short every human use of the
body is already *primordial expression.*"[100]

D. Conclusion

We began our phenomenological account of the pre-rational by argu-
ing that every human act comes from a subject with an indivisible con-
sciousness, demonstrating that the human is an integrated whole, mind
and body, an embodied rationality. Through its manifestations in the
primordial, unreflected and pre-personal, the pre-rational unearths my
initial connection to the world, provides the material that will be taken
up by rationality and reflection and aids the construction of who I am
as a person. To confirm this understanding of the human, we looked
at examples of reflexive, habitual and artistic behavior to see how the
nonrational concretely influences human behavior. We have seen that
even the simplest actions, such as the reflex of the knee, comes from the
entire human. When we perform a habit, we rely on our body, as the pri-
mordial habit, and from there, build other habits which seek after mean-
ing given by the body; habit illustrates the nonrational because it is done
without the explicit guidance of the rational. Likewise, experiencing art,
both as a participant and as an artist, mirrors our primordial experience
of the world, giving us insight into how we nonrationally grasp the world.

   The steps taken in this chapter lay the critical groundwork for under-
standing the phenomenological approach to madness. By acknowledg-
ing the wholeness of the human, we cannot relegate the pre-rational to
some actions of the human or some parts of the human, because it plays
an integral role in all of human experience, including experiences of
madness, as we will see in the next chapter.

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98. Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," 17.
99. For further discussion on this, see Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin, "Phenomenology:
      Merleau-Ponty and Sartre," in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut
      and Dominic McIlver Lopes (London: Routledge, 2005), 168.
100. Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," 104, italics his.

3   Phenomenology of Madness

As opposed to seeing madness as something excluded from normal human experience, a Merleau-Pontyean phenomenological approach describes madness as an integral part of the human condition, arising out of it and being central to it. Merleau-Ponty considers cases of psychopathology throughout all of his works and can even be considered a psychologist in his own right as he was Professor of Child Psychology and Pedagogy at the University of Paris from 1949 to 1952. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, our focus text, he has the most extensive discussion of psychopathology of all his works as he draws in depth from psychological studies in order to explore and illustrate the nature of human perception.

To establish the phenomenological approach to madness, I begin by looking closely at the radical idea that madness is intrinsic to human experience, based on Merleau-Ponty's discussion of madness (*la folie*) (A). Next, by placing the pre-rational in madness, I determine that the patterns in normal behavior mirror patterns in disordered behavior (B). I will consider two examples of disordered behavior, phantom limb syndrome and psychic blindness, to confirm these shared patterns (C). To close, I will demonstrate how the phenomenological approach to madness provides insights into human experience in general (D).

A. Madness as Intrinsic to Human Experience

Here we will look closely at Merleau-Ponty's most thorough and longest discussion of madness (*la folie*) in his section on "space," where he is wrestling with how to deal with experiences that appear to be outside "objective" space, such as myths, dreams or fits of madness.[1] Drawing

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1. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 298–311. Clearly, the connection between dreams and madness relates to the work of Sigmund Freud, which we will address later in this chapter (D.2).

on his reflections, I will argue that a study of experience shows us that *madness is not self-enclosed, madness is an expression of the human condition* and *madness uses the structures of the world.*

Madness *is not self-enclosed*, because it opens itself up to be understood by others. After exploring experiences of nonobjective space, such as hallucinations, Merleau-Ponty recognizes that we must accord to such experiences some kind of reality. And yet, he questions whether we will then be left to "pure subjectivism," where each person is on an "island of experience" and cannot relate or connect with another person. He answers by rejecting pure subjectivism in the following way:

> Mythical or dreamlike consciousness, madness [*la folie*], and perception, despite all their differences, are not self-enclosed [*ne sont pas fermées sur elles-mêmes*]; they are not islands of experience without any communication and from which one cannot escape . . . mythical consciousness opens onto a horizon of possible objectifications.[2]

Although mythical, dreamlike and hallucinatory experiences are unusual, they are not cut off from common human experience; *they are not closed on themselves* (as the French literally says). These experiences display a link among humans and make up a shared horizon of human experience. Just as the phenomenal field is open to natural thought, so madness is "present to [natural thought] as a horizon."[3] Madness, then, is not isolated from the rest of human experience, because it is part of the horizon of human experiences, shared by all humans.

Reflecting on the experiences of homesickness and hallucinations can illustrate the shared horizon of nonobjective space. When we are homesick, we feel far from something or someone that we love such that we are not truly living in our actual objective space and are longing to be somewhere else. My body may be in one place, "but this landscape is not necessarily the landscape of our life. I can 'be elsewhere' while remaining here, and if I am kept far from what I love, I feel far from the center of real life."[4] While experiencing a hallucination is a more extreme form of feeling far from the center of real life, it is similar in that I feel as though I were somewhere else, although my body remains in objective space.

Both the experience of homesickness and the experience of hallucinations show the "structural indeterminacy in the spatiality of perception," as Marratto writes.[5] All humans relate to space with a certain amount

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2. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 305, translation slightly altered; French: 345.
3. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 24–5, translation slightly altered.
4. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 299.
5. Marratto, *The Intercorporeal Self: Merleau-Ponty on Subjectivity*, 50.

of indeterminacy; it is a way of subjectively forming space according to unknown and hidden factors. Marratto continues:

> The whole point of the discussion of dreams, myths, and psychopathology is to show that these spectral phenomena are not foreign to the world of ordinary perception. In other words, we may find, in these forms of experience, possibilities of being spatial that are no less rooted in our prereflective encounter with the world than the objective geographical and mathematical space of the scientist. Merleau-Ponty offers a description of an occasion in which our "normal" experience of space might partially dissolve so as to intimate these other possibilities.[6]

The purpose of Merleau-Ponty's description of madness, as Marratto correctly points out, is not to show the contrast between madness and other human experiences, but precisely the opposite: to reveal to us the subjective way that we all relate to the world. The experience of relating to space in other ways than geographically or mathematically is found not only in experiences of madness, but in everyday, pre-reflective experiences, as we discussed in Chapter 2 (Chapter 2, B.2). Experience of madness then is not foreign to us, but can actually be patterned after some of our everyday experiences.

Furthermore, madness can open up to the horizon of human experience, because it is an *expression of the human condition.* In thinking about madness and other experiences of the human condition, Merleau-Ponty sees two options: we can either say that we have a grasp on life, such that "the madman, the dreamer, and the subject of perception must be taken at their word" or we can say that we cannot judge one's own life, such that all life becomes an illusion.[7] To follow the second option, we "drain [life] of all positive value" and we cannot provide any meaning to experiences of madness, dreams or even perception.[8] If we want to accord truth to any experience in general, he concludes, we must recognize that all of experience has some positive value, even if the experience still shows a lack of the rational and contradicts objective reality. He writes,

> As long as we acknowledge the dream, madness, or perception as, at the very least, absences of reflection—how could we not if we want to maintain a value for the testimony of consciousness, without which no truth is possible—then we do not have the right to level out all

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6. Marratto, *The Intercorporeal Self: Merleau-Ponty on Subjectivity*, 50.
7. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 302.
8. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 303.

experiences into a single word, nor all modalities of existence into a single consciousness.[9]

Instead of labeling all experiences as unreliable, we have to begin by asserting that there is some meaning, some truth in each one.

In this way, madness is not an anomaly, but it, like the making of myths, displays meaning by projecting existence onto the world; he writes, "Myth is a projection of existence and an expression of the human condition. But understanding myth does not mean believing in it, and if all myths are true, this is insofar as they can be put back into a phenomenology of spirit."[10] All myths, and, by analogy, all hallucinations, are true in the sense that they express something about the human; they teach us about the way that humans must live in subjective space in addition to objective space. These experiences are still an extension of the human condition, because when we reflect on the spirit of them phenomenologically, we can fit them into functions of the human consciousness and establish a meaning for them in a philosophical context.

Notice Merleau-Ponty's use of the phrase "human condition" in this quote as opposed to "human experience." As mentioned in the introduction, I have chosen to focus on the phrase "human experience" in this project because it is employed by both Merleau-Ponty and Foucault. However, Merleau-Ponty also refers to the "human condition" and sees it as the structure or source for human experience. Although probably unknown to Merleau-Ponty, Hannah Arendt's understanding of the human condition complements his and helps us in filling in a definition of the human condition. Arendt points out that the human condition must include speech and action, for this is precisely what makes it human: "a life without speech and without action . . . is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men."[11] Like Arendt, Merleau-Ponty is interested in the human condition because of what makes it uniquely *human* which includes the experiences of speech and action. While both Arendt and Merleau-Ponty reject any notion of a "human nature," it is in these types of experiences that we can find certain general structures and principles which can even be considered universal for humanity, as I will argue for specifically in Chapter 7.[12] It is in these structures of the human condition that we discover the spatial indeterminacy found in normal and abnormal behavior.

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9. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 303.

10. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 306.

11. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 176.

12. For Arendt's rejection of a human nature, see Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 11. Merleau-Ponty directly writes, "There is no human nature given once and for all." See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 195.

We can make sense of cases of madness, because we, as humans, belong both to the objective and subjective world at the same time. Jasper Feyaerts and Stijn Vanheule put this well: "Merleau-Ponty fulminates against reducing madness to the mere outcome of numerous causal factors that would determine its make-up. Rather than placing madness beyond human existence, he believes that madness reflects a state of subjectivity that can be comprehended in its own right."[13] There is a way of understanding madness, that mirrors the way we understand human experience in general; it can be placed in the constructs of the human condition. As Merleau-Ponty writes in his later *The Visible and the Invisible*, our body has a "double belongingness to the order of the 'object' and to the order of the 'subject.'"[14] In cases of hallucinations, we may lose touch, although not completely, with objective space in a greater way than in cases of homesickness, and yet, both experiences represent the way we belong to subjective space to a certain degree.

Despite this pull of subjective space, however, the structures of objective space are often not completely lost in cases of mental instability. This leads Merleau-Ponty to posit that madness *still uses the structures of the world.* He writes:

> Madness gravitates around the world [*c'est autour du monde que gravite la folie*]. To say nothing of those morbid fantasies or fits of delirium that attempted to build for themselves a private domain out of the debris of the macrocosm, the most advanced states of melancholy, where the patient settles into death and, so to speak, makes it his home, still make use of the structures of being in the world [*l'être au monde*] in order to do so, and borrow from the world just what is required of being in order to negate it.[15]

L'être au monde is a common French expression for the English "being in the world," but the French can have further meanings due to the preposition *à* which can include "being of the world," "being toward the world" and "belonging to the world," showing the many different connections and interactions that we have with the world.[16] These connections with the world do not fade away in madness, for it is around the world that madness moves (*que gravite la folie*). Even in extreme fits of madness where a patient builds an elaborate domain in his mind, he still borrows

13. Jasper Feyaerts and Stijn Vanheule, "Madness, Subjectivity, and the Mirror Stage: Lacan and Merleau-Ponty," in *Lacan on Madness: Madness, Yes You Can't*, ed. Patricia Gherovici and Manya Steinkoler (London: Routledge, 2015), 161.
14. Merleau-Ponty, "'The Intertwining—The Chiasm' from *The Visible and the Invisible*," 254.
15. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 306; French: 346.
16. See Donald Landes's note on this in a related context: *Phenomenology of Perception*, 525n103.

the objects of the objective world, such as tables, chairs or people, to construct the private world. And in cases of extreme depression, where death becomes a place of permanent dwelling, a patient again takes structures of the world, such as the cycle of birth and death, to create the environment. For this patient, his experiences are thus "constructed upon a natural space" in order to form the lived, mythical space.[17]

Merleau-Ponty cites the experience of a person struggling with schizophrenia to illustrate this point. The patient sees a brush that is close to a window come and enter his head and yet, the patient never stops knowing that the brush is still over by the window. When one appeals to the fact that the brush is still over there and so it cannot possibly be inside one's head, the patient agrees but states that this does not negate his experience.[18] Although those struggling with mental disorders may feel the subjective with greater intensity, they are still aware of objective space. A person experiencing a hallucination, for example, can still cross a room, avoiding the furniture and objects on the floor, because the hallucination is on top of the already perceived reality.[19] In reviewing experiences of mental disorders, it becomes clear that patients incorporate real people, objects and places from their objective reality into the construction of their private domain, distorting them in such a way as to separate themselves from the world.

B. Placing the Pre-Rational in Madness

In Chapter 2, we placed the pre-rational in overall human experience and now, with our understanding of madness, we will locate the presence of the pre-rational in experiences found in madness. We already know that the pre-rational is a motivation for the general actions of humans through our primordial, unreflected and pre-personal encounter with the world, and that this encounter is displayed in our habitual behavior. In this section, we will consider the similarity and brokenness that separates disordered behavior and normal behavior in *primordial, unreflected, pre-personal* and *habitual ways.*

Primordially, we are already attached to the world, from the moment of birth; we immediately sense our environment, prior to making

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17. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 306.

18. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 303–4. This study is taken from Ludwig Binswanger, a psychologist whom Merleau-Ponty frequently cites throughout *Phenomenology of Perception.*

19. For the example of crossing the room, see Talia Welsh, *The Child as Natural Phenomenologist: Primal and Primary Experience in Merleau-Ponty's Psychology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 43. We will further discuss the experience of hallucinations under disordered behavior in the next section as well as in our discussion of schizophrenia in Chapter 8 (Ch. 8, A).

judgments. For those struggling with mental disorders, the primordial attachment to the world does not disappear, but can be misdirected. Returning again to the example of the person having a hallucination with a brush, we find that he is also already connected to the world, mentally grasping the objects physically around him, such as the brush over by the window. The problem arises, then, not in his pre-rational connection to the world which gives him an awareness of the brush, but in *how* he figuratively "takes up" the brush and judges it to be entering into his head.[20]

This helps us tell the difference between true perception and false perception: not by denying that a person can judge what he or she sees, but by recognizing the distortion that can take place in the experience of perception. Merleau-Ponty writes: "But if we see what we judge, how can we distinguish true perception from false perception? And after such a conclusion, how will we continue to say that the person suffering from hallucinations or the madman 'believes they see what they do not see'?"[21] To say that the madman does not see what he believes to see is to misunderstand the way we experience the world: we all base our judgments on what we see according to the same primordial grounds. A person hallucinating is "seeing" objects in a similar subjective way to how humans in general see objects, but the judgment on the perception is flawed by blocking other ways that we understand space. In the case of the brush, the person actually sees and experiences the brush coming inside his head, because the usual reminder that subjective experiences of space needed to be regulated by the objective has been ignored to a certain extent.

In a similar way, just as all humans draw on a primordial connection to the world, we all experience and respond to the world in *unreflected* ways. Dreams, as nonrational experiences of space, are examples of something common to human experience and take place prior to reflection. As Marratto reminded us earlier, "in these forms of experience" (such as dreams) we find "possibilities of being spatial that are no less rooted in our *prereflective* encounter with the world than the objective geographical and mathematical space of the scientist."[22] We can relate the unreflected, nonspatial experience of dreams with the nonspatial quality found in the disordered behavior of hallucinations, such as the brush hallucination listed above. It is clear, then, that non-spatial, nonrational experiences are common to the human, but some experience them with greater intensity such that their connection to actual space is utterly shaken. Usually, however, the connection to actual space never

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20. See again Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 303–4.
21. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 36.
22. Marratto, *The Intercorporeal Self: Merleau-Ponty on Subjectivity*, 50, my italics.

completely disappears: while the person may add hallucinatory objects to space, he or she still knows what objects are actually there; thus, as we mentioned early, a patient experiencing a hallucination can still walk across a room without hitting furniture or objects on the floor.[23]

Not only are the primordial and unreflected aspects found in a diversity of human experiences (both normal and abnormal), *pre-personal* encounters with the world are also a common part of shaping the human identity. All humans take up the milieu of the world to define their individual identity, but there is a certain fragility in *how* this is accomplished. As we recall, my pre-personal identity relates to the sense of my birth and my future death, both beyond the capacity of my memory. When faced with a sense of mortality, we all have moments of crisis, but for some, such moments of crisis are displayed in extreme forms of disordered behaviors. Hysteria, for example, often arises out of conflicts of personal identity and manifests itself in excessive emotions and behavior-seeking attention. Merleau-Ponty writes that in hysteria, "we can be ignorant of something while knowing it because our memories and our body, rather than being given to us through singular and determinate acts of consciousness, are enveloped by generality."[24] We hold memories and experiences of crises in our bodies, which may express themselves in the agitation of hysterical behavior when not properly acknowledged and addressed. Henri Maldiney, known as *un philosophe de crise*, explores this even further by describing how the crises felt in experiences of madness are reminders of the larger crisis of human existence.[25] Disordered behavior highlights the way crisis experiences play a role in the shaping of human identity.

And lastly, in the way of *habit*, it is here that we may find less of a deviation between normal human behavior and pathological behavior. Habitual behavior will often stay despite a brain injury or mental crisis. For example, the patient Schneider, whom we will discuss more in the next section, is able to perform habitual actions without a problem, but when he encounters something new, he cannot offer a spontaneous response; his actions "never emerge from a spontaneous movement, but rather from an abstract decision."[26] An abstract, automated response, rather than a creative, spontaneous response, comes from a brokenness in the relationship between the nonrational and the rational. He still relies on the nonrational in abstract habitual movements, but he has

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23. See again Welsh, *The Child as Natural Phenomenologist: Primal and Primary Experience in Merleau-Ponty's Psychology*, 43.
24. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 165. He writes this description for the experience of repression too. See discussion on repression at Ch. 1, A.2.
25. Henri Maldiney, "*Existence, crise et création*," in Maldiney, *une singulière présence* (La Versanne: Encre marine, 2014), 219–57.
26. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 160.

lost his intentionality because he cannot rationally direct his movements toward certain goals.

If the presence of the nonrational is not what makes behavior disordered, then what is it? If we cannot put the normal on the side of reason and the abnormal on the side of unreason, then what causes the problems in psychopathology? As we have seen in the discussion so far in this chapter, the root of the problem is more complicated, because it comes from broken relationships—the broken relation to the nonrational, the broken relation to the rational, the lack of cooperation between the rational and nonrational, and the misapplication of the nonrational and rational to the way of being in the world. Hamrick writes, "Since abnormal cases have a coherence and intelligibility all their own—they can be understood—the difference between living the world normally and abnormally cannot be that between sense and non-sense or order and disorder."[27] The presence of sense and nonsense, order and disorder, reason and unreason in all human behavior reveals that we cannot distinguish between the normal and the abnormal along these same lines.

In each of these pre-rational areas of the nonrational, we glimpse at how the relation to the nonrational remains the same, but it is in the application of the nonrational where we discover the degrees of brokenness. From a fracturing in the primordial and unreflected senses, where a person may take up objects in space but make them part of hallucinations, to a fracturing of the pre-personal horizon, where a crisis leads to an extreme reaction in hysteria, to a fracturing in the habitual sense, where habits can be performed but cannot be changed or grown creatively, we recognize that the source of the challenges in mental disorders is not an excessive amount of the nonrational, but rather a problem in how a person relates to the nonrational and applies it to his or her life.

C. Madness as Intrinsic Confirmed in Disordered Behavior

Merleau-Ponty discusses more than twenty human disorders in *The Structure of Behavior* and *Phenomenology of Perception* (see Chart 3.1: Disorders in Merleau-Ponty's *The Structure of Behavior*, *Phenomenology of Perception* and *Child Psychology and Pedagogy*). While some of these are not considered mental disorders today, especially under the rankings of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V* (DSM-5), all of them have a "mental component," as Matthews reminds us, and can help "shed light on the undisputed cases of mental disorder."[28] In Chapter 8, we will demonstrate the application of our united approach

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27. Hamrick, "Language and Abnormal Behavior: Merleau-Ponty, Hart and Laing," 184.
28. Matthews, *The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty*, 78.

Chart 3.1 Disorders in Merleau-Ponty's *The Structure of Behavior, Phenomenology of Perception* and *Child Psychology and Pedagogy*

Disorder	Quick Definition	References	Modern-Day Equivalent
Agnosia	Loss of ability to interpret sensation and thus to recognize things due to brain damage	SB 91; PP 127; CPP 7, 16, 387; see also "psychic blindness"	Related to neurocognitive disorders
Alexia	Inability to see the written word or to read, known as word blindness or visual aphasia	PP 201, definition at 532n39	Related to neurodevelopment disorders
Amnesia	Partial or total loss of memory	PP 180–81, 197–200; CPP 124	Dissociative amnesia
Anorexia	Excessive desire to lose weight by refusing to eat	PP 167	Anorexia nervosa
Anosognosia	Ignorance of a certain disease, especially a paralysis	PP 79, 82–83, 102, 149–50, definition at 513n16	Related to somatic symptom disorders
Aphasia	Loss of ability to understand or express speech due to brain damage	PP 127, 179–81, 196–203, 435, 532n23; CPP 4, 7, 16, 18, 41, 44–47, 50, 134, 229, 235, 361–65, 373, 383–84, 388, 425, 459, 469n9, 480n15	Related to neurocognitive disorders
Aphonia	Lose of ability to speak due to damage to mouth	PP 163–67, definition at 528n9	n/a
Apraxia	Loss of ability to perform actions due to brain damage	PP 127, 140, 142, 523–25n99; CPP 16, 251–52, 459	Related to neurocognitive disorders
Blindness (and variations)	Loss or partial loss of vision	SB 29 (blindfolded subject); PP 8 (colors), 153–54, 233	n/a
Hemianopsia	Half the vision is lost in one or both of eyes	SB 40–41; CPP 361, 364–65, definition at 478n38	n/a
Hysteria	Psychological stress shown in excessive emotions and often attention-seeking behavior	PP 26, 163, 164 (pithiatism), 165, 335, 395, 398, 514n23, definition of pithiatism at 528n12; CPP 127	Currently seen as symptom not diagnosis, related to personality disorders

Macropsia (and micropsia)	A condition of the eyes where objects appear larger or smaller than they really are	PP 279, definition at 542n45	n/a
Mania	A condition usually including periods of great excitement, euphoria, delusions and overactivity	PP 299, 350	Related to bipolar and other related disorders
Melancholy	Severe sadness or gloom	grief, PP 86, 372; melancholy, PP 306	Related to depressive disorders
Neurosis	General mental disorder, sometimes seen as less severe	PP 161, 341; CPP 72, 81, 127–28, 182, 232–33, 235, 262, 270, 275, 281–83, 304	No longer used; related to obsessive compulsive, anxiety, personality and impulse-control disorders
Paraphrasia	Linguistic disturbance with alteration and substitution of words, related to aphasia	PP 201, definition at 532n40	related to neurocognitive disorders
Phantom limb	Sensations from a missing limb, often painful	PP 78–89, 101, 150, 513n19, 516n10; CPP 44, 464n58	Related to somatic symptom disorders
Psychic blindness	Deficit in the unity of behavior	SB 19 (caused by brain lesion); Schneider: SB 62–73; PP 105–40, 157–60, 174, 201–2, 517n13, 517n27, 19n39, 519n47, 520–21n58, 522n71, 522n74, 523n78, 527n2, 533n43	Related to neurodevelopment disorders
Schizophrenia	A breakdown between thought, emotion and behaviour, causing withdrawal from reality to fantasy, mental fragmentation, often accompanied by hallucinations	Schizophrenia, PP 127, 294–95, 299–304, 309, 349–50, 355, 357, 359, 544n72, 551n94; hallucinations, PP 36, 150, 212, 231, 304, 308, 349–60, 551n84, 552n95; CPP 41–44, 177, 180–81, 359, 376–77	Related to schizophrenia-spectrum disorders

Note: This chart does not aim to be a contemporary medical account of these disorders, but rather to capture the discussions and categories found in Merleau-Ponty's works. The definitions are taking either from Merleau-Ponty or from a common dictionary. References refer to *The Structure of Behavior* (SB), *Phenomenology of Perception* (PP) and *Child Psychology and Pedagogy* (CPP). The modern-day names are based on the 2013 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V* (DSM-5), the national guide for all psychopathological diagnoses in the United States.

to current diagnoses of mental disorders today, but here we will focus on two more general disorders, phantom limb and psychic blindness, to confirm our account of madness as intrinsic to human experience. We will find that the patterns in disordered behavior follow the pre-rational patterns found in general human behavior, and while some of these patterns will be somewhat inoperable and misdirected in disorders, the best way to understand these broken patterns will be to see them as connected to and emerging out of the common human condition.

1. Phantom Limb

Phantom limb is a condition where a person still feels sensations, ranging from itchiness to severe pain, from a missing limb. Usually the limb is missing due to an accident or amputation; however, in some cases, phantom limb can be experienced by people who were born without the limb.[29] To understand the nature of this phenomenon, we must turn away from the insufficient explanations offered by physiology and psychology and begin to think of the phantom limb according to a "mixed theory," as Merleau-Ponty suggests.[30] Drawing on a mixed theory, we view the human as an integrated psychological physiological being, who interacts with the world as a whole, and only in this way can we give a full account of the phenomenon.

Recalling then how the normal subject bases his movement on the whole of the body, rather than specific sensations, we understand how a person can treat the phantom limb as part of the whole, too, despite a clear perception of the absence of the limb. Merleau-Ponty writes, "if he [person with phantom limb] treats it in practice as a real limb, this is because, like the normal subject, he has no need of a clear and articulated perception of his body in order to begin moving."[31] We cannot grasp why a person treats a phantom limb as a real limb by placing the disorder outside of normal human experience, but only by looking at the way a person generally relates to his or her body as a whole. Thus, the phenomenon of the phantom limb is best understood from the "perspective of being in the world [*l'être au monde*]," from the myriad of connections that we have with the world.[32] Andrew Felder and Brent Dean Robbins, as psychologists, describe the beneficial approach of Merleau-Ponty to phantom limb: "The lens of being-in-the-world illuminates how the disjunctive relationship between bodily existence and the home and

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29. See Gallagher's discussion on this: Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 86–9.

30. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 79.

31. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 83.

32. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 83. Remember the full connotations for the phrase "*l'être au monde*" mentioned in A.

horizon of culture are revealed in symptoms, or flesh pathology."[33] For a person with a phantom limb, he or she experiences a disconnection between the bodily existence and the lived horizon (perhaps from the memory of having the limb previously), resulting in pathological symptoms such as feeling pain when there is no actual pain.

At the root of this disconnection is a disclosure of the ambiguity of the human, as both nonrational and rational. This ambiguity is more clearly expressed in the phantom limb phenomenon, but it illustrates the role that ambiguity plays in all of human experience. Merleau-Ponty writes, "Consciousness of the phantom limb itself therefore remains equivocal [*équivoque*]."[34] An awareness of the phantom limb comes from the equivocation or ambiguity between current bodily experiences which make up the "actual body" and the bodily memories of the past which make up the "habitual body." Thus, while the actual body "knows" that the limb is gone, the habitual body, drawing on the nonrational, still feels as though it is there. He concludes, "The ambiguity of knowledge amounts to this: it is as though our body comprises two distinct layers, that of the habitual body and that of the actual body."[35] These two layers are interlaced and interconnected, and yet in dysfunctional responses it can be helpful to consider them as two distinct layers in order to help us understand the reactions. The fragmentation is best seen when the habitual body is no longer properly connected to the actual body in order to provide us the proper sensations. As a result, a person with phantom limb nonrationally feels that a limb is present, even though he or she knows rationally, through the perception of the actual body, that it is absent.

2. Psychic Blindness (The Case of Schneider)

Another illustration of this experiential approach to madness is found in the condition of psychic blindness, as exhibited by the patient Schneider. His condition, as we already briefly discussed in Chapter 1, consists in brain lesions due to a gunshot wound to the brain, resulting in what Merleau-Ponty calls "psychic blindness," a deficit in the unity of behavior.[36] This deficit includes other disorders such as agnosia, sexual impotency, number blindness and more. Through our discussion of

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33. Andrew J. Felder and Brent Dean Robbins, "A Cultural-Existential Approach to Therapy: Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment and Its Implications for Practice," *Theory & Psychology* 21, no. 3 (2011): 362.

34. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 83; French: 110.

35. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 84. For further discussion on the contribution of the lived-body approach to phantom limb, see Gallagher, "Chapter 4: Pursuing a Phantom," in *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 86–106.

36. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 121.

Schneider, we will see how *the disorder affects all of his behavior*, how *the disorder still shows a nonrational (and rational) way of dealing with the world* and how *the disorder arises from a broken relationship between the nonrational and the rational.*

Merleau-Ponty's interest in Schneider begins in *The Structure of Behavior*, where he argues that despite the localized damage to his brain, *the disorder affects all of his behavior*. He writes, "A lesion, even localized, can determine structural disorders which concern the whole of behavior."[37] Even though the disorder is only affecting one part of the brain, the loss of mental capacity in one area affects the person as a whole. Thus, to understand the specific disorders, we cannot isolate certain effects from the injury, because "a specific disorder should always be put back into context of the total behavior."[38] When we start to understand the whole of the behavior, we find that in the case of psychic blindness, there remains a "systematic disintegration of function" woven throughout all of it.[39]

We can see this "systematic disintegration" or structural disunity in the split between concrete space and virtual space. By virtual space, we mean do not mean space, as mediated by a computer screen, but space that we create through our subjective encounter with it. Even though Schneider has no nerve damage and has normal physical sensations of concrete space, he feels disoriented in space and has trouble constructing a general sense of the environment around him, resulting in a confusion of virtual space. Merleau-Ponty describes this disorder, known as agnosia, as follows: "We can be disoriented in virtual space without being so in concrete space. We can be incapable of conceptualizing space as a universal milieu without the horizon of virtual space."[40] Understanding the disorientation of Schneider intrinsically and holistically means recognizing how the injury affects him as a whole, even in areas which appear to respond normally, such as his physical sensations.[41]

Building upon this holistic approach to the disorder, we find that *the disorder still shows a nonrational (and rational) way of dealing with the world.* This is seen when we trace the disorder not back to some kind of cause, but to a reason or "condition of possibility" of the disorder. Since we

37. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 62.
38. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 64.
39. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 73.
40. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 91.
41. For an excellent discussion on Schneider and the importance of the holistic approach, see the section, "The Case of Schneider: Merleau-Ponty's Dynamic Conception of Embodiment," in Talia Welsh and Susan Bredlau, "Introduction," in *Normality, Abnormality, and Pathology in Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Talia Welsh and Susan Bredlau (New York: State University of New York Press, Forthcoming).

cannot explain the symptoms through other methods, Merleau-Ponty argues:

> Only one method seems possible: it would consist in reconstituting the fundamental disorder by following the symptoms backward, not to an observable *cause*, but to an intelligible *reason* or condition of possibility: that is, to treat the human subject as an indivisible consciousness that is wholly present in each of its manifestations.[42]

In this discussion of Schneider's condition, we find the context for the focus text on the human that we discussed at the beginning of the chapter. It is precisely here, in a discussion of a disorder, that Merleau-Ponty discovers his understanding of the human. Even with his disorder, Schneider's behavior represents the holistic quality of the behavior of all humans and the reliance on the nonrational and the rational. The condition of possibility for the disorder is there, because of the rational–nonrational relation present in Schneider, just as it is present in all humans; for, at the root of every living perception, we find this same condition of possibility in the "primordial condition."[43] Schneider restructures the world, incompletely guided by the rational and yet still in accordance with the primordial condition.

Since there is still a recourse to the rational as well as the nonrational, we cannot describe Schneider's dysfunction solely as a result of the nonrational. Rather, *the disorder arises from a broken relationship between the rational and the nonrational.* There is a problem in a type of organization that is done by the rational of the nonrational, as Merleau-Ponty writes:

> The analysis of perception will lead to re-establish a demarcation— no longer between sensation and perception, or between sensibility and intelligence, or, more generally, between a chaos of elements and a higher system which would organize them—but between different types or levels of organization.[44]

Schneider's inability to construct virtual space cannot be explained by making a distinction between the function of his sensations and the function of his intellect, nor between a nonrational disorderly heap of sensations and the higher rational order which organizes them. Rather, it is because the organizational style of the rational has been broken and cannot operate on the same level or in the same way. Rothfield writes, as we mentioned in Chapter 1, that we cannot understand Schneider's style

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42. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 122.
43. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 112.
44. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 91.

in space as " 'normal' minus some capacity."[45] It is not that Schneider is abnormal because he is lacking the rational capacity, but that he is operating on a different level of organization between his rational and nonrational capacities.

The broken organization between the rational and nonrational is demonstrated in Schneider's (1) loss of "melodic character" to his movements, (2) lack of "signification" in the presence of other people and (3) loss of unity ("intentional arc") in his understanding of concepts.[46] His abstract movements—coming out of his habitual, nonrational behavior—are still functioning, but are not always able to be corrected by the rational to make them applicable and graceful to the situation. Furthermore, he cannot feel connected with other people, because while he sees them, he cannot rationally distinguish between the meaning of an object and a meaning of a human. And he has a hard time connecting concepts with practical skills, as seen in mathematical functions. His "number blindness" results in him being able to count, add, subtract, multiply and divide, but not being able to distinguish which number is greater than another.[47] His rationality is still present, his "general intelligence [*l'intelligence*] is intact," as Merleau-Ponty observes, but he is disconnected from a full experience of the world.[48]

Schneider displays for us ways that his disorder affects all of his behavior, still relies on the nonrational, and yet, arises out of a broken relationship between the nonrational and rational. This is how we can find meaning in Schneider's experiences, as Matthews writes: "The mechanical failure [of Schneider] makes sense only if it is understood in terms of the meaning which it has in the context of his life, because it is only in that context that it becomes a *mental disorder*."[49] For each case of mental disorder, the experiences will be different, because of the necessity of looking at the context of life, but we will understand these experiences only if we see the proper relation between the nonrational and the human.

D. Insights Gained Into Human Experience

Our reflections on the phenomenological approach to madness are not solely for the sake of bringing psychology and philosophy together,

45. Rothfield, "Living Well and Health Studies," 222.

46. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 121, 135, 137.

47. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 135.

48. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 136; French: 168. It is important to note that the French word "*l'intelligence*" often does include both rational and nonrational aspects of the human. We will discuss this further in the conclusion of this book.

49. Eric Matthews, "Merleau-Ponty's Body-Subject and Psychiatry," *International Review of Psychiatry* 16, no. 3 (2004): 195.

although that is important, but ultimately to understand what it means to be human. In this final section, we will examine Merleau-Ponty's adaption of the method of "existential analysis," discover how, due to this method, a study of madness facilitates a unique understanding of human experience and conclude by discussing what distinctions need to be maintained between the normal and the abnormal.

1. The Method Behind the Madness

Existential analysis was a method developed during the early twentieth century based on the ideas of Ludwig Binswanger, Martin Heidegger, Sigmund Freud and others.[50] While there are many applications and variations to this method, Merleau-Ponty finds value in existential analysis, because it avoids the problems found in many of the dominant methods used by modern psychology.[51] In his discussion on Schneider, Merleau-Ponty argues that it is through the method of existential analysis that we can have a greater awareness of the patient's particular struggles:

> The study of a pathological case [Schneider] has thus allowed us to catch sight of a new mode of analysis—existential analysis—that goes beyond the classical alternatives between empiricism and intellectualism, or between explanation and reflection.[52]

An application of existential analysis to a pathological case offers a better account of madness than the methods of pure empiricism and intellectualism (see Chapter 2, B.2). As we saw, Merleau-Ponty refuses to accept a pure empirical account of the human which reduces the human to a scientific, mechanical object. And he also rejects intellectualism, which places the emphasis on the mind of the human as the source for all meaning. Just as these two methods fall short in explaining the primordial horizon of the human, they also fail to offer a full account of the nature of madness.

Empiricism sees each experience of reflection and each experience of madness as initially closed off from human understanding; our first grasp of an experience, before analysis, cannot be explained by purely

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50. For a helpful summary on the roots of existential analysis, see Scott D. Churchill, "Daseinsanalysis: In Defense of the Ontological Difference," ed. Erik Craig, *A Review of Psychotherapy for Freedom: The Daseinsanalytic Way in Psychology and Psychotherapy, A Special Issue of The Humanistic Psychologist* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 51–2.

51. Interestingly, in his early writings, Foucault also sees existential analysis as a helpful alternative to the mainstream methods used in psychology. Although he will find fault with aspects of it later, it played a critical role in the development of his ideas of psychology. We will discuss this further in Chapter 5 (Ch. 5, B).

52. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 138.

empirical claims. The "conversion of the gaze," for example, where we transform our perception of an object from obscure to clear, cannot be fully justified by the causal relations between the existence of an object and our perception of it.[53] Merleau-Ponty continues:

> Prior to conversion, these phenomena were inaccessible, and empiricism can always respond that it does not *understand* the descriptions given of them. Reflection, in this sense, is just as closed a system of thought as madness, with the difference that it understands itself and the madman, whereas the madman does not understand it.[54]

Even though empiricism recognizes that, through reflection, we usually can describe our experiences, while a madman may not be able to, the initial capacity for grasping these experiences remains opaque to its scientific analysis. As a result, empiricist constructions "conceal from us the 'cultural world' or the 'human world' in which almost our entire life nonetheless happens."[55] By being unable to see the human capacity for meaning, empiricism cannot give us the proper account of any human experience, including madness. Simply put, the pure empirical method focuses on a "mere outcome of numerous causal factors," as Feyaerts and Vanheule write, to explain madness and it does not take into account the holistic subjective experiences of the human.[56]

Additionally, intellectualism separates madness from the concrete world, also making it something abstract and inaccessible. Merleau-Ponty criticizes intellectualism by saying: "For beginning from this transparent consciousness, and from this intentionality that does not admit of degrees, everything that separates us from the true world— error, illness, madness, and in short, embodiment—is reduced to the status of mere appearance."[57] Pushing experiences of madness and even experiences of the body to the mental realm takes away their material reality, making them only facades. In doing this, madness no longer really exists, because deep inside the madman, according to intellectualism, he "knows that he is delirious, that he makes himself obsessive, that he lies, and ultimately, that he is not mad, he just thinks he is. On this account, then, everything is just fine and madness is simply a lack of good will [*la folie n'est que mauvaise volonté*]."[58] Disconnecting

53. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 24.
54. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 24–5, italics his.
55. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 25.
56. Feyaerts and Vanheule, "Madness, Subjectivity, and the Mirror Stage: Lacan and Merleau-Ponty," 161.
57. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 126.
58. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 127; French: 158.

madness from the body makes it just a mental state resulting from a bad will [*mauvaise volonté*]; furthermore, this description of madness "identifies all disorders" according to this same cause, meaning that one cannot distinguish between different types of mental disorders.[59]

To have a deeper investigation of madness which goes beyond empiricism and intellectualism, Merleau-Ponty adapts the method of existential analysis according to his own unique phenomenological approach, but continues to keep existence as the starting point for all studies of psychopathology. By making existence central, this kind of analysis approaches madness not so much to show what is opposite or alien to the human, but rather what is common. Gallagher, following a similar approach in his cognitive science studies, observes this as well, "Quite frequently . . . the examination of pathological condition will help us understand normal and everyday behavior."[60] To profit the most from this examination, we must begin placing the pathological condition in the context of everyday behavior.

2. The Uniqueness of Madness

We might object, however, that an examination of any human issue, pathological or not, can tell us something about the human. What is it specifically, then, that this adapted method of existential analysis applied to madness discloses about human experience? What are the *unique* contributions which come out of this study of madness?

Madness is unique in that it often strips away common assumptions about what it means to be human and leaves us with what is more fundamental to human experience. If we expect to find humans continually characterized by acting and thinking rationally, madness shows us ways in which this is not always the case. With the tearing away of the normal human attributes, we can then look closer at the nonrational, something often displayed in cases of madness. Through an exposure of the nonrational, we find that nonrationality itself is not the source for madness, but that madness arises out of a complex brokenness of the rational–nonrational relation. And yet, this particular type of brokenness reveals something fundamentally human: human problems come not only from neurological issues, but also from a lack of ability to perform and interact in *human* social settings. The possibility of madness, then, emerges only out of the human structures of the world; without the human world, there is no such thing as madness. Maldiney writes extensively on this, arguing that we must see madness as unveiling part of human experience; he profoundly states,

59. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 127.
60. Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 3.

"Madness is a possibility of man without which he would not be what he is."[61] The problems made visible in cases of madness come out of human ambiguity, the interplay between the rational and the nonrational, which in itself allows for the possibility of madness in the first place.

One way that studying madness teaches us about the human is by distinguishing us from other animals and from machines. Thinking first about other animals, a study of madness illustrates how humans have a unique way of escaping from the biological world, as seen in cases of feeling a phantom limb or experiencing hallucinations. This is not to separate entirely the human from the animal, for we can learn from the presence of the animal how behavior must be understood holistically as a lived creature in the world, as Merleau-Ponty does in *The Structure of Behavior*. Basing his method on Merleau-Ponty, Churchill's work communicating with bonobos (a type of ape), for example, reminds us that "*we dwell within a common realm* with the animal" and this opens a way of understanding the self, especially through the expression of gestures.[62] However, even with the insights gained, Churchill writes that we cannot confidently find capacities, such as conception or language, in the expression of animals.[63]

Supporting these observations, Merleau-Ponty discusses the tension of our position as animals and as humans:

> There is no single word or behavior that does not owe something to mere biological being—and, at the same time there is no word or behavior that does not break free from animal life, that does not deflect vital behaviors from their direction [*sens*] through a sort of *escape* and a genius for ambiguity [*l'équivoque*] that might well serve to define man. . . . We cannot do without this *irrational* power that creates and communicates significations.[64]

There is an ambiguity or double sense (*l'équivoque*) in how the human is both tied to biological, animal existence, yet able to transcend it in

61. Henri Maldiney, *Regard, Parole, Espace* (Lausanne: Editions l'age d'homme, 1973), 210, my translation: "La folie est une possibilité de l'homme sans laquelle il ne serait pas ce qu'il est."
62. Scott D. Churchill, "Experiencing the Other Within the We: Phenomenology with a Bonobo," in *Phenomenology 2005, Vol. IV: Selected Essays from North America*, ed. Lester Embree and Thomas Nenon (Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2007), 155.
63. Churchill, "Experiencing the Other Within the We: Phenomenology with a Bonobo," 155. See also Merleau-Ponty's note in *The Structure of Behavior*, 234n61 where he says, "It goes without saying that in all the preceding discussions, and in spite of the anthropomorphic language which we have used in order to be brief, consciousness is not supposed in the animal."
64. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 195, italics mine; French: 230–1.

order to reach for meaning (*sens*) in every behavior; this irrational power actually makes up what it means to be human and breaks down the stark divisions between rationality and animality made in the past.[65] Although the irrational is often equated with the animal historically, as we will see with Foucault, Merleau-Ponty sees the irrational also as a human quality, because it describes the complexity of our double-sided placement in the world. The balancing of these two sides is often broken in cases of madness, such that we recognize a dysfunctional encounter with the world for those struggling with mental illness. While animals may display certain symptoms of mental disorders as well, we see the particularly human effects of mental disorders because of the way it disrupts our unique ability to find proper meaning in the world, something that an animal is not capable of in the same way.[66]

By recognizing the necessary human quality to the study of madness, we can also distinguish the human from a machine. Madness cannot only be explained by the malfunctioning of certain neurological processes, but must also be seen as a fragmented way of interacting with the world. A diagnosis as a breakdown in a neurological process does not capture the full effect of mental disorder because it misses how the disorder "distort[s] the person's mental relationship to his or her surrounding environment," as Matthew puts it.[67] Matthew supports this claim by saying, "Neurological processes can go wrong, for example, by failing to produce any thought at all, or by producing incoherent thoughts (expressed in non-sensical jumbles of words), but 'producing false, irrational, distressing, obscene thoughts' is not a *neurological* criterion of failure, but a *social* and *human* one."[68] Muteness and non-sensical speech can be given a neurological explanation, but they are *judged* as nonrational and incorrect by the social and cultural standards of human life. By seeing the mental disorder as "a human problem rather than a simple mechanical breakdown," as Matthews writes, we can begin to see what it means to be human under many different conditions.[69]

Reflecting on humans under many different conditions reveals another general principle that is brought out from the study of madness: the diversity of bodies. It allows us to step beyond a constrained idealistic

65. Merleau-Ponty does not speak as much about the irrational which is why this chapter focuses primarily on the pre-rational. We did discuss the irrational aspect of repression in phenomenological terms in Chapter 1 (Ch. 1, A.2).

66. See again Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 181: "Man can never be an animal: his life is always more or less integrated than that of an animal."

67. Matthews, "Merleau-Ponty's Body-Subject and Psychiatry," 193.

68. Matthews, "Merleau-Ponty's Body-Subject and Psychiatry," 193.

69. Matthews, "Merleau-Ponty's Body-Subject and Psychiatry," 197.

mold of the human, which cannot fit a single individual anyway, and recognize the variation of human experience. Hamrick writes:

> Merleau-Ponty thus uses the abnormal to construct a phenomenology of the lived-body as a concrete unity of body and "mind," the external and the internal. . . . The consequences of this view for understanding "mental illness" are that there is no immutable datum of nature . . . no fixed essence of humanity which is somehow not attained in abnormal cases. . . . We all, the normal and the abnormal, live at the intersection of nature and culture, as we live them in different ways.[70]

Because madness clears away attributes of the human usually used to define humanity, we can then look at what is left, what it means, at the bare minimum, for a human to have a lived-body. We recognize the intersection that we each live at, whether labeled mad or normal, between the bodily and the social, and that each person navigates this intersection in different ways. This is not to say that there are no particular differences between normal and abnormal ways of living, as we will see discuss next, but to show that the usual criteria for what it means to be human are challenged through studies of madness, revealing that to be human must be something more broad and more diverse. Thus, the study of madness exposes the mysterious ambiguity of the human, as a nonrational and rational creature, who is an animal, but is more than an animal, who is a machine, but is more than a machine, who has a unique lived-body, but is present in the world in diverse ways.

Another protest to choosing madness as a topic is that if rely on these studies on madness to explain human experience, we end up making everyone crazy. If we are judging the normal by the abnormal, will we not come up with a distorted picture? This is often the criticism of Freud's work on psychoanalysis, which is characterized as seeing hidden repressions, usually sexual, as the real drive for human actions. We cannot discuss the relationship between Merleau-Ponty and Freud fully here but it is important to note that Merleau-Ponty is certainly addressing Freud in his studies and sees Freud as providing some helpful insights.[71] For

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70. Hamrick, "Language and Abnormal Behavior: Merleau-Ponty, Hart and Laing," 183–4.
71. Keith Hoeller reminds us that Merleau-Ponty sees Freud as having a phenomenology. See Keith Hoeller, "Introduction," in Hoeller, *Merleau-Ponty and Psychology*, 3–22. Also, for a fuller study of the relationship between Freud and Merleau-Ponty, see Emmanuel Falque, *"Ça" n'a rien à voir: Lire Freud en philosophe* (Paris: Cerf, 2018); J.B. Pontalis, "The Problem of the Unconscious in Merleau-Ponty's Thought," 83–96 and Dorothea Olkowski, "Merleau-Ponty's Freudianism: From the Body of Consciousness to the Body of Flesh," 97–116, both in *Merleau-Ponty and Psychology*, *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry*; Hubert L. Dreyfus, "Alternative Philosophical Conceptualizations of

example, Merleau-Ponty is thinking of Freud when he relates dreams and madness, as he does in the focus text for this chapter.[72] Freud argues that one must be able to understand dreams in order to understand madness: dreams have "the greatest external similarity and internal kinship with the creations of insanity, and are, on the other hand, compatible with complete health in waking life."[73] Dreams, for Freud, point to the way that underneath healthy humans, there lie repressed forms of madness. This can be taken to mean that all humans have some kind of madness, sometimes hidden and sometimes revealed.

Even though Merleau-Ponty follows Freud in seeing a link between dreamlike states and fits of madness, he takes a different general direction than Freud in explaining human experience from studies of madness. Yes, madness reveals the brokenness of humanity, but this is not the final word on what it means to be human. Even in the brokenness, we see the way that humans function as a whole. Welsh writes, "We find pathology [for Merleau-Ponty] results not from secret drives," as in a Freudian account, "but from incompatible structures of experience."[74] In pathological conditions, the experiences of the world clash, and no longer feel cohesive, but these experiences still operate in some form according to shared structures of experience. It is here on this base level, as opposed to the pathological level, that Merleau-Ponty looks for the commonality in human experience.

3. Distinctions Between the Normal and the Pathological

If we do not want to conflate the normal and the pathological, as sometimes can happen under a Freudian approach, we must address what kinds of distinctions should be made between the normal and the mad. If madness is intrinsic to the human condition, as we are arguing, we must come up with ways to make sense of those who struggle with mental disorders over against those who do not.

There are three options for understanding the relations between the normal and that pathological: (1) equating them, (2) separating them entirely or (3) drawing distinctions while still maintaining links between them. Naturally, Merleau-Ponty takes the third, more difficult

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Psychopathology," in *Phenomenology and Beyond: The Self and Its Language*, ed. H.A. Durfee and David F.T. Rodier (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 41–50; and Saint Aubert, "Introduction à la notion de portance," *Archives de Philosophie* Tome 79, no. 2 (2016): 327–9.

72. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 298–311.

73. Sigmund Freud, *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1961), 34.

74. Welsh, *The Child as Natural Phenomenologist: Primal and Primary Experience in Merleau-Ponty's Psychology*, XVIII.

and more ambiguous path. The first option, where the normal becomes the pathological, as we have already seen above, does not offer a complete understanding of human experience. Merleau-Ponty clearly claims: "The normal cannot be deduced [*déduire*] from the pathological."[75] Yes, we can learn from the pathological, and yes, the pathological opens a new way of understanding the normal, but we cannot make conclusions about the normal from pathological behavior. For example, we cannot conclude that the absurdity of some pathological behavior, such as secret sexual fantasies, can be found in all human behavior, if we just dig deep enough.

The second option is where pathological people are often made into a category of subhumans, because they do not display the ideal attributes of the human. If the mentally ill no longer display a clear rationality in relation to the exterior world, then some will conclude that they can no longer be defined as fully human, and are relegated to something less than human. Foucault will further expose this view in his historical account. Merleau-Ponty clearly rejects this second option due to seeing psychopathology as being intrinsic to the human, and yet, he does still call for certain distinctions between the normal and pathological.

The third option starts by viewing the human as integrated, but recognizing that sometimes this weaving together can be fragile and can begin to be undone, as in cases of the abnormal. In his discussion of Schneider, Merleau-Ponty often distinguishes between the patient Schneider and the normal human to illustrate the fragility in the abnormal conditions.[76] Due to this language of "normal" and "abnormal," however, Merleau-Ponty has been criticized for holding too much of a normative approach to the human. Feyaerts and Vanheule criticize Merleau-Ponty for establishing a "*normative* analysis of subjectivity" and seeing the patient as having a "blocked subjectivity."[77] The concern is really twofold: one, that Merleau-Ponty is placing the normal above the abnormal in an unhelpful hierarchy, and two, that Merleau-Ponty does not fully understand the subjective experience of those experiencing disorders.

These criticisms, however, appear to be missing the nuances of this third option taken by Merleau-Ponty. He does call for certain distinctions between the normal and the pathological because they are necessary in order to offer a description of the conditions and because the

75. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 110; French: 138.
76. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 105ff.
77. Feyarts and Vanheule, "Madness, Subjectivity, and the Mirror Stage: Lacan and Merleau-Ponty," 168–9. For further critiques of Merleau-Ponty's normative account, see Butler, "Sexual Ideology and Phenomenological Description: A Feminist Critique of Phenomenology of Perception," 85–100, and more sympathetically, Gayle Salamon, *Assuming a Body: Transgender and the Rhetorics of Materiality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

distinctions validate the weightiness of the actual suffering of the patient. But he clearly makes these distinctions, not to create a stark divide, but to look to their common structures which may vary in application but not in form. Hamrick puts this well when he writes that "the difference between the normal and the abnormal is one of degree rather than one of kind."[78] Rather than creating separate kinds or categories, the normal and the abnormal are on the same spectrum, but the abnormal have a greater degree of intensity and greater confusion of experiences than what is often generally experienced.[79] We can return to our inspiration from Aristotle to help us understand this by looking specifically to his idea of form (*eidos*). The Aristotelean idea of form points to the core of the existence of something and acts like a blueprint which stays the same, even though its manifestations can include privations of its material.[80] To apply this to the human, the kind or "form" remains the same for humans with normal and abnormal cases, but there may be things lost, missing or broken in the abnormal displays.

E. Conclusion

On the face of it, it can be easy to equate madness with nonrationality, and yet through our exploration of the pre-rational with Merleau-Ponty, we found that such a simple equation cannot stand. Nonrationality, at least here in the form of the pre-rational, is present in madness, but its presence has a striking similarity to its presence in all of human experience. Furthermore, the rational, commonly seen as absent in many mental disorders, is also present. Establishing the integration of the rational and nonrational capacities requires, first, an acceptance of the human as a united whole, as established in Chapter 2, and, second, a recognition of madness as intrinsic to human experience, as discussed in this chapter.

To review, we demonstrated how madness originates in human experience. Those who are struggling with mental disorders, then, can be understood by others, can express elements of the human condition and can operate according to the common structures of the human condition. Specifically, the expressions of the pre-rational still manifest in disordered behaviors, even though they are dysfunctional and broken. To confirm this understanding of madness, we examined patterns found in

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78. Hamrick, "Language and Abnormal Behavior: Merleau-Ponty, Hart and Laing," 201.
79. Maldiney writes extensively on the problem in contrasting the normal and the pathological. He follows Merleau-Ponty in taking a third way, by breaking down many of the distinctions between the two, but also arguing for the closing of certain possibilities for the pathological (a closure of *transpassibilité*). See, for example, Henri Maldiney, *Penser l'homme et la folie* (Grenoble: Editions Jérôme Millon, 2007), 10, 70, 298.
80. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. XII, Ch. 4, 1070b25–28, p. 875.

the disordered behaviors of phantom limb and psychic blindness, and discovered that the nonrational was still present, but that it no longer related to the rational properly. Without the correct regulation of the nonrational, a person struggling with a mental disorder has incomplete experiences when relating to others and the world.

We substantiated our phenomenological account of madness by seeing how it sheds light on unique aspects of human experience, unlike other studies. Madness has a way of accessing the core of human experience, stripping away qualities normally used to define what it means to be human. It brings us an up-close look at nonrationality and its place in human experience. While distinctions are still necessary between the normal and the pathological, a study of madness opens us up to see the broadness and diversity of human experience.

Part III

Foucault

Madness and the Irrational

> You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless [*inquietum*] until it rests [*requiescat*] in you.
>
> I travelled much further away from you into more and more sterile things productive of unhappiness, proud in my self-pity, incapable of rest in my exhaustion [*inquieta lassitudine*].
>
> If Adam had not fallen from you, there would not have flowed from his loins that salty sea-water the human race—deeply inquisitive, like a sea in a stormy swell, restlessly unstable [*instabiliter fluvidum*].[1]

Written in the form of long prayer to God, St. Augustine ponders the restlessness found in human experience throughout his *Confessions*. In his opening, St. Augustine introduces this theme by describing the human heart as restless (*inquietum*) and as only quieted by coming to God. Before he turned to God, he recalls his life as completely unhappy, full of "restless weariness," as *inquieta lassitudine* could be translated. This restlessness cannot be easily pacified; even when we try to ignore it or forget about it, it is always there, reminding us that things are not right in the human world. For Augustine, this deep restlessness originates in the sin of humanity, beginning in Adam, and continues to make the human experience tempestuously stormy and restlessly or unsteadily fluid (*instabiliter fluvidum*).[2]

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1. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Bk. I, Ch. I, p. 3; Bk. II, Ch. II, pp. 24–5; Bk. XIII, Ch. XX, p. 289. Latin: Augustine, *Confessions I: Books I–VIII (Loeb Classical Library)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912), Bk. I, Ch. I, p. 2; Bk. II, Ch. II, p. 66; Augustine, *Confessions II: Books IX–XIII (Loeb Classical Library)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912), Bk. XIII, Ch. XX, p. 422.
2. The adverb *instabiliter* (from the adjective *instabilis, -e*) is used here which literally means "unsteadily" or "unstably." See the entry for *instabilis, -e* which cites this very passage of the *Confessions* in Lewis and Short's *A Latin Dictionary*. Although *instabiliter* comes from a different root than *inquietum* and *inquita* (from the adjective *inquietus, -a, -um*), both give a sense of insecurity and restlessness.

Augustine's portrayal of the restlessness of humanity sets an excellent framework for considering Foucault's account of unreason: both see unspoken pain at the heart of the human experience and both call us to acknowledge the depth of the pain rather than ignore it. While Foucault will not name human sin as the source for this unrest, he feels an urgency, like Augustine, to uncover the presence of this dark force in all human experiences, including the existential and the historical, and even reminds us that "restless hearts have ever been filled with the same anguish."[3] It is by bringing the anguish and the darkness into the light that we can truly grasp the freedom available to us as humans.

Prompted by Augustine's sense of restlessness, our archaeological approach to madness begins by tracing the dark irrational or unreason (*déraison*) across three ages of European history, seeing how it constructs madness. In Chapter 4, I uncover the continued obsession to define madness in conformity with the cultural definition of the irrational from the Renaissance to today. The cultural view of the irrational is displayed in key events of each age, like the great confinement of the classical age which sought to hide any signs of the irrational by placing the mad in jails across Europe. Despite these fluctuations in the perceptions of the irrational, I argue that there remains an underlying tragic element, which I call the "overarching nonrational," that plagues each age. In Chapter 5, I outline the archaeological trajectory of madness due to the influence of the irrational and describe its impacts on modern psychology. By uncovering the hidden origins of modern psychology and looking at the motivations behind diagnosis, I demonstrate how each shift in the understanding of rationality shapes the way that madness is identified and classified.

The archaeological approach, therefore, demonstrates the way that culture impacts our understanding of mental illness and uncovers the continual presence of the tragic throughout the structures of history. In Part III, we will be primarily drawing on Foucault's *History of Madness*, but we will also include his early writings on psychology, such as *Mental Illness and Personality/Psychology* and his later lectures entitled *Abnormal*, to establish a perspective of madness based on history.

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3. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 116.

4   Archaeology of the Irrational

Foucault uses the French *déraison*, literally meaning "as opposed to" (*dé-*) "reason" (*raison*), hundreds of times throughout his *History of Madness*. His understanding of *raison* is linked to the modern notion of *ratio* and stands in contrast to the Greek *logos*. He writes that while the Greek *hubris* (pride) does have an opposite in *sophrosyne* (prudence), the "Greek Logos had no opposite" such that its definition included many facets within itself.[1] In contrast, Foucault sees the Latin *ratio* of the West more like the Greek *hubris* because it has an external opposite in unreason and it "cannot exist without its negation," as Judith Revel explains.[2] Thus, his use of *déraison* signifies two things. First, Foucault is thinking primarily of Western culture, as opposed to other cultures around the world, because of the way the West has embraced the meaning of reason from the modern *ratio* and its opposite, unreason. Second, he wants to push the boundaries of the rational–nonrational relation, "expanding" our notion of reason, as Merleau-Ponty says—perhaps even to go back to a more open understanding as seen in the Greek *logos*.[3] For this project, I see Foucault's *déraison* as synonymous with my use of "nonrational," and in particular, the "irrational" form of the nonrational, because of the way the irrational is *against* the rational. When I use the term "irrational" for Foucault, I am referring to his notion of "unreason" (*déraison*).

In this chapter, I will describe the perception of the irrational, the key historical event and the representative figure in three European ages: the Renaissance (A), the classical age (B), and the modern age (C). In each of these ages, I will state the particular consciousness of madness which constitutes it and argue that the structures of each society, according to these events and figures, ultimately derive from the relation

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1. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxix. See John Caputo, *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 21 for a helpful note on this.
2. Judith Revel, *Le vocabulaire de Foucault* (Paris: Ellipses, 2009), 83, my translation: "la raison n'existe pas sans sa négation."
3. See Merleau-Ponty's comments here: Merleau-Ponty, "Hegel's Existentialism," 63.

between the nonrational and rational. In closing, I will argue that in addition to Foucault's "irrational" (*déraison*) as representing a particular society's view at a specific time, it also captures an overarching meaning which transcends any particular age (D).

Before beginning our archaeology of the irrational, we must make two notes on terminology. In each age, I will first sketch the *perception of the rational*, before giving a detailed report on the *perception of the irrational*. This is not to say that the rational develops first and then the irrational as their development arises in a dynamic tension between them. Nevertheless, for the ease of discussion, we will set up the rational first and see the irrational as a kind of response.

In addition, Foucault describes four types of *consciousness of madness*, the critical, the practical, the enunciatory and the analytical, which we will define in full in each section. It is important to note that these types of consciousness must be understood as interconnected and yet, still never "totally absorbed into any other."[4] Because of the complex links among the four types of consciousness, all four of them are always present in each age, but "on occasion one is more privileged than another, so that the others may fade into the background."[5] In each event, we will focus on the one or ones that are privileged, but we should remember that the others are still there, but have faded to the background.

Throughout this chapter, please refer to Chart 4.1: Foucault's Milieu of Madness for a summary of each of the characteristics.

A. Irrational of the Renaissance

During the Renaissance, the rational was something that brought *light* and represented the *sacred*.[6] In a kind of opposition to this, but also intersecting with it at the same time, the Renaissance irrational can be characterized as *dark, tragic,* but *necessary*.[7] After a look at the Renaissance irrational, we will describe how it is the *critical* consciousness of madness that shapes the institutions of this age.

1. Irrational as Dark, Tragic, but Necessary

Foucault describes the European people of the sixteenth century as viewing human life as a complex mix of light and dark, a sharing of a bright day and a "dark night."[8] This dark night, which comes from the

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4. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 168.
5. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 169.
6. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 142: "light of day"; 94: "sacred"; 96: "the sacred and the profane had done battle."
7. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 28: "dark night," "tragic focus"; 43: "great tragic threat"; 40: "constant process of exchange."
8. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 28.

Chart 4.1 Foucault's Milieu of Madness

Characteristics of the Milieu	Renaissance: Sixteenth Century	Classical: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries	Modern: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries
Consciousness of madness	Critical (dialectic)	Critical (dialectic), practical, enunciatory, analytic	Analytic
Perception of rational	Light, sacred, real	Moral, ordered, positive truth	Normal, objective, scientific
Perception of irrational	Dark, tragic, illusory but necessary	Animality, immorality, nothingness	Alienated, exiled, silenced
Relationship between rational and nonrational (irrational)	Dynamic and continuous	Separated and divided	Priority of the rational
Artists showing irrational	Bosch, Grünewald, Brueghel	Racine, de La Tour	Diderot, Sade, Goya, Nerval, Hölderlin, Nietzsche, Van Gogh, Roussel, Artaud
Historical event	Ship of fools	Great confinement	Great reform
Figure	Human monster	Incorrigible individual	Onanist and abnormal individual

Note: This is not an exhaustive account of Foucault's milieu of madness, but merely a representation in order to illustrate his overall thesis. My use of "rational" and "irrational" (the latter as a form of the "nonrational") correlates with Foucault's use of "reason" and "unreason" (*dèraison*). This is based on his *History of Madness, Abnormal* and Frederic Gros's helpful chart in his *Foucault et la folie;* specific references are noted in the text.

irrational element of humanity, reminds them that reason is not always powerful enough to withstand the mysterious force of unreason. The irrational is the "great tragic threat," writes Foucault, which plagues humanity, poking at the weakness of the human and showing how easy it could be to fall out of the hands of reason.[9]

Although Foucault will argue that this "tragic focus" will later be lost in the modern age, here it is seen as a necessary part of existence, a "contradiction at the cosmic level," as Frédéric Gros names it.[10] The contradiction arises out of fundamental aspects of the universe which cannot

9. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 43.
10. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 28. Gros, *Foucault et la folie*, 36, my translation: "la contradiction au niveau cosmique."

be overcome. The irrational is inseparable from the world, because it contains a "constant process of exchange between reality and illusion" which is "blurring the distinction between the real and the chimerical."[11] To try and tear away the illusory and the chimerical would also be to tear away the real and the true. The illusory aspect of the irrational is woven together with the reality of the rational in "the fantastical fusion [*le mélange fantastique*] of worlds at the end of time."[12] This fantastical mixture (*mélange*) of "unreasonable Reason" or "reasonable Unreason" is allowed to "come out into the light of day, as public exposure gave evil the chance to redeem itself and to serve as an exemplum."[13]

2. *Critical Consciousness of Madness: Ship of Fools*

In the sixteenth century, many European authorities banished the mad from their towns forcing them to "run wild in the distant countryside" or to be "entrusted to the care of the river boatman."[14] Those who were entrusted to the boatman were placed on a ship of fools and drifted down the rivers "from one town to another with their senseless cargo."[15] Foucault argues that the mad were placed on these aimless ships not primarily for the purpose of exclusion, but as a symbolic representation of the "senseless in search of their reason": the mad represent the universal human journey toward truth, which can happen even through madness.[16]

  This understanding and treatment of madness, as seen in the ship of fools, comes out of what Foucault calls the "critical consciousness of madness." A critical consciousness denounces madness and distinguishes it from everything that is "reasonable, ordered, and morally wise."[17] At the same time, the critical consciousness also maintains a dialectical relationship between madness and the rational as the categories are reversible, which means that all that is madness could actually be rational, and all that is rational could be madness. Foucault writes:

> The sixteenth century privileged the dialectical experience of madness, and more than any other period was open to all that was infinitely reversible between reason and the reason of the madness, to all

11. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 40, 42–3. These references are actually to "madness" but, as we will discuss in a moment, madness can be a representative of the irrational of the Renaissance.
12. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 346; French: Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, 434.
13. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 47, 142.
14. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 9.
15. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 9.
16. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 10, 13.
17. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 164.

that was close, familiar, and akin in the presence of a madman, and to the aspects of his existence that allowed illusion to be denounced so that the ironic light of truth might shine forth.[18]

Because of the reversibility between reason and the "reason" of the madness, the critical consciousness relies on a reciprocal relationship between the rational and the mad, where both are interconnected and can speak to one another in a certain way. This is because both sides can be a way toward the light of truth, both speak a shared "primitive language," and both provide access to wisdom.[19]

The possibility of a conversation between reason and madness is then ultimately due to the dialectic relationship between the irrational and rational. Because the irrational, as dark force, encompasses more than madness, madness serves as one reminder of the grander presence of the nonrational all around us: it brings to light the foolish and the tragic showing their nearness to everyday life. Angelos Evangelou describes medieval and Renaissance madness according to Foucault: "The essential thing . . . is that madness, in its threatening monstrosity but also in its devout and respectable sanctity, was close to people; it was part of their lives, terrible and exciting at the same time."[20] The mad person on the boat and the peasant in the town share the same world: the presence of the wandering boat reminds the peasants on shore of the difficulty in seeking after truth and the reality of the tragic all around them.

In addition to the ship of fools, Foucault cites another illustration of this understanding of madness in his lectures entitled, *Abnormal*: the figure of the human monster. A mad person is seen as a monster, a repulsive creature to be avoided, and yet still human, as an "exception to the form of the species."[21] Like someone sent off on a ship of fools, the human monster points again to the underlying tragic reality of human experience by representing "the spontaneous, brutal, but consequently natural form of the unnatural."[22] The human monster epitomizes the dialectical understanding of the irrational, seen through its outward display of madness, as something to be feared and yet respected, something to be hated and yet loved.

To illustrate the Renaissance irrational, Foucault considers the artists of the Renaissance, in particular, Hieronymus Bosch, Matthias Grünewald and Pieter Brueghel, who depict this dark yet persistent presence in the world. For example, Grünewald's *Temptation of Saint*

18. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 169.
19. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 164.
20. Angelos Evangelou, *Philosophizing Madness from Nietzsche to Derrida* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 140.
21. Foucault, *Abnormal*, 324.
22. Foucault, *Abnormal*, 56.

Image 4.1 Art Displaying the Irrational of the Renaissance

Source: *Temptation of Saint Anthony* by Matthias Grünewald (1512–1516), in public domain.

Anthony displays Saint Anthony being afflicted by monstrous beasts and almost overcome by them. (See Image 4.1: Art Displaying the Irrational of the Renaissance.) Saint Anthony both pulls back, resisting the darkness, but at the same time, feels curiously drawn to this "fearsome knowledge" found in the irrational world of the beasts.[23] Foucault writes that Grünewald's *Temptation* "serves to reveal the dark rage and sterile folly [*la folie infertile*] that lurks in the heart of mankind"; it shows, in other words, that the irrational is not separate from but part of the fabric of human life, exposing the violence already in the human heart.[24]

23. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 19.
24. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 19; French: 37.

B. Irrational of the Classical Age

The idea of the irrational as a dark and essential force is carried into the classical age, but it is pushed further down, further away from the human, and thus further away from reason. Foucault's primary focus in his work is on this age as is seen in his original title: *Madness and Unreason: History of Madness in the Classical Age* (*Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*). His reason for this focus is not for the sake of pure historical analysis, but because he believes that it is the key to understanding our approach to mental illness today, as we will discuss more in the next section and even more fully in Chapter 5.

Rationality in the classical age is a complex and dynamic concept, but phrases that express it are: that it is *moral*, represents *order* and is related to *positive truth*.[25] In stark contrast to the rational, the classical irrational can be distinguished by its *animality*, *immorality* and *nothingness*.[26] We will explore the descriptions of the classical irrational and then look at the two pairs of the consciousness of madness that undergird this age of history.

1. Irrational as Animality, Immorality and Nothingness

By severing ties with the human, the irrational starts to be linked with animality. The curiosity about the irrational, as seen in St. Anthony's temptation with the beasts, is no longer a part of natural human desires, and is now seen as an "enslavement to the passions" which represent something "inhuman" in the human.[27] Rather than a distortion of the human, the irrational is now below the human, and so displays of madness have aspects of "animal violence."[28] Todd May writes that the classical person who has embraced the irrational "has descended or regressed into an animal state" and shows the opposite of "what it is to be fully human."[29]

The link of the irrational to the animal gives it a sense of innocence because human standards no longer apply. But, almost paradoxically, the classical irrational is at the same time being judged according to a new ethical lens. Foucault writes:

> Whatever "rational animal" meant, confinement constantly stressed the *animality of madness*, while attempting to avoid the scandal linked

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25. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 133: "moral order"; 251: "rationality, as the form of its truth."
26. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 147: "animal violence"; 152: "animality of madness," "immorality of the unreasonable"; 242: "nothingness of madness."
27. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 100.
28. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 147.
29. Todd May, *The Philosophy of Foucault* (Toronto: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006), 31.

to the *immorality of the unreasonable.* This demonstrates clearly the distance that sprang up in the classical age between madness and other forms of unreason.[30]

During the great confinement, as we will discuss in a moment, the push to confine the mad was stressed due to their connection to animality while their connection to the great evil of unreason was avoided. This meant that a separation begins to form between madness and other displays of unreason, such as the tragic and the foolish in art or religion. This separation was gradual, but slowly over time, to avoid thinking about any other form of the irrational besides madness, the irrational becomes equated with madness and viewed as something inhuman and immoral.

Understanding the link between immorality and irrationality brings us to another sense of the irrational. In Part III, we use the "irrational" form of the nonrational to discuss Foucault's notion of unreason, because of the emphasis on something against or contrary to reason. This plays out in the way irrational actions are performed in opposition to a rational fact or present reality, such as repressing memories that actually took place (see Chapter 1, A.2) or pushing away the reality of the good and the sacred to focus on darkness, as seen in the Renaissance. Another sense of the irrational is uncovered here by Foucault's account of the classical where actions are held to be in opposition to reason because they are contrary to the moral standards of a given society, which I will call the "immoral irrational." Transgression of the accepted moral standards violates the principles of the rational and as a result, transgressors need to be locked up and hidden away sweeping the irrational out of sight.

Sweeping it out of sight classifies the irrational according to a new level, an "ontological level," as Gros states, because it becomes a "manifestation of nothing."[31] Classical reason slowly conquers unreason by offering rational explanations for all of its manifestations in madness. Foucault writes, "Reason reigned in a pure manner, triumphantly, and victory over unchained unreason [*déraison déchaînée*] was guaranteed in advance."[32] Reason boasted that all of the irrational could be understood as madness and thus, through the confinement of madness, reason would be supreme. The mysterious, uncontrollable, free and chainless irrational of the Renaissance is "driven underground" by reason and it slowly dissolves into nothingness.[33] This process of ontologically

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30. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 152, italics his.
31. Gros, *Foucault et la folie*, 37, my translation: "niveau ontologique"; "manifestation d'un rien."
32. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 77 (see also 151); French: 109.
33. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 47.

classifying the irrational as nothingness begins with the stark separation that is made between reason and unreason and can best be understood according to the following three qualities of classical unreason (the classical irrational) described by Foucault.[34]

First, the classical irrational is seen in the division between the mad person and his or her madness as it is here in the void that the irrational "can be first apprehended."[35] Since madness is identified with the irrational, and the mad person can be explained by the rational, this division allows any other part of the irrational to fall into the void. In another section, Foucault calls this void, this great divide, the place where the "secret coherence" of the classical irrational can be found.[36] This leads to the second quality of the classical irrational: "unreason is that the truth of madness is reason."[37] Because reason can explain the truth of madness, the meaning of madness can be found only in the rational, and the irrational is hidden. It is almost like taking away the substance of madness itself by pulling away the irrational and replacing it with reason: "madness becoming the paradoxical absence of madness and universal presence of reason."[38] And thirdly, unreason is seen to have some positive forces which make up or contribute to the irrational and these are how the rational can judge and find meaning to madness, but these remain secret and hidden: there is an "active force of unreason, the secret kernel of the classical experience of madness."[39] To summarize, these three qualities show the steps that the irrational takes toward nothingness: first, the irrational is opposed to the rational, and then it is driven into the void between madness and the rational; here, madness becomes the place-marker for the irrational and is judged by the rational according to some unknown forces. The rational, in the end, appears to dominate, but its foundation remains insecure.

It is in the void that the ontological status of the irrational must be understood only as a "negativity," because, while it is the "ultimate meaning of madness," it is only in positive rationality that we can discover its truth.[40] Foucault writes:

> Madness at bottom is *nothing*, for all that it unites in them [the experiences of madness] is the negative. But its paradox is that it *manifests* this *nothingness* . . . an inextricable unity . . . of the reasonable being of things and the nothingness of madness. For madness, if it is

34. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 206–7.
35. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 206.
36. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 173.
37. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 206.
38. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 206.
39. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 207.
40. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 251.

nothing, can only show its face by emerging from itself and assuming an appearance within the order of reason, thereby becoming its own opposite. . . . How can we avoid summing up this experience by the single word *Unreason*?[41]

At its root, the content of madness signifies an absence, a nothing, because experiences of madness can be explained only by something positive in the categories of the rational. Paradoxically, this positive display of something real in madness is actually a display of nothingness. This means that the experience of the irrational, which is summed up in the experience of madness, must mask itself as its opposite to be understood.

2. Divisions in the Consciousness of Madness: Great Confinement

The change in the perception of the irrational in the classical age is due to a shift in the consciousness of madness as revealed in the new types of institutions that are made:

What happened between the end of the Renaissance and the height of the classical age was therefore not simply an evolution of the institutions: it was a change in the consciousness of madness, and thereafter it was the asylums, houses of confinement, gaols [jails] and prisons that illustrated that new conception.[42]

The "new" institutions, although often located in old buildings, such as houses of leprosy, included asylums, houses, jails and prisons, and their existence began to be increasingly necessary due to the drastic increase in the confinement of the mad. This is what became known as the "great confinement" of the seventeenth century in Europe because large amounts of people were being labeled mad and locked away: for example, over 1 percent of the population of Paris was incarcerated over a period of just a few years.[43] On the surface, it would appear that the increase must be due to a rise of madness during this time. But again, Foucault asks us to look closer and find that what actually changed was not an increase in madness amongst the Europeans, but a change in the "perception" of madness, fueled by the new perspective on the irrational.[44] The classical perception of madness arises out of complex mixing of the four types of consciousness of madness, all of which can be understood according to a great desire for *division*—a division between madness and the rational, between the moral and the immoral.

41. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 242–3, italics his.
42. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 120.
43. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 47, 54.
44. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 54.

The first consciousness pair represented in the classical age is the critical and the practical. The *critical* consciousness—continuing from the Renaissance—still sets madness as an opposite to reason but its dialectical aspect is muted due to the *practical* consciousness which no longer speaks with the mad and physically excludes them from "rational" society.[45] The link between the immoral irrational and madness "demonstrates the urgency of the division," the pressing drive to separate out the mad in order to rid society of evil.[46] The "mad" are increasingly confined under moral diagnoses such as idleness, homosexuality, blasphemy and other disruptive behaviors, because those who give into such behaviors are following their passions to such a great extent that they must have lost their rationality and need to be corrected and confined: "madness was seen through an ethical condemnation of idleness" as well as other sins so much so that "madness found itself side by side with sin."[47]

The enunciatory and analytic are the second consciousness pair of madness for the classical age.[48] The *enunciatory* is seen in a quick pronouncement of madness without need for qualification or explanation. It is as if one look could tell us whether the person is mad and we proclaim, "Look, a fool!" or the French, *Tiens, un fou*![49] The *analytic* supports the judgment with supposed objective claims about the nature of madness and this support will eventually become the most privileged account of madness, as we will see in the modern age.

Although all four types of the consciousness of madness play an important role in the classical age, they are there only in pairs of division—each in contrast and tension with the other. This division is then reflected in a divided society where the mad are segregated from society, hidden away so that no one will be contaminated by their presence. The confined mad are relegated to the status of nothing, such that they are no longer worth any reflection and no longer representatives of the grand nonrational; they follow the same trajectory of the irrational which became ontologically nothing, an absence only to be explained by its contrary. Evangelou writes that the irrational, as seen in the great confinement, "is what reason made of madness, or it is what madness becomes after the labelling of madness by reason as its absolute opposite."[50] Madness becomes only understood and helped in accordance with the terms of its opposite, the rational.

The push for confinement and correction is seen in the classical representative figure which Foucault calls the "individual to be corrected [*l'individu à corriger*]" or the "incorrigible."[51] No longer welcomed in

45. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 154–66, 170–2.
46. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 165.
47. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 72, 86.
48. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 166–8, 170–2.
49. Gros, *Foucault et la folie*, 39.
50. Evangelou, *Philosophizing Madness from Nietzsche to Derrida*, 143.
51. Foucault, *Abnormal*, 57–8, 326.

society, the mad are sent away for the possibility of correction in places of confinement. Most, however, are judged as incorrigible because no matter what training techniques will be used, the individuals remain unteachable and unable to return to society. The process of correcting (*corriger*) begins here, but will be considered more effective in the modern age, where the reformers will view the places of confinement as ideal places of study and experimentation. This orientation toward reform emerges just as the figure of the human monster fades to the background, along with the link to a cosmic world, and institutions seek to remove and reshape these individuals according to a new ethical model.

The classical irrational—in its link to the realm of the subhuman, its condemnation as immorality, and its sinking into nothingness—is seen in some classical art. Foucault points in particular to the works of Jean Racine and Georges de La Tour. For example, Georges de La Tour's *The Repentant Magdalen* depicts this radical division between the rational, as the positive light, and the irrational, as the negative shadow. (See Image 4.2: Art Displaying the Irrational of the Classical Age.) Foucault designates this painting as having "shadow and light face each other,

Image 4.2 Art Displaying the Irrational of the Classical Age

Source: *The Repentant Magdalen* (*Madeleine at the Mirror*) by Georges de La Tour (1635–1640), public domain, slightly lightened.

dividing and unifying a face and its reflection, a skull and its image, waking and silence."[52] The woman touches the skull, like a mad person encountering the dark irrational, only to find that the irrational is given back as an exact image in a mirror; the irrational becomes nothing but a reflection of madness, brought to the light of reason.

C. Irrational of the Modern Age

The modern heralding of the rational can be thought of in terms of the *objective*, the *scientific* and the *normal*.[53] With the priority of the rational and the continued suppression of the irrational which started in the classical age, Foucault argues that the irrational is in some ways missing from the modern age, as it is *alienated, exiled* and *silenced*.[54] After describing the disappearance of the irrational, we will look to the dominance of the *analytic* consciousness of madness. Despite the attempted eradication of the irrational, we will close this section by uncovering the hidden explosions of the irrational still present today.

1. Irrational Disappears

Beginning already in the classical age, society was pushing the irrational outside the boundaries of normativity, and this was not just a metaphor, because at the same time, the "mad" people were also being pushed outside society, *alienated* from others and placed in internment. This pushing away of the irrational bleeds into the modern age, such that the irrational has "retreated," placed at such a distance, and eventually ignored almost completely.[55] Foucault describes the alienation of the irrational by saying:

> At the base of so many of these obscure alienations [*aliénations*] that cloud our perception of madness there must at least be that: the recognition that when society one day decided that the mad were "alienated" [*désigner ces fous comme des "aliénés"*], it was in society that unreason first alienated itself, and it was in society that unreason exiled and silenced itself. The word "alienation," [*aliénation*] . . . is

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52. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 245. Foucault calls this painting *Madeleine at the Mirror*, which is one of its other titles.

53. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 159: "objective pathology"; 91: "scientific and medical knowledge of madness"; 129: "psychopathology . . . in relation to . . . a normal man"; 489: "placed the patient in a milieu that was both normal and natural . . . by men of reason."

54. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 103: "unreason first alienated itself, and it was in society that unreason exiled and silenced itself"; 388: "unreason retreated"; 158: "reduced to silence."

55. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 388.

not entirely metaphorical. . . [for] unreason ceased to be an experi-
ence in the adventure that any human reason is, and found itself
instead avoided and enclosed in a quasi-objectivity.[56]

Foucault traces the complete alienation of the irrational back to the his-
torical act of alienating the mad from society done in the classical age.
Foucault is linking the French noun *aliéné*, which can mean "alienated"
but can also name a "mad person" or "mental patient" like *fou*, with
the verb *aliéner*, which means "to alienate" or "to push away." Physically
designating the mad as *aliénés* (*désigner ces fous comme des "aliénés"*) dem-
onstrates the structural act of avoiding and alienating the notion of the
irrational, confining it to objectivity.[57]

   Due to the irrational being ignored by society and exiled, there is
a "rupture in a dialogue" between the rational and the irrational; the
irrational is then "reduced to silence" and, upon arrival of the modern
age, its voice can no longer be heard.[58] Foucault concludes, "Faced with
these wordy [modern] dialectical struggles, unreason remains mute,
and forgetting comes from the great silent wounds [*déchirements*] within
man."[59] The torn, ripped and broken elements of the irrational (from
the French *déchirement*, as we stated in Chapter 1) formerly considered
essential to human experience, are forgotten and muted in the modern
age. Philippe Chevallier writes that the modern age can be characterized
by a "loss and denial of the tragic"; it avoids reflecting on the unexplain-
able afflictions often found in human experience[60]

   Unlike the cosmic lens of the Renaissance and the ontological lens
of the classical age, the modern irrational is viewed according to an
"anthropological framework," as Gros labels it, because of its focus on
the "urgent immediacy of need and indefinite mediations of illusion" for
the individual human.[61] The human, under this framework, has a need
for something more than the monotonous life of the real; the individual
urgently expresses this need and calls for something to satisfy it. However,

56. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 103; French: 141.
57. Foucault notes that the reformer Samuel Tuke, whom we will discuss in a moment, pre-
     ferred the French term *aliéné* over the English "insane" because he saw the French as
     representing a separation in mental capacity as opposed to the English which suggests
     a complete termination of mental capacity (Latin: *insanus*: *in* = not, *sanus* = healthy).
     This goes along with Tuke's notion that through the use of the rational, patients can be
     restored to reason. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 473; French: 588–9.
58. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxviii, 104, 158.
59. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 530.
60. Philippe Chevallier, *Michel Foucault et le christianisme* (Paris: Ecole Normale Supérieure,
     2011), 243, my translation: "perte et déni du tragique."
61. Gros, *Foucault et la folie*, 37, my translation: "un plan anthropologique"; "immédiateté
     urgente du besoin et médiations indéfinies de l'illusion." See Foucault, *History of Mad-
     ness*, 349–51.

rather than turning to the "strange faces" of the Middle Ages, arising out of the dark forces of the unnatural world, the modern irrational takes the "familiar and the identical" and places it in a dreamy and illusionary state.[62] The modern age offers illusions or dreams in an attempt to satisfy this need for the irrational so that "unreason disappear[s] into the deep figures of the imagination."[63] But sometimes these dreams become more than simple illusions and turn into nightmares, "haunted by the phantasms of unreason," where the reality of the darker nonrational of the past erupts to the surface.[64]

2. Analytic Consciousness of Madness: Great Reform

The ignoring of the irrational naturally shifts the way those labeled mad are handled in the modern age. No longer a constructive reminder of the irrational as in the sixteenth century and no longer equated with the irrational and hidden away as in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they are now seen as people who have deviated from the normal standards of society and need to be fixed, through both ethical and medical means, so that they can be brought back into society. This desire to fix and ultimately, "cure" the mad inspired the great reform of the modern age which sought to improve the conditions of the mad in the given institutions.[65] Foucault gives the example of two great reformers, Samuel Tuke of England and Philippe Pinel of France, to illustrate this change in mindset.[66] Tuke, as a Quaker, created a place of retreat for the mad; in this space, he desired to aid the mad in finding the truth underneath their madness and turn them back toward reason.[67] Pinel, as a secular scholar, sought to give more physical freedom during their confinement; in this way, he believed that they could be brought back to morality and cure their madness.[68] Although motivated by different belief systems, they approached the places of confinement in similar ways: they saw the purpose of confinement not so much in keeping the mad away from society, but in restoring them to reason.

Foucault wants us to notice that the actual confinement of the mad is not part of the modern movement, but that it has already taken place in the classical age. Thus, the modern approach builds on the reality of the already confined mad and takes this preexisting condition as an opportunity for new medical studies and experiments. This is way it is

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62. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 350.
63. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 417.
64. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 417.
65. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 475, 480, 509, 511.
66. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 463–511.
67. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 475.
68. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 480.

critical to understand the archaeology of the irrational in the classical age, because it lays the foundation for the construction of the modern movement of psychology. Capitalizing on the access to the mad in the houses of confinement, reformers, especially as doctors, began to play a more essential role in dealing with the mad.[69] Furthermore, many of the practices of the classical age remain—such as silence, forced incarceration, rewards and punishments, work, and cold showers—but they are done for new purposes, not so much for punishment and exclusion as for correction and cure.[70] Michael Behrent summarizes, "The new conception of madness put older techniques to work for new ends."[71] The practices of confinement, along with many of its treatments, took on the same form as before but were given a new meaning and purpose according to the dominant consciousness of madness.

Leaving behind the other three types of consciousness, the modern age gives precedence to the analytic consciousness of madness. The analytic consciousness, as we mentioned, defines madness according to objective standards and mechanistic explanations. Madness is no longer linked to the irrational of previous ages but is "totally alienated from forms of knowledge, no longer even made an object of division," as Gros writes.[72] This consciousness eliminates any knowledge of madness itself, because madness can be defined only objectively, and can no longer even be placed as an object in the division between the rational and the irrational, as in the classical age. Just as the modern reformers "cured" the mad by returning them to reason, so madness having lost any link to the larger nonrational can be cured by a return to the rational.

According to Foucault, there are two figures who serve as examples of the modern consciousness of madness. The first is the onanist or masturbator who acts as the last ancestor to the modern abnormal individual.[73] The onanist is seen as someone who secretly breaks the rules and must be made to conform to the standards of society. Previously, sexual perversion was associated with the dark side of the irrational, but in the modern age, it is seen as a social problem which pushes against the boundaries of the modern family. The onanist illustrates the priority placed on the categories of the normal and the abnormal and these categories are finally seen in the last figure of the modern age, the modern abnormal individual. Foucault argues that a mad person in modern times is someone who is sick and who needs to be fixed—not a monster, not an incorrigible

69. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 504.
70. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 495, 502, 487, 485, 501–2.
71. Michael C. Behrent, "Foucault and Technology," *History and Technology: An International Journal* 29, no. 1 (2013): 75.
72. Gros, *Foucault et la folie*, 39: "la folie, totalement aliénée dans les formes du savoir, ne fait même plus l'objet d'un partage."
73. Foucault, *Abnormal*, 60.

person—but simply not normal. We can define those with mental disorders by comparing them to what has been established as normal.[74]

When positing the figure of the abnormal individual, Foucault is certainly thinking about Georges Canguilhem's understanding of the abnormal and the normal. Canguilhem writes in *The Normal and the Pathological* (for which Foucault later writes an introduction):

> The abnormal, as ab-normal, comes after the definition of the normal, it is its logical negation. . . . The normal is the effect obtained by the execution of the normative project, it is the norm exhibited in the fact. In the relationship of the fact there is then a relationship of exclusion between the normal and the abnormal. But this negation is subordinated to the operation of negation, to the correction summoned up by the abnormality. Consequently, it is not paradoxical to say that the abnormal, while logically second, is existentially first.[75]

Canguilhem points out that the abnormal is simply the negation of what has been set up as normal. As a result of the normative project, which has been undertaken in modernity, there is an emphasis on the objective facts, leaving everything else out. But, Canguilhem remarks, while the normal is what logically comes first, it is experientially second. Meaning, it is often through experiencing the "other," such as encounters with tragedy, madness, or absurdity, that we quickly come up with a definition of the normal in order to rid ourselves of the discomfort of these experiences and to explain them away. Once we have our definition of the normal, we can turn back and logically label the other side as the abnormal. This idea of the negation being the root of the rational will be further seen in the next chapter, where Foucault describes the negative as the ultimate foundation for psychiatry and how it follows this almost paradoxical cycle proposed by Canguilhem. For now, however, the important point is that the abnormal individual is logically deduced as a negation of the normal and that it is through the normative project, that the categories of the normal and the abnormal have been clearly distinguished.

With such an emphasis on the normal and the abnormal, these two figures, along with the event of the great reform, make it difficult to find any connection between the rational and the nonrational in the modern age. The rational, as ultimate objectivity and normalcy, pushes out the nonrational, so that the relation is strained and almost impossible to see.

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74. Foucault, *Abnormal*, 328.
75. Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 243. Canguilhem gives a detailed account of the meaning and root for both normal and abnormal in this work. Foucault undoubtedly has this description in mind; see, in particular, the first chapter under Section Two, entitled "From the Social to the Vital," in Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, 237–56.

This is why the modern irrational, as we already discussed, is defined as alienated and muted. This act is represented "in the confiscation by reason of the experience of madness," as Chevallier comments.[76] And yet, although madness is reduced to medical and mechanistic explanations, the irrational cannot be completely forgotten, as it bursts forth unexpectedly in our modern world—often through the arts.[77]

3. Modern Explosions of the Irrational

Although we do not always recognize their presence, there are still signs of the irrational persisting in the modern age. To illustrate their continued existence, we can think of the way certain desires go beyond the standards of society opposing established social norms. Foucault gives the example of someone who hates his own father. In this hatred, the modern view does not consider this a link to the immoral irrational, but considers it simply a "dull thud of instincts *repeatedly* coming up against the solidity of the institution of the family."[78] From the modern perspective, these groundless feelings pushing up against the family should be fixed and brought into conformity with society. This is also seen in the modern figure of the onanist, who is someone who gives into his abnormal desires for self-gratification against the sexual mores of the family. On closer inspection, however, these deviant instincts can also be a reminder of the darker, perverse elements in human experience. Notice that these instincts are *repeatedly* coming back, because, as I will argue in the next section, there is an overarching nonrational which can be represented as an "unconditional return," something that comes back even when pushed away.[79]

When we do recognize the source for such dark desires, we receive a glimpse into the "great silent wounds [*déchirements*] within man."[80] These unspoken rips and tears appear to have transcended the limits of a particular age because their pain is continued to be felt and will, from time to time, rudely break into society. Due to the way the irrational has been squashed and suppressed in the modern age, its entrance can even come as an explosion. Foucault explains:

> The linearity that led rationalist thought to consider madness as a form of mental illness must be reinterpreted in a vertical dimension. Only then does it become more apparent that each of its

76. Chevallier, *Michel Foucault et le christianisme*, 242, my translation: "dans la confiscation par la raison de l'expérience de la folie."
77. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 536.
78. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 490, italics mine.
79. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 364.
80. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 530.

incarnations is a more complete, but more perilous masking of tragic experience—an experience that it nonetheless failed to obliterate. When constraints were at their more oppressive, an *explosion* was necessary, and that is what we have seen since Nietzsche.[81]

Like a teenager rebelling against the strict rules of his or her parents, the irrational revolts against the modern reduction of madness to mental illness; the more it is oppressed and pushed aside, the louder it bursts onto the scene. Philipp Rosemann comments, "Enter Nietzsche, and the whole beautiful edifice of modernity crumbles."[82] The explosions of the irrational, as seen in Nietzsche's work, force us to recognize the hidden pain of the human shaking the foundations of modernity.

Not only Nietzsche, but others who follow his example, push against the modern notion of madness. Each attempt tries to expose the power of the irrational in human experience—what Foucault calls, the "sovereign work of unreason."[83] These eruptions of the irrational are most clearly seen, Foucault argues, in some modern works of art notably from Denis Diderot, Marquis de Sade, Francisco Goya, Gérard de Nerval, Friedrich Hölderlin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Vincent van Gogh, Raymond Roussel and Antonin Artaud. For example, Goya's *Gran Disparate* (*Grand Folly*) is a reminder of the ignored irrational, presenting it as one of the "most interior and at the same time the most savagely free of all forces."[84] (See Image 4.3: Art Displaying the Irrational of Modernity.) Foucault sees the dismemberment of the body in this painting, due to the head of the central figure being held by its hair and replaced with a funnel, as pulling on this inward sense of the irrational and reminding us of the savage quality found in human life.

The consequences for facing the irrational in our modern age are grave: one could be overcome by madness itself. Foucault reflectively asks these questions about those who have had the courage to encounter the irrational in the modern age:

> After Hölderlin, Nerval, Nietzsche, Van Gogh, Raymond Roussel and Artaud ventures there, with tragic consequences—i.e. to the point at which the alienation of the experience of unreason pushed them into the abandonment of madness . . . why is it not possible to remain in the difference that is unreason? . . . What is this power that petrifies all those who dare look upon its face, condemning to *madness* all those who have tried the test of *Unreason?*[85]

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81. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 28, italics mine.
82. Philipp Rosemann, *Understanding Scholastic Thought with Foucault* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 35.
83. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 511.
84. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 531.
85. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 352.

Image 4.3 Art Displaying the Irrational of Modernity

Source: *Gran Disparate* (*Grand Folly*) by Francisco Goya (1824–1828), public domain.

Tragically, each of the artists listed above struggled with extreme forms of mental illness toward the end of their lives, as if their exploration of the irrational pushed them so far away from society as to break their very mental stability. Foucault actually witnessed firsthand this phenomenon when he attended the final appearance of the French dramatist Antonin Artaud on January 24, 1947. During this performance, Artaud recited some incoherent poems, accompanied by periods of silence and loud explosions of vulgar words until he completely broke down and was escorted off the stage.[86] Perhaps thinking about this experience, Foucault asks whether this kind of embracing of madness is necessary for those who seek out the irrational: Is it possible to stay sane when exposing

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86. James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Anchor, 1994), 94–6.

the irrational? Is everyone condemned to madness who has the courage to face it?[87]

Whether there are good answers to those questions or not, the point is that the irrational cannot be entirely snuffed out. Even during the age of reason and its aftermath, we can see the presence of the irrational, sometimes subtly in perverse desires, sometimes loudly in artistic expressions. These artistic explosions push back against the modern overemphasis on the rational, as the sole objective standard, but they also sometimes result in catastrophic consequences where the artists are overcome by madness.

D. Overarching Nonrational

The perception of the irrational has morphed over time, beginning with the Renaissance irrational, represented by a dark force which mixes with the light of reason, to the classical irrational, characterized by the stark division between immorality and the moral, to the modern irrational, which is mostly ignored, but can sometimes be seen in savage explosions in art. One of the threads that runs through all these descriptions of the irrational is the way its archaeology is best understood in the context of particular relations. In a general sense, the idea of relation or "carrefour" as Marc Ozilou calls it, is integral to Foucault's approach to history.[88] These complicated intersections and crossroads are hidden underneath the historical events and institutions, and by exposing them, we can have a greater understanding of the true motivations behind them. Thus, it is "only through a relation that madness can be understood and defined," as Evangelou writes.[89] In Robert Mandrou's review of Foucault's history of madness, for example, he argues that Foucault's work must be understood according to a relation among three key terms (*trois clefs*): madness, reason and unreason.[90] Nikolas Rose writes that the relation between madness and civilization is essential, while also recognizing how civilization is bound up with reason: "Madness exists in a constitutive relation with 'civilization.' It is ungraspable outside the integral

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87. Art is unique in that it continues to tell us about the irrational, even when the medical community ignores it. For a helpful discussion on art and mental illness, please see James C. Kaufman and Paul J. Silvia, "Creativity and Mental Illness," in *Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, ed. James C. Kaufman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 381–94.

88. Marc Ozilou, personal interview, May 18, 2017.

89. Evangelou, *Philosophizing Madness from Nietzsche to Derrida*, 148. However, Evangelou remains concerned about Foucault still maintaining some kind of "fragmentary character" of something throughout it all—something like an ontological nonrational that I am suggesting here.

90. Robert Mandrou, "Trois Clefs pour Comprendre la Folie à l'Époque Classique," in Smart, *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, 30–9.

ties that divide it from and bind it to reason. And it forms an indispensable 'other side' to [society]."[91]

All of these relations are important—the relation between madness and civilization, between madness and reason, between madness and unreason and the other combinations of these terms—but for the purposes of this study, our focus is the constant relation between reason and unreason. This is essential for understanding madness, for, as Roland Barthes states, madness can be grasped only according to the "couple formed by reason and unreason," the "interconstituent dialogue of reason and unreason."[92] Yes, the perceptions of the rational and the nonrational change, as we have seen, and yes, this brings about changes in the consciousness of madness, but these changes must be seen as *evolving* changes and not *erasing-and-starting-over* changes. In other words, all of the perceptions of the rational and the nonrational are linked together and, by seeing the complex yet continuous connection between the rational and nonrational, we have discovered both the specific role that the nonrational, in its different variations, plays in the treatment of mental health over the ages and the more general role that it plays in human experience.

To illustrate the prominence of this relation, we will explore the repeated themes found in the understanding of the irrational, and even in a larger sense, of the nonrational. We will ask: can we speak of a general nonrational which somehow connects these historical perceptions and takes part in the relation with the rational? Although we have mostly discussed Foucault's *unreason* in terms of the irrational, we will speak more broadly of the larger nonrational.

The best evidence for an overarching nonrational in Foucault is found in the first chapter under Part III of *History of Madness* where he speaks of the continuous repetition of unreason which can be contrasted with the temporality of madness:

> While the return of unreason took on the appearance of massive *repetition*, re-establishing its links with its previous incarnations down the ages [*qui renoue avec elle-même par-delà le temps*], the consciousness of madness by contrast was accompanied by a certain analysis of modernity, which immediately placed it within a temporal, social and historical framework. In this disparity between the consciousness of madness and the consciousness of unreason, we find, in the late eighteenth century, the starting point of what was to be a decisive moment, where the experience of unreason, such as is

91. Nikolas Rose, "Of Madness Itself: *Histoire de la folie* and the Object of Psychiatric History," in Still and Velody, *Rewriting the History of Madness: Studies in Foucault's 'Histoire de la folie'*, 143.

92. Roland Barthes, "Taking Sides," in Smart, *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, 25.

evident in Hölderlin, Nerval and Nietzsche, always leads back to the roots of time—unreason thereby becoming the untimely within the world *par excellence. . . .* It is from this period onwards that the time of unreason and the time of madness were to be affected by two opposing vectors: unreason becoming an *unconditional return*, and an absolute plunge [*plongée absolue*]; madness developing along the chronology of history.[93]

Although Foucault is describing a historical phenomenon in the late eighteenth century in this text, he also indicates the atemporal quality of unreason which can repeat itself by appearing as something from another time, something "untimely" in the world. Unreason carries the meanings of the past with it, its "incarnations of the ages" and even "reconnects with itself across time" as the phrase *qui renoue avec elle-même par-delà le temps* could be translated. In contrast, madness takes a different route, breaking away from unreason in order to be quantified and placed in a temporal framework. While madness seems to be subject to a historical timeline, unreason holds on to the "roots of time" and keeps returning to show itself in certain, sometimes unexpected, places.

   Although the works of art that we have looked at in this chapter contain different emphases and perspectives, they do contain certain themes which point to the way the nonrational opens a window to the void, an "absolute view" (*plongée absolue*) of the dark and painful unknown.[94] Gros describes the general themes found in art across the ages:

> Such works tie madness with absolute nonsense, with the absence of a work. They tell of the contradiction without hope of overcoming, the absolute wound [*déchirement*], the painful fusion of contraries, the limit experience of a limit point.[95]

These works of art continue to remind us of the true roots of madness found in the nonrational. Throughout time, the nonrational symbolizes an impasse impossible to overcome, ultimate brokenness, the mixture of opposites, and limit-experiences of the human. Some themes may

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93. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 363–4, italics his and mine; French: 455. Foucault makes a footnote on this section and states that it might seem that madness has a return as well in an evolutionary sense, because we are going back to a state that is less human. But Foucault writes that this kind of return is still chronological rather than a "defeat" or a going "*against* time," which characterizes unreason.

94. *La plongée* can mean a plunge into water or air or a view of something from above, like a view of a large field or mountain.

95. Gros, *Foucault et la folie*, 36, my translation: "De telles œuvres renouent avec la folie comme non-sens absolu, comme absence d'œuvre. Elles disent la contradiction sans espoir de dépassement, l'absolu déchirement, la fusion douloureuse des contraires, l'expérience limite d'un point limite."

be emphasized more than others at different times, but these elements appear to rise above the structures of a given age, connecting the perceptions of the nonrational together, folding it back on itself.

Reminiscent of Nietzsche's eternal return where we must will the return of everything, the good and bad, the nonrational must be allowed to return, over and over again. It is something that we cannot escape, just like Nietzsche's fate which we must love (*amor fati*); it returns to us even when it has been pushed away. Through a series of helpful diagrams, Rosemann depicts this fated return of unreason showing how even after it has been rejected from reason, unreason comes back to reassert itself. He writes:

> Yet the distancing/collapsing of distance between reason and unreason will never be wholly successful. When rationality deludes itself with the idea of having finally rid itself of its "other" [unreason]: this is precisely when madness will reaffirm itself at its very heart.[96]

Even when we think that we have evaded the nonrational, it reappears, showing us that this part of existence cannot be entirely ignored.

This also reminds us of Augustine's restlessness mentioned at the opening to Part III: Foucault speaks of madness as illuminating the anguish always present in restless hearts: "Perhaps doctors find it a great support and comfort to know that under the sun of madness there have always been hallucinations, that there has always been delirium in the discourse of unreason, and that restless hearts [*ces cœurs sans repos*] have ever been filled with the same anguish."[97] Hallucinations, delirium and restless hearts bear witness that this dark nonrational has always been there and is here to stay. Continuing this theme, Foucault concludes his *History of Madness* by prophesying the continual return of the overarching nonrational. This return is often revealed through the "mediation of madness" which breaks open an oeuvre: in the interruption of madness, we sense "a void, a moment of silence, a question without an answer, opening an unhealable wound [*un déchirement sans réconciliation*] that the world is forced to address."[98] All forms of the nonrational are present here, the pre-rational and the irrational, by referring to any kind of questions that do not have rational answers. Madness points us to this grander nonrational showing the reality of pain that persists throughout human experiences, as seen in wounds without reconciliation (*les déchirements sans réconciliation*) and hearts without rest (*les cœurs sans repos*).

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96. Rosemann, *Understanding Scholastic Thought with Foucault*, 35. His diagrams are found on p. 34.
97. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 115–6; French: 158.
98. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 537; French: 663.

It seems clear that Foucault does refer to a general unreason/ nonrational which transcends one specific age, but it is difficult to decide what kind of status to give it. We wonder if we should consider it as representing an ontological essence, despite his later explicit aversion to ontology, or if he is just describing an accumulation of all the perceptions of the nonrational across the ages. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow hold to the first view that Foucault does ascribe ontological status to his ideas in his *History of Madness*. They criticize his "recourse to ontology" in this work and claim that he abandons it in his later works.[99] Behrent also writes of ontology at the heart of Foucault's *History of Madness*: "Over time, Foucault argues, human beings have lost the ability to 'listen' to madness—and specifically, to grasp its ontological significance."[100] There are others, however, who see Foucault as going against ontology: Roger Paden writes that Foucault is countering explanatory humanism in his *History of Madness* by showing that reason (and by implication, unreason) is a "changing product of social practice" and "cannot be the human essence."[101] Furthermore, Revel defines Foucault's general approach to reason as "a critical history of reason which is the history of the transformation of rationalities and not the history of the founding act where, reason, in its essence, would be discovered."[102]

It is certainly true that Foucault, especially as his work progresses, is not interested in essences or ontological realities, and we must consider his work in light of these intentions. However, I am inclined to agree with Dreyfus, Rabinow and Behrent that there does appear to be some kind of ontological reality underlying Foucault's particular account of the nonrational. It is not overt, but hidden, under the surface, spilling over from his training in phenomenology. But in contrast to Dreyfus and Rabinow's negative view of his link to ontology, I find this hidden foundation actually providing support to his account and linking him with the work of Merleau-Ponty. Saving our discussion on Foucault's relation to phenomenology for later, my response to this specific problem is that Foucault does speak of the nonrational as an accumulation of historical perceptions, but that he also hints at something deeper which links these perceptions to a general experience of reality. His language of a "common experience of anguish" in the modern age which can be linked to the "common experience of unreason" in the classical age implies

99. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, Second Edition: With an Afterword by and an Interview with Michel Foucault* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 4, 12.
100. Behrent, "Foucault and Technology," 74.
101. Roger Paden, "Foucault's Anti-Humanism," *Human Studies* 10, no. 1 (1987): 126.
102. Revel, *Le vocabulaire de Foucault*, 85, my translation: "Il y a donc une histoire critique de la raison qui est l'histoire de la transformation des rationalités et non pas l'histoire de l'acte fondateur par lequel la raison, dans son essence, aurait été découverte."

something that has more than a temporary significance.[103] We can at least conclude that his account of unreason has the *possibility* of a connection to an ontological reality that can be represented as a common experience of the nonrational for the human, which we will explore further in Chapter 7.

E. Conclusion

We constructed an archaeology of the irrational by tracing its changing perceptions and resulting historical events in three ages of European society. Under the dialectical consciousness of madness, the fools on the ships remind the people of the dark and tragic presence of the irrational, which is actively connected to the rational. The great confinement begins to pay less attention to the interconnection between the rational and irrational and is instead motivated by a great desire for division; here, society separates the mad from society, which mirrors the theoretical separation between the different kinds of consciousness of madness. Led by the analytic consciousness, the modern age severs the tie between madness and the nonrational, allowing reason to fully confiscate madness in order to reduce it, explain it and cure it. However, the presence of the irrational, although faint, is still there and can be seen in the dark internal desires of the human and the genuine expressions of art.

Upon close inspection, each event revealed the hidden structures of the institutions behind the movements. These structures are based on a complex array of relations, but we specifically pulled out the underlying relation of the rational and the nonrational. This relation, although dynamic and evolving, consistently plays a critical role in the creation and enforcement of the institutions behind mental illness. I argued that although we should never lose sight of the historical contingency in each of these descriptions, there appears to be themes of the irrational in each age which hint at an overarching nonrational weaving together the diverse perceptions. In addition to the suffering found in mental illness, this general nonrational points to deep wounds present in all of human experience.

Our study of the irrational in human history sets the stage for how the irrational influences the definition and identification of mental illness today. With the understanding of the consistencies and changes in the archaeology of the irrational, we can perform an archaeology of madness that considers the roots of modern psychology and the motivations behind diagnosis in the next chapter.

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103. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 107.

5   Archaeology of Madness

Foucault's deep analysis of madness in the classical age is driven by his primary interest in exposing the roots of modern psychology; as Gary Gutting writes explicitly, "Foucault's ultimate goal in writing his history of madness in the Classical Age was to illuminate (or expose) the true nature of modern (nineteenth century to present) psychiatry."[1] Foucault is showing the "classical residues" of the modern age to help us understand the underworking of modern institutions.[2] This is characteristic of Foucault's general method where he offers us historical accounts, not for the sake of historical descriptions in themselves, but to give us insight into the present. His histories are, then, as Ian Hacking puts it, "histories of the present" intended for use here in the now.[3]

In this chapter, I will perform an archaeology of madness by digging up the past constructions that make up modern psychology. First, I will describe an event in Foucault's life that served as a window into the origin of modern psychology (A). Next, I will explore what hidden structures are revealed and how they point to a deep division in psychology because of ignoring the irrational (B). Third, I will confirm this understanding of modern psychology by considering the history of the disorder of delirium (C).[4]

Before attempting an archaeology of madness, we have to ask whether or not *madness* (*la folie*) has lasting qualities which enable it to be studied as a fixed object. Most scholars agree that madness is not an object for Foucault, but rather it is a construction of the dynamic structures of society. In her interview with me, Judith Revel reiterated that we must remember that, for Foucault, "the object of madness does not exist."[5]

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1. Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness," 62.
2. Gutting, "Foucault and the History of Madness," 62.
3. Ian Hacking, *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 24.
4. Sections A and B of this chapter are published in my article: Venable, "The Carnival of the Mad: Foucault's Window into the Origin of Psychology," *Foucault Studies* 30 (2021). I would like to thank *Foucault Studies* for allowing me to reprint the sections here.
5. Revel, personal interview, December 2, 2016.

She correctly points out that to ascribe to him some kind of fixed idea of madness is certainly to misunderstand his method. However, there is some tension here; for although Foucault is not viewing "madness" as an object, he is concerned with a coherent history of the "experience" of madness, as he states in the Preface.[6] Foucault desires to bring a unity to the varying experiences of madness over history, offering a "general synthesis," as Gros writes, to its total contents.[7] Rosemann describes this tension well,

> Madness . . . is not a thing-in-itself, a condition or state that is fixed, so that it could be defined once and for all. . . [but] these meanings are held together by an historical evolution . . . though not because they all belong to an identical "substance" of what madness "really" is.[8]

Although madness cannot be a fixed object and cannot hold a permanent definition, the historical evolution can be presented as a unity which pulls together all the meanings of the historical changes.

Foucault seems to hint at some kind of wholeness in his understanding of madness when he begins and ends his *History of Madness* by relating madness to an oeuvre.[9] He opens with the idea that madness is "nothing other than the absence of an oeuvre."[10] (This phrase is also the title to the 1972 appendix to the book: "Madness, the absence of an oeuvre."[11]) And he closes the book writing that madness is "an absolute rupture of the oeuvre" at the end of his last section.[12] Madness, for Foucault, represents something that is absent from the usual outline of history; the great work (*œuvre*) of history highlights the accomplishments of reason, leaving out the "few mildly worrying lines" of madness.[13] Madness signifies a rupture or separation from the work of history, because it does not take part in its great narrative. Some of the unity in this history

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6. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxxii.
7. Gros, *Foucault et la folie*, 42, my translation: "La totalité des contenus des expériences de folie (pratiques sociales et pratiques discursives) se compose enfin depuis une *synthèse générale.*"
8. Rosemann, *Understanding Scholastic Thought with Foucault*, 35–6. See also Nikolas Rose's helpful discussion on the way Foucault both does and does not treat madness as a thing in itself: Rose, "Of Madness Itself: *Histoire de la folie* and the Object of Psychiatric History," 142–9.
9. The French word *œuvre* can simply mean work, but it can also refer to a great or important work, such as in art. The latter is usually what is meant by the English "oeuvre." Here Foucault is not thinking in terms of the work of a person, but the overall work of history, whose story often excludes madness.
10. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxxi.
11. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 541–9.
12. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 536.
13. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxxi.

also comes from the possible ontological significance of the nonrational as well as the persistent, although dynamic, presence of the rational– nonrational relation in each age. Thus, as we go through this history, we should keep in mind that madness is an unfixed, ever-changing object, and yet, we should also look for a unity to the meanings of madness across the ages.[14]

Some have seen this definition of madness as a way of closing the door between philosophy and madness. If madness is a rupture from history, and thus from reason, then how can it be understood by philosophy? Evangelou, for example, writes that for Foucault, madness is "too far and deep to be accessed even by a transgressed or transgressive philosophical language."[15] Although Foucault certainly maintains a certain amount of mystery and ambiguity around madness, I do not think his definition makes madness inaccessible to philosophy. In fact, it is precisely his goal, as we will discuss in the next section, to use the language of philosophy to tell the silent tale of madness, to investigate that "less than."[16] The faces of madness may change but Foucault links them together by whatever is consistently seen as deficient, as separate and as unfit; he seeks out those aspects of society that are repeatedly pushed outside the boundaries of traditional history.

Also, my use of the word "modern" refers to the same "modern age" that we discussed in the previous chapter and includes the various psychological approaches which originated in the nineteenth century and have continued up to the present time. Furthermore, I will be primarily using the term "psychology," meaning the general study and care for the mental capacities and affected behaviors of the human, because Foucault tends to see "psychology" as the broader discipline which encompasses "psychiatry," with its focus on specific medical treatments, and "psycho- pathology," with its focus on the abnormal effects of the disorders.

A. Madness in Modern Psychology: Foucault's Experience at the Carnival of the Mad

Generally speaking, it is important to be careful about relying on bio- graphical information when trying to explicate the philosophy of a par- ticular thinker. This is especially true with Foucault, whose life has many colorful aspects which can be interpreted and then used to support

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14. We may feel like, then, that there is no foundation or stability that can be found for understanding madness and that we are in danger of making it completely relative. However, as I will argue in Chapter 7, I believe that Foucault's emphasis on the chang- ing structures of society can be grounded in the Merleau-Ponty's general principles of human experience.
15. Evangelou, *Philosophizing Madness from Nietzsche to Derrida*, 183.
16. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxxi.

many divergent viewpoints. But in this case, I believe that an overview of his personal training in psychology and an analysis of his attendance at the 1954 carnival of the mad are beneficial in deciphering his initial perspective on the discipline of psychology. In speaking about Foucault's training in psychology, Jean-François Bert argues that it is important to see the personal motivations of Foucault's work because, as Foucault himself indicates, his books "had a link with his personal story, anchoring reflections in an emotional dimension, explicitly existential."[17] In addition to establishing the existential connection of his thought, Foucault's personal experience at the carnival gives us as readers a poignant image of an unusual intersection between madness and society.

From 1949 to 1954, Foucault undertook extensive study and training in psychology, even considering it a possible career before turning entirely to philosophy. He pursued and obtained his *licence* in psychology in 1949 while also teaching psychology classes and working at the Hôpital Sainte-Anne around the same time.[18] Pertinent for this project in particular, he was specifically trained by Merleau-Ponty in psychology, and while it is not well-known in the English scholarship, Foucault faithfully attended Merleau-Ponty's 1949–1952 *Child Psychology and Pedagogy* lectures at the Sorbonne.[19] In 1952 while working at the *Université de Lille*, he received a *Diplôme de psycho-pathologie* from the *Institut de psychologie*.[20] (We will further discuss the biographical links between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty at Chapter 6, A.)

During this time, Foucault was personally invited along with Jacqueline Verdeaux by the psychiatrist Roland Kuhn to Münsterlingen to attend a carnival of the mad in 1954.[21] This was no ordinary carnival-parade (*Fasnachts-Umzug*), but was composed of the patients from the local psychiatric asylum in this small town in Switzerland. The patients were allowed to leave the asylum for this one day in order to parade down the streets of the city. Before the event, the patients had carefully "made their own costumes and masks," as Elisabetta Basso reports, and now they had the opportunity to show them off to others.[22] Extending to

17. Jean-François Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," in *Foucault à Münsterlingen: À l'origine de l'Histoire de la folie*, eds. Jean-François Bert and Elisabetta Basso (Paris: EHESS, 2015), 29, my translation: "C'est ce qu'a voulu exprimer Foucault en indiquant pourquoi ses livres avaient un lien avec son historie personnelle, ancrant ses réflexions dans une dimension affective, explicitement existentielle."

18. Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 42, 48.

19. Philippe Sabot, "Entre psychologie et philosophie: Foucault à Lille, 1952–1955," in Bert and Basso, *Foucault à Münsterlingen*, 110; Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 32.

20. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 48.

21. See the letter exchange here: Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 46–7.

22. Elisabetta Basso, "Complicités et ambivalences de la psychiatrie: Münsterlingen et la carnaval des fous de 1954," *Medecine sciences: M/S* 33, no. 1 (January 2017): 102, my

over thirty buildings in length, the parade included not only the patients but also the caregivers and townspeople from the city and nearby areas who wanted to participate as spectators or parade marchers.[23] There was even the famous psychiatrist, Roland Kuhn, who joined in the procession with a crown on his head. The distinctions between the patients and the caregivers were broken down or even "abolished for a time," as Bert writes, because costumes took the place of the usual clothes that set them apart.[24] It was a day where the lines were blurred between the mad and the not mad, the abnormal and the normal, the sick and healthy.

Foucault attended the carnival with Jacqueline Verdeaux who took forty-five photographs of the event that give us a unique look at the details of this carnival.[25] In the photos, we find that the carnival included a grand assortment of people that marched in the parade who sported all sorts of costumes and masks. Some had large full-headed masks complete with enormous ears and long, pointy noses. Others had carefully painted smaller masks with cone-shaped hats or crowns on their heads. One man in the crowd strode by wearing a massive elephant head with a protruding trunk. Another man appeared to be walking backwards, but had, in fact, placed his clothes and mask on backwards to produce this illusion. There were even children joining in the event: one young boy was riding a small wooden wagon being pulled by an adult wearing a long dress and a large mask, carrying an umbrella and a basket.

The pictures also reveal the signature piece of the parade: a giant straw mannequin representing the king of the carnival which was loaded onto a cart by at least four people and pulled along with the procession. At the end of the day, Foucault found a large fire used to sacrifice the figure of the carnival king and to allow the participants to toss in their own masks to burn along with it.[26]

It appears that it was here at the carnival, building on thoughts already brewing, that he began to question the traditional narrative given about the origin of psychology. This narrative describes how modern psychology has progressed beyond the use of any kind of mystical or spiritual explanation for madness, and, instead, has discovered that madness is simply a health condition, labeled as a mental illness, which can be scientifically identified and diagnosed. Foucault later summarizes this well

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translation: "Le cortège carnavalesque . . . le 2 mars 1954 est constitué par les malades qui ont fabriqué eux-mêmes les costumes et leurs propres masques."

23. Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 21.

24. Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 22, my translation: "Les différences vestimentaires entre soignants et soignés sont pour un temps abolies."

25. Recently, these photos have been published in France in a collection of articles on the carnival and related subjects entitled *Foucault at Münsterlingen: At the Origin of the History of Madness* (*Foucault à Münsterlingen: À l'origine de l'Histoire de la folie*).

26. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 46.

in the opening to his new chapter that he adds to his 1962 *Mental Illness and Psychology*:

> And all histories of psychiatry up to the present day have set out to show that the madman of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was simply an unrecognized mentally ill patient [*un malade ignoré*], trapped within a tight network of religious and magical significations. According to this view, it was only with the arrival of the calm, objective, scientific gaze of modern medicine that what had previously been regarded as supernatural perversion was seen as a deterioration of nature.[27]

In the past, those who were labeled mad were thought to be under the powers of strange religious and magical forces, but we now know that they were actually patients or sick people (*les malades*) who were suffering from undiagnosed medical conditions. The advance of science, with its objectivity and reliability, claims to provide biological accounts of disorders leaving behind the old spiritual explanations.

In fact, the asylum at Münsterlingen exemplified the latest scientific progress in mid-twentieth–century psychiatry with the use of diagnostic tests according to inkblot patterns, developed by Hermann Rorschach, and the introduction of the first antidepressant medication, developed by Roland Kuhn.[28] And yet, each year, in plain sight, the asylum hosted this event drawing on nonscientific ideas from medieval carnival traditions. Perhaps while watching the parade go by, Foucault asked the following question, as Bert writes: "How can an asylum, where science and rationality reign and that is now on the forefront of experiential research, each year for the day of Mardi-Gras perpetuate a ritual which finds a large part of its origin in the depths of the Middle Ages?"[29] In other words, if madness is only a disorder to be medically controlled and fixed, why is there this fascination on part of both the patients and the surrounding community with the strangeness and mysteriousness of madness? Does the carnival tell us something about a missing or hidden element of modern psychology?

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27. Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 64; French: Michel Foucault, *Maladie mentale et psychologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2015), 76. I will refer to the latter as the "1962 French" in the footnotes.

28. Basso, "Complicités et ambivalences de la psychiatrie," 99–100. I use the term "psychiatry" here because it refers specifically to the use of medical practices and treatments.

29. Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 20, my translation: "Comment un asile où règnant la science et la rationalité et qui est alors à la pointe de la recherche expérimentale peut-il, chaque année pour le jour de Mardi gras, perpétuer un rituel qui trouve une grande partie de son origine au plus profond du Moyen Âge?"

Foucault answers "Yes" to this last question and believes that the fascination with the mystical side of madness arises out of a part of history that is often covered up, but not completely gone. Foucault links the carnivals at psychiatric hospitals to the medieval feast of fools (*fête des fous*) to demonstrate how these two events reveal deep historical truths.[30] In a series of radio interviews about ten years after Münsterlingen, Foucault clearly draws the connection: "And by a strange paradox, by a strange return, we organize for them [the patients], around them, with them, a whole parade, with dance and mask, a whole carnival, which is in the strict sense of the term a new feast of fools."[31] The new feast of fools, for Foucault, represents a paradox at the heart of psychology, as we will discuss fully in the next section, and which can be traced back to the old medieval feast. The first observances of the feast of fools are found in the twelfth century and, although there were variations in its practices, it generally included an exchange of positions where the higher-ranked clergy would switch places with the lower-ranked clergy and was celebrated during the few days after Christmas.[32] The festival was repeatedly condemned by the church due to inappropriate and blasphemous behavior that may have taken place, although some have argued that the rumors were worse than the actual events.[33]

Nevertheless, for Foucault, the stories of these medieval festivals, both the true and the fictional, are linked to the roots of the carnival of the mad. They represent a "strange return" to the past, as he remarks in his radio interview, that brings attention to something deep in the human experience; the dancing, the masks and the changing of social positions are all characteristics of both events, shedding light on the human need for such expressions. Foucault writes in the *History of Madness* that the "theatrical events" of the medieval feast of fools were one way which "brings everyone back to their own truth," that is, to reveal something deep inside themselves.[34] In the same way, the carnival of the mad explains how our understanding of mental illness arises out of this same history, the history that we have created. Foucault concludes his radio

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30. The phrase "*fête des fous*" itself was probably not used at the carnival of Münsterlingen. See Yann Dahhaoui, "La fête des fous de Michel Foucault," in Bert and Basso, *Foucault à Münsterlingen*, 246n7.

31. Foucault, "La folie et la fête," first of five radio interviews under the title, "L'usage de la parole. Les languages de la folie," January 7, 1963, audio, 29:40, my translation, www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TC8f9zuIgw: "Et par un étrange paradoxe, par un étrange retour, on organise pour eux, autour d'eux, avec eux, tout un défilé, avec danse et masque, tout un carnaval qui est au sens strict du terme une nouvelle fête des fous." This quote is also transcribed in Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 12.

32. Dahhaoui, "La fête des fous de Michel Foucault," 236–8.

33. See Max Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

34. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 13.

talk with the following: "Maybe it is us who have invented entirely this feast of fools, this feast for the fools, this feast with the fools."[35] We cannot ignore the carnival of the mad, because even in a partial reenactment of it, we discover the ways that we have invented it for the patients and for ourselves out of our own history.

In 1975, Foucault further reflects on these carnivals in an article entitled "Faire les fous" first published in *Le Monde*. After reviewing a recent film depicting life in a local mental asylum, he writes:

> it makes me think particularly of these feasts of fools as it still existed only a few years ago in certain hospitals in Germany and Switzerland: on the day of the carnival, the mad put on costumes and had a masked parade down the streets, feeling some embarrassed curiosity and some fear of the spectators. This was the only day where we permitted the mad to leave [the hospitals], it was for laughing, for fooling around [*pour faire les fous*].[36]

As Foucault remarks here, this carnival was not just an annual tradition at the asylum of Münsterlingen but was something that took place in many hospitals in Germany and Switzerland.[37] The repeated incidents show that this singular day, where we allow the mad to leave the hospitals, must speak to us about our view of madness. Foucault is playing on the phrase *faire les fous*, which literally means the "making of the mad," but is usually an idiom for "fooling around" in order to have a good time. The carnival of the mad is both for having fun with the mad while at the same time creating their identity through the festive practices.

Foucault's experience at the carnival of the mad provoked questions about the history of psychology which he continued to pursue years after the event and which led him to draw up the archaeology of madness. Drawing the link between the feast of fools and the carnival of the mad, Foucault argues that the carnival of the mad proves a revelatory event in human history, particularly the history of madness. The carnival gives us

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35. Foucault, "La folie et la fête," 36:57, my translation: "Peut-être est-ce nous qui l'avons inventée entièrement cette fête des fous, cette fête pour les fous, cette fête avec les fous."

36. Michel Foucault, "Faire les fous," in *Dits et écrits I: 1954–1975* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1: 1672–3, my translation: "Mais le film de René Féret, dans sa très grande beauté et rigueur, me fait penser surtout à ces fêtes de fous, comme il en existait encore, il y a peu d'années, dans certains hôpitaux d'Allemagne et de Suisse: le jour du carnaval, les fous se déguisaient et faisaient un défilé de masques dans les rues: curiosité gênée, un peu effrayée des spectateurs: le seul jour où on permettait aux fous de sortir, c'était pour rire, pour faire les fous." Thanks to Philipp Rosemann for discussion on this passage.

37. There are various traces of other carnivals in the archives of the asylums. See Basso, "Complicités et ambivalences de la psychiatrie," 102.

a glimpse into the kind of the "making of the mad" that is happening in our modern times and it forces us to look to the historical structures behind modern psychology.

B. Modern Psychology: Division Between Theory and Practice

In his early writings on psychology, written around the time of the carnival, Foucault begins to explore these hidden structures behind modern psychology. In this section, we will look to his 1954 *Mental Illness and Personality* (*Maladie mentale et personnalité*), his 1954 "Dream, Existence and Imagination" (An Introduction to Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*), and his 1957 "Scientific Research and Psychology" ("La recherche scientifique et la psychologie"). Due to his change in methods over the years, some scholars argue that Foucault's early works in psychology should be disregarded as a "false start."[38] However, by tracing the themes from these early works, including his unpublished notes, to his later works, it becomes clear that the questions raised here remain central issues for Foucault throughout his writings, and in particular for this project, lay the foundation for the archaeology that he arrives at in his *History of Madness.*[39]

To discover the deep historical structures of psychology, we must begin by addressing some preliminary concerns right on the surface: first, the problem in the relationship between illness and mental illness, and second, the problem in the paradoxical experience of the individual patient. After investigating these two superficial issues, we will then be able to uncover the real theory and practice behind psychology and see the division between them.

Beginning with the first concern, we start by asking about the nature of the relationship between illness and mental illness and whether or not we can use the same language for all types of illness. These are the questions that plagued Foucault in the years leading up to the 1954 carnival as seen in the opening to his book, *Mental Illness and Personality* (*Maladie mentale et personnalité*), published that same year.[40] It is important to note

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38. Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London: Routledge, 1990), 195.

39. See, for example, the arguments for their continued relevance here: Basso, "À propos d'un cours inédit de Michel Foucault sur l'analyse existentielle de Ludwig Binswanger (Lille 1953–54)," 35–59; Elizabetta Basso, "Foucault's Critique of the Human Sciences in the 1950s: Between Psychology and Philosophy," *Theory, Culture & Society* (2020): 1–20; Béatrice Han-Pile, "Phenomenology and Anthropology in Foucault's 'Introduction to Binswanger's Dream and Existence': A Mirror Image of The Order of Things?" *History and Theory* 54 (December 2016): 7–22.

40. Foucault was working on the content of this book in the years 1952–1953 according to his list of writing projects that he made in May or June of 1953. This list also includes his introduction to Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*, which we will discuss shortly. See Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 63.

that Foucault republished this book with significant revisions in 1962 under a new title, *Mental Illness and Psychology*.[41] We will be primarily looking at the 1954 version in this of this section, and I will make a note if there were any changes in the 1962 version.

The opening to this early book asks the following two questions: "Under what conditions can one speak of illness in the psychological domain? What relations can one define between the facts of mental pathology and those of organic pathology?"[42] To answer these critical questions prior to his experience at the carnival, Foucault looks to specific methods, such as existential, phenomenological, psychoanalytic and Marxist methods, to try and understand the discrepancies between organic pathology and mental pathology. Although these methods may not have proved satisfactory in the end, at this point, he knows that something else is needed because conflating the notions of the organic and the mental was simply not working. He writes this in his opening chapter: "So one can accept at first sight neither an abstract parallel nor an extensive unity between the phenomena of mental pathology and this of organic pathology."[43] Rather than using an abstract parallelism, where unjustified lines of connection are drawn between the methods in general medicine with those in pathology, nor an extensive unity, where we conflate the two and say that both the organic and mental are part of one and the same thing, we must see, as Foucault argues, that "mental pathology requires methods of analysis different from those of organic pathology."[44] When we try to use the same methods in both areas, we end up not being able to offer a full account of mental illness; this recognition prompts us to search for other ways that our conventional account of psychology is incomplete.

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41. For helpful lists of the some of the changes between these two versions, see James W. Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight: Toward an Ethics for Thought* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1992), 185–7; Stuart Elden, "The Changes Between Maladie mentale et personnalité (1954) and Maladie mentale et psychologie (1962)," *Progressive Geographies* (blog), February 8, 2019, https://progressivegeographies.com/resources/foucault-resources/the-changes-between-maladie-mentale-et-personnalite-1954-and-maladie-mentale-et-psychologie-1962/.
42. Michel Foucault, *Maladie mentale et personnalité* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), 1. Translation from Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 1. The full 1954 French text can be found at: "*Maladie mental et personalite*," *Generation Online*, https://generation-online.org/p/fp-foucault.pdf. These opening questions remain the same in the 1954 and 1962 versions.
43. Foucault, *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 16. Translation from Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 13 (1962 French: 16). This statement is the same in the 1954 and the 1962 versions.
44. Foucault, *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 12; Translation: Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 10 (1962 French: 12). Again, this is the same in the 1954 and the 1962 versions.

Second, another surface-level problem in psychology is the paradoxical experience of the individual. Foucault sets up the paradoxical structure of the patient's experience toward the end of this early book on mental illness:

> The contemporary world makes schizophrenia possible, not because its *techniques* render it inhuman and abstract, but because *man makes such use of his techniques* that man can no longer recognize himself in it. Only the real conflict of the conditions of existence *can account for the paradoxical structure* of the schizophrenic world.[45]

The modern world places constraints around the real world and makes use of these constraints to shape the meaning of a mental illness, such as schizophrenia. These boundaries keep the schizophrenic world separate from the real world such that a "man [with schizophrenia] can no longer recognize himself" here and can no longer find his identity in society. Such a person has gone "beyond reality" and is "unable to feel at home in this world."[46] The modern way of redefining the world leaves no welcoming space or even space in general for someone who struggles schizophrenia. And yet, the conditions of existence *of the world* are what define the mental illness as being *outside of the world*; the constraints themselves are part of this world showing that the mental illness must be part of it, too. This creates the paradox where the man with schizophrenia becomes a "stranger in a real world" who feels both in the world and pushed outside of the world at the same time.[47]

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45. Foucault, *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 89, my translation: "Le monde contemporain rend possible la schizophrénie, non parce que ses techniques le rendent inhumain et abstrait; mais parce que l'homme fait de ses techniques, un tel usage que l'homme lui-même ne peut plus s'y reconnaître. Seul le conflit réel des conditions d'existence peut rendre compte de la structure paradoxale du monde schizophrénique." My italics in the text represent the phrases that were later changed in the 1962 version. Here is the 1962 version: "The contemporary world makes schizophrenia possible, not because its *events* render it inhuman and abstract, but because *our culture reads the world in such a way* that man himself cannot recognize himself in it. Only the real conflict of the conditions of existence *may serve as a structural model for the paradoxes* of the schizophrenic world" (Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 84; 1962 French: 100–1). Foucault changes "techniques" to "events" and "man makes use of techniques" to "culture reads the world" to show his later preference for a more historically situated approach to madness, as we will discuss in a moment.
46. Foucault, *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 88, 89. Translation from Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 84 (1962 French: 100). These phrases are the same in the 1954 and the 1962 versions.
47. Foucault, *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 89. Translation from Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 84 (1962 French: 100). This phrase is the same in the 1954 and the 1962 versions.

With the problems in the relationship between medicine and mental illness and with the conflict between conditions of the redefined world and the patient's experience, Foucault had already placed his finger on something paradoxical in psychology before his experience at the carnival and was trying to find the paradox in the truth of the human. But after witnessing the mental patients as "strangers" erupting "in the real world" at the carnival, he moved beyond trying to use particular methods to explain the human on its own to a more historically situated analysis of psychology as a whole. Perhaps it was the intensity of this carnival that finally pushed him to question the actual discipline of psychology seeing that none of these methods offered a full explanation for the event, and thus for the phenomena of mental illness. He changes his opening thesis in his book on *Mental Illness* from saying that he will find the root of pathology "in a reflection on man himself" (1954) to stating that he will find it "in a certain relation, historically situated, of man to the madman [*l'homme fou*] and to the true man [*l'homme vrai*]" (1962).[48] It is a shift from searching for psychology's origin in the essence of the human to seeking it in the dynamic relationship between the madman (*l'homme fou*) and the true man (*l'homme vrai*), between madness and humanity. James Bernauer puts it well: "His earlier work called into question the relation between mental illness and psychology's abstract view of man, as implied in the employment of the category of 'personality.' His later work is not calling into question an element or a tendency of psychology but the very field itself."[49] Foucault broadens his scope here from looking at the paradoxical experience of the patient to the contradictory nature of the field of psychology itself.

In this broader approach, we find that the paradoxical structure of a patient's experience arises out of the paradox found at the origin of psychology. This paradox lies in a division between the modern *practice* of psychology, which finds its heritage primarily in the classical age, and modern *theory* of psychology, which finds its heritage in the methods of modern science. The discipline of psychology cannot be understood solely by the theories of modern science, because its practices show that there is something else present. Thinking again of the example of the man experiencing schizophrenia, we can make the connection from the paradoxical experience of a patient to the paradox at the heart of psychology. Here is a person who has regular hallucinations where he feels and sees things that are not part of the material world. Because these experiences are placed outside of the world, he feels out of place in this world and relegated to another world. The modern theory cannot

48. Foucault, *Maladie mentale et personnalité*, 2, my translation: "dans une réflexion sur l'homme lui-même"; Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 2 (1962 French: 2).
49. Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight*, 42.

explain the presence of these phenomena as it can only say that these experiences do not fit into the real world. By placing the experiences outside of the real world, we cannot offer a theoretical explanation; and yet the needs of the patient demand for something to be done, some kind of practices to address the condition. Practices are used but they come for somewhere else, while the theory stays disconnected.

The disconnection between theory and practice pushes Foucault to search for other methods to better address mental illness. Like Roland Kuhn, who had invited Foucault to the carnival, Foucault was influenced by the work of a Swiss psychiatrist, Ludwig Binswanger and found Binswanger's method of existential analysis a possible way to avoid the paradox in psychology. In 1952–1953, Foucault and Jacqueline Verdeaux translated Binswanger's *Dream and Existence* from German to French and Foucault decided to write an introduction for its publication.[50] The introduction, now titled "Dream, Imagination and Existence," ended up being longer than Binswanger's actual book, and thus provides another helpful key into Foucault's thought around the time of the carnival, as possibly "the best reflection of his intellectual orientation during this period," as Didier Eribon comments.[51] In "Dream, Imagination and Existence," Foucault explores how psychoanalysis, from Freud, and pure phenomenology, from Husserl, can help us avoid the problems in modern psychology by approaching mental illness according to lived experience. But he finds that these methods still fall short and suggests that perhaps Binswanger's existential analysis, while also drawing on psychoanalysis and phenomenology, offers a more comprehensive approach. In his unpublished book on Binswanger's existential analysis written around this same time, Foucault makes his concerns about these methods, including Binswanger's application of them, even clearer such that he sees that "neither psychoanalysis nor phenomenology . . . is actually able to account for the phenomenon of disease," as Basso writes after examining the manuscript.[52] Although he eventually finds these methods unsatisfactory, his study still shows the insufficiency of modern psychology to offer full explanations for unusual human experiences, especially the experience of dreams.[53]

50. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 42–3.
51. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 47.
52. Basso, "Foucault's Critique of the Human Sciences in the 1950s," 9. The manuscript for this unpublished book on Binswanger was recently found in Foucault's papers and will be published soon, according to Basso's video introduction: www.theoryculturesociety.org/blog/special-issue-foucault-before-the-college-de-france.
53. Even with the change in methods, Han-Pile makes a compelling argument for how the questions and themes in "Dream, Existence, and Imagination" are reflected in Foucault's later book, *The Order of Things*. See Han-Pile, "Phenomenology and Anthropology in Foucault's 'Introduction to Binswanger's Dream and Existence'," 7–22.

Similar to the opening of *Mental Illness*, "Dreams, Imagination and Existence" begins by centering the discussion of dreams around a fuller understanding of the human. In the spirit of Binswanger, Foucault calls for "a form of analysis, finally, whose principle and method are determined from the start solely by the absolute privilege of their object: man, or rather, the being of man, *Menschsein*."[54] The German word, *Menschsein*, is used in contrast to both *homo natura*, as an empirical, natural being, and even to *Dasein*, as a subjective, transcendental being, as Han-Pile argues, in order to emphasize the importance of seeing the human as an "*instantiation* of the transcendental in the empirical," in other words, as a biological being that is placed in a meaningful relation to the world.[55] Because the methods of analysis used for organic pathology are inadequate, as we saw in *Mental Illness*, we need something like Binwanger's existential analysis, which does not rely on a theory that places the experiences of mental illness outside of the world but goes "straight to concrete existence, to its development and its historical content" to make sense of them.[56] Foucault writes, "If the dream is the bearer of the deepest human meanings, this is not insofar as it betrays their hidden mechanisms or shows their inhuman cogs and wheels, but on the contrary, insofar as it brings to light the freedom of man in its most original form."[57] The scientific theory tries to define dreams according to biological mechanisms and processes, but this truncated conception of dreams does not do justice to the presence of freedom in human experience.[58] If we rely only on modern psychology, we are left with no proper theory to account for the creativity in dreams.

In his 1957 article "Scientific Research and Psychology" ("La recherche scientifique et la psychologie"), Foucault argues that this loss of theory behind psychology is because the proper origin of psychology "has been forgotten, or rather hidden"; in other words, the practice of psychology no longer has a theory by which to support it.[59] The ignorance of its origin creates a contradiction at its root, the division between theory and

54. Michel Foucault, "Dream, Imagination and Existence: An Introduction to Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*," in *Dream and Existence*, ed. Keith Hoeller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1993), 31.

55. Han-Pile, "Phenomenology and Anthropology in Foucault's 'Introduction to Binswanger's Dream and Existence'," 10–11, 12.

56. Foucault, "Dream, Imagination and Existence," 32.

57. Foucault, "Dream, Imagination and Existence," 53.

58. Foucault is also criticizing psychoanalysis in this quote because, in his opinion, it also reduces dreams to deterministic processes.

59. Michel Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie," in *Dits et écrits I: 1954– 1975* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1: 173, my translation: "cette origine . . . a été oubliée, ou plutôt cachée."

practice that Foucault already uncovered in *Mental Illness*. He explains this division further:

> We find ourselves in a paradoxical situation: on one side, the real practice of psychology . . . does not rest on any theoretical formation, and by way of consequence never succeeds in taking the meaning [*sens*] of the theory [*recherche*], nor even in defining the precise needs in relation to the scientific theory [*recherche*].[60]

Here, on this first side, we have the practice of psychology which does not have a modern theory to justify it nor does it even try to respond to the demands of the scientific field, because its practices are still pulling from the ones of the past created prior to the modern age. Not only are there problems justifying the practices, but there is also an absence of a foundation for the modern theory: "On the other side, the acquisition of the techniques, that can guarantee a practical security and a theoretical justification to concrete psychology, cannot give itself access to an exercise of psychology where practice and theory [*recherche*] would find themselves effectively linked."[61] The other side of the paradox is that the modern theory is unable to come up with a practice (or exercise) of psychology which would support both a practical application and a justifiable theory and allow the theory and practice to be tied together. Thus, there cannot be any "theory of psychology" which comes out of the "needs of the practice."[62]

 To put it directly, Foucault finds that the modern practice of psychology does not have a foundation in theory and the modern theory of psychology cannot offer any practices nor make sense of the practices already there. He concludes: "*The non-existence* of an autonomous and effective *practice* of psychology has become paradoxically *the condition of existence* for a positive, scientific and 'effective' *theory* [*recherche*] in psychology."[63] There is in fact no such thing as a "modern" practice of

60. Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 175, my translation: "On se trouve dans une situation paradoxale: d'un côté, la pratique réelle de la psychologie . . . ne repose sur aucune formation théorique, et par voie de conséquence ne parvient jamais à prendre le sens de la recherche, ni même à définir ses exigences précises par rapport à la recherche scientifique."

61. Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 175, my translation: "D'un autre côté, l'acquisition des techniques qui peuvent garantir à la psychologie concrète une sécurité pratique et une justification théorique ne donne pas elle-même accès à un exercice de la psychologie où pratique et recherche se trouveraient effectivement liées."

62. Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 175, my translation: "La recherche en psychologie ne naît donc pas des exigences de la pratique."

63. Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 176, italics his, my translation: "*La non-existence d'une pratique* autonome et effective de la psychologie est devenue

psychology, and it is this absence of a practice which ironically forms the foundation for the modern theory of psychology. Because the practice is based on something else—the old ideas of the classical age which are "neither scientific nor psychological"—the theory is then based on nothing but an avoidance of the old forces at work.[64] Behrent summarizes this well, "Applied psychology . . . has no theory, while psychological research has no practice (or concrete applications)."[65] The practices of psychology have a foundation that is hidden and the theories of psychology do not have any practices; each is left unsupported by the other.

This narrative may seem oversimplified for some of us, as there are certain modern practices, such as the prescription of medication, that appear to be justified by modern theory. Let's take for example the introduction and use of antidepressants for major depressive disorder. During the testing of different medications, starting back even with Kuhn (with whom Foucault worked) in the 1950s, studies have shown that there are often positive results in patients who are given antidepressants.[66] As we will discuss further in Chapter 7, the prescription of antidepressants has some scientific backing, but the motivation behind the practice does not arise out of the contemporary modern theory. The motivation to get rid of signs of depression can be traced back to an old structure of the classical age which sought to hide any expressions of madness. Rather than hiding the expression by placing people in confinement, as in the classical age, we conceal it now by modifying emotions and behaviors with medication to fit with modern norms. Ignoring this motivation, we no longer have a justification for the practices of psychology and in the void, we attempt to give a scientific account of mental illness. This does not mean that modern practices, such as prescribing medicine for mental illness, are negative on their own, but that we need to take time to understand the reasons behind them and the motivations behind implementing them.

Drawing on the classical age, Foucault gives some examples of the kinds of social structures that are behind the practices of psychology in the *History of Madness*, including *unemployment, idleness, poverty, homosexuality,*

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paradoxalement *la condition d'existence d'une recherche* positive, scientifique et 'efficace' en psychologie."

64. Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 177, my translation: "ni scientifique ni psychologique."

65. Behrent, "Foucault and Technology," 70.

66. Kuhn writes of the positive results in 1958 stating, "The patients express themselves as feeling much better, fatigue disappears, the feeling of heaviness in the limbs vanish, and the sense of oppression in the chest gives way to a feeling of relief," as quoted in Todd M. Hillhouse and Joseph H. Porter, "A Brief History of the Development of Antidepressant Drugs: From Monoamines to Glutamate," *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology* 23, no. 1 (February 2015): 6, https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038550.

and *religion*. A rise in *unemployment*, for example, can also mean a rise in people being confined for madness.[67] The exclusion and confinement of the unemployed can bring a "dividing line" between work and *idleness*.[68] Furthermore, any link to *poverty* could itself be a sign of madness since the poor can be seen as black spots and an unwanted blemishes on society.[69] On the other side, without strong work, the wealthy can also be seen as connected to madness due to an excess of "sensibility" coming from a life of extreme leisure, abundant wealth and extensive education.[70] Troubles with sexuality, in particular *homosexuality*, were in the past connected to madness and can still be behind diagnosis today.[71] Also, rejection of *religion* or the overzealous following of *religion* can also influence judgments of madness.[72] The shifting nature of these social structures comes from the underlying crack in the foundation of psychology that should provoke questions about the validity and scope of the diagnoses that are being offered by psychology.[73]

Critically analyzing the hidden structures behind the division in psychology points to how the modern age overlooks the crucial aspect of the irrational (*déraison*) in human experience. Beginning with his participation in the carnival event to his questioning of the discipline of psychology itself, Foucault's quest eventually leads him to discover this critical force behind mental illness, the irrational, as he details in *The History of Madness*. As we have seen, in the classical age, through physical confinement and moral condemnation, society tried to hide and eradicate the irrational. Displays of the irrational in events, such as the old feast of fools, was condemned and suppressed during this time. After hundreds of years of concealment, modern psychology has now almost forgotten about the experience of the irrational, but it is still something that pervades human society, as seen even in the modern rendition of the feast of fools.

Foucault closes his 1957 article by saying that psychology has not "finally obtained the status of being scientific and positive . . . on the contrary, it has forgotten the negativity of man, which is its place of origin . . . forgotten its eternally infernal vocation."[74] The forgotten origin of

67. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 66.
68. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 71.
69. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 77, 409.
70. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 369–72.
71. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 91.
72. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 93.
73. I will refer to these social structures in our discussion of delirium later in this chapter and in our discussion of mental disorders in Chapter 8.
74. Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 186, my translation: "ce n'est donc pas le signe que la psychologie a enfin atteint son âge scientifique et positif, c'est le signe au contraire qu'elle a oublié la négativité de l'homme, qui est sa patrie d'origine, le signe qu'elle a oublié sa vocation éternellement infernale."

psychology causes the division between theory and practice and, as Foucault sees it, psychology can be unified only by a *return* to the dark irrational. His last sentence of the article provocatively reads, "Psychology can be saved only by a return to Hell."[75] If we truly desire to bring unity to the discipline of psychology, we must look at some of the darker aspects of patients' experiences and be aware of the historical structures of society which may be shaping these experiences; we must, in a way, descend into Hell in order to grasp the deep pain of madness so that we can find a way to ascend beyond it.

In the *History of Madness*, Foucault finds that it is this this disavowal of the irrational element of the human which ultimately marks the birth of modern psychology:

> That which was classified as sickness would be related to the domain of the organic, and all that was associated with unreason . . . would be relegated to the realm of the psychological. And it was precisely there that psychology was born, not as the truth of madness, but as a sign that madness was now detached from its truth, which was unreason, and that from now on it would be a rudderless phenomenon, *insignificant*, on the indefinite surface of nature. An enigma with no truth other than the one that could reduce it.[76]

Here Foucault returns to the original question that he asks back in the opening to his 1954 *Mental Illness* on the relationship between physical sickness (organic pathology) and psychological sickness (mental pathology) and offers a deeper response. When we place all sickness, physical and psychological, in the domain of the organic, anything that is psychological must be defined according to the terms of medicine. The "domain of the organic" and the "realm of the psychological" are now on one side and understood according to one classification. What used to be the source of the psychological, which was anything associated with the irrational (unreason), was detached from it and pushed aside. This source used to be the "truth" of madness, the reason for its existence, but now madness is separate from this truth and understood only according to the medical. It is here between the medical and the irrational that psychology is born: psychology comes into the picture not by the next step in a proper understanding of madness but by taking madness and cutting it off from its anchor. It now has no distinction except the one which reduces it to "nothing more than a sickness."[77]

75. Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 186, my translation: "La psychologie ne se sauvera que par un retour aux Enfers."
76. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 339.
77. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 339.

The ambiguous relationship between illness and mental illness and between patient experience and the conditions of the refined world act as red flags alerting us to a larger problem found in the structures of psychology itself. This problem comes from a division between the theory and practice where neither can justify the other, but both are used to address and explain the disorder. Overlooking the root of these practices is especially concerning because it ignores the unexplainable tragic elements of human life found in irrational experience. Modern theory truncates the reach of madness because it is no longer a part of the larger nonrational, no longer connected to other mysterious and mythical human phenomena, but is placed under the classification of a medical illness to be treated. Rejecting magical and spiritual explanations in other areas of human life, modernity also does away with any mysterious link of madness to the irrational creating the division at the core of psychology.

C. Case of Madness: Delirium

Foucault discusses more than twenty disorders in *Mental Illness and Psychology* and *History of Madness* (see Chart 5.1: Disorders in Foucault's *Mental Illness and Psychology* and *History of Madness*). In Chapter 8, we will demonstrate the application of our united approach to current diagnoses of mental disorders today, but here we will focus on one disorder, delirium, to confirm our account of modern psychology. In our phenomenological accounts of disorders in Chapter 3, we found that each disorder could not be characterized as entirely nonrational, but that the dysfunctional behavior is best understood according to a broken relation between the two dimensions. In a similar way, in the archaeological analysis of disorders, we discover that it is the cultural perceptions of the rational and nonrational as displayed against the background of the social structures that shape the disorder.

Delirium can be roughly defined as a disturbed state of mind founded on a system of false beliefs, usually manifesting in fevers, dreams, intoxication, restlessness and illusions. Foucault writes his second chapter, "The Transcendence of Delirium," of Part II of the *History of Madness* specifically on the disorder of delirium and its place in the classical history of madness. He states that in the classical age, there were two types of delirium: one which was a specific condition with explicit symptoms, and another which was a broad term encompassing all forms of madness. Beginning with the first form of delirium, the particular condition, as diagnosed in the classical age, could include many divergent manifestations of the sickness of the mind, including convulsions, excessive talking and a dreamy state of existence, but not hallucinations.[78]

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78. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 236–7, 239–41.

Chart 5.1 Disorders in Foucault's *Mental Illness and Psychology* and *History of Madness*

Disorders	Quick Definition	References	Modern-Day Equivalent
Anorexia	Excessive desire to lose weight by refusing to eat	MIP 4	Anorexia nervosa
Asthenia	Excessive weakness and tiredness (physical and mental)	MIP 4	Related to persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia)
Bestiality	Behavior or actions that resemble animals and/or sexual feelings and behaviors with animals	HM 26, 32, 147, 149, 150, 155, 335, 398	Zoophilia (under other specified paraphilic disorder)
Blindness	Loss or partial loss of vision	HM 241–42 (relation to delirium), 295–96, 346, 349, 454, 499	n/a
Delirium	A disturbed state of mind founded on a system of false beliefs, usually manifesting in fevers, dreams, intoxication, restlessness, and illusions	HM xxxi, 20, 34, 36–37, 39, 83, 104, 107, 115–16, 135, 141, 177–78, 192–94, 197–202, 208–50, 257–58, 270, 296, 320, 323, 327–33, 336, 339, 347–52, 354, 361, 367–68, 398, 450, 454, 457, 473, 480, 492, 495–500, 506, 512–13, 516–17, 524, 530, 535, 619n–21n, 657–58	Delirium (under neurocognitive disorders)
Dementia	Disorder of mental processes often caused by disease or injury, manifested in memory and personality dysfunctions	MIP 5–6, 27; HM xxix, 31, 37, 115, 128, 136, 193–94, 200–2, 205, 218, 234, 239, 241, 252–62, 266, 277, 324, 369, 389, 391, 445, 473, 493–94, 611n62, 620n2	Dementia (under neurocognitive disorders)
Epilepsy	a neurological disorder shown in loss of consciousness, convulsions and seizures	HM 111,187, 204, 255, 301–3, 622n65	no longer categorized under mental disorders

Disorders	Quick Definition	References	Modern-Day Equivalent
General paralysis	Degeneration of the brain due to syphilis, resulting in confusion and personality changes	MIP 1, 4; HM 201–4, 262, 281, 515, 522–25, 528, 643n17	Also called *paralytic dementia*, related to major neurocognitive disorders
Homosexuality	Sexual attraction to one's own sex	MIP 37; HM 88, 91, 101–2, 118, 545	No longer considered a disorder
Hydrophobia	Irrational fear of water, sometimes as symptom of rabies	HM 193, 201	Specific phobia disorders (under anxiety disorders)
Hypochondria	Anxiety and fear of having a particular disease	MIP 47, 63; HM 193, 201, 222, 252, 277–96 (and hysteria), 303, 309, 318, 324, 338, 368, 383, 622n64–65, 625n35	Illness anxiety disorder (under somatic symptom and related disorders)
Hysteria	Psychological stress shown in excessive emotions and behavior often seeking attention	MIP 4, 8, 12–13, 21, 36; HM 140, 204, 213–14, 252, 277–96 (and hypochondria), 298, 302–5, 619n62, 623n86, 643n17	Currently seen as symptom, not diagnosis; related to personality disorders
Mania	A condition usually including periods of great excitement, euphoria, delusions, and overactivity	MIP 4, 8; HM 192–94, 199–202, 214–15, 218–20, 230, 262–77 (and melancholy), 281, 303, 311–15, 319–20, 324, 329, 338, 624n8, 644n28, 657, 660	Related to bipolar disorders
Melancholy/ depression	Severe sadness or gloom	Melancholy, MIP 27, 66; HM 123–24, 192–93, 199–202, 218, 226, 230–31, 233–34, 236, 238–39, 262–77 (and mania), 280–81, 310, 312, 314, 318–21, 323, 328, 330, 332, 338–39, 367–68, 374, 492, 617n19, 621n29, 625n29, 630n47, 657–58, 660; depression, MIP 4–6, 8, 11; HM 194, 472; suicide, HM 94	Related to depressive disorders
Nervous diseases	Diseases of the nervous system	MIP 4, 7, 71; HM 203, 293–95, 307, 362–63, 383	Can be related to neurocognitive disorders

(Continued)

Chart 5.1 (Continued)

Disorders	Quick Definition	References	Modern-Day Equivalent
Neurosis	Historically, a general term for madness; later distinction was made between neurosis and psychosis (HM 201)	MIP 4 (including obsessions), 8, 19, 21, 26, 36; HM 96, 106–7, 133, 201, 203, 541, 623n86	No longer used; related to obsessive compulsive, anxiety, personality and impulse-control disorders
Nymphomania	Excessive sexual desire (for women)	HM 235, 322, 327	Later called *hypersexuality* but no longer used; now related to impulse-control disorders
Paranoia	Obsessive delusions of persecution, jealousy and pride	MIP 8, 26, 45–48; HM 194, 201, 214	Related to anxiety disorders (as well as others)
Psychosis/ schizophrenia	A breakdown between thought, emotion and behavior causing withdrawal from reality to fantasy; mental fragmentation, often accompanied by hallucinations	Schizophrenia/psychosis, MIP 5 (including hebephrenia and catatonia), 7–8, 47–50, 84; HM 201; hallucinations, MIP 48–49; HM 115–16, 132, 179, 193, 197, 201, 211–13, 239–41, 257, 277, 367–68, 619n72	Related to schizophrenia spectrum disorders, includes catatonia
Somnambulism	Sleepwalking	HM 193, 201	Sleepwalking (a parasomnia sleep–wake disorder)

Note: This chart does not aim to be a contemporary medical account of these disorders, but rather to capture the discussions and categories found in Foucault's works. The definitions are taking either from Foucault or from a common dictionary. References refer to *Mental Illness and Psychology* (MIP) and *History of Madness* (HM). This does not contain exhaustive references to the disorders in *Mental Illness and Psychology*. The modern day names are based on the 2013 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* V (DSM-5), the national guide for all psychopathological diagnoses in the United States.

Not only was delirium diagnosed according to living behavioral patterns, it was also confirmed in the examination of brains after death. For example, Johann Friedrich Meckel discovered that a cube cut from the brain of a deceased human who had not suffered from madness was slightly heavier than a cube from someone who had suffered from madness. He performed other experiments on the density and coloring of the brain as well to find differences between the two.[79] This was not a materialistic explanation for delirium, but was influenced by the social structure of *religion.* The religious beliefs at the time relied on the interconnection between the soul and the body so that if the body performed acts of sin, the soul would be negatively affected (and vice versa). In cases of delirium, this interconnection between soul and body was seen in the effect of the delirium on the brain, because, as Foucault explains, the "brain was the organ closest to the soul."[80] Thus, in the classical belief, the diagnosis of delirium by the dissection of the brain confirmed the identity of the disorder and was supported by the religious understanding of the human at the time.

In addition to delirium being a specific disorder identified in both life and death, it also formed a general foundation for all forms of madness. Foucault writes, "Delirium is the necessary and sufficient condition for an illness to be considered as madness."[81] Underneath any type of madness, the classical view required that there would be some form of delirium. The chapter title, "The Transcendence of Delirium," reveals Foucault's real interest in classical delirium in that it points to something beyond, something that transcends delirium itself. A study of delirium, then, actually provides insight into a general understanding of madness for the classical age and, in particular, into the way madness remains connected to the rational and the nonrational.

In Foucault's analysis, the classical view of delirium illustrated a complex relationship between the rational and the nonrational in that delirium was never entirely devoid of the rational, but rather represented an error in judgment, an error which took place in a dreamy state. There was still rationality inside the structure of delirious behavior; for example, if a man believes that he is made of glass, it is logical that he should then be careful and avoid surfaces which could make him break, for "that is the reasoning of a madman, although we should note in passing that there is nothing absurd or illogical in the reasoning itself."[82] In speaking of this example, Heather Ohaneson writes, "While a rational person is willing to adopt the appearance and speech of madness for the sake of

79. Foucault, *History of Madness,* 218–9.
80. Foucault, *History of Madness,* 219.
81. Foucault, *History of Madness,* 237.
82. Foucault, *History of Madness,* 233.

reason, madness can commandeer reason for its own ends."[83] The belief that he is actually glass is an error, but his deduction is still systematic and in accordance with the rational; madness has taken over reason and used it for its own purposes. Foucault offers this definition, "Delirium as the principle of madness was a system of erroneous propositions inside the general syntax of dreams."[84] Delirium, as the fundamental principle of madness, still operates according to a type of system, but the system is convoluted as if in a dream.

The type of erroneous propositions or mistakes that are found in delirium are not due to physical error, as seen in hallucinations, but due to moral error.[85] Delirium is where moral truth becomes "cloudy and unclear," as if someone is in a wakeful dreamlike state and can no longer distinguish between right and wrong. The man, in the example above, believes that he is glass, not because he looks in a mirror and sees his arms and legs appearing like glass (as he might in a hallucination), but because he has a wrong belief about himself as a human and what it means to be human. While this may not seem like a moral failure to us now, the classical perspective viewed false beliefs as a kind of madness because of this inability to recognize moral truth: "To lose the ability to discern those relations [relations between moral objects and ourselves] was a form of madness, such as the madness of character, of conduct and of the passions."[86] The classical view labeled a false belief about one's self, such as the belief that one is made of glass, as coming from a distortion in character, perhaps even a distortion of the soul.

Foucault illustrates this through a metaphor (although he claims it is more than a metaphor) that delirium is like staring at bright light, but not being able to see it clearly due to the intense glare. Those who suffer from delirium, which actually defines all who are mad under this classical understanding, are not completely cut off from reason, but rather relate to reason as a "reason dazzled [*raison éblouie*]."[87] The French verb *éblouir* can mean to dazzle, to impress, to overwhelm and even to blind which suggests that the rational still impacts states of delirium, but a person is unable to use the rational to make sense of an experience and remains in a state of confusion, overwhelmed and dazzled, even to a state of blindness. Foucault writes, "Unreason is to reason as dazzlement

83. Heather C. Ohaneson, "Voices of Madness in Foucault and Kierkegaard," *International Journal for Philosophy and Religion* 87, no. 1 (February 2020): 39. This excellent article uses the writings of Foucault and Kierkegaard to point to the dialectic of the rational and the nonrational, or the "the intertwining of logical and illogical forces," as she calls it (29).

84. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 242.

85. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 240–1.

86. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 241.

87. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 243; French: 310.

is to daylight."[88] The irrational distorts and confuses the rational, just as staring at the sun for too long distorts the way we see the world. An experience of delirium does not reject the rational entirely, but places a glare on top of it such that our view of it is cloudy and our application of it is misdirected.

Briefly turning to the modern view of delirium, we can consult the DSM-5 to see its criteria for diagnosis of delirium: "Essential feature of condition is a disturbance of consciousness and an alteration in cognition that develops over a short interval. Subtypes include delirium due to general medical condition, substance-induced delirium, and delirium due to multiple etiologies."[89] Notice the continuation of the classical themes of the disorder in the focus on disturbed and altered states of mind, labeled the errors of judgement in the classical world. Modern delirium is listed under neurocognitive disorders along with disorders such as dementia, because of this emphasis on the disturbance or dysfunction of the brain which causes these short bouts of confusion. The mental confusion can be from other injuries or sicknesses ("multiple etiologies") and even can be caused by a substance such as alcohol or drugs.

However, different from the classical diagnosis, there is a greater preference for a rationalistic account of what is *lacking* in the person with delirium; it is a disturbance where the mind is not functioning according to its proper levels. While this may be one helpful way of describing it, this definition can miss the way the person actually does relate to the rational. As in the example of the man who in his delirium believed that he was glass, his condition cannot adequately be understood as a deficit of the rational as he still draws on the rational to discern that he should treat himself as fragile. With an awareness of the history of delirium, we find that the rational can be seen as present in the disorder; a delirious person, working under the irrational influence of the delirium, can still behold the rational, despite its glare.

D. Conclusion

Due to the push of the modern narrative, it can be tempting to subscribe to the progress model given to the history of psychology. Under this model, as we mentioned in the beginning, the mad of the past were simply undiagnosed patients with mental disorders and now with the "progress" of modern science, we can accurately place them in the proper categories of mental disorders and be assured that if they had

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88. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 244.
89. This is an abbreviated description from the DSM-5 according to the following: Albert E. Lyngzeidetson, "DSM-5 Overview," *BarCharts Academic Outlines* (2014): 4.

lived in modern times, we could have offered them the benefits of modern medicine and cures.[90] While certain modern advancements such as more humane treatment of patients in institutions and the invention of many types of medicine are beneficial and legitimate responses to those struggling with mental disorders, Foucault's archaeological approach shows us that this modern account is missing an important aspect of its narrative—namely, where it originated and the reasons behind its interpretation of madness. In this chapter, we peeled back the modern framework of psychology to look under the surface at how madness has been constructed and how the perception of the irrational influenced its construction.

Starting with Foucault's personal experience in modern psychology with his training and his participation in 1954 carnival of the mad, we traced the origin of psychology to a disunity between theory and practice, where the theory has forgotten the dark roots of the discipline, its "eternally infernal vocation."[91] Acknowledging the division in psychology means considering the social structures that are behind a diagnosis of madness and the role of the irrational in these structures. Using delirium as an example, we found that a full understanding of a disorder must include its historical roots and the placement of the rational–nonrational relation in its manifestations.

Being aware of the historical milieu that surrounds madness gives it its proper depth and placement in the story of humanity. It reminds us that madness is often influenced by the ways that the rational and nonrational are defined in each society. This approach to madness keeps it from being set outside human experience, as if it is something subhuman or foreign, but rather shows how it has arisen out of the past and present social structures and shaped by human society itself. Furthermore, if madness is intricately connected to the human story, then the nonrational dimension, in all of its forms, is not something that is exclusive to cases of madness, but is found to be integral to all of human experience.

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90. See again Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 64.
91. Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 186, my translation: "a oublié sa vocation éternellement infernale."

Part IV

Synthesizing Merleau-Ponty and Foucault

> All the great philosophical ideas of the past century . . . had their beginnings in Hegel; it was he who started the attempt to explore the *irrational* and integrate it into an expanded *reason* [*raison élargie*] which remains the task of our century.[1]

> The day would come when all differences were to be classified and analysed objectively, and *reason* could claim as its own the most visible regions of *unreason*.[2]

Although their approaches differ, Merleau-Ponty and Foucault are driven by the same motivation in their explorations of madness: they both desire to push back against the view of rationality established by modernity. Modern rationality, as detailed in the introduction, arises out of the Cartesian split between the mind and body that began in Descartes's philosophy and was reformulated in the division between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds in Kant's philosophy. To address problems found in Cartesian and Kantian understandings of rationality, they use their respective investigations, one from experience and one from history, to show first that we need to expand the modern definition of the rational to include its relation to the nonrational, and second, that we need to go beyond the division between the rational and the nonrational itself.

Merleau-Ponty sets the stage for this by arguing that our understanding of the rational is best informed by looking first to what is often considered outside of the rational: aspects of the nonrational. In the opening to *Sense and Non-Sense*, Merleau-Ponty discusses how the nonrational (unreason) must be remembered and reflected on, because from it, we can then form a new idea of the rational (reason): "The experience

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1. Merleau-Ponty, "Hegel's Existentialism," 63, my italics.
2. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 389, my italics.

of unreason cannot simply be forgotten: we must form a new idea of reason."[3] It is not that we are throwing out reason and starting over entirely, because we are "born into reason as into language," but that our understanding of reason needs to be expanded and renewed.[4] And in an essay on Hegel, as quoted at the top, Merleau-Ponty announces that the job of twentieth-century philosophy is to expand on the notion of the rational, "to explore the irrational and integrate it into an expanded reason which remains the task of our century."[5] It is "not that Hegel himself offers the truth we are seeking," he adds, but rather that he began the work on expanding the rational that philosophers today must continue.[6] This is what phenomenology seeks to accomplish, as he writes in his opening of *Phenomenology of Perception*: to explore the nonrational (irrational) in order "to reveal the mystery of the world and the mystery of reason."[7]

Merleau-Ponty invites others to take up the task of Hegel. Foucault accepts this invitation and carries out the work through his examination of the nonrational in the history of madness. Gros argues that Foucault's plunge into the dialectic between reason and madness is "always in the name of what Merleau-Ponty designated as an 'enlarged reason.'"[8] Foucault's work demonstrates how a historical exploration of the nonrational also shows the limits to modern rationality. The modern age tries to reduce all appearances of the nonrational to rationalistic explanations such that "*reason* could claim as its own the most visible regions of *unreason*," as quoted at the top.[9] Like Merleau-Ponty, Foucault finds a deep problem in modern rationality: it takes over and classifies all aspects of the nonrational and, as a result, excludes an important part of the human narrative.

Through their respective investigations, they find that the nonrational must remain tied to the rational both experientially and historically. We must see, Merleau-Ponty states, that "the idea of reason [is] immanent in unreason."[10] Just as the rational is in the nonrational, the reverse is also true: the nonrational is in the rational. Etienne Bimbenet writes that both Merleau-Ponty and Foucault discuss the origin of the nonrational in the rational and that we must see the excess of the nonrational as internal to the rational if we are going to escape the corrupted and

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3. Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, 3.
4. Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, 3.
5. Merleau-Ponty, "Hegel's Existentialism," 63.
6. Merleau-Ponty, "Hegel's Existentialism," 63.
7. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, LXXXV.
8. Gros, *Foucault et la folie*, 30, my translation: "au nom toujours de ce que Merleau-Ponty désignait comme 'raison élargie.'"
9. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 389, my italics.
10. Merleau-Ponty, "Hegel's Existentialism," 70.

cliché understanding of the rational.[11] Foucault writes of the importance of this relation in the opening to the *History of Madness*: "the Reason-Unreason relation constitutes for Western culture one of the dimensions of its originality."[12] To understand Western culture, we must begin be seeing the impact of the rational–nonrational relation on our structures and institutions.

And yet, we will not be content with just a new definition of the rational, but we must take a further step and look beyond the categories of the rational and the nonrational. A holistic view of the human experience and history calls for a unity that transcends the relation of the rational and nonrational in a radical way. To depict this unity, Merleau-Ponty and Foucault later refer to the idea of "flesh" (*la chair*), as we will discuss more in Chapter 7 (Chapter 7, B.1). They are both aware that the categories, rational and the nonrational, help explain experiences of madness, but, at the same time, these categories ultimately break down because human experience cannot ever fit entirely into a rigid system of classification.

Although it is clear that Merleau-Ponty and Foucault have a shared motivation in their study of madness, we must acknowledge that a common inspiration does not necessarily bring about compatible conclusions and that more work is needed to demonstrate a united synthesis. In Chapter 6, I deal with three problems which seem to divide the thoughts of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault: the place of the human subject, the place of history and the role of psychology. I respond to the scholarly skepticism about a synthesis between Merleau-Ponty and Foucault and address Foucault's own explicit rejection of phenomenology. In Chapter 7, I defend the position that there is a synthesis between the approaches of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault. After describing why other strategies for aligning their thoughts have fallen short, I present my complementary strategy and argue for its effectiveness in weaving their thoughts together. Using this strategy, I offer a solution to each of the problems from Chapter 6 and overcome the obstacles that block their synthesis.

The strength in uniting their approaches is further illustrated in how the thoughts of one fill in gaps in the thoughts of the other, allowing a more full and complete approach to madness. Although we will address general problems to their synthesis, the primary goal will be to show a unity in their particular approaches to mental illness.

11. Etienne Bimbenet, *Apres Merleau-Ponty: Études sur la fécundité d'une pensée* (Paris: Vrin, 2011), 51. Please see Bimbenet's Chapter 2 for a helpful discussion on the rational–nonrational relation in Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Derrida and Habermas.
12. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxix.

6   Merleau-Ponty vs. Foucault

We have already seen the fruit in exploring the approaches of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault, respectively, and how each of their perspectives provides a fuller account of mental illness and of human experience as a whole. The question now is whether these two accounts can be reconciled, and if so, what further insights could be gained from harmonizing them. Before we reap the full benefits of their complementarity, we have several difficult problems to overcome in reconciling these approaches. These problems come in two forms: the differences in their overall philosophical methods and the differences in their specific applications of these methods to madness.

Throughout this chapter, we will sit in the tension of the differences between them and it will not be until the next chapter that I will argue for the resolution and offer a full explanation for the ensemble of their approaches. To start, I will relate Merleau-Ponty and Foucault's biographical connections to understand the context for the progression of their ideas (A). Second, I will present the split between the phenomenological human subject and the bracketed human subject and include the differing emphasis on the tragic element of madness (B). And third, I will discuss the divide between the perceptionally situated approach and the historically situated approach and cite the conflict between being pro-psychology and anti-psychology (C).

A. Biographical Links

Generally speaking, Merleau-Ponty served as a teacher and model for many of the rising French philosophers, including Foucault during the 1940s and 1950s. Foucault attended Merleau-Ponty's lectures over the years and probably read most of his works (see Chart 6.1: Merleau-Ponty's Lectures Most Likely Attended by Foucault). From 1947 to 1948, while studying for the *agrégation* in philosophy at the École normale supérieure, Foucault attended Merleau-Ponty's lectures entitled "The Incarnate Subject: Malebranche, Biran and Bergson on the Union of the Body and Soul" (*L'union de l'âme et du corps chez Melebranche, Biran et*

Bergson).[1] Although Foucault took detailed notes for his courses in general, the notes from this course are particularly clear and comprehensive.[2] In fact, Jacques Taminiaux, who wrote the preface for the English translation of these lectures, borrowed these notes from Foucault to read and remarked that they were "indeed very clear and detailed."[3] After lending Taminiaux his notes for the year, Foucault made sure to come and ask for them back: Taminiaux recounts, "I came to realize how important and inspiring these lectures were for [Foucault] when, at the end of the academic year, the young Foucault . . . made it a point to come himself to retrieve his notes."[4] Eribon, in his biography of Foucault, also comments on how significant these lectures were for him saying that Foucault "never missed a single lecture given by Maurice Merleau-Ponty at the ENS [École normale supérieure] in 1947–48 and 1948–49."[5]

Also, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Foucault faithfully attended Merleau-Ponty's 1949–1952 "Child Psychology and Pedagogy" lectures at the Sorbonne (*Psychologie et pédagogie de l'enfant*). These lectures were actually divided into different classes, and there is specific documentation on his attendance at several of them. First, he was most likely present at the course "Consciousness and Language Acquisition" (*La conscience et l'acquisition du language*) from 1949 to 1950 where

1. Jacques Taminiaux, "Preface," in *The Incarnate Subject: Malebranche, Biran, and Bergson on the Union of Body and Soul*, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, ed. Andrew G. Bjelland Jr. and Patrick Burke, trans. Paul B. Milan (New York: Humanity Books, 2001), 13. Also, see Avelino Aldo De Lima Neto, "Entre la Fascination et le Rejet: Foucault et la Phénoménologie de Merleau-Ponty," in *Au travers du vivant: Dans l'esthésiologie, l'émersiologie*, ed. Bernard Andrieu and Petrucia da Nóbrega (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 2017), 227; and Ted Toadvine, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/merleau-ponty/.
2. I viewed Foucault's original notes in the archives at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) in Paris (found at BnF, NAF 28730, box n. 38: "Notes de cours et de lecture des années de formation: Sorbonne, ENS"). The notes are quite nicely put together and often written in paragraph form. Due to the new project of digitizing all of Foucault's notes, called Projet ANR Foucault fiches de lecture (FFL), these notes are now publicly available online, https://eman-archives.org/Foucault-fiches/items/show/6375.
3. Taminiaux, "Preface," 13.
4. Taminiaux, "Preface," 13.
5. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 32. See also the analysis of the Foucault's notes around this time from the archives project: Gautier Dassonneville, "Foucault auditeur: Les études de philosophie et de psychologie à Paris, 1946–1953," *Foucault fiches de lecture*, https://eman-archives.org/Foucault-fiches/exhibits/show/foucault-auditeur-les-ann-es-. There are three parts to the "Foucault auditeur" series and Dassonneville discusses the notes from box n. 37 in the first one, "Profiter de l'offre culturelle Parisienne," https://eman-archives.org/Foucault-fiches/exhibits/show/foucault-auditeur-les-ann-es-/profiter-de-l—offre-culturel.

Chart 6.1 Merleau-Ponty's Lectures Most Likely Attended by Foucault

Years	French Title	Location	Source	English Title and Publication
1947–1948	*L'Union de l'âme et du corps chez Malebranche, Maine de Biran et Bergson*	Ecole normale supérieure and University of Lyon	• Personally viewed Foucault's original notes to this lecture in archives: NAF 28730, Boîte 38. • Foucault's notes have been digitized through the FFL project and can now be viewed online, https://emanarchives.org/Foucault-fiches/items/show/6375. • Taminiaux, Preface to English translation, 13. • Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 32. • De Lima Neto, "Entre la Fascination et le Rejet," 227. • Toadvine, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty," plato.stanford.edu.	*The Incarnate Subject: Malebranche, Biran and Bergson on the Union of Body and Soul.* Published by Humanity Books, 2001.
1949–1952	*Psychologie et pédagogie de l'enfant*	Sorbonne	• Sabot, "Entre psychologie et philosophie. Foucault à Lille, 1952–1955," 110. • See citations below for specific lectures in this series.	*Child Psychology and Pedagogy.* Published by Northwestern University Press, 2010.
1949–1950	"La conscience et l'acquisition du langage" (part of *Psychologie et pédagogie de l'enfant*)	Sorbonne	• Sabot, "Entre psychologie et philosophie. Foucault à Lille, 1952–1955," 110. • De Lima Neto in "Entre La Fascination et Le Rejet," 227, 230. • Revel, *Foucault avec Merleau-Ponty*, 161. • Lefort's chronology in *Œuvres de Merleau-Pony* (Revel, *Foucault avec Merleau-Pony*, 161). • Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," 436. • Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains*, 262.	"Consciousness and Language Acquisition." Published as Chapter 1 in *Child Psychology and Pedagogy*.
1950–1951	"L'enfant et autrui" (part of *Psychologie et pédagogie de l'enfant*)	Sorbonne	• Foucault's notes are found in NAF 28730, box n. 33 A, folder n. 0 (Basso, "Foucault's Critique of the Human Sciences in the 1950s," 17n6) • Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 14. • Sabot, "Entre psychologie et philosophie. Foucault à Lille, 1952–1955," 110.	"The Child's Relations with Others." Published as Chapter 5 in the *Child Psychology and Pedagogy*.
1950–1952	"Sciences de l'Homme et Phénoménologie" (part of *Psychologie et pédagogie de l'enfant*)	Sorbonne	• Sabot, "Entre psychologie et philosophie. Foucault à Lille, 1952–1955," 110. • De Lima Neto, "Entre La Fascination et Le Rejet," 227. • Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 32.	"Human Sciences and Phenomenology." Published as Chapter 6 in the *Child Psychology and Pedagogy*.

Note: I have not confirmed the presence of notes from Foucault for the courses "La conscience et l'acquisition du langage" and "Sciences de l'Homme et Phénoménologie" although many scholars suggest that he attended these, as seen under the category "Source." Notes in the archives are confirmed for "L'Union de l'âme et du corps chez Malebranche, Maine de Biran et Bergson" and "L'enfant et autrui" as indicated under "Source." It is also possible that Foucault attended Merleau-Ponty's lectures at the Collège de France, but there is not clear documentation on this as I will discuss in the chapter. Full bibliographic information is cited in the chapter.

Merleau-Ponty discussed the views of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure.[6] Foucault himself seems to refer to this course in a late interview:

> [It] was a fairly critical point—Merleau-Ponty's encounter with language. And, as you know, Merleau-Ponty's later efforts addressed that question. I remember clearly some lectures in which Merleau-Ponty began speaking of Saussure.[7]

Second, Foucault was most certainly part of the course "The Child's Relations with Others" (*L'enfant et autrui*) from 1950 to 1951.[8] And third, he most likely attended "Human Sciences and Phenomenology" (*Sciences de l'homme et phénoménologie*) from 1950 to 1952.[9] It is also very likely that Foucault attended the other lectures at the Sorbonne that were part of the Child Psychology and Pedagogy series, such as "The Adult's View of the Child" (1949–1950), "Structure and Conflicts in Child Consciousness" (1949–1950), "Child Psycho-Sociology" (1950–1951), "Method in Child Psychology" (1951–1952) and "The Experience of Others" (1951–1952).[10] Even if he did not attend all of them, he certainly read them afterwards, as Eribon comments, "[Merleau-Ponty's] lectures were published in the *Bulletin de psychologie* almost as soon as they were given, and there is no doubt that Foucault took advantage of them."[11]

   After Merleau-Ponty was appointed to the chair at the Collège de France in 1952, it is possible that Foucault continued to attend his

6. Judith Revel, *Foucault avec Merleau-Ponty* (Paris: Vrin, 2015), 161. Revel also refers to Claude Lefort's chronology in *Œuvres de Merleau-Pony* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010). De Lima Neto, "Entre la Fascination et le Rejet," 227, 230. Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 262. To alleviate confusion, this work of Eribon, entitled *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains*, is a later *second* biography of Foucault that has not been translated into English. It is more focused on the academic environment surrounding Foucault.

7. Michel Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism, Interview by Gérard Raulet," in *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954–1984, Vol. 2: Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 436.

8. Foucault's notes from this class are in the archives and can be found at BnF, NAF 28730, box n. 33 A, folder n. 0. These have not been digitized yet, so I would like to thank Elizabetta Basso for confirming this for me. See also Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 14; and Basso, "Foucault's Critique of the Human Sciences in the 1950s," 17n6.

9. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 32. De Lima Neto, "Entre La Fascination et Le Rejet," 227.

10. For the full English translation of these lectures, see: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Child Psychology and Pedagogy: The Sorbonne Lectures 1949–1952*, trans. Talia Welsh (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010).

11. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 32. See the third part of Dassonneville's series for a copy of a *Bulletin de pscyhologie*: Dassonneville, "'Devenir psychologue', in 'Foucault auditeur: Les études de philosophie et de psychologie à Paris, 1946–1953'," *Foucault fiches de lecture*, https://eman-archives.org/Foucault-fiches/exhibits/show/foucault-auditeur-les-ann-es-/devenir_psychologue.

lectures there until Foucault left for Sweden in 1955.[12] These lectures could possibly include "The Problem of Speech" (*Le problème de la parole*) 1953–1954, "Materials for a Theory of History" (*Matériaux pour une théorie de l'histoire*) 1953–1954, and maybe even "Institution and Passivity" (*Institution et passivité*) 1954–1955.[13] But his attendance at these lectures is less certain and more documentation is needed to demonstrate it.

Regardless, it is clear that Foucault is reflecting on the ideas of Merleau-Ponty during this time as is seen in his work on two unpublished manuscripts found in the archives. One is a twelve-page document entitled, "The Psychological Themes from the Phenomenology of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty" (*Les thèmes psychologique de la phénoménologie de Husserl et de Merleau-Ponty*) which was probably written in preparation for one of Foucault's lectures.[14] The other is a typed thirty-eight–page document on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology that was intended to be a published article.[15] Foucault speaks about this article, "the article on Merleau [*l'article sur Merleau*]" in a letter to Jean-Paul Aron written around this time.[16]

In addition to his early formation coming from Merleau-Ponty's courses and his written reflections on them, he was also aware and read much of Merleau-Ponty's works. In the archives, there are over thirty pages of notes

12. De Lima Neto mentions the two Merleau-Ponty lectures at the Collège de France, "The Problem of Speech" and "Materials for a Theory of History," as influencing Foucault but does not specifically state that he attended them: De Lima Neto, "Entre La Fascination et Le Rejet," 230. It is also possible that Foucault's reference to Merleau-Ponty's lectures on language in the interview quoted above ("Structuralism and Poststructuralism") could refer to "The Problem of Speech" in addition to the "Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language." I also heard from two Czech scholars at the International Merleau-Ponty Circle in 2018 that Foucault attended the institution lectures, but I have yet to find any documentation on that. Another scholar, Stuart Elden, doubts that Foucault attended many lectures once Merleau-Ponty is at the Collège de France. See Stuart Elden, "The Early Foucault Update 4: Merleau-Ponty, Canguilhem, and a Week in the Archive and a Book Contract," *Progressive Geographies* (blog), February 21, 2017, https://progressivegeographies.com/2017/02/21/the-early-foucault-update-4-merleau-ponty-canguilhem-a-week-in-the-archive-and-a-contract/.
13. The English translations of these lectures (or parts of these lectures) can be found at: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Themes from the Lectures at the Collège de France, 1952–1960," in *In Praise of Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. John O'Neill (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 66–199, for the first two lectures mentioned and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Institution and Passivity: Course Notes from the Collège de France (1954–1955)*, trans. Leonard Lawlor and Heath Massey (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), for the last one.
14. This manuscript is found at BnF, NAF 28730, box n. 46, folder n. 4. Basso, "Foucault's Critique of the Human Sciences in the 1950s," 4–5. Bert, "Retour à Münsterlingen," 37n13.
15. This manuscript is found at BnF, NAF 28803, box n. 3, folder n. 7. Basso, "Foucault's Critique of the Human Sciences in the 1950s," 5.
16. Excerpts of this letter are reprinted here: Bert and Basso, *Foucault à Münsterlingen*, 122.

from Merleau-Ponty's *The Structure of Behavior* and *Phenomenology of Perception*.[17] In addition, Foucault kept up with Merleau-Ponty's later works as he reveals in the interview already referenced above when he refers to the importance of Merleau-Ponty's "later efforts" on language.[18] For example, around the time of its publication in 1955, Foucault praised Merleau-Ponty's *Adventures of the Dialectic* as the one of the greatest books on the human sciences that he had ever read.[19] Furthermore, after Merleau-Ponty's death in 1961, Foucault was part of an editorial board for the journal *Critique*, and collected articles on Merleau-Ponty's posthumous *The Visible and the Invisible* (published in 1964) for an issue in December 1964.[20] Furthermore, Foucault was aware of Merleau-Ponty's unpublished work, *The Prose of the World* (eventually published in 1969), because, although he wanted to name his fifth major book with the same title, he decided against it knowing that Merleau-Ponty wished for his posthumous book to have this title. Instead, Foucault titled it, *Les mots et les choses* (published in 1966) which in English is known as *The Order of Things* and used "The Prose of the World" as a title for the second chapter.[21]

   The point in this biographical account is that there can be no question that Foucault was steeped in the thought and writing of Merleau-Ponty. When he speaks of Merleau-Ponty in later interviews and writings, it is clear that Merleau-Ponty played a special role in his formation, over and above many of the other French scholars at the time. Although Sartre was in some ways more in fashion, Foucault remarks that it was in fact Merleau-Ponty who captured him and the other young philosophers: "The one who counted for us when we were young was not Sartre, but Merleau-Ponty. We were fascinated by him."[22] In a 1978 interview, Foucault speaks of the respect that he has for Merleau-Ponty and the way his thinking was opened up by Merleau-Ponty's method:

> Establishing a meeting point between the academic philosophical tradition and phenomenology, Maurice Merleau-Ponty extended existential discourse into specific domains, exploring the question

17. These notes are found at BnF, box n. 33 A, folder n. 0. Basso, "Foucault's Critique of the Human Sciences in the 1950s," 4. See again the third part of Dassonneville's series for comments on this: Dassonneville, "Devenir psychologue," https://eman-archives.org/Foucault-fiches/exhibits/show/foucault-auditeur-les-ann-es-/devenir_psychologue.
18. Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," 436.
19. Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains*, 134, my translation: "[Foucault] parlait [du livre de Merleau-Ponty *Les Aventures de la dialectique*] à Gèrard Lebrun comme du plus 'grand livre de sciences humaines qu'il ait jamais lu.' "
20. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 151.
21. Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 155.
22. Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains*, 107, my translation: "Celui qui comptait pour nous, lorsque nous étions jeune, ce n'était pas Sartre, mais Merleau-Ponty. Il exerçait sur nous une fascination." See also Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 32.

of the world's intelligibility, for example, the intelligibility of reality. My own choices ripened within that intellectual panorama: on the other hand, I chose not to be a historian of philosophy like my professors and on the other, I decided to look for something completely different from existentialism.[23]

Although he says that he goes in a different direction from his mentor, he acknowledges that it was in the expansive and extended way of thinking of Merleau-Ponty where his ideas were able to grow and ripen toward fruition. In 1979 review of Jean Daniel's book, *Era of Ruptures* (*Ere des ruptures*), Foucault closes his short essay by repeating similar sentiments about his respect for the openness and challenge of Merleau-Ponty's thought:

> Impossible . . . not to think of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's teaching and of what was for him the essential philosophical task: never to consent to being completely comfortable with one's presuppositions. Never to let them fall peacefully asleep, but also never believe that a new fact will suffice to overturn them.[24]

Foucault admires Merleau-Ponty's approach to philosophy due to his willingness to question presuppositions but at the same time not to be quick to throw them away.

Thus, from the account of his training as well as his own testimony later in life, Foucault received an inheritance from Merleau-Ponty which strongly influenced him and shaped his philosophical trajectory. The question remains, however, *how* exactly this influence works itself out. Was Merleau-Ponty's training something that Foucault tried out and found wanting? Did Foucault feel that his training demonstrated how *not* to do it? As Foucault alluded to in the interview above, he saw himself as doing something "completely different" than his teachers.[25] This is reiterated in his explicit rejection and opposition to phenomenology expressed in his writings, which we will review shortly. Recognizing then the clear biographical links between them, we need to look closer at the conceptual and methodological differences between Merleau-Pony and Foucault to see whether their two approaches are compatible.

23. Michel Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault, Interview by D. Trombadori," in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Vol. 3: Power*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: New Press, 2001), 247.

24. Michel Foucault, "For an Ethic of Discomfort: Review of Jean Daniel's *Ere des ruptures*," in Faubion's *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Vol. 3: Power*, 448.

25. See again Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault, Interview by D. Trombadori," 247.

B. Phenomenological Subject vs. Bracketed Subject

Foucault appears to distance himself from Merleau-Ponty by opposing the method of phenomenology in general. Todd May opens his article, "Foucault's Relation to Phenomenology," with this bold statement:

> Foucault's mature work is not phenomenologically oriented. He rejects utterly the phenomenological method as a method of intellectual inquiry. It is not an exaggeration to say that although Foucault's work goes through methodological changes, it always defines itself *against* phenomenology. The influences of Foucault's formative years become for him exemplary paths that one *cannot* take if one were to try and to gain some foothold of understanding on how, what or where we are.[26]

May states definitively that Foucault follows a method which defines itself against the method of phenomenology; he sees Foucault as forging a new path away from phenomenology.[27] According to May, the answer to the question posed in the last section, "Did Foucault feel that his training demonstrated how *not* to do it?" is "yes" because phenomenology represents a path not to follow if one wants a full understanding of who we are and the world around us.

The differing views on phenomenology between Merleau-Ponty and Foucault is especially seen in their respective approaches to the human subject. To see this possible disparity, I will first review Merleau-Ponty's placement of the subject in phenomenology and then look at Foucault's clearest critique of the phenomenological subject found in *The Order of Things*. Next, I will describe the potential problems that come into both of their philosophies because of their position on the human subject: the problem of being stuck in the empirico-transcendental doublet for Merleau-Ponty and the problem of ignoring the role of the body for Foucault. To illustrate this, I will look specifically to their differences in their approach to madness by seeing the human as ideal, for Merleau-Ponty, and by viewing the human as tragic, for Foucault.

1. Subject as Center vs. Subject as Hidden

We already know from our first chapter the indispensable role that the human subject plays in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. Starting with the subject is foundational to his understanding of phenomenology. The subject

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26. Todd May, "Foucault's Relation to Phenomenology," in Gutting's *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 285, italics his.

27. However, May also acknowledges at the end of his article that there is still a kind of "continuity of spirit" between Foucault and phenomenology. See May, "Foucault's Relation to Phenomenology," 304.

is not just a mind accessing the knowledge of the world, but it is a whole being, present in all of its manifestations, interacting with the world. As we recall, we must "treat the human subject as an indivisible consciousness that is wholly present in each of its manifestations" so that we can understand our access to the world around us.[28] Everything must begin with my own perspective as a subject for I cannot ever entirely escape myself. Merleau-Ponty writes that this must be seen as an important qualification to the work of science:

> I cannot enclose myself within the universe of science. Everything that I know about the world, even through science, I know from a perspective that is my own or from an experience of the world without which scientific symbols would be meaningless.[29]

To put it simply, I cannot close myself off from myself to enter the abstract world of science and all knowledge, even the abstract symbols of science, has meaning because of my lived experience in the world. Although I can reflect on my own perspective, judge it and critique it, I can never fully detach from it as it is the lens by which I view and experience the world.

The starting place of the human subject appears to be precisely what Foucault finds problematic about phenomenology as seen in his most explicit critique in *The Order of Things*. One may wonder why I am taking time on Foucault's critique of phenomenology in *The Order of Things*, which was published in 1966, five years after the *History of Madness*. Many scholars see Foucault as still holding on to a certain kind of phenomenological approach in the *History of Madness*, but then finally breaking all ties with it in *The Order of Things*. As I pointed out in the introduction, *History of Madness* has even been called a work of phenomenology itself.[30] If this is true, does his critique of phenomenology in 1966 really apply to his 1961 work on madness? By seeing *History of Madness* as a bridge between phenomenology and structuralism, we can acknowledge both the phenomenological language that is present in the work, but also recognize how it starts to turn away from that language. In the *History of Madness*, he continues to use the word "experience" over and over again, clearly linking him to the phenomenological method, but it is not the experience of the individual human subject that he is interested in there: it is the experience of madness itself.[31] Foucault writes in the pref-

28. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 122.
29. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxii.
30. See again Matza, "Review of 'Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason'," 74; Laing, "The Invention of Madness," 76.
31. See again Jean Khalfa's comment on phenomenological vocabulary in his introduction to the *History of Madness*: Khalfa, "Introduction," xx.

ace: "[This] is not at all a history of knowledge but of the rudimentary movements of experience. A history not of psychiatry, but of madness itself, in all its vivacity, before it is captured by knowledge."[32] With this distinction, he is implicitly pulling away from a focus on the human subject and shifting to a new approach based on historical discourses.

With this in mind, we will now discuss Foucault's critique of phenomenology in *The Order of Things*, which is found primarily in two places: first, in the opening in terms of methodology, and second, in a more detailed argument in the ninth chapter. The first critique found in the "Foreword to the English edition" reveals how his rejection of phenomenology does revolve around the place of the human subject:

> If there is one approach that I do reject, however, it is that (one might call it, broadly speaking, the phenomenological approach) which gives *absolute* priority to the observing subject, which attributes a constituent role to an act, which places its own point of view at the origin of all historicity—which, in short, leads to a *transcendental* consciousness. It seems to me that the historical analysis of scientific discourse should, in the last resort, be subject, not to a theory of the knowing subject, but rather to a theory of discursive practice.[33]

We can see the progression for his rejection of phenomenology here: first, the priority of the subject makes one's own point of view an *absolute* point of origin for history; second, making the subject absolute leads to the consciousness of the subject becoming *transcendental*, placing it as the source of meaning for history. Instead, he wants to explore the origin of history and science not according to the subject but according to a "theory of discursive practice," a theory that finds the origin in the societal and cultural structures surrounding the subject.

Foucault details his concern about phenomenology's tendency to make a transcendental subject in his second explicit section on phenomenology in Chapter 9 of *The Order of Things*. In this chapter, he presents three doublets, the empirical and the transcendental, the cogito and the unthought, and the retreat and the return of the origin. For each, he offers a complex argument for why philosophers have often been unable to move beyond the constructs of the two sides of each pair. Being stuck in each of these pairs results in a dualistic understanding of reality where the two sides are there but are separated and remain at an impasse, unable to be connected or integrated in a meaningful way. I will not attempt a comprehensive account of his critique of these three doublets, because it has already been done by other scholars and because our focus will

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32. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxxii.
33. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), xiv, italics mine.

remain on the problem of the human subject, especially in relation to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.[34]

For that reason, we will look only at the first doublet, the empirico-transcendental doublet, to see his specific critique on phenomenology. The phenomenological method is not, however, what first prompts Foucault to put forward this critique. Growing out of his work on Kant's *Anthropology* (the subject of his second dissertation, *thèse complémentaire*), Foucault finds the problematic division between the empirical and transcendental already present in the work of Kant. However, coming out of this Kantian tradition, the "reflections inspired by phenomenology," according to Foucault, are also not able resolve this problem.[35] In fact, although Foucault does not name him directly, it is often assumed that Foucault is thinking of Merleau-Ponty specifically in this first doublet.[36]

To understand the empirico-transcendental doublet, we must see how it arises out of the divide between the noumenal (transcendental) and phenomenal (empirical) worlds in Kant's philosophy. Here Foucault finds an unresolved problem between presuming that the subject is transcendental due to its ability to create meaning and find truth beyond the physical world, but at the same time subjecting the subject to empirical analysis because it can be scientifically understood and defined. Foucault sees this closed circle as being created due to the priority placed on "actual experience" because here the subject is identified as an empirical object due to the subject's transcendental place, but this transcendental place is dependent on the empirical study of the subject. He defines actual experience in the following way:

> Actual experience is, in fact, both the space in which all *empirical contents* are given to experience and the original form that makes them possible in general and designates their primary roots; it does indeed provide a means of communication between the space of the body and the time of culture, between the determinations of nature and the weight of history, but only on condition that the body, and through it, nature, should first be posited in the experience of an *irreducible spatiality*, and that culture, the carrier of history, should be experienced first of all in the immediacy of its sedimented significations.[37]

34. For a more comprehensive account, please see Philippe Sabot, "Foucault et Merleau-Ponty: un dialogue impossible?" *Les Études philosophiques* 3, no. 106 (2013): 323–7; Nick Crossley, *The Politics of Subjectivity: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994), Chapter 5: Phenomenology and the Knowing Subject: A Critique of Foucault's Critique, 136–60; Johanna Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Chapter 2: The Foucaultian Failure of Phenomenology, 40–69.
35. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 321.
36. Crossley, *The Politics of Subjectivity*, 137. Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom*, 53.
37. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 321, italics mine.

Foucault is arguing that a method which focuses on actual experience illustrates this closed circle of the subject as empirical and transcendental. In this difficult passage, he shows how the space for empirical contents, as the information received from the senses, is made possible by an original or immaterial form, as the truth understood by a transcendental subject, but this ability of the transcendental subject is in turn founded on the experience of immediacy, the experience of the world of the senses. Any meaning of the world can never go beyond the way that the transcendental categories of space, time, history and culture are circularly dependent on the sensual experiences of the body.

In other words, the problem is that there is a doubling of man in phenomenology because man is both given in experience and outside of experience. Béatrice Han-Pile explains, "Because of this anthropological doubling (or 'Fold,' as Foucault calls it) of the empirical on the transcendental, phenomenology is bound to fail: it cannot justify its modal claims to universality or necessity, which makes fulfilling the Kantian project impossible."[38] The foundation for understanding the human is the human itself and there is no way to escape this perpetual cycle. Because phenomenology continues to prioritize actual experience, it cannot break free from this circle nor solve this problem. Although a "return to actual experience" may provide a helpful description of human life, it remains just that, a helpful description.[39] Because of this, Foucault concludes that phenomenology "resolves itself, before our eyes, into a description;" it gives us a report about experience, but cannot tell us more than this.[40]

As a result, Foucault does something different by searching for a method beyond these dichotomies and this becomes, among other things, a project of a "pure description of discursive events," as he describes it in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*; rather than asking about a subject's actual experience, it asks a new question: "how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another?"[41] Tabling the criticism on whether such a project is actually feasible, we see that Foucault finds himself wanting to push the limits of phenomenology by using its own method of "bracketing (putting to the side) any presupposition" in order to bracket the human subject itself. With a hidden subject, he will then have the freedom to study the historical statements separate from the person. He wants, as Dreyfus and Rabinow put it, to radicalize phenomenology "by bracketing all specific truth claims" and go "beyond

38. Han-Pile, "Phenomenology and Anthropology in Foucault's 'Introduction to Binswanger's Dream and Existence'," 8.
39. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 322.
40. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 326.
41. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 27.

phenomenology in bracketing the meaning the subject himself gives to his experiences."[42] In summary, Foucault's radicalizing of phenomenology reveals both the difficulty in bringing Merleau-Ponty and Foucault together in their understanding of the human and raises a difficulty in Merleau-Ponty's own account due to him possibly being still caught in the empirico-transcendental doublet.

Foucault comments in the "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism" interview (cited in the last section) about his journey away from phenomenology. He states that he, along with others in the 1960s, felt that "phenomenology was no match for structural analysis" and that the "phenomenological subject was disqualified" by the many new methods being introduced including structuralism, psychoanalysis and others.[43] He gives the philosopher Deleuze as an example of someone who began to ask the question, "Is the theory of the subject we have in phenomenology a satisfactory one?" Foucault sees his work as a response to this question: "So, I would say everything that took place in the sixties arose from a dissatisfaction with the *phenomenological theory of the subject*, and involved different escapades, subterfuges, break-throughs, according to whether we use a negative or positive term, in the direction of linguistics, psychoanalysis or Nietzsche."[44] In the reflective tone of the interview, we notice that he is not necessarily making a judgment on whether this rejection of the phenomenological subject turns out to be beneficial in the end or whether the new methods which were tried proved to be more successful. In fact, he is very clear in other places about his dislike of psychoanalysis, and even in this interview he discusses the problems of structuralism. What is important to see is that in addition to the philosophical problems with phenomenology noted in *The Order of Things*, Foucault's own environment at that time personally motivated him to turn a different direction.

From the other side, however, it can also be argued that Foucault's rejection of the phenomenological subject brings its own difficulty to his account of the human. Because of Merleau-Ponty's priority of the subject, there has been much fruit in understanding the importance of the body of the human and the role of the body in our interaction with the world. By stating that the body does not just have habits but actually is the first primordial habit, for example, the body becomes essential in every aspect of life; as we recall, "My own body is the primordial habit, the one that conditions all others and by which they can be understood."[45] But if the human subject is bracketed or hidden away, some scholars see

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42. Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 161.
43. Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," 436, 437.
44. Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," 438, italics mine.
45. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 93.

Foucault as demeaning or ignoring the body, not recognizing its primal and habitual capacity for understanding the world. Nick Crossley directly states, "The issue of the sentient subject, the subject of visual perception . . . is not explicitly dealt with in any of Foucault's works."[46] Johanna Oksala echoes this critique, "Foucault did not present a theory of the body anywhere, not even a unified account of it."[47] Han-Pile concludes her book with concern over Foucault's understanding of the subject because he seems to make "the reflective activity of the subject the starting point for the constitution of the self."[48] The concern is that since he is so focused on describing the structures outside of the body and the reflective activities of the subject which may act on and control the body, he does not provide an account of the body itself.

The description of the body from the outside is often called the "inscribed body" and is placed in contrast to the "lived body" of phenomenology. Many scholars do not think it is possible to reconcile these two versions of the body, the inscribed body of Foucault and the lived body of Merleau-Ponty.[49] Those on the "lived body" side feel that Foucault's inscribed body (also called a "docile body") results in a body controlled and determined by outside forces, without free choice. Bill Hughes, for example, when writing on Foucault's connection with disability ethics, states that Foucault's docile body "underestimates [the] body's role as subject, that is, as an agent of self- and social transformation."[50] Even in Foucault's later works where he focuses on the self, Hughes argues, Foucault "applies techniques of the self as a reflex of domination, not as a practice of freedom."[51] Although I will counter these claims in the next chapter, the conclusion for Hughes, along with other thinkers, is that Foucault's inscribed body is not free, but fated to be shaped by the techniques of institutions and even the

46. Nick Crossley, "The Politics of the Gaze: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty," *Human Studies* 16, no. 4 (1993): 405.
47. Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom*, 11.
48. Béatrice Han, *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical*, trans. Edward Pile (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 188–9. (Her last name is now Han-Pile.)
49. See Crossley's article which details the problems in putting together the inscribed body (body-power) and the lived body (body-subject) as discussed in the literature: Nick Crossley, "Body-Subject/Body-Power: Agency, Inscription and Control in Foucault and Merleau-Ponty," *Body & Society* 2, no. 2 (1996): 99–116. Unlike many of the scholars that he cites, Crossley ultimately concludes that the two versions of the body can be reconciled, as we will discuss in the next chapter.
50. Bill Hughes, "What Can a Foucauldian Analysis Contribute to Disability Theory?" in *Foucault and the Government of Disability*, ed. Shelley Tremain (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 80.
51. Hughes, "What Can a Foucauldian Analysis Contribute to Disability Theory?" 87.

techniques of the self. Hughes argues that the lived body of phenomenology can offer the only corrective to this deterministic approach to the body.

The core of these concerns comes from a question on the actual ontological status of the human being. While both Merleau-Ponty and Foucault firmly deny any kind of fixed human nature, there appears to be an insurmountable division between them on the definition of the human. Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the priority of the subject's interaction with the world is because he believes that through this method, we can find meaning applicable to common human experience. Although we begin with a subjective perspective, we are not confined to this perspective, because through it, we can consider what links it to the experiences of others around us. In a discussion on why phenomenology on infant behavior is possible, Chad Engelland writes this helpful description of phenomenology: "Phenomenology is not ineluctably tied to one's own first-person point of view. It asks not how something appears to oneself, but how something appears to anybody."[52] By realizing that we all are "condemned to meaning," as Merleau-Ponty famously writes, we can search for how things may appear to anybody in a general sense, drawing out the meaning that is already present in the world.[53] There is then a certain kind of logic or meaning which applies in a universal sense to human experience:

> There is a logic of the world that my entire body merges with and through which inter-sensory things become possible. . . . To have a body is to possess a universal arrangement, a schema of all perceptual developments and of all inter-sensory correspondence beyond the segment of the world that we are actually perceiving.[54]

Thus, the body has a certain "universal arrangement" which operates according to common patterns and allows us to discover through perception and through exploration the order of the world.

Foucault is often seen as not being able to subscribe to any kind of common or universal aspects of the human. His emphasis on historical constructions includes the human itself, which can also be simply a construct of society. He claims at the beginning and at the end of *The Order of Things* that "man is a recent invention," meaning our idea of what it is to be human in modern times is not a timeless truth, but comes from the

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52. Chad Engelland, *Ostension: Word Learning and the Embodied Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2014), 139.
53. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxxiv.
54. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 341.

recent creation of the rationalistic age.[55] This conception of the human, he argues, will soon vanish and be replaced by another one. He famously ends *The Order of Things*:

> As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end. If those arrangements were to disappear as they appeared, . . . then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.[56]

If what it means to be human can be erased and washed away from one age to the next, many view Foucault as saying that the human is entirely defined by society and cannot hold to any common human experience or meaning across time, contra Merleau-Ponty.

2. Example From Madness: Ideal vs. Tragic

A specific difference in their understanding of the human is seen in the emphasis on the ideal traits, for Merleau-Ponty, and the tragic traits, for Foucault, in the discussion of madness. When Merleau-Ponty looks at cases of madness, he considers how the experiences of madness positively allows humans to interact, although in a dysfunctional way, with the world: he writes of the nonrational in madness as a way of revealing some of our unique human tendencies which still remain present in disorders. This is seen, for example, in Merleau-Ponty's otherwise excellent account of habit for both the normal and the abnormal person (see Chapter 2, C.2 for an exposition on habit). Merleau-Ponty describes the role of habit in our lives and how it helps us to experience the world, interact with others and provide pre-reflective content which can be further explored under reflection. However, he does not fully discuss the tragic side of habit, the ways that we can inappropriately relate to the world, resulting in painful treatment of the self and others. Saint Aubert remarks that Merleau-Ponty "evokes even the tragic of man, but he has not sufficiently analyzed the destructive potentialities from the absence of self, from nonsense, from indetermination—and especially, the way of getting out of it all."[57] The tragic element which is often seen in cases of mental disorder, as Saint Aubert points out, is not fully studied by Merleau-Ponty.

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55. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xxiii, 386.
56. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 387.
57. Saint Aubert, "Introduction à la notion de portance," 332, my translation: "il évoque même le tragique de l'homme, mais il n'a pas suffisamment analysé les potentialités destructrices de l'absence de lien, du non-sense, de l'indétermination—et surtout, la façon d'en sortir."

Foucault, on the other hand, sees the tragic as one of the most important threads in human existence, an element which he feels is too often ignored. Because we think of madness as simply a form of mental illness according to the rationalist approach, we miss the presence of the nonrational, and in particular, the underlying tragic nature of the experience. This experience is something that we can never fully erase: the rationalistic approach to madness is a "perilous masking of tragic experience—an experience that it nonetheless failed to obliterate."[58] The tragic aspect of human experience will continue to make itself known even in the modern age no matter how hard we try to cover it up.

An example of their different understandings of the role of the tragic can be seen in their treatment of the disordered behavior of hallucinations. Merleau-Ponty, in his analysis of hallucinations, finds that the way a person encounters the world through hallucinations and through perceptions is in accordance with common patterns: "hallucination and perception are modalities of a single primordial function."[59] Operating according to the same primordial function, the person hallucinating is simply using his or her own environment to create a fictional reality, "but this fiction can only count as reality because reality itself is reached for by the normal subject in an analogous operation."[60] Although Merleau-Ponty's assessment of these analogous operations between hallucination and perception are valid and helpful, he does not stop to acknowledge the challenge and frustration that may be felt by a person who is operating according to a fictional reality. Compared to Foucault, Merleau-Ponty is missing the layer of the tragic here that is present in hallucinatory experience.

Foucault describes hallucinations as a reminder of the tragic quality of humanity, which has always been there and will always remain, as we see again in the quote: "Perhaps doctors find it a great support and a comfort to know that under the sun of madness there have always been hallucinations, that there has always been delirium in the discourse of unreason, and that restless hearts have ever been filled with the same anguish."[61] Hallucinations, along with fits of delirium and anxiety, have always plagued humanity; they are a signal of a deeper darkness and brokenness which comes from the experience of the nonrational. The nonrational manifests itself in many different ways, as Foucault shows through his explorations in art, and creating a fictional reality in hallucinations is another warning of the tragic quality to the nonrational.

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58. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 28.
59. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 358.
60. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 358, translation slightly modified.
61. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 115–6.

C. Perceptionally Situated vs. Historically Situated

The next critical difference in their overall philosophies is found in their approaches and placements of history in their accounts. Beginning again with Merleau-Ponty, I will describe how his philosophy may lack a historical account, and the effect this may have on the notion of inter-subjectivity. Next, I will discuss how this possible lack is yet another push leading Foucault to free himself from phenomenology in order to properly provide a place for history in his philosophy. To close, I will look to their opposing approaches to the discipline of psychology.

1. Perception vs. History

Merleau-Ponty can be seen as undervaluing historical analysis in his philosophical method. Some feel that his emphasis on human behavior opens up to cultural and historical connections, but that he does not pursue these openings fully. We are reminded of his statement in his first book, *The Structure of Behavior*: "The world, inasmuch, as it harbors living beings, ceases to be a material plenum consisting of juxtaposed parts; it opens up at the place where behavior appears."[62] Although Merleau-Ponty analyzes the role of human behavior, some are concerned that he does not go far enough in including how history impacts behavior. Furthermore, placing such an importance on individual human behavior can diminish the significant role of larger movements of history. Crossley writes in his 1993 article that Merleau-Ponty does not move beyond the idea of Marxist relations in his understanding of the place of history: Merleau-Ponty's "understanding of power is extremely weak and his politics seldom moves beyond a consideration of basic capital–labour relations."[63] Crossley explores this further in his book published the next year in 1994, *The Politics of Subjectivity: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty*, by first demonstrating that Merleau-Ponty does provide a coherent, philosophical *framework* for how subjectivity, the political and the social are intertwined. But, he argues, this framework is never fully fleshed out because Merleau-Ponty does not offer a detailed study of history to back up his claims.[64] Certainly, Merleau-Ponty has an opening for the place of history in his philosophy, but the concern is that if he actually recognized how essential history is in our understanding of the human, he would have taken time to give us an account of historical structures.

Due to his lack of historical analysis, some take a step further in criticizing Merleau-Ponty for not recognizing the resulting significance of

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62. Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, 125.
63. Crossley, "The Politics of the Gaze," 410.
64. Crossley, *The Politics of Subjectivity*, Chs. 1–3.

intersubjectivity. With his tunnel-focus on the individual, he can be seen as not fully describing the cultural relations between the individual and the others around him or her. Mary Rose Barral acknowledges that one of Merleau-Ponty's themes is about the "interrelation of beings in the world, in particular human beings," but she says that a "full explication of the relation at the personal level is not found in his works."[65] Saint Aubert also feels that Merleau-Ponty, while giving us a good starting place, does not have a cohesive account of intersubjectivity or an in-depth under-standing of the "being-with [*être-avec*]," as he calls it: Merleau-Ponty "does not give us all the ways to think about this co-existence."[66]

In contrast, we can certainly see how Foucault places history as cen-tral to his work as it plays an indispensable role in the creation of the human and human society. As we recall, we detailed in the introduction the importance of history for Foucault and the specific kind of historical analysis that he wants to perform. Even in terms of madness, Foucault feels that we cannot understand madness unless we look through the lens of history: for the necessity of madness is "linked to the possibility of history," as he writes in the preface to the *History of Madness.*[67] Only through an exploration of the silent experiences and the missed gaps of history can we gain a deeper grasp on madness itself. In terms of the sec-ond area of intersubjectivity, it is also possible that with Foucault's stress on the relations between the human and cultural, he can differentiate himself from Merleau-Ponty. However, it is less clear if his method can actually offer a satisfactory account of intersubjectivity, as I will revisit in the final conclusion. For now, the clear difference between them is on the role of historical accounts in their understanding of reality, and here we find another reason for Foucault to break away from phenomenology.

Toward the end of the Chapter 9 critique in *The Order of Things* that we discussed in the previous section, Foucault reminds us that phenom-enology cannot be the ultimate answer because it too is just another movement churned out by the wheels of history: "Phenomenology is therefore much less the resumption of an old rational goal of the West than the sensitive and precisely formulated acknowledgment of the great hiatus that occurred in the modern *episteme* at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."[68] Phenomenology is not the next step in the progressive movement of philosophy, but is a response to a break that happens in between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It *has* historical origins and will come and go just like the other methods

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65. Mary Rose Barral, "Self and Other: Communication and Love," in Hoeller, *Merleau-Ponty and Psychology*, 155.

66. Saint Aubert, "Introduction à la notion de portance," 327, my translation: "Mais Merleau-Ponty ne nous donne pas tous les moyens de penser cette coexistence."

67. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxxii.

68. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 325.

of thought before it. This realization motivates Foucault, as he describes in a 1978 interview, to move out from underneath the "dominant influences" of phenomenology through the aid of Nietzsche, Blanchot and Bataille.[69] Thus, Foucault is ready to advance and free himself from the influence of phenomenology by creating a method which will acknowledge the historical construction of all forms of knowledge.

His conclusion to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* shows how he changes his method to prioritize the historical in contrast to phenomenology. In the section on his responses to the hypothetical objections to his book, he writes that in his method he "refused to refer it to a subjectivity."[70] His rejection of the historical account being linked to a subjectivity includes, as he states a little further down, even "the meanings of the perceived world since Merleau-Ponty."[71] Rarely does Foucault name Merleau-Ponty specifically in his critiques of phenomenology, but here he points out that even Merleau-Ponty's insights gained from the perception of the subject about the world cannot be used. To do so would be to refer to a subjectivity, which he has already rejected. Ultimately, he writes that his aim through archaeology is "to free history from the grip of phenomenology."[72] And while he later leaves archaeology for the method of genealogy, the point remains that he wants to move away from considering the narrow view of the subject to a reflection on larger historical movements and structures.

2. *Example From Madness: Pro-Psychology vs. Anti-Psychology*

A further example of their respective differences in the area of history is seen in how Foucault works outside psychology to place it in its historical milieu while Merleau-Ponty stays inside of the discipline to explore the experience of the subject. During Foucault's training in psychology, he remembered being asked, "Do you want to do scientific psychology or psychology like Merleau-Ponty's?" Foucault, as was characteristic of him, responded by questioning the question, remarking that there is a "fundamental skepticism presumed by the question." But he also added that he is more interested in the "basis" or foundation behind psychology and the "choice of its rationality."[73] His answer was a way of saying "neither," because he instead wanted to understand the structures and rationality which undergird psychology, both the scientific psychology

69. Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault, Interview by D. Trombadori," 246.

70. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 200.

71. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 203.

72. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 203.

73. Eribon recounts this story in his biography, and Foucault also alludes to this event in the opening to his article, "Le recherche scientifique et la psychologie." Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 43. Foucault, "La recherche scientifique et la psychologie," 166–7.

and the more phenomenological psychology. By putting aside the preconditions of psychology and the preconditions of phenomenology, he is able to consider the discipline of psychology from the outside.

Drew Ninnis argues that even though Foucault does not entirely "escape the influence of phenomenology" in the *History of Madness,* we can already see the way he turns to a more external approach to madness.[74] Ninnis explains that for Foucault:

> Foucault turns away from a phenomenological or psychoanalytic methodology, and towards the use of historical analysis. If one cannot come to know the forms of subjectivity, and therefore the various structures of the subject, *internally,* then one can attempt to analyze them *externally.* This is the genesis of Foucault's *History of Madness.*[75]

By working inside the discipline of psychology, phenomenology is stuck trying to understand the internal forms of the subject. Because Foucault feels that one is already assuming the subject in the study of the subject, he seeks a different approach which turns to the external structures which shape and form the conditions of madness over time.

Foucault's propensity to study psychology from the outside is also seen in his *Mental Illness and Psychology*:

> It is in this relation [the relation between Reason and Unreason], that, despite all the penury of psychology, is present and visible in the works of Hölderlin, Nerval, Roussel, and Artaud, and that holds out the promise to man that one day, perhaps, he will be able to be free of all psychology and be ready for the great tragic confrontation with madness.[76]

Notice, first, that it is in the relation of reason and unreason, the rational and nonrational, that we will actually be able to understand psychology. This relation, then, is of great importance for Foucault, even from the beginning, and informs his exterior approach to psychology. Second, it is clear that Foucault does not want to work within psychology, as he desires to be able to *free* us from psychology; psychology has become for him not a discipline to reform and improve, but rather something to be released from in order to move beyond. And third, this freedom will entail an encounter with the great tragic aspect of madness, a part of madness which cannot be ignored. Consequently, Foucault's work

74. Drew Ninnis, "Foucault and the Madness of Classifying Our Madness," *Foucault Studies* 21 (June 2016): 123.
75. Ninnis, "Foucault and the Madness of Classifying Our Madness," 123, my italics.
76. Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, 75.

pushes us to question the motives and structures behind psychology itself; we must look at the relations exterior to psychology, such as the relation between the rational and the nonrational, and the relation to the tragic, which create and prop up the discipline.

The contrast between critiquing psychology from the inside and critiquing it from the outside is illustrated in their differing opinions on the method of "existential analysis," a method of analyzing a mental disorder according to the overall experience of the patient (see Chapter 3, D.1). Due to his extensive research on many cases of psychopathology, Merleau-Ponty suggests that his variation of the method of existential analysis further enhances the understanding of psychopathological conditions as we have seen: "The study of a pathological case has thus allowed us to catch sight of a new mode of analysis—existential analysis—that goes beyond the classical alternatives between empiricism and intellectualism, or between explanation and reflection."[77] Merleau-Ponty sees existential analysis as aiding psychology by progressing beyond the incomplete methods of empiricism and intellectualism.

Foucault acknowledges the benefits of the method of existential analysis, but ultimately finds it an unsatisfactory method. Early on, in his introduction to Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*, Foucault finds some value in existential analysis, but even there, and even more so in his unpublished book on Binswanger's existential analysis written around this same time, Foucault expresses concerns for the deficiencies of the method (see Chapter 5, B). In a late interview, Foucault speaks of how the method of existential analysis helped him personally when he was working at the psychiatric hospitals and also remarks how it gives us excellent descriptions of madness. And yet Foucault's point to his audience is that he has "moved on to other things" than existential analysis and focused on a "critical historical analysis" of psychology instead.[78] He explains in further detail in his preface to *The History of Sexuality, Volume II* why he had to move on from existential analysis writing that it contains a theoretical weakness by focusing too much on individual experience and an ambiguous link to psychiatric practice by ignoring psychiatry and assuming it at the same time.[79]

Another difference in their relation to psychology can be seen in their approach to psychoanalysis, the method of drawing on hidden desires in the subconscious based on the works of Sigmund Freud. We discussed in Chapter 3 the way that Merleau-Ponty finds helpful insights in Freud's work and his method of psychoanalysis even though he does not fully

77. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 138.
78. Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault, Interview by D. Trombadori," 257.
79. Michel Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality, Volume II*," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 334. There are, in fact, three versions of a preface to his second volume of *The History of Sexuality*.

endorse Freud's approach to the human (see Chapter 3, D.2). Foucault, on the other hand, rejects psychoanalysis completely because he sees it as a failed, reductionist and causal attempt to explain madness and the human. Dreyfus, in his helpful article on Foucault's critique of psychoanalysis (and psychiatry in general), writes that Foucault dislikes the causal explanations offered by psychoanalysis because it makes subconscious desires the direct cause for disordered behavior. If psychoanalysis could change its causal language, Dreyfus suggests, perhaps Foucault would be more inclined to consider its insights. But as it stands, Foucault regards it as a "dangerous pseudoscience."[80]

For better or worse, Merleau-Ponty's and Foucault's divergent approaches to psychology have profoundly affected the application of their ideas in the psychological world. Due to Merleau-Ponty's explicit goal, as he stated in his lectures on "Human Sciences and Phenomenology" (1950–1952) at the Sorbonne, "to define a compatible psychology and philosophy," his unique phenomenological approach remains one of the primary and dominant methods for bringing philosophy and psychology together.[81] As a result, as I will chronicle in the next chapter (Chapter 7, D.1), Merleau-Ponty's insights into psychopathology have been used and are continuing to be used by some in the psychiatric and psychological community. This is because, as Engelland puts it:

> Merleau-Ponty takes phenomenology into dialogue with contemporary psychologists. He employs psychological studies to get his bearings, deploys phenomenological accounts to complement the psychological investigations, and poses genetic questions that parallel the developmental questions pursued by psychologists.[82]

Owing to his willingness to dialogue with psychologists and his ability to bring together insights from phenomenology and psychology, Merleau-Ponty provides an attractive model to those in both disciplines by writing in a way that can be more readily received and applied. Given the fact that the psychological world, especially in the United States, is still dominated by reductionistic scientific materialism, it is Merleau-Ponty and others who continue to speak to the inaccuracies of this model and encourage a more holistic approach.

As a result of Foucault's exterior relation to psychology, many have seen his writings as being part of the anti-psychiatry movement and

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80. Hubert L. Dreyfus, "Foucault's Critique of Psychiatric Medicine," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 12, no. 4 (1987): 321.

81. Merleau-Ponty, *Child Psychology and Pedagogy: The Sorbonne Lectures 1949–1952*, 337.

82. Engelland, *Ostension*, 69–70.

closing down a dialogue with those in the psychological community. Although his ideas produced fruit in medical sociology, as I will show in the next chapter (Chapter 7, D.2), they are mostly ignored by the psychological community. By claiming to want to "free" us from psychology, he can appear as burning a bridge to psychology such that his voice will not be heard by that community. His questioning of the discipline itself leads people to say that he can offer no help or compassion to those who are actually suffering from mental disorders. Matthews writes, "Foucault's depiction of mad people as effectively rebels against the established order diminishes the suffering which these conditions entail."[83] In other words, because Foucault seems to delegitimize the discipline of psychology by saying that its diagnoses are based on dynamic cultural standards, those labeled as having mental disorders become just outsiders to a certain cultural norm. This, in Matthew's view, does not express sympathy or help to those who feel that they are actually suffering from something real.

Many others have expressed their concerns about Foucault's inability to address the real problems in psychology today. Angelos Evangelou writes that Foucault is often criticized "for having no real interest in the mad and for offering no hope and no alternative for their treatment."[84] Deborah Lupton writes that Foucault appears to "neglect . . . the ways that medical practitioners and lay people . . . practice and experience medicine" and this leaves "little scope for resistance or acknowledgement of the 'lived experience' of the body."[85] Like Lupton, others have criticized Foucault for not providing a better account of resistance and change for those struggling with mental disorders.[86] Foucault's work in psychology, then, becomes not "a particularly helpful guide," as Peter Barham puts it, to address the modern needs of psychology.[87]

Although neither Merleau-Ponty nor Foucault is accepted by the mainstream psychological community, the fact remains that Merleau-Ponty's ideas have remained more palatable to those working in psychology who

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83. Eric Matthews, *Body-Subjects and Disordered Minds: Treating the 'Whole' Person in Psychiatry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.
84. Evangelou, *Philosophizing Madness from Nietzsche to Derrida*, 137.
85. Deborah Lupton, "Foucault and the Medicalisation Critique," in *Foucault, Health and Medicine*, ed. Robin Bunton and Alan Peterson (London: Routledge, 2002), 198.
86. See: Gillian Bendelow and Simon Williams, *The Lived Body: Sociological Themes, Embodied Issues* (London: Routledge, 1998), 35: Foucault's "inability to satisfactorily explain 'resistance.'" Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory*, 3rd ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2012), 84: "Foucault cannot say what about the body resists."
87. Peter Barham, "Foucault and the Psychiatric Practitioner," in Still and Velody, *Rewriting the History of Madness: Studies in Foucault's 'Histoire de la folie'*, 49. See also Richard Rorty's article where he praises many things about Foucault, but finds that he offers little prospect for social change: Richard Rorty, "Foucault, Dewey, Nietzsche," *Raritan* 9 (1990): 1–8.

are open to new perspectives. But Foucault, unfortunately, is very often dismissed entirely. Their opposition is seen in the use of different vocabulary about psychology and their acceptance and rejection of certain methods, such as existential analysis and psychoanalysis. With divisions in psychology between the applications of their ideas, their types of language and their view on methods, we can see how it may be difficult to match up their accounts on madness.

D. Conclusion

By looking at a detailed biographical record of the relationship between Merleau-Ponty and Foucault, we found that not only was Merleau-Ponty a prominent professor and mentor for many of Foucault's generation, but that Foucault described him as one of the most important figures in his early formation. While Foucault expressed admiration even toward the end of his life for Merleau-Ponty, we were still left wondering whether Merleau-Ponty's methodological influence was still there or whether that had been rejected along with phenomenology.

Next, we addressed overall problems in their respective methods dealing with their place and understanding of the human and history. For the human, we were reminded how the subject plays a central role for Merleau-Ponty but is bracketed for Foucault and that this comes out of a core difference in how they view the human: Merleau-Ponty appears to describe the human as possessing certain common qualities, whereas Foucault seems to paint the human as a changing concept, here one day and gone the next. However, Foucault offers a vivid reminder of the tragic element of the human that can be missed in the ideal accounts of phenomenology. In regard to history, while Foucault views historical analysis as essential to our understanding of any topic, Merleau-Ponty is often criticized for not offering a satisfying account of the role of the historical in human experience. As an example, their respective approaches to the discipline of psychology come from opposite directions, one from the outside and one from the inside, resulting in different conversations about how to deal with the actual practices of psychology.

We have left many questions unanswered and many problems unresolved as a result of this presentation. Unlike our other chapters, we are left without a proper conclusion, but rather an agenda for what we must do next in order to successfully offer a synthesized approach to madness according to Merleau-Ponty and Foucault.

7 Resolving the Problems

Uniting the Perspectives of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault

Merleau-Ponty and Foucault are known for their willingness to discuss unusual topics and to tackle them in unorthodox manners. Their philosophies are characterized by their alternative methods and their propensity to reflect on so-called "illegitimate topics" of philosophy, as De Lima Neto writes: both thinkers move themselves toward domains of thought which are often "without prestige in the philosophical tradition—such as madness, crime, sickness, prison, sex, painting, literature, poetry and film—and then turn to philosophy by starting from there."[1] Both see the benefit to starting with topics that are often ignored by the philosophical tradition, such as madness, in order to gain access to a deeper understanding of human reality.

Despite this shared love for the unconventional, the question remains from our previous chapter whether there can be a kind of synthesis to their methods, especially in regard to an approach to madness. To begin, I will first address the best strategy for harmonizing Merleau-Ponty and Foucault, which includes briefly chronicling the strategies attempted by others (A). Next, I will resolve the problems from the previous chapter: the place of the human subject (B), the place of history (C) and the role of psychology (D).

A. How to Synthesize Them: A Question of Strategy

In contemporary scholarship, a synthesis between Merleau-Ponty and Foucault is not typically attempted because of how each thinker is placed decidedly in his respective tradition: Merleau-Ponty in phenomenology and Foucault in post-modernism/post-structuralism. The line between these two traditions, especially in American scholarship, is usually not to

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1. De Lima Neto, "Entre la Fascination et le Rejet," 225, my translation: "Les deux auteurs se dirigent vers des domaines de pensée qui pourraient être qualifiés de 'philosophiquement illégitimes' . . . sans prestige de la tradition philosophique—la folie, le crime, la maladie, la prison, le sexe, la peinture, la littérature, la poésie, le cinéma—et basculent ainsi dans la philosophie à partir du dedans."

be crossed. This is not, however, as much the case in French scholarship because many of the scholars are part of the same lineage as Merleau-Ponty and Foucault and recognize the natural development which has taken place. A dialogue between Merleau-Ponty and Foucault is more readily accepted by French scholars, and a certain harmony between them is already presumed. Nevertheless, some scholars who have looked beyond these divisions have attempted to bring a synthesis to the thinking of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault. In this section, I will consider three strategies that attempt to bring a synthesis and describe why these strategies are not beneficial for this project. Next, I will present my strategy for synthesizing their ideas, which falls more in line with the French approach, and cite a few examples of those who have used a similar strategy successfully.

One strategy for aligning Merleau-Ponty and Foucault is to eventually *give superiority to one thinker over the other*. Eric Matthews, for example, finds helpful thoughts in both Merleau-Ponty and Foucault but ultimately sees Merleau-Ponty as offering a better version of humanism and a better approach to psychiatry.[2] In sociology, Gillian Bendelow and Simon Williams argue that Merleau-Ponty is better able to overcome body passivity and dualism than Foucault.[3] Bill Hughes, as well, argues that Foucault falls short in his account of the human body and needs the "corrective" of phenomenology.[4] On the other side, there are those who conclude that it is actually Foucault who must be given the priority over Merleau-Ponty. Most notably, Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow in their classic work, *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, chronicle Foucault's changes of thought according to an upward progression seeing Foucault as finally advancing past Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.[5] John Carvalho, who shows excellent ties between Foucault's and Merleau-Ponty's notions of the invisible/visible and art, reaches the conclusion that in the end Foucault's philosophy remains more open and less restrictive than Merleau-Ponty's.[6]

Another strategy is to *turn one philosopher into the other philosopher* in order to make them compatible. James Schmidt, for example, argues that Merleau-Ponty eventually saw phenomenology as "problematic" and moved beyond it in his later works, so that he did in fact become

2. Matthews, *The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty*, 108–9 and Matthews, *Body-Subjects and Disordered Minds: Treating the 'Whole' Person in Psychiatry*, 7–8.
3. Bendelow and Williams, *The Lived Body: Sociological Themes, Embodied Issues*, 8, 35, 51–5.
4. Hughes, "What Can a Foucauldian Analysis Contribute to Disability Theory?" 87
5. Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 16–43. Todd May, cited in the previous chapter, has a similar take: May, "Foucault's Relation to Phenomenology," 284–311.
6. John Carvalho, "The Visible and the Invisible: In Merleau-Ponty and Foucault," *International Studies in Philosophy* 25, no. 3 (1993): 37, 45.

like Foucault toward the end.[7] Along the same lines, Richard Cohen ultimately argues that the "difference is only one of strategy" between the "counter-traditional" school of philosophy of Merleau-Ponty and the "anti-philosophical" school of Foucault, because in the end, Merleau-Ponty breaks entirely with phenomenology and thus becomes what Foucault wanted all along (although Foucault does not realize it).[8] Another example is found in Johanna Oksala's work where she details how Merleau-Ponty can be constructed as a "non-foundationalist" in terms of the human body and in so doing, we can then make him compatible with Foucault's "open and ambiguous" understanding of the body.[9] On the other side, those, like David Matza and R.D. Laing, who ignore the beginnings of the archeological method of Foucault in the *History of Madness*, place him in the phenomenological camp, making his type of work the same as Merleau-Ponty's.[10]

The third strategy is accomplished by deciding that due to inherent problems in their philosophies *neither philosopher offers a satisfying philosophical description*. This is a "strategy" only in the sense that a dialogue was attempted to synthesize them at first, but is eventually given up, seeing it as a failed endeavor. The failure arises usually either because neither philosopher provides compelling answers or because one of the philosophers lacks an essential element in his philosophy. For the first reason, Chris Shilling, for example, a prominent thinker in the sociology of the body, explores Foucault (for structuralism), Merleau-Ponty (for phenomenology) and pragmatism and concludes that none of the theories "adequately" recognize the "body's implication in all these processes."[11] Falling in line with the second reason, although she finds much richness in Foucault's philosophy, Han-Pile remains dissatisfied at the end of her book with Foucault's lack of ontology to support his claims.[12] Angelos Evangelou, in contrast to Han-Pile, argues that Foucault's approach to madness falls short because he still holds on to some kind of fixed objects, such as reason and madness.[13] From another

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7. James Schmidt, *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Between Phenomenology and Structuralism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), 5, 160, 165.
8. Richard Cohen, "Merleau-Ponty, the Flesh and Foucault," in *Rereading Merleau-Ponty: Essays Beyond the Continental-Analytic Divide*, ed. Lawrence Hass and Dorothea Olkowski (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000), 290. See Gary Madison's definition of counter-traditional philosophy: Gary Madison, *Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty: A Search for the Limits of Consciousness* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1981), 293.
9. Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom*, 110–56 (quotations from 133, 151).
10. See again Matza, "Review of 'Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason'," 74; Laing, "The Invention of Madness," 76.
11. Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory*, 248.
12. Han, *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical*, 191. (Her last name is now Han-Pile.)
13. Evangelou, *Philosophizing Madness from Nietzsche to Derrida*, 148–9.

angle, Richard Rorty concludes that Foucault's lack of moral obligations leaves his philosophy unsatisfying.[14]

To be clear, these strategies certainly have their place in the practice of philosophy, and it must be noted that even in reference to this project there are many helpful insights that are found in the scholarship listed above on Merleau-Ponty's and Foucault's philosophies. Furthermore, just because a scholar provides an example of one strategy, I do not mean to imply that this is his or her overall philosophical method. But for our purposes, none of these three strategies is what we need for our particular goals. I will not be placing one philosopher's approach higher than another's, as in the first strategy, but instead find that each offers a valuable perspective, filling gaps in the other's account. And second, I will not turn one of the philosophers into the other, but instead respect their distinctions while still showing their harmony. De Lima Neto puts this well at the beginning of his essay by stating that his point is "not to make Merleau-Ponty Foucauldian, nor to make Foucault Merleau-Pontyean, but to explore their theoretical affinities as well as their distances."[15] Regarding the final strategy, it is also not helpful to this project because, while they are not without their faults, as I will point out in the final conclusion, I believe that both philosophers offer a joint cohesive and insightful approach to madness.

Instead, I will use a *complementary strategy* which includes the qualities listed above: it regards each philosopher as offering a valuable contribution, it respects the differences between the philosophers, while still finding unity between them, and it does not dismiss them due to imperfections in their final accounts. Due to the challenges mentioned in the previous chapter as well as the ones at the opening of this section, we are then not surprised that there are only two scholars, Nick Crossley (British sociologist) and Judith Revel (French philosopher) who have produced full books which attempt a complementary approach to the philosophies of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault: Crossley writes of their synthesis on the topic of subjectivity and Revel on the topic of history.[16]

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14. Rorty, "Foucault, Dewey, Nietzsche," 1–8.
15. De Lima Neto, "Entre La Fascination et Le Rejet," 221, my translation: ". . . n'est pas de rendre Merleau-Ponty foulcaldien, pas plus que Foucault merleau-pontyen, mais d'explorer leurs affinités théoriques ainsi que leurs distances."
16. Crossley, *The Politics of Subjectivity*; Revel, *Foucault avec Merleau-Ponty*. Although their subject matter differs from mine, I am deeply indebted to both of their works in offering a guide for the proper way in thinking about the synthesis of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault. I would also like to mention an unpublished dissertation which I found particularly helpful using this complementary approach: Levin, "Bodies and Subjects in Merleau-Ponty and Foucault: Towards a Phenomenological/Poststructuralist Feminist Theory of Embodied Subjectivity." Despite the different topic, the structure for the dissertation and the way she addressed the problems between Merleau-Ponty and Foucault served as a model for me.

There are several other articles, in addition to these two books, which also pursue a complementary approach and provide helpful examples on how to put these thinkers together.[17]

B. Place of the Human Subject

Merleau-Ponty explicitly cites the human subject as the necessary starting point for phenomenology, while Foucault wants to bracket the subject in order to explore more abstract discursive practices. I will argue that we can harmonize their two approaches to the subject, first, by showing their shared interest in *experience*, and second, by pointing to the implied subject of Foucault's philosophy. Lastly, I will discuss how Foucault's exposure of the tragic of the human fills in a necessary gap in Merleau-Ponty's approach.

1. *Shared Pursuit of Experience*

Beginning with the idea of experience, in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, we have already seen how Merleau-Ponty grounds and roots his understanding of psychopathology in both the primordial and reflective aspects of experience. This is because it is only through subjective experience that we have access to the world: "Universality and the world are at the core of individuality and of the subject . . . the world is the *field* of our experience."[18] Merleau-Ponty finds individuality centered on the universal and common structures of the world and we discover these structures through our experience of the world. Following Husserl's notion of the eidetic intuition, Merleau-Ponty's interest in "actual experience" is in how the forms or structures of that experience give us insight into human life itself.

In the *History of Madness*, we are reminded how Foucault speaks of "experience" over and over again and even opens his work with the

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17. Bimbenet, *Apres Merleau-Ponty: Études sur la fécundité d'une pensée*; Etienne Bimbenet, " 'La chasse sans prise': Merleau-Ponty et le project d'une science de l'homme sans l'homme," *Études philosophiques* no. 2 (2001): 239–59. Ian Burkitt, "Psychology in the Field of Being Merleau-Ponty, Ontology and Social Constructionism," *Theory & Psychology* 13, no. 3 (2003): 319–38. Licia Carlson, "The Human as Just an Other Animal: Madness, Disability and Foucault's Bestiary," in *Phenomenology and the Non-Human Animal: At the Limits of Experience* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 117–33. Todd May, "To Change the World, to Celebrate Life: Merleau-Ponty and Foucault on the Body," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 31, nos. 5–6 (2005): 517–31. Maren Wehrle, "Normative Embodiment: The Role of the Body in Foucault's Genealogy: A Phenomenological Re-Reading," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 47, no. 1 (2016): 56–71. Sabot, "Foucault et Merleau-Ponty: un dialogue impossible?" 317–32. De Lima Neto, "Entre la Fascination et le Rejet," 221–37.
18. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 428, italics his.

explicit purpose to discover the hidden experience of madness through his historical analysis.[19] Years later, he comments on how important the idea of experience is for his work on madness: "I was trying, after all, to describe a locus of experience from the point of view of the history of thought, even if my usage of the word 'experience' was very floating."[20] Despite the fact that his term "experience" was not well-defined, Foucault reiterates that he is primarily concerned with reconstructing the *experience* of madness in the *History of Madness*. But, what kind of experience is Foucault interested in and can this link him to Merleau-Ponty? Does Foucault also explore experience for the sake of finding general structures present in human life?

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault writes that he is not interested so much in "actual experience," which he defines as experience from a first-person perspective, but rather a kind of "pure experience."[21] He speaks of pure experience in the following way: "in every culture, between the use of what one might call the ordering codes and reflections upon order itself, there is the pure experience of order and of its modes of being."[22] Putting aside the subjective experience allows us to look between the external order of culture and the reflections on that order to find pure experience; pure experience is what is hidden in the gap, the structures that make up culture. While we cannot detail her argument here, Han-Pile claims that there is a certain harmonization between the approach to actual experience and the approach to pure experience found in Foucault's earlier introduction to Binswanger's *Dream and Existence* that responds specifically to his critiques of phenomenology in *The Order of Things*; here, as she puts it, we find the "only text where Foucault sees and develops the possibility of a productive partnership between phenomenology and anthropology."[23] Although Foucault writes this introduction over a decade before *The Order of Things*, she persuasively suggests that the solution offered in it should not be quickly dismissed, as it may shed light on how to rethink the relation between the empirical and the transcendental.[24]

Thinking in terms of the *History of Madness*, even if Foucault had not worked out the difference between actual and pure experience at the time, the distinction illuminates his approach because of the way he is

19. Foucault, *History of Madness*, xxvii, xxxii.
20. Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality, Volume II*," 336.
21. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 321. See Ch. 6, B.1 for a description of what Foucault means by "actual experience."
22. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xxi.
23. Han-Pile, "Phenomenology and Anthropology in Foucault's 'Introduction to Binswanger's Dream and Existence'," 19.
24. Han-Pile, "Phenomenology and Anthropology in Foucault's 'Introduction to Binswanger's Dream and Existence'," 22.

already focusing on the codes, regulations, institutions and structures surrounding madness, as opposed to the experience of an individual. We can see that, in his study of madness, Foucault still finds many benefits to an analysis of actual experience and does not deny that pure experience is ultimately grounded in actual experience. He seems to know that all experience must eventually mean experience of an individual even it is an experience shared or characterized by a culture or a society, but he feels that in order to return to the experience of the subject in a deeper way, we must put actual experience to the side and look at the analyses of pure experience.

Thus, I argue that Foucault's interest in "pure experience" is ultimately for the sake of giving us more insight into a subject's personal experience. He may not always return there explicitly, as Merleau-Ponty does, but he does tell us that this is the underlying goal: through a study of "forms of experience," we are ultimately brought back to an understanding of "thought," and "thought," he argues, is centered on the experience of the individual. In the preface to the *History of Sexuality, Volume II*, he writes, "There is no experience which is not a way of thinking and which cannot be analyzed from the point of view of the history of thought."[25] Any study of experience leads us back to a history of thought and thought has to be grounded in the individual: thought "must be analyzed in every manner of speaking, doing, or behaving in which the individual appears and acts as subject of learning, as ethical or juridical subject, as subject conscious of himself and others."[26] This progression from "abstract experience" to "history of thought" to "individual experience," drawn from his later work, may not have been clear in his mind during the writing of *History of Madness*, but it reveals that his motivation behind a study of madness is to display the structures of thought which affect individual cases of madness. I will prove this in a stronger way in the next point where we discuss the hidden presence of an implied subject in Foucault's work.

For now, though, in speaking of experience, we can see that Merleau-Ponty's and Foucault's interests in experience have the same goal: a greater understanding of the human subject, even if they take different routes toward it. Their differing approaches to human experience is similar to viewing something according to two different "temporal frames," as Crossley puts it. Merleau-Ponty focuses on the daily experience of the now, while Foucault steps back to look at long-term experience over time.[27] Both perspectives, the immediate and long-term, are needed in thinking about the experience of madness, because they provide a way to

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25. Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality, Volume II*," 335.
26. Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality, Volume II*," 334–5.
27. Crossley, "Body-Subject/Body-Power," 103.

reflect both on the personal effects of the disorder and the environment and conditions surrounding the disorder itself.

These perspectives converge ultimately in their shared understanding of the flesh (*le chair*). Flesh, as Merleau-Ponty later describes it in *The Visible and Invisible*, is a way of showing the unity found in human experience, the way the human has a "double belongingness to the order of the 'object' and to the order of the 'subject.' "[28] This double belongingness is seen in the unbroken connection that the human body has to the world; it is in this reciprocal relation of the body to the world that we have flesh. Merleau-Ponty writes, "The thickness of the body, far from rivaling that of the world, is on the contrary the sole means I have to go unto the heart of things, by making myself a world and by making them [myself and the world] flesh."[29]

Although the idea of flesh is more often attributed to Merleau-Ponty, Foucault also highlights the concept of flesh in his later works as a way to bring unity to human experience. In a more historical context, flesh, for Foucault, unifies the discursive practices of society which act on the human and the techniques of the self which are done for self-formation and self-creation. Foucault's understanding of flesh can be found, among other places, in his final volume of the *History of Sexuality* series, which is entitled *The Confessions of the Flesh*.[30] In this work, Foucault traces the Christian understanding of flesh to the modern age to show ways that one can relate to the self, especially in regard to sexuality. Interestingly, he ultimately arrives at seeing flesh, not as a technique of power, but as an experience, demonstrating again his fascination of tracing the themes in human experience, as Chevallier points out.[31]

Merleau-Ponty's and Foucault's descriptions of flesh arise out of different areas, but they both aim to illustrate a unity to human experience. Their complementarity is best seen in Carvalho's article demonstrating how their two conceptions of flesh—Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh and Foucault's genealogies of the flesh—are a folding over of one another, pointing to different aspects of the same reality.[32] Although we

28. Merleau-Ponty, " 'The Intertwining—The Chiasm' from *The Visible and the Invisible*," 254.
29. Merleau-Ponty, " 'The Intertwining—The Chiasm' from *The Visible and the Invisible*," 253.
30. More work needs to be done on Foucault's notion of the flesh as it is only recently that we have had access to this fourth volume. It was published in France in 2018 and just translated to English in 2021. Michel Foucault, *Les aveux de la chair* (Paris: Gallimard, 2018). Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. IV: Confessions of the Flesh.*
31. In a recent seminar hosted by the National University of Ireland Maynooth, Chevallier discussed this transition from seeing flesh as technique to flesh as experience in this final volume of the history of sexuality: Chevallier, "The Genesis of Foucault's Confessions of the Flesh: The Hypothesis of the Archives" (March 11, 2021). This paper will soon be published in the Maynooth Philosophical Papers.
32. John Carvalho, "Folds in the Flesh: Merleau-Ponty/Foucault," in Hass and Olkowski's *Rereading Merleau-Ponty: Essays Beyond the Continental–Analytic Divide*, 297–8, 308–9.

do not have the space to explore this further, their shared concept of flesh provides a further synthesis to their respective approaches.[33]

2. Foucault's Implied Subject

In addition to the link of experience, Foucault can be harmonized with Merleau-Ponty on the human subject by recognizing that underneath all the historical structures, there is an implicit subject lurking below his work. Although Foucault does not feel the need to acknowledge it, it seems clear that he "presupposes" a subject in order to make his work possible.[34] Crossley writes, "The very notion of rules, as Foucault uses it, presupposes a situated subject and intersubjectivity. Situated subjectivity and intersubjectivity provide a necessary, unexplicated background for Foucault's foreground or figural concerns."[35] Foucault never throws out Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological training, which he clearly admired and cherished as we chronicled in the previous chapter, but instead uses it as a launching pad to start his own new project. He does not feel the need to explicate this background because he knows that the phenomenological subject has already been laid out by Merleau-Ponty and others, and he often cites the benefits of these phenomenological descriptions. But in moving on to new methods, he maintains the spirit of the phenomenological quest, which at the heart is a philosophical inquiry into the meaning of the human subject, although he radicalizes this quest by bracketing the subject itself. But it is *through the radicalization of the subject* that he believes we will in fact learn more about the human subject itself.

Foucault's ultimate concern about the human subject is seen in the way he speaks about his past and current work in his late reflections and interviews. For example, in the first afterword to Dreyfus and Rabinow's *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, he writes:

> Finally I have sought to study—it is my current work—the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject. . . . Thus, it is not power, but the subject, which is the general theme of my research.[36]

To broaden this claim, I would say that in all of Foucault's work he seeks to study how the human being *is turned into a subject* by historical and cultural structures and the way the human *turns himself and herself into a*

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33. For further thoughts on connections of flesh and madness for Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and other French thinkers, see Emmanuel Falque, "The Discarnate Madman," trans. Sarah Horton, *Journal for Continental Philosophy of Religion* 1, no. 1 (April 2019): 90–117.

34. Crossley, "The Politics of the Gaze," 404.

35. Crossley, *The Politics of Subjectivity*, 159–60.

36. Michel Foucault, "Afterword: The Subject and Power," in Dreyfus and Rabinow's *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 208–9.

subject by techniques of the self. The point is that in both instances, it is the creation and the understanding of the subject that form the general theme of his research. In the discussion on the body, even Dreyfus and Rabinow acknowledge that "the project is the same" for Merleau-Ponty and Foucault as both are concerned about the subject, its treatment and construction.[37] It is the "problematization of the human" that motivates Merleau-Ponty's and Foucault's work, as Bimbenet points out, and Foucault follows Merleau-Ponty's example on this, walking in his shadow. Bimbenet writes, "It is difficult not to notice the presence of Merleau-Ponty like a shadow at the background of these different analyses [of Foucault]."[38] While Foucault will explore it in a different way, he is trying to answer the same questions as Merleau-Ponty on how to understand the place of the human.

Recognizing an implied subject behind Foucault's work helps answer two other questions that we addressed in the previous chapter: the question of the lived vs. inscribed body and the question of a common humanity. First, in relation to the human body, we discussed the problem of reconciling the lived body of Merleau-Ponty with the inscribed body of Foucault. But by acknowledging that the lived bodily experience is always underneath the inscriptions placed on the body, we can see how this problem can be overcome. At the end of Foucault's *History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, Foucault writes of his interest in the "history of bodies" where the "biological" (lived) and the "historical" (inscribed) are "bound together."[39] Although we cannot detail it here, it should be noted that Crossley, May and Sabot have done excellent work in showing the links between Merleau-Ponty and Foucault on the body.[40] The point here is that Foucault does not detail the inscriptions and discourses placed on the body in order to show that humans are determined and without agency. It is rather the opposite: by focusing on the inscribed body, he brings awareness to how the body is externally shaped which then opens a space for us, in our lived bodies, to resist and push back.

37. Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 167.
38. Bimbenet, " 'La chasse sans prise,' " 252, my translation: "il est difficile de ne pas apercevoir, à l'arrière-plan de ces différentes analyses, la présence et comme l'ombre portée de Merleau-Ponty."
39. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 152.
40. Crossley's article shows how one can overcome the lived and inscribed body problem because of the complementary motivations of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault. Crossley, "Body-Subject/Body-Power," 99–116. May brings together Merleau-Ponty's idea of flesh with Foucault's techniques of power. May, "To Change the World, to Celebrate Life: Merleau-Ponty and Foucault on the Body," 517–31. Sabot demonstrates the link by comparing Merleau-Ponty's lived body and Foucault's body utopian (according to Foucault's late essay, *Le corps utopique*). Sabot, "Foucault et Merleau-Ponty: un dialogue impossible?" 327–32.

In a rather beautiful statement in a 1982 interview, just two years before his death, Foucault speaks of his desire to show people the significance of their human freedom:

> My role . . . is to show people that they are much freer than they feel. . . . All my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence. They show the arbitrariness of institutions and show which space of freedom we can still enjoy and how many changes can still be made.[41]

Freedom, for Foucault, is the power of self-creation, the power to "be who you are," as Nietzsche writes. His analyses are to remind us of our freedom not to depict humans as trapped and determined. His goal is to first make us aware of our situation, cognizant of the hidden powers pressing down on us, so that we can escape and free ourselves.

   An implied subject also addresses the second question about the sense of common humanity. While Foucault exposes how things taken for granted about the human change over time, this does not mean that we can say nothing universal about the human. In fact, it is through bracketing the subject and analyzing "forms of experience," that we can then find certain "universal structures" for the human. Citing again the preface to the *History of Sexuality, Volume II*, he states this as a general principle for his method: "Singular forms of experience may perfectly well harbor universal structures; they may well not be independent from the concrete determinations of social existence."[42] In other words, through an exposition of abstract experience, we can recognize patterns in the human world; these are not universal patterns in the sense that they are transcendent or separate from the world, but they are patterns that reveal the structures of the world that are tied to a dynamic concrete existence. Just as Merleau-Ponty finds common truths about the human by studying the subject's experience, Foucault finds common structures through his analysis of cultural experience; both approaches locate common reference points in human experience.

3. Foucault's Aid: Properly Placing the Tragic

In Chapter 1, we discussed how Merleau-Ponty points to the loss that takes place in experiences of madness. He speaks specifically of the loss that comes from disordered behavior on the level of an individual's experience of the world (see Chapter 1, C.1). With Schneider, for

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41. Foucault, "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault, October 25, 1982, Interview by Rux Martin," 10–11.
42. Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality, Volume II*," 335.

example, he observes the loss of relationships, including any kind of romantic relationship, because of the disorder of psychic blindness.[43] But Merleau-Ponty's analysis on the loss from madness stops here at how the individual misses out on experiencing fully certain aspects of the world. Due to this focus on the individual, he overlooks the tragic of the nonrational. First, he does not have the larger picture of madness *in society* where there is a kind of suffering and tragedy that is felt by a whole community. Second, he also does not address the link between madness and evil, such as madness leading to violent actions of hurting oneself or others. At the end of Merleau-Ponty's account of madness, we are left with questions such as: Why is there such a stigma about the diagnosis of madness? Why do patients often complain of intense guilt when no condemnation has been explicitly expressed? What brings about the link between madness and acts of violence?

I believe that because of Foucault's bracketing of the individual experience, he is able to see madness through a wider historical lens and this allows him to detect the general tragic character that can come from the nonrational. Foucault offers his aid to Merleau-Ponty by filling in this gap in Merleau-Ponty's understanding of human; the human is not just a representation of ideal capacities, but also a reminder of the tragic elements of the world. In his historical study, Foucault illustrates how madness is often felt by a community as a kind of suffering, an intense pain, an ever-present anxiety, a brokenness without hope and even a sign of death. Think about the examples of the nonrational in art given in Chapter 4: from the art of Matthias Grünewald, Georges de La Tour and Francisco Goya, we found the displays of the nonrational in madness not as interesting types of behavior, but as a representation of things deeply disturbing, an evidence of great suffering and possible evil. Due to taking a step away from the individual, Foucault exposes the tragic side of the nonrational which acts as a heavy burden pulling a community down and reminding them that things remain amiss in this world.

Foucault shows us that we cannot just stay in the realm of the individual when we think about suffering and brokenness. To fully understand the depth of human loss and suffering, we must see the pain according to the larger trends of society to have a sense of its gravity. Yes, tragedy is felt on an individual level, but the weight of it can often feel disproportionate to an individual's experience; the historical lens shows how the weight of tragedy for an individual can also be due to a communal sense of suffering and loss. Think of it in terms of a village who has been infected with a disease. With the loss of one person to this disease, the tragedy is felt not just by the family of the individual but the whole village, because it represents the pain present among all of them. In the

43. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 160.

same way, the smaller scale tragedy of an individual is linked to the tragedy or disease that infects all of human existence, because it goes beyond the personal circumstances of the individual but points to a larger reality. With the awareness of the larger reality, we can understand how an individual's experience of the tragic can arise out of it.

We are reminded of the link of madness to the immoral irrational, one of our types of the nonrational, that can represent an evil quality to the human experience (Chapter 4, B.1). For example, the wider historical lens can provide insight into the link between mental disorders and crime. In a recent study, it was shown that there has been a 76 percent increase in forensic patients in state hospitals in the United States from 1999 to 2016; "forensic patients" are patients who have been found "not guilty" to a crime due to insanity.[44] During my tour at the Austin State Hospital, for example, the premises contained some similarities to a prison because 65 percent of their patients are forensic patients. The high security level was noticeable during my visit with police present on the campus and a series of locked doors in order to access most of the campus, including staff offices, hallways in buildings and patient areas.[45]

By considering concrete examples in this way, the archaeological approach reveals the tremors of a deep disturbance below the surface. The brokenness in social institutions is not just an interesting anomaly, but it is a sign of the tragic unrest, the existential anxiety, which underlies all human experience. With Foucault's help, we attune our understanding of human experience to include both the strengths and weaknesses present in the human subject.

C. Place of History

The second problem to resolve is the division between a perceptionally situated approach and a historically situated approach. In our previous chapter, we encountered the criticism that in privileging the perceptionally situated approach, Merleau-Ponty devalues the historical. Notice, however, that the concern is not that Merleau-Ponty is anti-historical nor that he has put forward a poor account of the role of history, but more that, unlike Foucault, he leaves us an incomplete account of how the subject is historically situated. My purpose in this section is to address this problem by showing the value that Merleau-Ponty clearly places on the historical and to argue that, while he died before expanding on it,

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44. Amanda Wik, Vera Hollen, and William H. Fisher, "Forensic Patients in State Psychiatric Hospitals: 1999–2016," *From a Series of Ten Briefs Entitled: What Is the Inpatient Bed Need if You Have a Best Practice Continuum of Care?* Assessment #9 (National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, August 2017), 8, www.nri-inc.org/media/1318/tac-paper-9-forensic-patients-in-state-hospitals-final-09–05–2017.pdf.
45. Austin State Hospital, *Personal Tour and Interview*, August 24, 2017.

it is precisely his openness to history which allows Foucault to pursue it further. To close, I will argue that it is Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological patterns which fill in a necessary gap in Foucault's historical account.

1. Merleau-Ponty's Openness to History

Because of Merleau-Ponty's dominant theme of perception, especially in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, it can be easy to overlook the value that he places on situating the subject in history. But he leaves key reminders for us on the significance of history that we would do well to observe. In his discussion of sexuality, he reminds us that when we try to define the human, we cannot think only in terms of the empirical, because "man is a historical idea, not a natural species."[46] To truly understand the human, we cannot offer a description of the body only, but we must include our relation to history, because there is a meaning (*sens*) to history itself. History does not contain only one meaning, for "history has no single signification," he writes, but represents complex layers of meaning inter-related with each other.[47] The meaning is found in the relation between us and history: "we give history its sense [*sens*] but not without history offering us that same sense [*qu'elle nous le propose*]."[48] To understand our relation to history, we find that we provide history meaning, but that this meaning is also presented and proposed (from the French *proposer*) to us by history itself.

Merleau-Ponty closes his *Phenomenology of Perception* with a powerful demonstration of the importance of our relation to history:

> I am a psychological and historical structure. . . . And yet, I am free, not in spite of or beneath these motivations, but rather by their means. For that meaningful life, that particular signification of nature and history that I am, does not restrict my access to the world; it is rather my means of communication with it. It is by being what I am at present, without any restrictions and without holding anything back, that I have a chance at progressing.[49]

Through our awareness of being both a psychological and historical being, we can be free to be who we are, to remove the boundaries sometimes blocking our way and to progress toward greater freedom and greater understanding of the human experience. With Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on freedom arising *by means of* these motivations, we can already see

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46. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 174, translation slightly altered.
47. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 177.
48. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 475; French: 513–4.
49. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 482.

echoes of these words in Foucault's statements in the interview quoted in the last section where he expresses that all of his analyses have been for the purpose of showing people that they are "freer than they feel" and creating spaces of freedom so that people can initiate change.[50]

After the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty continues to point toward the importance of the historical structure of the human. In his notes in *Parcours deux* of 1951, he writes that history reveals truth about the human in the same way as perception: "In history as in perception, there is a seed of truth . . . our experience is a becoming toward the truth."[51] Contra the criticism, he does not appear to be privileging perception over history, for although he spends more time articulating the truths from perception, he finds that both are an important part of human experience. He makes a point, for example, to include an analysis of cultural norms in his account of child psychology. Based on her study and translation of Merleau-Ponty's lectures on child psychology, Welsh summarizes: "What Merleau-Ponty's model offers is a manner in which to focus on the activity of the individual as part of this human order, including its cultural norms."[52] Merleau-Ponty's model focuses on the activity of the individual, such as the activity of a child, but it also draws from cultural norms to understand their impact on the individual as well.

In "Materials for a Theory of History," Merleau-Ponty displays even more his interest in history by presenting principles needed for a theory of history; these principles resonate profoundly with Foucault's philosophical project (and as we mentioned in the previous chapter, it is possible that Foucault was present for these lectures, but it remains unconfirmed):

> The proper starting point is not from the alternatives of understanding and history or spirit and matter, but from those of history as an unknown god—the good or evil genius—and history as the milieu of life. History is a milieu of life if it can be said that there is, between theory and practice, between culture and man's labor, between epochs and individual lives, between planned actions and the time in which they mature, an affinity that is neither fortuitous nor grounded in an omnipotent logic.[53]

50. See again Foucault, "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault, October 25, 1982, Interview by Rux Martin," 10–11.
51. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "1951: XX Titres et Travaux, Projet d'enseignement, 2. L'histoire et l'intersubjectivité," in *Parcours deux: 1951–1961* (Paris: Verdier, 2001), 34, my translation: "Dans l'histoire comme dans la perception, il y a une semence de vérité . . . notre expérience est un devenir vers la vérité."
52. Welsh, *The Child as Natural Phenomenologist: Primal and Primary Experience in Merleau-Ponty's Psychology*, 15.
53. Merleau-Ponty, " 'Materials for a Theory of History,' from 'Themes from the Lectures at the Collège de France, 1952–1960'," 96–7.

Merleau-Ponty suggests that a theory of history should not begin from the juxtaposition of two themes, but rather with something which has been given mysterious meaning, as if from an unknown god, *and* with a recognition that it is part of the milieu of the human life. This theory finds something in between all the different parts of life, a kind of order or unity ("an affinity") that is not put together by chance ("neither fortuitous") nor by determinism ("nor grounded in omnipotent logic"). While Merleau-Ponty usually associates a person's milieu more specifically with the relation of the body to the world, here he speaks of history as the "*milieu* of life." This is the type of milieu that Foucault is particularly concerned: he searches for the social structures which shape and construct human life.[54] Merleau-Ponty follows up with some of these reflections on history in his 1955 *Adventures in the Dialectic* where he offers another example for a beginning exploration into the importance of historical and cultural norms which Foucault takes up for his project.[55]

To review, I agree with the critics that Merleau-Ponty does not follow through completely with his bold claims about the value of history in human experience. But this is exactly where the complementarity with Foucault proves to be helpful. Taught the importance of historical significance by Merleau-Ponty, Foucault demonstrates the validity of these claims through his further analysis of historical structures in many different areas. We remember his remarks in the interview cited in the previous chapter saying that it was the expansive nature of Merleau-Ponty's thought which allowed his own work to flourish. He comments that because Merleau-Ponty "extended existential discourse into specific domains," his "own choices ripened within that intellectual panorama."[56] Revel details the way Foucault's work on history grows out of Merleau-Ponty's ideas by showing how they both see history as an essential aspect to the milieu of human experience and how both understand history according to Merleau-Ponty's extended notion of chiasm, a way of bridging the gap between two sides.[57]

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54. See Aimi Haimraie's helpful discussion on Foucault's milieu here: Aimi Hamraie, "Historical Epistemology as Disability Studies Methodology: From the Models Framework to Foucault's Archaeology of Cure," *Foucault Studies* no. 19 (June 2015): 129.
55. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Adventures in the Dialectic*, trans. Joseph J. Bien (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973). Revel draws on this work to demonstrate how the topic of history links Merleau-Ponty and Foucault: Revel, *Foucault avec Merleau-Ponty*.
56. Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault, Interview by D. Trombadori," 247.
57. Revel, *Foucault avec Merleau-Ponty*, introduction, Chs. 3, 6 and conclusion.

2. Merleau-Ponty's Aid: Rooting Historical Structures in Phenomenological Patterns

In the spirit of Merleau-Ponty's openness to history, Foucault offers us a persuasive and compelling account of the history of madness that reveals how structures in each age shape and construct the meaning of madness. The institutional practices regarding madness arise from the current perceptions of the rational and nonrational and form these historical structures that set the boundaries for madness. It is precisely this unity which Foucault brings to hundreds of historical events and practices that makes his work so compelling; he builds a case for the hidden links and connections behind them that ultimately construct madness. Nevertheless, Foucault never gives us a foundation for what provides the unity to these structures; he only demonstrates what they are and how they function. In my view, as with the implied subject, the truths of the perceptional world are already there for Foucault, already assumed, and while he does not acknowledge them explicitly, they form a support for his historical analysis.[58]

Historical structures can then give us a helpful understanding for *how* madness has been defined and changed over history, but we are still left asking *why* it has happened in this way and *why* there is this apparent unity. If we are given only the *how*, then the description can feel arbitrary: there is no reason for why madness is based on these particular structures as opposed to any other.[59] If mental illness depends on the changing perception of the nonrational, then it seems that madness is nothing at all in itself but whatever society at the moment decrees that it is. This leads us to ask whether a diagnosis of a mental disorder is entirely arbitrary, subject to the whims of the historical forces of the time. Despite its cohesion, Foucault's approach to madness can feel arbitrary because of its lack of grounding for its claims and its inability to root the ideas of the rational and the nonrational in anything other than societal perceptions.

When set in the context of phenomenology, the historical structures are no longer arbitrary as there is a unity and a logic to them that can be seen when linked to common patterns of human experience. To do this, Merleau-Ponty brings us "some general truths," as Welsh calls them, "about human development and intersubjective

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58. Some of the material in this section will be included in my chapter in the upcoming volume: Hannah Lyn Venable, "The Need for Merleau-Ponty in Foucault's Account of the Abnormal," in Welsh and Bredlau, Forthcoming.
59. See Licia Carlson's similar argument when discussing the idea of animalization of those with disabilities: Carlson, "The Human as Just an Other Animal: Madness, Disability and Foucault's Bestiary," 128.

life," which are already laden in human experience.[60] Merleau-Ponty writes:

> There is no history where the course of events is a series of episodes without unity, or where it is a struggle already decided in the heaven of ideas. History is there where there is a logic *within* contingence, a reason *within* unreason, where there is a historical perception which, like perception in general, leaves in the background what cannot enter the foreground but seizes the lines of force as they are generated and actively leads their traces to a conclusion.[61]

History should not be seen as already determined nor as a random splattering of events, but can be understood according to a certain unity, an open logic and a relation between the rational and the nonrational. The events of history and the experience of perceiving the world are linked because the unity and meaning found in history mirrors the unity and meaning found in perception.

To put this in general terms, social constructionism is enhanced, as Ian Burkitt writes, when undergirded by an ontological understanding of the world because "the field of Being . . . is also a perceptual field in which history emerges from and is always embedded in the sensible world."[62] Burkitt further argues that Merleau-Ponty shows "that the very possibility of meaning that is linguistically articulated by social groups must already be present in the more archaic image-schematic structures of corporeal perception."[63] Under this perspective, historical processes come out of experiences that are already implanted in the perceptional world, revealing that the significance of history can be found in bodily experience. For example, we can see the roots of the social desire to set up some form of government in the bodily experience of order, both in the organization of the body itself with all the organs functioning together and in the system for how the body relates to the outside world. The expression of order in society can be more deeply understood when paired with the orderly way the body encounters the world. In a similar way, the historical structures of madness are better supported when traced back to the bodily experiences of madness itself.

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60. Talia Welsh, "Translator's Introduction," in Merleau-Ponty, *Child Psychology and Pedagogy: The Sorbonne Lectures 1949–1952*, XIII.
61. Merleau-Ponty, "Materials for a Theory of History,' from 'Themes from the Lectures at the Collège de France, 1952–1960','' 97–8, italics his.
62. Burkitt, "Psychology in the Field of Being Merleau-Ponty, Ontology and Social Constructionism," 327.
63. Burkitt, "Psychology in the Field of Being Merleau-Ponty, Ontology and Social Constructionism," 328.

In Chapter 1, we demonstrated how to root historical structures in phenomenological patterns in two ways: first, the historical structure of madness being defined by the cultural perception of the rational is supported by the phenomenological patterns of rationally analyzing and understanding an individual's experience of madness and, second, the historical structure of madness signaling cultural displays of the nonrational is confirmed in the way nonrational plays an essential part in all human experience (Chapter 1, A.1–2). This continual search to understand displays of madness is not arbitrary but comes out of the phenomenological principle that madness is accessible to our understanding and is not devoid of meaning; madness is an integral part of human experience, arising out of it and being central to it. The reversibility of the flesh, which shows the integration of the rational and the nonrational in the human, explains why Foucault has both the rational and the nonrational, even in their variations, present in each age because it is in their balance and unity that we can make sense of human experience. Even in the contemporary times, where the priority is placed on the rational, the constant presence of the nonrational in behavior reveals why elements of the nonrational cannot be forgotten in history, but must still break through in "explosions" of madness, as Foucault describes.[64] With Merleau-Ponty's help, we can ground the observations of history in the general truths of phenomenological experience, providing an ontological structure for this united approach to madness.

D. Role of Psychology

Even with the complementarity seen in their approaches to the human and to history, we must resolve the final problem: the difference in their relationships to psychology. To do so, I will first sketch Merleau-Ponty's influence on psychology and then Foucault's influence on medical sociology and disability studies. To close, I will argue that, although not accepted yet, Foucault's ideas can offer practical insights to psychology, just as they have in other medical areas, especially when they are paired with Merleau-Ponty's rising influence in psychology.

1. Merleau-Ponty's Influence in Psychology

Phenomenological psychology certainly does not begin with Merleau-Ponty, as the roots of the philosophical interest in psychology began with philosophers, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, and key psychiatrists, Karl Jaspers, Ludwig Binswanger and Kurt Goldstein.[65] Karl Jaspers

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64. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 28.
65. As we chronicle the history of phenomenological psychology, I will list the year that the major work of the scholar is published in parenthesis in the text. This represents

(originally published in 1913), for example, questions the empirical model of psychology in his *General Psychopathology*, stating that the "exact knowledge of the brain" is not enough to understand cases of psychopathology.[66] Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty is constantly relying on psychiatric studies and notes from Goldstein (1920) and Binswanger (1930) as we see throughout his texts.[67]

In the 1950s, many shared Merleau-Ponty's concerns about psychology, such as Rollo May (1958), who writes in his *Existence* that there are "serious gaps [which] exist in our way of understanding of human beings. These gaps may well seem most compelling to psychotherapists, confronted as they are . . . with the sheer reality of persons in crisis whose anxiety will not be quieted by theoretical formulae."[68] Herbert Spiegelberg (1972) carefully documents this new movement in his historical and geographical review entitled *Phenomenology in Psychology and Psychiatry.* In his work, Spiegelberg writes that Merleau-Ponty was the French phenomenologist who "had the greatest stake and record in psychology" and who has "permeated the work of non-philosopher psychologists much more widely" than others like Sartre.[69]

Moving to the 1990s, in France, for example, there is Henri Maldiney (1991), as a friend and successor to Merleau-Ponty at the University of Lyon, who builds on Merleau-Ponty's own understanding of madness and expands it in new directions, arguing that mental disorders must be understood as a distinctively human possibility.[70] In the English scholarship, there is Drew Leder's work (1984, 1992), for example, which specifically uses Merleau-Ponty's account of the lived body to show the

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the *original* year of publication, but the footnote will cite the year of the most recent edition.

66. Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*, Vol. 2, trans. J. Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 459. See the following for a helpful discussion on how Jaspers gestures toward holistic care in psychology, but that he does not take the time to develop it fully: Matthew Broome, Robert Harland, Gareth S. Owen, and Argyris Stringaris, *The Maudsley Reader in Phenomenological Psychiatry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), viii.

67. Kurt Goldstein, *The Organism: A Holistic Approach to Biology Derived from Pathological Data in Man* (New York: Zone Books, 2000). Ludwig Binswanger, *Dream and Existence*, in Hoeller, *Dream and Existence*, 81–105. For an excellent historical overview on phenomenological psychiatry, please see Scott D. Churchill, "Phenomenological Psychology," in *Encyclopedia of Psychology, Volume 6*, ed. A.E. Kazdin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 162–8.

68. May, "The Origins and Significance of the Existential Movement in Psychology," 3. See mention of Merleau-Ponty in the third chapter of *Existence*: Henri F. Ellenberger, "A Clinical Introduction to Psychiatric Phenomenology and Existential Analysis," in May, Ernest, and Ellenberger, *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*, 97.

69. Herbert Spiegelberg, *Phenomenology in Psychology and Psychiatry* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 25, 27.

70. Maldiney, *Penser l'homme et la folie*, 11: "Or cette thématisation ne nous est compréhensible que parce qu'elle aussi est une possibilité humaine."

shortcomings in the medical empirical model.[71] S. Kay Toombs (1992), as a multiple sclerosis patient herself, writes a book describing how Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology offers the best approach to illness and care, because it bridges the "divide between patient and doctor through a notion of their common humanity."[72]

Most recently, Matthews (2004, 2007) has done extensive work showing the continued relevance of Merleau-Ponty's thought to psychology; he concludes that "mental disorder can then be conceived as problems in human beings in the world, which other human beings can understand in virtue of their common humanity, and can help with on the basis of that understanding."[73] Gallagher (2005), in his detailed work applying Merleau-Ponty's philosophy to cognitive science, argues in a similar way: although it is complex, an embodied vocabulary actually helps us understand many pathologies of human experience.[74]

It is not just philosophers like Matthews and Gallagher, but also psychiatrists and psychologists who are recently turning to Merleau-Ponty for a new model in psychology. Louis Sass, clinical psychologist, Jennifer Whiting, philosopher, and Josef Parnas, doctor of psychiatry (2000) argue that because of the "distinct bias towards the natural sciences" in psychology, an open dialogue between philosophy and psychopathology, including the phenomenological approach of Merleau-Ponty, provides fresh insights into the suffering in mental conditions.[75] Andrew Felder and Brent Dean Robbins (2011) look at other conditions, such as phantom limb syndrome and anasognosia (ignoring a paralyzed limb), and come to similar conclusions, saying:

> Merleau-Ponty's interpretations . . . have stood the test of time. Contemporary neuroscience found additional support for his original insights. Research makes evident that neither the phantom limb nor anasognosia [as well as other disorders] can be interpreted from a

71. Drew Leder, "A Tale of Two Bodies: The Cartesian Corpse and the Lived Body," in *The Body in Medical Thought and Practice*, ed. Drew Leder (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 126. Also see Drew Leder, "Medicine and Paradigms of Embodiment," *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 9 (1984): 29–43.

72. This is from a helpful summary of the book at Rothfield, "Living Well and Health Studies," 227. See also S. Kay Toombs, *Meaning of Illness: A Phenomenological Account of the Different Perspectives of Physician and Patient* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992).

73. Matthews, "Merleau-Ponty's Body-Subject and Psychiatry," 198. This article is followed by his book: Matthews, *Body-Subjects and Disordered Minds: Treating the 'Whole' Person in Psychiatry* where he expands on his conclusions.

74. Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 244–6.

75. Louis A. Sass, Jennifer Whiting, and Josef Parnas, "Mind, Self and Psychopathology: Reflections on Philosophy, Theory and the Study of Mental Illness," *Theory & Psychology* 10, no. 1 (2000): 89.

purely physiological or "psychological" perspective, but can only be clearly understood when the body is seen as indivisibly situated in a world of personal and cultural significances which call forth pragmatic action.[76]

According to these two psychologists, Merleau-Ponty's interpretations of psychopathology have continued to be relevant to present day mental health care.

Support for Merleau-Ponty's approach also comes from the editors of *The Maudsley Reader*, Matthew Broome, Robert Harland, Gareth S. Owen and Argyris Stringaris (2012), who are associated with the Maudsley Hospital, one of the largest psychiatric training institutions in the UK. They published their reader so that their fellow psychiatrists could be exposed to a more holistic account of psychiatry, as seen in Merleau-Ponty and others. The editors describe the frustration of the psychiatrist when he discovers experientially the inadequacy of the empirical medical model: "he soon becomes aware that the neuroscientific hypotheses—that underpin psychiatry as part of medicine—lack predictive and discriminatory power."[77] By contrast, the editors point to an "insistence on the irreducibility of the human and the approach to the 'whole being'" that arises out of phenomenology, arguing that "phenomenology is not resorted to because biology has not advanced enough, [but] it is rather seen as essential in its own right if justice is to be done to the patient as a human being."[78] Even if future biological discoveries can explain with greater precision the neurological activity of a mental disorder, we still need to see the person as a human being, who is struggling with something that arises out of human experience and can only be understood in connection to the structures of human experience.

Welsh (2013), in her recent work on child psychology, also validates this approach to psychopathology. She writes that with Merleau-Ponty's holistic understanding of behavior, we can see how "abnormal and pathological behaviors reveal a restructuration, usually not a successful one, of the subject's behavior due to a psychological or physical injury . . . it affects a disturbance in an entire mode of being-in-the-world."[79] Welsh is confirming Merleau-Ponty's account that psychopathological conditions are best understood as a restructuring of the world, rather than

76. Felder and Robbins, "A Cultural-Existential Approach to Therapy: Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Embodiment and Its Implications for Practice," 371.
77. Broome, Harland, Owen, and Stringaris, *The Maudsley Reader in Phenomenological Psychiatry*, viii.
78. Broome, Harland, Owen, and Stringaris, *The Maudsley Reader in Phenomenological Psychiatry*, 272.
79. Welsh, *The Child as Natural Phenomenologist: Primal and Primary Experience in Merleau-Ponty's Psychology*, 14.

a creation of alternative, inaccessible structures. Furthermore, the recent rise in the approach called *Humanistic Psychology* owes much of its influence to the work of Merleau-Ponty, as well as other "existential phenomenologist" pioneers. In *The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology*, for example, Scott D. Churchill and Frederick J. Wertz (2015) trace the history of the phenomenological movement and offer ways that it continues to provide helpful methods to the psychological world, especially in humanistic psychology.[80]

And lastly, two other recent works of scholarship confirm this account: Philipa Rothfield (2014) and Emmanuel de Saint Aubert (2016).[81] Rothfield argues that Merleau-Ponty's approach to pathology, as "a lived corporeal phenomenon," allows healthcare practitioners to see the broader context for a patient's illness.[82] Written in consultation with many in the French psychological community, Saint Aubert writes that it is Merleau-Ponty's philosophy which opens up modes of holistic care, including the idea of *portance*, *portance*, he argues, is a way of walking side by side (*un côte à côte*) with people who are struggling, as opposed to only talking to them face to face (*le face à face*).[83] Following Merleau-Ponty's account that madness is an expression of the human condition, Saint Aubert argues that we can understand those who have mental disorders because their struggles are like all of us, but with greater frequency and greater fragility.[84]

This survey is not an exhaustive account of the influence of Merleau-Ponty's thought on psychology, but it proves that many psychologists and psychiatrists have found and continue to find great value in the applying his ideas to the complexities of mental disorders.

2. *Foucault's Influence in Medical Sociology and Disability Studies*

Because of Foucault's harsh criticisms on the discipline of psychology, his work has generally been seen as part of the anti-psychiatry movement with others such as R.D. Laing and Thomas Szasz.[85] R.D. Laing (1964)

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80. Scott D. Churchill and Frederick J. Wertz, "An Introduction to Phenomenological Research in Psychology: Historical, Conceptual, and Methodological Foundations," in *The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology: Theory, Research and Practice*, 2nd ed., ed. Kirk J. Schneider, J. Fraser Pierson and James F.T. Bugental (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2015), 276.

81. Rothfield, "Living Well and Health Studies," 218–27. Saint Aubert, "Introduction à la notion de portance," 317–43.

82. Rothfield, *Living Well and Health Studies*, 222.

83. Saint Aubert, "Introduction à la notion de portance," 322.

84. Saint Aubert, "Introduction à la notion de portance," 321: "sont comme nous tous, mais dans une plus forte récurrence et une plus grande fragilité."

85. Again, in this section, I will be listing the original publication date in parenthesis in the text and supply the recent edition in the footnote.

published his *Sanity, Madness and the Family* which takes a historical approach to the disorder of schizophrenia.[86] Thomas Szasz (1974, 1997) has written many books on the problems in psychiatry based on historical criticism as well as other critical theories, including *The Myth of Mental Illness* and *The Manufacture of Madness*.[87] Although they do not always align with Foucault's ideas, they viewed their work as complementing and furthering Foucault's approach to madness.[88] More recently, explicitly drawing on Foucault and Szasz, Joanna Moncrieff's work (2008) has continued the charge against the modern psychiatric movement as seen in *The Myth of the Chemical Cure: A Critique of Psychiatric Drug Treatment*.[89]

Although Foucault's insights have not yet been accepted by movements in psychology, other areas in medicine are employing Foucault to address contemporary problems. In the area of medical sociology, there is Phil Brown (1992), who applies sociological aspects of Foucault's approach to medical diagnosis.[90] As already discussed, Crossley (1994), as a sociologist, uniquely applies both Merleau-Ponty and Foucault in *The Politics of Subjectivity: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty*.[91] Robin Bunton and Alan Peterson (2002) published their edited collection, *Foucault, Health and Medicine*, which specifically looks at Foucault's influence and contributions to medical sociology.[92]

Furthermore, there has been a growing interest in applying Foucault's overall method to disability studies. Shelley Tremain has led the way in utilizing Foucault for disability studies in her edited book *Foucault and the Government of Disability* (2005) and in *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability* (2017).[93] Also, see Licia Carlson's excellent book, *The Faces of Intellectual Disability: Philosophical Reflections* (2009), which further relates

86. R.D. Laing and Aaron Esterson, *Sanity, Madness and the Family* (London: Routledge, 2016).

87. Thomas Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974); Thomas Szasz, *The Manufacture of Madness: A Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

88. Szasz, in particular, calls for a radical dichotomy between mental sickness and physical sickness which Foucault would not accept. For an excellent article comparing Foucault and Szasz, see Pat Bracken and Philip Thomas, "From Szasz to Foucault: On the Role of Critical Psychiatry," *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology* 17, no. 3 (2010): 219–28.

89. Joanna Moncrieff, *The Myth of the Chemical Cure: A Critique of Psychiatric Drug Treatment* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

90. Phil Brown, "Naming and Framing: The Social Construction of Diagnosis and Illness," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35 (1992): 34–52.

91. Crossley, *The Politics of Subjectivity*.

92. Robin Bunton and Alan Petersen, eds., *Foucault, Health and Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2002).

93. Shelley Lynn Tremain, ed., *Foucault and the Government of Disability*, enlarged and rev. ed. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015) and Shelley Lynn Tremain, *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2017).

Foucault to intellectual disability.[94] In addition, there is Stephanie Jenkins (2016), who finds Foucault's work an "effective tool" in discussing disability and ableism.[95] Aimie Hamraie (2015) argues that we must take Foucault's *History of Madness*, in particular, seriously in order to approach disability studies.[96] In a related area, Susan Bordo's interesting article (1991) applies Foucault's concepts to the female body as seen in the disorders of hysteria, agoraphobia (fear of open places) and anorexia nervosa.[97]

Although it is just a beginning, I believe that if Foucault can speak to problems in other medical fields, he can also be applied to the discipline of psychology. Because Merleau-Ponty already has an established voice in alternative psychological movements, Foucault can be brought into the conversation owing to the parallels in their two approaches to madness. Furthermore, in addition to Foucault's overall method being helpful to medical practice, he also has interesting and helpful insights into specific medical disorders, often left unexplored by scholars, as I will discuss in our final chapter.

E. Conclusion

According to the complementary strategy which I have adopted, I have offered resolutions to the major barriers that block a harmonization of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault. Speaking of the place of the human subject, I argued that Merleau-Ponty and Foucault have a complementary understanding of the subject because of their common interest in human experience and because of the implied subject in Foucault's work. Although they take different routes for understanding human experience, their motivation is the same: they both want to study experience in order to bring meaning eventually back to the individual. Furthermore, although Merleau-Ponty's account of history is left somewhat incomplete, he created space for the historical and cultural dimension which has allowed Foucault to explore this in his own way. Each of their approaches fills in gaps in the other for just as the phenomenological patterns give depth to

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94. Licia Carlson, *The Faces of Intellectual Disability: Philosophical Reflections* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009).
95. Stephanie C. Jenkins, "Defining Morally Considerable Life: Toward a Feminist Disability Ethics," in *Feminist Philosophies of Life*, ed. Hasana Sharp and Chloë Taylor (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 211. See also Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
96. Hamraie, "Historical Epistemology as Disability Studies Methodology: From Models Framework to Foucault's Archaeology of Cure," 124.
97. Susan Bordo, "Docile Bodies, Rebellious Bodies: Foucauldian Perspectives on Female Psychopathology," in *Writing the Politics of Difference*, ed. Hugh Silverman (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 203–15.

the historical structures, the wider historical lens exposes the tragic elements that can be missed by phenomenological studies. Despite the fact that Merleau-Ponty has been more welcomed by certain psychological communities than Foucault, the growing interest in applying Foucault to other areas of medical care demonstrates that he can also speak to the discipline of psychology.

Consequently, we can consent that a philosophical synthesis is possible between our two thinkers. This synthesis provides further ethical implications, such as considerations of human equality and human dignity, as discussed in the final conclusion. But, as I will substantiate in the next chapter, their unity also provides practical benefits for psychology. By thinking in terms of the shared lived-body experience and cultural structures, we can offer a more holistic picture of mental disorders to support greater care in mental health.

Part V

Toward an Application

> A life without speech and without action, on the other hand—and this is the only way of life that in earnest has renounced all appearance and all vanity in the biblical sense of the word—is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men.[1]

According to Hannah Arendt, human life is singular due to the presence of speech and action and, without these, we are no longer human because we have lost the sense of engagement and relation with others around us. "Speech and action," she writes, "reveal this unique distinctiveness" of the human life.[2] As we mentioned briefly in Chapter 3, this is her understanding of what it means to be in the human condition: to take part in a public realm which includes the human abilities of word and deed. Now, at the end of our project, we will take her thoughts seriously and suggest that the conclusions here must not only be words, but must fuel new actions. One of the ways to test the value of these reflections will be to see if they can be applied to actions in areas of human life, particularly in the area of mental health.

Consequently, since we have resolved the difficulties in synthesizing the approaches of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault in regard to madness, we are now able to present the full strength of their united approach. I believe that their joint reflections not only provide a fresh look at human experience as a whole, but actually offer practical help for addressing mental health. Their aid to psychology is found first in the general principles that we presented in Chapter 1: reminding us of the way history is expressed in experience, the dynamic relationship between the rational and the nonrational and the awareness of loss and tragedy. But it is also

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1. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 176.
2. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 176.

found in the specific discussions of mental disorders in their respective texts. In Chapter 8, I will discuss implications of this joint approach for three types of mental disorders. And then, in our final conclusion, I will expand these thoughts further by gesturing to ways that this project promotes human value and human equality in general.

8 The Strength of a United Approach

Implications in Psychology

Scholars in psychology and psychiatry are concerned about the over-emphasis on biological explanations and are calling for more study of "psychogenic" factors (the mental rather than physical factors of a disorder) and more training in "psychosocial sensitive care" (individual care that takes into account social surroundings).[1] Robert McGrath, in his brief history of psychopharmacology, cites concerns that scholars have in ignoring alternative methods of care because of the "efforts well-funded by both the federal government and the pharmaceutical industry to treat the biological elements of psychopathology as the most salient."[2] Despite his strong advocacy for empirically-based medical care, McGrath concludes his article by encouraging psychologists to consider both sides, the psychological and the biological: psychologists need to offer "the full spectrum of services, championing the value of both the psychogenic and the somatogenic perspectives."[3]

In a similar way, from his decades of work in psychiatry, Kleinman asks for practitioners to consider the "illness" of a patient in addition to the "disease." For Kleinman, illness is the "innately human experience of symptoms and suffering," whereas the disease, the usual focus of the practitioner, is "what the practitioner creates in the recasting of illness in terms of theories of disorder."[4] We must consider both the experience and the categorization of the disorder, because the purpose of medicine, according to Kleinman, is "both control of disease processes and care

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1. Robert E. McGrath, "A Brief History of Psychopharmacology in the Context of Psychology and Psychiatry," in *APA Handbook of Psychopharmacology* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2019), 14. Arthur Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, the Human Condition* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 255.
2. McGrath, "A Brief History of Psychopharmacology in the Context of Psychology and Psychiatry," 8.
3. McGrath, "A Brief History of Psychopharmacology in the Context of Psychology and Psychiatry," 14.
4. Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives*, 3, 5.

for the illness experience."[5] This chapter contributes to this purpose: to help us see that "illness is as important as disease."[6] It must be clear that the following descriptions of mental disorders do not replace the medical accounts. To fully understand disorders and to provide the proper care, one must also study the biological explanations given to each disorder by the medical community. However, this project aims to supplement this account by revealing perspectives on the disorders, the aspects of "illness," as Kleinman calls them, that are often ignored.

Merleau-Ponty and Foucault discuss at least seven shared disorders, but there are three that particularly highlight their contributions (see Chart 8.1: Disorders in Merleau-Ponty and Foucault). In this chapter, I will draw on their specific discussions on these three mental disorders, as well as their general approach to madness, to present new ways of thinking about them. I will offer their thoughts on schizophrenia (A), major depressive disorder (B), and bipolar I disorder (C). I have chosen to use the modern-day names to refer to these disorders, but we will discuss other terms in each of the individual sections.

A. Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is defined as a breakdown between thought, emotion and behavior which causes withdrawal from reality and is often accompanied by hallucinations. Unlike some other mental disorders that have been discussed for thousands of years, the concept of schizophrenia is more recent and was first given the name *dementia praecox* by the German psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin (1856–1926).[7] Although its name and its classification have changed over the past hundred years, schizophrenia "remains a broad clinical syndrome" that is difficult to define and diagnose due to the diversity of symptoms.[8] Hallucinations, however, are one symptom that are almost always present in the disorder.

In Merleau-Ponty's account of schizophrenia, he describes the condition as a fragmentation in one's mental life, such that on top of reality, there are displays of fantasy. A hallucination is an experience of altered reality, but not an experience of an alternative reality, because the objective world does not disappear, but has a distorted subjective layer placed over it. In a hallucination, a person takes up the real objects of the world and adds to them or changes the meaning of them. This added layer does not appear in the same way as objective reality, as can be seen in the

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5. Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives*, 253.
6. Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives*, 257.
7. Assen Jablensky, "The Diagnostic Concept of Schizophrenia: Its History, Evolution, and Future Prospects," *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience* 12, no. 3 (2010): 272.
8. Jablensky, "The Diagnostic Concept of Schizophrenia," 271.

Chart 8.1 Disorders in Merleau-Ponty and Foucault

Disorder	Quick Definition	Merleau-Ponty References	Foucault References	Modern-Day Equivalent
Schizophrenia (especially experiences of hallucinations)	A breakdown between thought, emotion and behavior causing withdrawal from reality to fantasy, mental fragmentation, often accompanied by hallucinations	Schizophrenia, PP 127, 294–95, 299–304, 309, 349–50, 355, 357, 359, 544n72, 551n94; hallucinations, PP 36, 150, 212, 231, 304, 308, 349–60, 551n84, 552n95; CPP 41–44, 177, 180–81, 359, 376–77	Schizophrenia/psychosis, MIP 5 (including hebephrenia and catatonia), 7–8, 47–50, 84; HM 201; hallucinations, MIP 48–49; HM 115–16, 132, 179, 193, 197, 201, 211–13, 239–41, 257, 277, 367–68, 619n72	Related to schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia
Melancholy/ depression	Severe sadness or gloom	Grief, PP 86, 372; melancholy, PP 306	Melancholy, MIP 27, 66; HM 123–24, 192–93, 199–202, 218, 226, 230–31, 233–34, 236, 238–39, 262–77 (and mania), 280–81, 310, 312, 314, 318–21, 323, 328, 330, 332, 338–39, 367–68, 374, 492, 617n19, 621n29, 625n29, 630n47, 657–58; 660; depression, MIP 4–6, 8, 11; HM 194, 472; suicide, HM 94	Related to depressive disorders, such as major depressive disorder
Mania	A condition usually including periods of great excitement, euphoria, delusions and overactivity	PP 299, 350	MIP 4, 8; HM 192–94, 199–202, 214–15, 218–20, 230, 262–77 (and melancholy), 281, 303, 311–15, 319–20, 324, 329, 338, 624n8, 644n28, 657, 660	Related to bipolar and related disorders, such as bipolar I disorder

(Continued)

Table 1.3 (Continued)

Disorder	Quick Definition	Merleau-Ponty References	Foucault References	Modern-Day Equivalent
Hysteria	Psychological stress shown in excessive emotions and attention-seeking behaviors	PP 26, 163, 164 (pithiatism), 165, 335, 395, 398, 514n23, definition of pithiatism at 528n12; CPP 127	MIP 4, 8, 12–13, 21, 36; HM 140, 204, 213–14, 252, 277–96 (and hypochondria), 298, 302–5, 619n62, 623n86, 643n17	Currently seen as symptom not diagnosis; related to personality disorders
Neurosis	Historically, a general term for madness; later distinction was made between neurosis and psychosis (HM 201)	PP 161, 341; CPP 72, 81, 127–28, 182, 232–33, 235, 262, 270, 275, 281–83, 304	MIP 4 (including obsessions), 8, 19, 21, 26, 36; HM 96, 106–7, 133, 201, 203, 541, 623n86	No longer used; related to obsessive-compulsive, anxiety, personality and impulse-control disorders
Anorexia	Excessive desire to lose weight by refusing to eat	PP 167	MIP 4	Anorexia nervosa
Blindness (and variations)	Loss or partial loss of vision	SB 29 (blindfolded subject); PP 8 (colors), 153–54, 233	HM 241–42 (relation to delirium), 295–96, 346, 349, 454, 499	n/a

Note: Merleau-Ponty and Foucault discuss at least seven of the same disorders; the first three are discussed in this chapter. The definitions are taken either from Foucault, Merleau-Ponty or from a common dictionary. References refer to Merleau-Ponty's *The Structure of Behavior* (SB), *Phenomenology of Perception* (PP) and *Child Psychology and Pedagogy* (CPP) and Foucault's *Mental Illness and Psychology* (MIP) and *History of Madness* (HM). The modern-day names are based on the 2013 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V* (DSM-5), the national guide for all psychopathological diagnoses in the United States.

way that patients with schizophrenia distinguish between the real and the fantastical: for these patients, studies have shown that there is something different between hallucinatory electrical shocks and real ones, between an imagined man in the garden and a real man with the same physical appearance, between voices in imagination and voices on a record, and between imagined powder in a bed and actual powder placed there.[9]

Because hallucination does not replace perception, it must be understood as coming from the same function, rather than contradictory or opposing functions:

> This is only possible if hallucination and perception are modalities of a single primordial function by which we arrange around ourselves a milieu with a definite structure and by which we situate ourselves sometimes fully in the world and sometimes on the margins of the world. . . . *But this fiction can only count as reality because reality itself is reached for by the normal subject [est atteinte chez le sujet normal] in an analogous operation.*[10]

Both experiences, hallucinatory and perceptual, come from the same structure of human experience; they are both "born from a function deeper than knowledge," the primordial relation to the world.[11] In both situations, we perform an analogous task of drawing on the nonrational, primordial function of the human to engage with the world. In a normal experience, we intuitively take in space around us to bring out the meaning of objective reality; in the case of a hallucination, we still intuitively take in space but give it a distorted meaning due to the additional fantasies.

To speak in terms of the rational–nonrational relation, we can see that while the reliance on the nonrational is present in both cases, the patient with schizophrenia cannot then regulate the nonrational by the rational in the proper ways. This is not to say that the rational is gone, however, for their experiences still make sense and have valid reasons for the person. But the application of the rational is broken, since it is disconnected from the actual world. In his Sorbonne lecture "Structure and Conflicts in Child Consciousness" (1949–1950), Merleau-Ponty discusses hallucinations: "The falsehoods of mentally disturbed individuals are not themselves deceiving; there is always something positive in their vision which serves to ground their actions."[12] There is always some structure of the

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9. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 349–50.
10. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 358, translation slightly modified; French: 400, italics his.
11. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 357.
12. Merleau-Ponty, *Child Psychology and Pedagogy: The Sorbonne Lectures 1949–1952*, 177.

world "around which the mentally ill organize their behavior," as Welsh says, for hallucinations do "have their own sense" even if the sense does not remain when placed in the context of the real world.[13]

Patients with schizophrenia draw on content from the nonrational and provide the content with sense from the rational. Their behavior then follows the same common pattern found in human experience. And yet, they have a broken ability of applying the rational to the nonrational, resulting in a creation of a private world within the real world: "The normal subject does not revel in subjectivity, he flees from it, he is really in the world . . . whereas the hallucinating subject makes use of being in the world in order to carve out a private world within the common world."[14] Although there is distortion in the hallucinatory act, we can still find something "positive" in the behavior, something that makes sense, because they are creating their private world still within the common world.

Foucault's historical account of hallucinations adds another element to this feeling of distorted reality. Speaking of the classical age, hallucinations were seen as an error in perception; a person experiences the physical truth of reality, but then distorts it in some way. He writes, "Physical truth is the correct relation between sensations and physical objects, and one form of madness was defined by an inability to accede to this form of truth. This was a kind of madness of the physical world, including illusions, hallucinations, and troubles linked to perception."[15] Even though hallucinations were seen as physical errors rather than moral errors, as was the case with the disorder of delirium, there was still a moral condemnation placed on both conditions. Because of the way the nonrational was already tied to the immoral, displays of the nonrational even if they were not sinful in themselves were seen under the moral lens. A schizophrenic, as someone who sees things that are not actually present, remained linked to the nonrational, and, as a consequence, was also bound up with the immoral.

At the start of the modern age, there was a distancing between the moral and the mad. Due to a change in the social structure of *religion*, many of the doctors during the great reform no longer looked to religion and morality to provide diagnosis and began to worry if an overemphasis

13. Welsh, *The Child as Natural Phenomenologist: Primal and Primary Experience in Merleau-Ponty's Psychology*, 43.

14. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 358. Merleau-Ponty's approach to schizophrenia was further expanded by Henri Maldiney. See Samuel Thoma's helpful article on Maldiney's approach to schizophrenia: Samuel Thoma, "A Psychopathology *à l'impossible*—On Henri Maldiney's Inclusive Anthropology of Schizophrenia," trans. Johanna Thoma, 2014, 1–23, www.henri-maldiney.org/sites/default/files/imce/homm age*to*henrimaldineybysamuelthoma-1.pdf.

15. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 241.

on religion could be a cause for schizophrenia, as well as other disorders. Foucault writes:

> Religious beliefs prepare a sort of imaginary landscape, an illusory milieu that encourages hallucinations and all forms of delirium. Doctors had long feared the effects of unusually intense devotion and overly strong beliefs. An excess of moral rigour or an unhealthy concentration on salvation and the life to come were often enough to push patients into melancholy.[16]

Although its roots can be traced back prior to the modern age, worry over an excess of religion rose to the forefront during the beginning of the great reform when connections to all mysterious and mythical phenomena were being severed. For example, a fixation on the life to come was seen as something that could push people into disorders, including schizophrenia, delirium and melancholy, because such people were no longer concerned with the reality right in front of them.

Even though the modern age has hidden away this idea of moral failing and offers warnings against extreme religion, the feeling of guilt is often found in those who experience schizophrenia.[17] Psychiatrists might pretend to be surprised, Foucault writes, at "finding feelings of guilt mixed in with mental illness" such as in schizophrenia, but these feelings are still coming out of the historical structures of an ethical condemnation of madness.[18] This is because many of the practices, reaching all the way back to the reformers of Samuel Tuke of England and Philippe Pinel of France, still rely on methods that elicit guilt in patients. Although that is no longer the motivation behind these practices, it is possible that the guilt experienced comes from the method of these practices.[19]

Furthermore, the diagnosis of schizophrenia itself still retains some moral judgments of the past as seen in the subtle stereotypes of people with schizophrenia. Ninnis writes of a patient who, after being diagnosed with schizophrenia, remarked, "It's like a death sentence when somebody tells you that you have schizophrenia."[20] This statement illustrates how patients may feel as if their human identity has been reduced to something else—a being that can only be known as a schizophrenic. Patients may push back against a diagnosis of mental illness, because they feel that

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16. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 367.
17. Rachel Miller and Susan E. Mason, "Shame and Guilt in First-Episode Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective Disorders," *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 211–21.
18. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 91.
19. For examples of this, please see my article: Venable, "The Carnival of the Mad: Foucault's Window into the Origin of Psychology."
20. Ninnis, "Foucault and the Madness of Classifying Our Madness," 117.

the modern classification system has a dehumanizing effect and sense that there is something more behind the psychological analysis than scientific evidence. Rachel Miller and Susan E. Mason confirm this by writing of these negative stereotypes and the affect that it can have on a person: "The stereotyping of someone with schizophrenia as being out of control, dangerous, retarded, homeless, almost a non-person, plays a role in how people see themselves once their illness has been identified."[21] A diagnosis of schizophrenia, even today, is often accompanied by feelings of shame and guilt, as if wrong has been committed, and a feeling of dehumanization, as if the patient is no longer a person.

Divorced from its historical and social roots, schizophrenia is usually treated according to the individual symptoms of a patient without regard for other factors, but Foucault's account reminds us to consider the role of social structures, such as the social structure of religion, and the influence of past moral judgments. To see an example of this, we can look to R.D. Laing and Aaron Esterson's *Sanity, Madness and the Family*, where they interviewed eleven women, along with their families, who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia to understand what social structures might be a factor in their mental disorders. One of the patients, Sarah, for example, shows a link between the social structure of religion and the diagnosis of schizophrenia. According to the mother's perspective, Sarah's over-interest in religion, as seen in her copious reading of the Bible and her use of religious language to explain her life experiences, was a sign of her unraveling. It becomes clear through the interviews that it was not so much her religious actions themselves, but the tension between what her family thought was appropriate "religious behavior" and what Sarah actually practiced which contributed to her mental disorder, and eventual diagnosis of schizophrenia.[22] Laing and Esterson indicate that if psychiatrists only look at Sarah's medical history and physical behavior, they will miss how the perception of religion played a role in her life and in her mental health.

Louise Phillips is another scholar who looks not only to familial and societal aspects, but phenomenological ones as well, to understand schizophrenia.[23] As mentioned in the first chapter, Phillips served as a nurse for many years at mental institutions and writes on the ways that lived experience and cultural influence are often not considered in the care of patients. Standard textbooks, she writes, for mental healthcare providers "make little reference to cultural values about mental illness and how the

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21. Miller and Mason, "Shame and Guilt in First-Episode Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective Disorders," 214.
22. Laing and Esterson, *Sanity, Madness and the Family*, 111.
23. Although Phillips suggests this approach for mental illness in general, she focuses primarily on schizophrenia, which she prefers to call "psychosis" in her book. See Phillips, *Mental Illness and the Body: Beyond Diagnosis*, 3.

bodies of people with mental illness and the way we see them can reflect prevailing discourses about mental illness and its presentations."[24] Phillips points to the ways that "lived bodily experience," following Merleau-Ponty, and bodies "inscribed by popular discourses about mental illness," following Foucault, impact patients' experience of mental health.[25] Once we consider the roots of emotional and physical dysfunctions, then we can start thinking "about the meanings within our patients' symptoms," giving us a deeper understanding of an individual's experience of schizophrenia.[26]

In summary, by applying a unified account to schizophrenia, we gain further insights into a patient's disorder by reflecting both on the lived body experience as well the cultural inscriptions affecting the patient. Phenomenologically, we recognize that the experience of a hallucination comes from a nonrational behavior that is shared both in hallucinations and perceptions. This allows us to further understand as well as empathize with the patient. From an archaeological perspective, we acknowledge the unspoken cultural structure that condemns the nonrational and sees a moral failure in errors of physical judgment. An awareness of these past and present historical structures may help us identify the source for unexplained feelings of guilt and confusion for the patient.

B. Major Depressive Disorder

Melancholy, characterized loosely as a state of severe sadness or gloom, has historically been one of the most written about and discussed types of madness, resulting in a great variation of its causes, symptoms and cures.[27] Coming out of the history of melancholy, we have the modern mental diagnosis of "major depressive disorder," which generally includes persistent negative mood, diminished satisfaction from activities, feelings of worthlessness and sometimes suicidal ideation.[28]

In the key passage about madness in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty writes that a patient struggling with melancholy borrows structures of the world in order to distort them and fixate on death: "The most advanced states of melancholy, where the patient settles into death and . . . makes it his home, still make use of the structures of being in the world in order to do so, and borrow from the world just what is required of being in order to negate it."[29] The structures of the world,

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24. Phillips, *Mental Illness and the Body: Beyond Diagnosis*, 30.

25. Phillips, *Mental Illness and the Body: Beyond Diagnosis*, 13, 20.

26. Philipps, *Mental Illness and the Body: Beyond Diagnosis*, 184.

27. Jennifer Radden, ed., *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

28. These are only some of the symptoms that are listed in the DSM-5. For a compact reference version of the DSM-5, see Lyngzeidetson, "DSM-5 Overview," 1–6.

29. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 306.

which are the patterns by which humans order their lives and make sense of reality, do not disappear for those struggling with depression. Instead, they borrow from reality what they need in order to push it away. For example, a man struggling with depression can pull from the cycle of birth and death seen in nature: he recognizes this structure, takes hold of it and then twists it so that he can only reflect on the side of death (see discussion of the cycle of birth and death as a pre-personal horizon in Chapter 2, B.3). His loss is seen in a deep lack of joy and satisfaction in life, because he is overly absorbed in aspects of death. In Chapter 1, we used this example to speak about the significance of "personal loss" in mental illness. Here we see again that personal loss, in the case of melancholy, is not a complete loss of the rational, because patients still use the rational to pull from real structures of the world in order to provide content for their extreme grief.

Recognizing structures of the world that are underlying a person's experience of depression can help shed light on difficult behaviors. For example, some with depression have lost the desire to speak. For others, they no longer want to perform any movements of the body and sit frozen, with no energy to exert themselves. In some cases, these symptoms can be the result of a previous stroke, but have lingered even after the physical ability has returned.[30] To address these symptoms, we look for clues in how they are experiencing the structures of the world, such as time or space, through more subtle forms of communication, such as facial expressions or noises. Focusing on the lived body in these cases not only gives insight to the practitioner but can also help the patient find stability.

When we consider the shared structure of time, the "temporal structure of our experience," we find an example of how this method brings a sense of stability for patients.[31] We have all experienced the way our minds can stay preoccupied with one particular thought, even while our bodies grasp the changes that come with each minute that passes. This type of experience is amplified under conditions of depression: "When I am overcome with grief and wholly absorbed in my sorrow, my gaze already wanders out before me, it quietly takes interest in some bright object."[32] Even when we feel trapped by grief and sorrow, our senses are still taking in the world around us, such as seeing a brightly colored object across the room. This description of grief allows us first, to empathize with those feeling "stuck" in a particular time when suffering from

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30. For connections between poststroke depression and major depressive disorder, please see Paul R. Albert, "Is Poststroke Depression the Same as Major Depression?" *Journal of Psychiatry & Neuroscience* 43, no. 2 (2018): 76–8.
31. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 87.
32. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 86.

depression, and second, to encourage patients to find a certain steadiness in their bodies which can lead them to new sensations and experiences.

Foucault's historical archaeology of depression also looks at the structure of time, not for the individual, but for the disorder as a whole, showing the fluctuations and inconsistencies in its classification. For example, in the eighteenth century, there was a question on the relation between melancholy and delirium (see Chapter 5, C for a discussion on delirium). In 1763, in Boissier de Sauvages's *Methodical Nosology*, melancholy was classified as a type of delirium, and this was also confirmed in Diderot and d'Alembert's 1780 *Encyclopédie*, which described melancholy as having a "particular delirium."[33] But later in the eighteenth century, "forms of madness that lacked any delirium were easily classified as melancholic."[34] Instead of citing physical reasons for the changes, such as the "sluggishness of fluids," the new description of melancholy did away with signs of delirium because it focused on the qualities of "inertia, despair and a dull stupor" to define melancholy.[35] The presence of delirium no longer fit with the qualitative method being used to define melancholy.

Foucault argues that the reason for the fluctuations that took place from the Renaissance to the classical age demonstrate a greater reliance on an ideology of melancholy than on actual physical causes. Physical causes are still believed to be there, but whatever they are—whether one of the four humors (bodily fluids) or something else—does not matter, because the understanding of melancholy is organized according to a qualitative method. Foucault writes in summary:

> On the one hand, [the qualities of melancholy] will trace, among the symptoms and manifestations, a certain profile of sadness, darkness, slowness and immobility. On the other, they will sketch a causal support that will no longer be so much the physiology of a humour as the pathology of an idea, a fear or terror.[36]

Classical melancholy is defined in these two ways: first, there is the focus on the symptoms of sadness and decreased movement of the body, and second, there is the focus on a fixation of a distorted belief or fear. Both of these perspectives no longer rely on the causal support of a physical explanation, such as the idea of the four humors, but on the way these two angles fit together. Foucault claims, "It is the secret logic of this [qualitative coherence] that orders the future of the notion of melancholy,

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33. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 193, 202.
34. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 268.
35. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 268.
36. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 265.

not medical theory."[37] Even moving into the future, Foucault argues that ultimately it is not medical theory, but this classical classification that contributes to our understanding of modern depression.

The changes in how melancholy is viewed are ultimately due to the changes in the relationship between madness and reason. Foucault writes that for melancholy, as well as the other key disorders of the classical age (dementia, mania, hysteria and hypochondria), "a difficult relationship is at work . . . this is the relation between *unreason*, as the ultimate meaning of madness, and *rationality* as the form of its truth."[38] To varying degrees, states of madness, in the classical understanding, draw its meaning and originate from the nonrational, but are then given a rational account to make them something real or true. Foucault illustrates this by showing that each key disorder of the classical age can be placed on a graph of increasing rationality (or positivity) (see Chart 8.2: Foucault's Figures of Madness, which illustrates this concept). Dementia, he argues, is the most negative, the most "frail and transparent," and thus very close to the nonrational.[39] Melancholy and mania have a little more substance, meaning that we can see more aspects of the rational
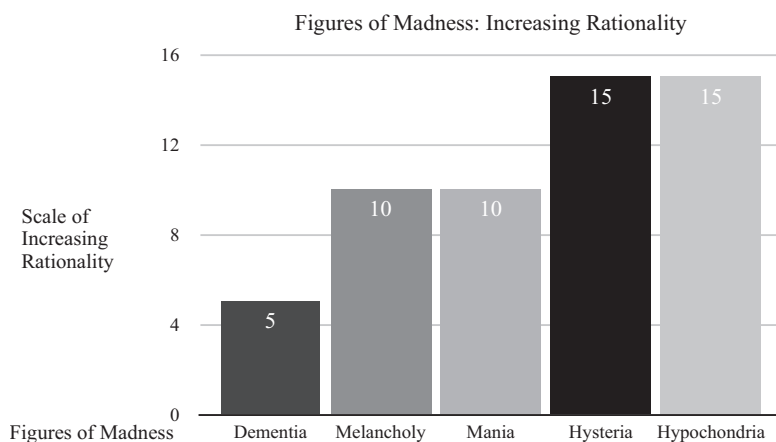
Chart 8.2 Foucault's Figures of Madness

Note: The lower the number, the closer the disorder is to the nonrational, as something which goes towards negativity. As the scale increases, the disorder has less of a relation to the nonrational and more of a relation to the rational. There is more positivity for disorders with higher numbers, and thus they are less nonrational. The numbers are completely arbitrary and only used to illustrate this concept. This graph is based on Chapter 3 of Part II of Foucault's *History of Madness*.

37. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 265.
38. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 251, italics his.
39. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 252.

in their classification. Lastly, we have hysteria and hypochondria, which have been so disconnected from the nonrational that the relation is almost completely broken.[40] Foucault believes that this push to distance disorders from the nonrational is what caused the nonrational to "crumble" in the modern age because the tie is eventually severed between all disorders and the nonrational.[41]

We will refer again to the relationship between mania and the rational in the next section, but here, we can see the tension that specifically surrounds the classical understanding of melancholy. From Chart 8.2, we find that melancholy is in the middle, still holding onto the nonrational but gaining more of the rational; there is still some mystery around melancholy, with its tie to the nonrational, but it is increasingly identified by the rational account of its symptoms. The classical age began the process to define mental disorders through rationally qualitative systems and the modern age completed it. By cutting the tie with the nonrational completely, the modern notion of major depressive disorder no longer contains mysterious or unexplained aspects in its description, but only what rationally fits into the modern diagnosis paradigm.

Foucault's priority on the social and theoretical accounts of depression seems to fly in the face of the modern scientific theories that are used today to explain the disorder. The usual scientific hypothesis is that patients with depression have a decrease in concentrations of monoamine neurotransmitters in the brain, such as serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine.[42] Medications supposedly increase these levels in order to help treat the disorder. But the scientific theory is still very unclear: because these medications were discovered serendipitously, doctors are still unsure on exactly why there are effective. Now, the latest research is that depression may not be due to a decrease in neurotransmitter levels, but due to a lack of neural connectivity.[43] Even with the ambiguity, we can at least say there are plausible scientific theories upon which we base our diagnosis and treatment of major depression disorder.

This fact, however, does not contradict the point of Foucault's account which is to reveal the social motivations behind the practices. More recently, even well-known psychiatrists point to the way that social forces influence the treatment of mental disorders. In McGrath's history of psychopharmacology, he acknowledges this: "Psychiatrists incorporated psychotropic medications into their practices based on science. However, it

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40. The pairing of these disorders—melancholy with mania and hysteria with hypochondria—does not make them identical, but shows how they share the same relation to the rational.
41. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 252.
42. Hillhouse and Porter, "A Brief History of the Development of Antidepressant Drugs," 3.
43. Katharina Helm et al., "Neuronal Connectivity in Major Depressive Disorder: A Systematic Review," *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment* (October 2018): 2715–37.

can be argued that the degree to which these medications have become the predominant treatment in psychiatry may reflect social, economic, and political considerations as much as empirical ones."[44] While the scientific theories speak to the benefits of certain medications, McGrath admits that the reliance on these treatments may be just as much based on nonscientific factors as on the scientific ones. Moncrieff argues that not only treatment methods, but also the promotion of drugs is due to "extra-scientific interests," such as professionals wanting more respect for the discipline of psychiatry or pharmaceutical companies desiring an increase in revenue.[45]

Addressing depression specifically, although medication is given according to the scientific hypothesis that it will increase monoamine neurotransmitters in the brain, the motivation is to alter the behavior of the person in order to conform to the standards of society. This motivation is often disguised by the genuine desire to help people "feel better" and to respond to the desperation that many feel to escape their depression. This is not to make light of the real suffering felt in depression, but to acknowledge the cultural pressures that push us to "fix the problem" so that people can be normal contributors to society. For example, one of the chief concerns of medical practitioners today relates to the social structure of *unemployment*. While there is no longer the explicit moral stigma associated with these conditions, there is a priority given to trying to get patients to lead "normal lives," which means in particular to be able to hold a "regular job." Furthermore, feelings of moral judgment still play a key role in how people describe their experience of depression. A recent study on blogs written by people diagnosed with depression conducted by Joanna Moncrieff, Maev Conneely and Paul Higgs found that over and over again the bloggers "described their recovery in moral terms."[46] Usually through means of medication, the goal is not so much to address these moral concerns or uncover the pathological idea underneath the depression, but to fix the patient enough so that he or she can keep down a job.

To summarize the way a united approach informs experiences of depression, phenomenologically, we first take into account the lived experience of the body by exploring the symptoms, such as immobility or lack of speech, and see how these relate to the patient's encounter with the world. We trace the structures of the world, such as spatial and

44. McGrath, "A Brief History of Psychopharmacology in the Context of Psychology and Psychiatry," 13.

45. Joanna Moncrieff, "The Creation of the Concept of an Antidepressant: An Historical Analysis," *Social Science & Medicine* 66 (2008): 2352–3.

46. Joanna Moncrieff, Maev Conneely, and Paul Higgs, "Medicalising the Moral: The Case of Depression as Revealed in Internet Blogs," *Social Theory & Health* (June 2020), https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41285-020-00141-1.

temporal structures, that patients are relying on in their state of sadness, to both understand their condition and find a path forward. Archaeologically, we first learn how the descriptions of melancholy and depression have changed over the years and how these changes are not always due to observing physical conditions, but to satisfy qualitative systems. As a result, we must be aware that we may be relying on a description of depression that is primarily based on ideologies rather than a solid theory of physical causes.

C. Bipolar I Disorder

Bipolar I disorder is characterized by fluctuations between two extreme states: a state of mania and a state of melancholy or depression. In the DSM-5, these states are considered "episodes," which include the manic episode, where a person has a greatly heightened mood with an excess of energy, and the major depressive episode, where a person has a persistent negative mood, diminished satisfaction from activities, feelings of worthlessness and sometimes suicidal ideation, as already discussed above.[47] As far back as the Ancient Greeks, there have been descriptions of both mania and melancholia, but they were usually portrayed as separate illnesses. Later, especially by the eighteenth century, following Thomas Willis (1622–1670) and others, there was a "general recognition by physicians that mania and melancholy were related."[48] In this section, we will start by focusing on mania first, since we have already addressed depression, and then discuss their unity at the end.

   Although Merleau-Ponty does not directly address melancholy and mania as one disorder, he does give us phenomenological reflections on both separately. To understand experiences of mania, we begin with a common pattern of centering ourselves in the world according to a "lived space" rather than objective space. Generally, this space is what is right in front of us, but this is not always the case as we saw in experiences of homesickness and hallucinations where we feel "decentered" and "far from the center of real life."[49] For people struggling with mania, the opposite extreme takes place where they become "overly-centered," placing themselves as the center of everything around them. Quoting Binswanger, Merleau-Ponty writes, "The maniac, however, centers himself everywhere: 'his mental space is large and luminous, his thought,

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47. There is another episode called the "hypomanic episode," which is the same as the manic episode, but lasts for a longer time.

48. Robert D. Goldney, "From Mania and Melancholia to the Bipolar Disorders Spectrum: A Brief History of Controversy," *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 46, no. 4 (2012): 306.

49. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 299. See Ch. 3, A for the discussion on homesickness and hallucinations.

sensitive to all the objects that are presented, flies from one to the other and is drawn into their movement.' "[50] Here the lived space becomes distorted for the person: while still relying on the horizon of nonobjective space, a person in a manic episode magnifies himself in that space so that everything in the environment is dependent on him.

As we have consistently seen in other disorders, there is not a total loss of the rational in the distortion of space, for even during a manic episode a person can often still distinguish between objective space and the "me-centered" reality. In an alcoholic mania, for example, a patient who sees the doctor's hand as a guinea pig can tell the difference between it and the other hand that actually holds a guinea pig.[51] Although the modern diagnostic system would not count this as a manic episode because it is substance induced, it provides an illustration for the way the rational is still present even in the nonrational distortions of reality. Actions done during manic episodes are often based on an inflated idea of one's abilities and further demonstrate this reliance on the rational–nonrational relation. For example, a woman during a manic episode walks into a hotel lobby, accurately perceives that there is a grand piano, but inaccurately believes herself to be a concert pianist and proceeds to perform for everyone there.[52]

These examples feel strange to us at first, but we must remember that experiences of mania are not something foreign to human understanding but are relying on the same "single primordial function" from which we all situate ourselves in the world.[53] Drawing on this primordial function, we interact with our environment according to a spectrum of centeredness, with hallucinations, as extremely decentered, homesickness, as moderately decentered, usual experiences, as centered, and manic episodes, as overly-centered. With this in mind, we can identify a patient according to the spectrum which gives us relatability to the patient, since we are also on this spectrum, and greater understanding, since we have a way of judging the level of intensity of the experience.

Similar to melancholy, the historical roots of mania are found in a drive for cohesive categorization rather than strict observation. Mania has the same relation to the rational as melancholy in that there is some mystery still there, but there are symptoms which can be given a reasonable explanation (see again Chart 8.2: Foucault's Figures of Madness). It is through the organization of these symptoms that we find a unity between mania and melancholy. Foucault points to Thomas Willis as the one whom "we

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50. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 299.
51. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 350. The example is taken from a study by Konrad Zucker; see 550n72.
52. This example is drawn from a confidential report to the author from a witness to such a situation.
53. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 358.

honour as the 'discoverer' of the manic-depressive cycle."[54] Foucault argues that Willis sees the two states as linked, not because of observation, but because of how the qualities of one relate to the other: "the passage from one state to the other is not perceived as an observational fact, in need of a subsequent explanation, but rather as the consequence of a profound affinity that lies in their secret nature."[55] Willis draws on the images of flames for mania and smoke for melancholia to show this affinity. Just as flames push away the smoke, but the smoke returns to put out the flames, there is a unity in the interaction between the "sombre and dark" spirits of melancholy and the "perpetual" and hot spirits of mania.[56] Foucault concludes, "For Willis, the unity of melancholia and mania was not a disease, but a secret fire in which flames and smoke were in conflict, the element bearing both this light and this shadow."[57]

In Georges de La Tour's *The Penitent Magdalen*, we see an illustration of this conflict in poignant ways.[58] Here we have light, as seen in a burning candle and its reflection in a mirror, and darkness, as seen in the blackness of the room and the hint of smoke on the top of the candle. The division between light and darkness, which we found as a general description of madness, beginning in the Renaissance and carried into the classical age, can now be applied to a specific disorder in the unity of melancholy and mania. The woman sitting in the room brings a unity to the two forces by having the light shine on her face while her hands remain folded on a skull.[59]

Over time, the images of flame and smoke are replaced with new images, such as movement and immobility or positive and negative charges, but the unity of the disorder itself is not questioned. Foucault summarizes:

> The key point is that this process did not go from observation to the construction of explanatory images, but that on the contrary, images fulfilled the initial role of synthesis, and their organising force made possible a structure of perception where symptoms could finally take on their significant value, and be organised into the visible presence of the truth.[60]

Through images, a synthesis of the disorder was made so that even when new images and new reasons are chosen, they were still there to support

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54. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 273.
55. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 274.
56. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 274.
57. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 274.
58. This is the painting featured on the cover of the book.
59. See also Georges de La Tour's *The Repentant Magdalen* for similar themes as discussed in Chapter 4 (Ch. 4, B.2).
60. Foucault, *History of Madness*, 277.

the same account of the disorder that was originally constructed according to the principles of categorization instead of observation. This is even demonstrated in the recent scientific literature on bipolar disorder. Psychiatrists Joshua Roseneblat and Roger McIntyre, in their discussion on medicine used for bipolar, write that there is still not an adequate scientific explanation for the existence of the disorder: "while decades of research have revealed numerous potential contributing mechanisms to the onset and progression of BD [bipolar disorder], the field still lacks a unifying hypothesis to adequately explain the pathoetiology of BD."[61] Because of the lack of understanding about the pathoetiology (the causes of the disorder), we have to "rely exclusively on serendipity and repurposing of treatments initially designed for other disorders rather than designing and testing hypothesis-driven interventions."[62] Today, the unity of bipolar disorder continues to be assumed even though we do not have a strong scientific theory to support it.

With the ambiguity present in the history of the disorder, we must see a diagnosis of bipolar I disorder as a description rather than an explanation of a patient's experience. Kleinman calls for caregivers to see a "psychiatric diagnosis" of bipolar or any mental disorder as "an *interpretation* of a person's experience."[63] Viewing a diagnosis as a description or interpretation does not mean that a diagnosis is useless to patients, for in fact, a diagnosis can often help people cope with their disorder by providing a category of expression for how they feel and reducing isolation knowing that others with the same diagnosis experience similar things. But when a diagnosis is taken as a strict scientific explanation, it can take over a person's identity making them feel no longer completely "human" but instead a "maniac." The label of a diagnosis can also open up a person to both positive and negative social judgments; for example, according to the social structure of *idleness*, some will see the depressive episodes as negative, because the person is not accomplishing much, but may praise actions during a manic episode, because of the abundance of productivity. When giving a diagnosis, we should do so with the awareness of the challenges people will face individually and socially.

To sum up these reflections, a phenomenological perspective on bipolar I disorder shows us that periods of great energy, such as what takes place in a manic episode, can be understood according to a spectrum of space centeredness. Although extreme, usual human experiences are based on the same patterns of "lived space" which can range from decentered to overly-centered perceptions of objective space. An

61. Joshua D. Rosenblat and Roger S. McIntyre, "Pharmacological Treatment of Bipolar Disorder," in *APA Handbook of Psychopharmacology*, eds. Suzette M. Evans and Kenneth Carpenter (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2019), 165–6.
62. Rosenblat and McIntyre, "Pharmacological Treatment of Bipolar Disorder," 166.
63. Kleinman, *Rethinking Psychiatry*, 7, italics his.

archaeological perspective exposes the history of bipolar 1 disorder as arising out of a desire for cohesive unity rather than scientific study. Even today, we do not have adequate scientific theories to explain bipolar I disorder which makes our treatment of the disorder based on what works rather than on an understanding of its causes. A diagnosis of bipolar should be given with tentativeness so that a patient can benefit from its description but not be limited by it. With both of these perspectives in mind, we can approach patients diagnosed with bipolar as humans, living and experiencing space similar to us, and treat their diagnosis as *one* helpful way to describe their experience, rather than a summation of who they are.

D. Conclusion

Many practitioners today are calling for a greater understanding of psychogenic factors and for more training in psychosocial care. Here we have sketched out three disorders and pulled in the phenomenological and archaeological perspectives on each to answer that call. For schizophrenia, we found that a way to understand hallucinations is through general patterns in perception and a way to trace the feelings of guilt is to look to some of the historical practices and structures underneath the disorder. In major depressive disorder, we saw how even in depths of sadness, a person still relies on certain common structures of the world and how the experience of depression may be shaped by ideological descriptions rather than scientific observation. And lastly, for bipolar I disorder, we gained insight by placing extreme experiences of space on a spectrum and by treating the diagnosis as a descriptive interpretation rather than an explanation.

   Due to the complexity of mental disorders in general, I would expand the "tentativeness in diagnosis," that I suggested with bipolar I disorder to all mental health diagnoses and treatment. The definition of diagnosis can be seen from its Greek roots: *dia* as "apart" and *gignoskein* as "to recognize or know," making "diagnosis" a way of "distinguishing," "discerning" or "telling apart." A diagnosis of madness, then, can be a way of telling apart two groups of people and creating a dividing line between those who are "normal" and "like us" and those who are "abnormal" and need treatment. Making such distinctions can be helpful and needed, but we should be aware of the consequences that can arise. As psychiatrist McGrath points out in his history of pharmacology, as we discussed, this tentativeness comes from the awareness that the treatments in psychiatry reflect "social, economic, and political considerations as much as empirical ones."[64] Thus, a diagnosis should be given

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64. McGrath, "A Brief History of Psychopharmacology in the Context of Psychology and Psychiatry," 13.

in humility allowing the person the freedom to live and create himself or herself beyond these constraints.

When we ignore these considerations and treat diagnosis as the final answer, it reduces the quality of care of the practitioners and the freedom of living for the patients. Kleinman writes that the "radically materialist pursuit of the biological mechanism of disease" is a "serious failing of modern medicine: it disables the healer and disempowers the chronically ill. Biomedicine must be indicted of this failure to provoke serious interest in reform."[65] While we should not disregard the study of "disease," we should continue to fill-in our understanding of "illness" by considering multiple perspectives, including the phenomenological and archaeological, on mental disorders. In this way, we can reform modern medicine such that it places a higher priority on the experiential and social aspects of the human in its practices.

65. Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives*, 9.

Conclusion

Toward the end of my year in Paris, I had the opportunity to interview Emmanuel de Saint Aubert.[1] In the interview, Saint Aubert described how the French notion of intelligence (*l'intelligence*) is more than a power of reason and already includes within it the manifestation of the nonrational. Of the three acts of intelligence—abstraction, judgment and reason—only the latter is completely identified with the rational in the French conception, showing how the nonrational, as displayed in abstraction and judgment, is also a critical aspect of human experience. Abstraction, as the ability to make categories, such as a child learning his or her colors, and judgment, as the ability to discern positive and negative values, such as a child expressing preferences for different kinds of foods, can both be done before language and without active reasoning. Although this three act breakdown of intelligence originates from scholasticism, Saint Aubert's point was that the French appropriation of this tradition sees a place for the nonrational in the conception of human intelligence.[2] Embedded in the philosophical formation of philosophers in France, for Merleau-Ponty and Foucault as well as Saint Aubert, we find that there is already a sense of integration between the rational and the nonrational.[3] Thus, when Merleau-Ponty announces that we must "attempt to explore the irrational and integrate it into an

1. Saint Aubert holds a position of researcher at the Husserl Archives of Paris, housed at the Ècole Normale Supérieure and is considered one of the most prominent Merleau-Ponty scholars in France. He is not as well-known in American circles, because his works have not yet been translated into English.
2. For the origins of the three acts of intelligence, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (1947 Benziger Bros. edition, Christian Classics Ethereal Library), I 79, I 85, www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.toc.html.
3. Saint Aubert, personal interview, March 7, 2017. When I asked Saint Aubert for the source of this interpretation of intelligence, he replied that he felt it was something that he always knew, perhaps bringing him back to something early in his formation ("J'ai l'impression de l'avoir depuis toujours, ce qui me renvoie à la période de ma formation.") However, he does discuss this topic indirectly in his thoughts on "knowing without knowing [*savior sans savior*]": Saint Aubert, *Être et chair*, 94–7, 216–20.

expanded reason [*raison élargie*]," he is speaking out of this French tradi-
tion, the same tradition which Foucault also takes up.[4]

It is in the spirit of this French notion of intelligence as well as in pur-
suit of Merleau-Ponty's idea of an "enlarged reason" that this project
has explored madness through the lens of experience and history. By
considering both the phenomenological and the archaeological per-
spectives, we have been able to rethink the accepted modern notion
of the rational, pushing away its boundaries and making room for the
influence of the nonrational. But, as I have indicated along the way,
the goal was not to stop at the categories of the rational and the nonra-
tional. Through the descriptions of normal and abnormal behavior of
Merleau-Ponty and the accounts of the treatment of madness in differ-
ent historical ages of Foucault, we found again and again that human
experience is best understood when the threads of the rational and
the nonrational are woven together. Ultimately, while the terms of the
rational and the nonrational are helpful for an ordered discussion,
we discovered the need to go beyond them. The need to tear down
inflexible distinctions is further demonstrated when we recognize how
human experience is unified in the concept of flesh [*le chair*]. The
behavior of those with mental disorders are seen as arising from flesh
and cannot be compartmentalized into a separate category of human
existence.

It is clear that there are many benefits to placing Merleau-Ponty and
Foucault together, especially in the areas of mental disorders and human
rationality. But since it is also important to consider any problems or
holes that may still be present in this approach, I will suggest two unre-
solved questions for the phenomenological–archaeological approach.

First, from a broad perspective, I am concerned that the foundation
for the definition of the human remains insecure. We already addressed
this concern in Foucault's philosophy where I presented the critique
that the human becomes only a historical construct, completely defined
by society and without reference to any common experience or mean-
ing across time (see Chapter 6, B.1). If modern man is a "recent inven-
tion" as Foucault repeats in *The Order of Things*, then a human in each
age is simply established by the changing societal norms.[5] I answered
this problem by showing how Merleau-Ponty roots general notions of
the human in the common bodily experiences. These common experi-
ences provide a link among humans across the ages, demonstrating how
humans encounter the world and relate to the world in similar ways.
But are common bodily experiences of a human enough to define the
human? Does this become a circular argument that defines the human

by the human leading us back to Foucault's original critique of the empirico-transcendental doublet?

Take, for example, the idea of historical embodiment. Roughly speaking, a phenomenological–archaeological notion of the human argues that the human is best understood as an embodied historical creature, a being who has an integrated mind and body and who interacts with the world as a unified whole, but who is also shaped by the hidden structures of society. Others may counter this description by saying that a human is best defined as only a spirit (or ahistorical consciousness), and that both the experiences of the body and the experiences of society are to be disregarded. This view could say that the human should focus on the life of the mind, such as out-of-body experiences, leaving behind the material and social world. Does a phenomenological–archaeological approach have a satisfactory reply to this view? Its response has to be to refer back to human experience, individual experience and cultural experience, to show the importance and significance of the body and society. It cannot consult a standard beyond human experience as it must stay within the realm of the human to define the human.

Although many insights are discovered in this realm, as we have seen, we may need to call on a stronger foundation to ground this understanding of the human in order for it to defend itself against false accounts. A reference to a standard outside the human—although the knowledge of this standard will always be limited by the human lens—helps point to how one definition of the human proves more reliable and more true than another. Consequently, it may be necessary to turn to other accounts which may offer such a foundation: there are philosophical options, such as the account of the human as a rational animal capable of virtue (from Aristotle) or the human as an autonomous being of dignity (from Kant) and theological options, such as the human as imago dei (from Genesis) or the human as linked to the incarnation of Christ (from the New Testament). This is not the place to discover what kinds of foundations would be the most satisfactory here but merely to state that further justification is needed to uphold the truth found in the phenomenological–archaeological description of the human.

Another concern in our approach, related specifically to madness, is an insufficiency in the understanding of intersubjectivity. Although both thinkers recognize the significance of the relationship of the other and even spend time discussing it to a certain extent, neither of them offers a substantial commentary on the necessary place and value of others in the lives of humans, especially those who may be struggling with mental disorders. Merleau-Ponty discusses the general way others impact our view of the world, but he does not address the personal way that others can offer support and help during times of suffering. As already mentioned, Saint Aubert sees how Merleau-Ponty's philosophy opens up to intersubjectivity, but argues that he does not follow it through completely;

as a result, Saint Aubert attempts to take Merleau-Ponty's ideas further through his work on *portance* which emphasizes the way we can physically and emotionally help carry the pain of others who are struggling with disorders.[6] Furthermore, Foucault addresses the negative ways others can shape the self through structures of power, and he even writes in his later works on how one can positively form the self through technologies of the self, but he does not describe how others can also *positively* help shape and mold the self. A more robust description of intersubjectivity, by drawing on something like Gabriel Marcel's notion of *presence* of the other or Emmanuel Levinas's idea of the *face-to-face* encounter, could help fill this gap and provide even more suggestions for holistic care to modern psychology.

Although there is more work to be done, I believe that the insights gained from a historical experiential study of madness point in a powerful way to general truths that are found in human experience. Our study does not prove these truths, but gestures toward them, offering important first steps toward a greater understanding of the human. I will mention the following two values of the human, without proving them or defining them, but simply as a way to provoke further reflections and thoughts.

First, our study points to the value of *human equality*: it breaks down stark distinctions between normal and abnormal humans and reveals how these categories arise from an inaccurate model of the human (such as the Cartesian model) and from shifting historical perceptions. Phenomenologically, in contrast to a rationalist model, we recognize that both normal and abnormal humans are operating according to the same structures, and while the rational–nonrational relation will be broken in a greater way for those considered "abnormal," we can understand this brokenness precisely because they still approach the world in a human way. The reliance on the nonrational, for example, is not something found only in abnormal behavior but in all human behavior. Thus, whatever value we attribute to a distinctively human way of interacting with the world, we must attribute to both functional and dysfunctional ways of experiencing the world in the sense that it remains human. The value of humans placed in normal and abnormal categories is equal, because of the shared way that we encounter the world.

Archaeologically, we recognize that all humans are shaped by the institutional structures that surround us. Although not entirely determined by them, none of us are immune from the influence of what society tells us is appropriate "normal" behavior and what is inappropriate "abnormal" behavior. The changing notion of the nonrational, for example, means that certain humans may be institutionalized during some times

6. Saint Aubert, "Introduction à la notion de portance," 322.

in history, while at other times, they would be free. This prompts us to consider the equal condition of all humans, subject to the whims of the societal perceptions of the rational and the nonrational. It also exposes the tragic thread that runs through all of human existence, as seen in our experiences of pain and death. From his years of research and work in mental illness, Kleinman writes, "Indeed, I will argue that that the study of the experience of illness has something fundamental to teach each of us about the human condition, with its universal suffering and death."[7] With the barriers between the normal and abnormal human laid aside through both of these perspectives, we can be reminded of the equality that remains among humans who may be found under many different conditions, joy or pain, life or death, madness or sanity, normality or abnormality.

Second, our study points to the value of *human dignity*: it signals the uniqueness of human experience, both in how an individual nonrationally encounters the world and in how societies continue to shape institutions according to the rational and the nonrational. The fascination with the human is justified, because there are no other experiential or historical phenomena that have the complexity and mystery that is characteristic of the human creature. Phenomenologically, the human's relation to the world is distinct from an object's relation and even an animal's relation; the human, as represented in the "human order" as Merleau-Ponty describes it, is the only being that is part of the biological world but can also escape it.[8] The description of the human's ability to reason, which relies on the capacity for nonrationality, evokes a sense of wonder at the complexity of the human; it confirms the recognition of value and dignity in the human.

Archaeologically, we are both creatures of history and creatures who write history. As Foucault reminds us, the more we understand the hidden structures of history, the more we can free ourselves from them. By being aware of the historical structures of the nonrational in the past and the present, for example, we discover the strength in human freedom to push against established structures, creating new spaces of freedom. Humans, as Foucault states, "are much freer than they feel" and all these analyses "show which space of freedom we can still enjoy and how many changes can still be made."[9] The implications of this approach, as seen in the ability of the human to make sense of the world and the power of human freedom, are another marker of human dignity.

7. Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives*, xiii.
8. See Ch. 2, A.3 for further discussion on the distinctions between human and animal.
9. Foucault, "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault, October 25, 1982, Interview by Rux Martin," 10–11.

As indicated in these gestures toward human equality and dignity, I have put forward the discussions in this project not simply as way to further understand mental illness, but also as a first premise to a larger argument proving the worth of the human. There will be many other premises and illustrations needed for this larger argument but this project serves as one step toward the final conclusion that there is much significance and value to be found in all human life.

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