

FOUCAULT'S MADMEN

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'Mais quoi? Ce sont des fous!

HISTORY OF A DISPUTE

Foucault's *Folie et Dérison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, published in 1961, was republished in 1972 simply as *Histoire de la Folie à l'âge classique*. This edition included a new preface and a two supplements in reply to a critique by Derrida, "Cogito, et l'histoire de la folie."¹ Foucault's first and more extensive supplement is a beautifully constructed piece whose title 'Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu'² is drawn from a French translation (validated by Descartes) of a line in the *First Meditation* in which he opposes a certain reflection that might limit his doubts about what he senses: "... yet there are many other facts as to which doubt is plainly impossible ... that I am here, sitting by the fire, wearing a winter cloak, holding this paper in my hands ..." (Descartes, 62).³ I want to draw us up close to the mood and the details of the clash between Foucault and Derrida produced by Foucault's brief references to Descartes in *Histoire de la Folie*. There is still a great deal to learn and finally to comprehend (if not to comprehend finally) about how what appears on the page as a fine line of difference that opened up a fracture wide and deep enough to separate Foucault and Derrida for more than a decade. This fault line was (as Culler, Gaston and others have demonstrated) a symbolic place for supporters to plant their flags on either side of the ravine.⁴

FOUCAULT AND DESCARTES

Foucault makes his first reference⁵ to Descartes and madness at the very outset of the second chapter of Part I of the *Histoire*—that Part in which he establishes his whole theme of the new institutional confinement of the mad in the seventeenth century. Foucault makes only brief references to Descartes, and complains of Derrida as overplaying them. Nevertheless, there can be no mistake about the prime place Foucault gives to the first and most significant of these citations. Foucault has opened "The Great Confinement" with these challenging

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words: "After ... the Renaissance had liberated the voice of Madness ...[t]he age of reason, in a strange take-over, was then to reduce it to silence." Thus Foucault's use of Descartes' words on madness makes them appear as a prime expression of this new desire to exclude and confine madness:

On the methodical path of his doubt, Descartes came across madness beside dreams and all the other forms of error. Might the possibility of his own madness rob him of his own body, in the manner in which the outside world occasionally disappears through an error of the senses, or in which consciousness sleeps while we dream? (History, 44).

He gives us Descartes' own words that challenge us with an elusive level of rhetoric that, it turns out, will make both Foucault and Derrida extend their subtlety and learning to the limit:

How could it be denied that these hands or this whole body are mine? Unless perhaps I were to liken myself to madmen, whose brains are so damaged by ...melancholia that they ... say that their heads are made of earthenware or that they are pumpkins, or made of glass (Cottingham, 13).⁶

Foucault claims that "Descartes does not evade the danger of madness in the same way that he sidesteps the possibility of dream as source of error." This might appear to be entirely correct. He cannot contain within the field of reasons for doubt that he might be deranged rather than philosophical in fancying that his body might be radically other than it appears. Since he cannot encompass that possibility, he is not "evading" it when he proceeds, regardless, to doubt everything for which he can "imagine the least doubt." In using *dreaming* as a reason for "being able to imagine some doubt" about what he learns from the senses, Descartes in fact *embraces* rather than sidesteps the possibility that, even as he holds *ce papier* in his hands, shakes *la tête de son corps* and warms himself by *ce feu*, still he is dreaming it all.⁷ (At the same time, Foucault does not make precise the distinction between the possibility of his being mad and the impossibility of admitting that within a method of *rational* doubt.⁸)

In these opening pages of "The Great Confinement" Foucault explains his claim that Descartes "sidesteps the possibility of dream as a source of error" by incorporating into his commentary arguments that Descartes will make after having accepted the relevance (and strength) of this possibility that one is only dreaming when it seems most evident that one is awake. *These particular experiences (ce papier, mon corps, ce feu)* might be dreamed, but sensory experience remains an irreducible origin behind thought, imagination and dreaming. As Foucault (accurately) compresses Descartes' view, one can, in imagination, only make use of "simpler or more universal things that make fantastical images possible." Just as the principles of logic or mathematics are no less true and evident whether one considers them awake or within a dream, so too the real origins of what we can imagine—whether truly or falsely—lie beyond the realm of imagination. That is to say, the possibility of dreaming (or even of being beset by a powerful demon that manipulates one's experience) does not disturb the indubitability of one's clear and distinct apprehensions of truths within that moment during which one apprehends them. It is in contrast with that reassuring default position of the human computer that "madness is an altogether different affair", as Foucault announces:

If I am mad then my 'grasp on the truth [that I have a body] is no more secure than 'that of a man who believes his body to be made of glass' ... One cannot suppose that one is mad, even in thought, for madness is precisely a condition of impossibility for thought ... Dreams and illusions are overcome by the very structure of truth, but madness is excluded by the doubting subject, in the same manner that it will soon be excluded that he is not thinking, or that he does not exist. (History, 45).

For the next hundred pages, Foucault sketches a history of the 'great confinement' of the insane—and of the deliberate blurring of the difference between moral and mental failure. And then, having completed his third chapter—on the details of the new "Correctional World" and his fourth—"Experiences of Madness"—it is in the course of the fifth—"The Insane" that Foucault reinstalls the theme of Descartes' 'exclusion' of madness

from the permissible field of philosophical thought. In the historical register, this is what has taken his attention immediately before he returns to the status of Descartes' exclusion of madness:

Taken in its simplest form, and seen from the outside, confinement would seem to indicate that classical reason had conquered the power of madness, and that a clear dividing line was drawn at the level of the social institutions themselves ... But the moral perception of madness [intrinsic to confinement] betrays a divide that was still far from being clear-cut. [Whereas] unreason in the classical age ... took place in a space of freedom and choice [in which an] indifference to any rigorous distinction between moral failings and madness ... [permitted] a decisive option [between madness and sanity that would proceed from] a more responsible form of will within the subject (History, 138).

This is the stage set by Foucault that permits him again to use Descartes as emblematic (at least) of a banishment of the mad from the arena of any responsible thought and choice. Where he had Descartes "evading" the problem of madness and "sidestepping" the possibility that he was dreaming (History, 44), now Descartes is "sidestepping" the possibility that he is mad in such a way that "madness was excluded without a trace, leaving not even a scar on the surface of thought [because] it was simply of no use in the process of doubt's movement towards truth" (History, 138). The passages in the *Meditations* that Foucault selects in exhibiting Descartes as engaged in a battle with a kind of madness are rich—and yet neglected as 'literary flourishes' by commentators bent on attacking his grounds for dualism rather than understanding what makes dualism seem true in experience.

At any rate, Foucault concludes this second main involvement with Descartes on madness in a *segue* that carries his discussion back within the ground of history:

In the classical age reason is born inside the space of ethics ... That much is discernible in the insistent imperative of Cartesian doubt; but the choice itself ... is apparent throughout Spinozian thought ... When the eighteenth century confined as insane a 'deranged mind inventing its own devotions' ... the judgment ... made manifest the ethical division between madness and reason.

[In sharp contrast] it took a 'moral' consciousness ... in the nineteenth century, to object to the inhuman treatment the mad had received in the previous age ... when so many physicians were writing learned treatises about frenzy, melancholy and hysteria (History, 140).

It is from his last principal use of Descartes' *Meditations*, in the closing three pages of this same chapter—*The Insane*, that we may better understand Foucault on excluding madness. Here, he draws attention to the "shadow of the evil genius" that "haunts ... the *Meditations*":

The brilliant light of the truth of the *Cogito* should not be allowed to obscure the shadow of the evil genius, nor to obfuscate its perpetually threatening power; until the existence and truth of the outside world have been secured, he haunts the whole movement of Descartes' *Meditations* (History, 157).

The demon "haunts" the *Meditations* because that figure carries within it a threatening possibility. Perhaps madness cannot be contained by an original moral choice to be steadfast in reason; perhaps one cannot keep one's promise never to succumb to the 'laziness' of falling into belief (whether true or false) rather than critically testing whatever befalls one in sense:

Madness was proscribed by internment in the seventeenth century, but it was also linked with the experience of an animal unreason ... the scandal of the human condition ... [Where] juridical definitions of madness [were] concern[ed] with finding a way between responsibility and determinism ... a contradictory experience saw madness as a natural phenomenon ... [And although] the positivist psychiatry [of the nineteenth century] placed the ... animal side of madness within a theory where mental

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alienation was seen as a pathological mechanism of the natural world ... madness was still haunted by an ethical view of unreason, and the [countervailing] scandal of its animal nature (History, 158).

In Part Two, Foucault's chapters are "The Madman in the Garden of Species," "The Transcendence of Delirium," "Figures of Madness" and "Doctors and Patients." One might say that in the First Part, the mad have been confined. Thus located, they are now being defined. The next stage is to follow them into these places of confinement so as to describe their existence and experience as thus institutionalized. In the first chapter, then, we find the theme of the madman whose existence is not doubted "because he is other." Thus Foucault reminds us of the Descartes who had known "immediately that he was not of ... those who thought their heads were made of earthenware (etc.)" This judgement, Foucault asserts,

implies an exterior relation... to that singular Other that is the madman, in a confrontation where the subject ... is neither compromised nor even called upon to provide any evidence ... his madness stands out against the backdrop of the outside world, and the relation that defines him, exposes him .. to the gaze of reason .. He now represents ... *the difference of the Other in the exteriority of others* (History, 181).

This is an important (implied) critique of Descartes' epistemology. Descartes not only disposes of the idea that hyperbolic doubt is madness but also erects dualism on the success of his method of doubt. His exclusive attention to himself as thinker and observer gives his dualism temporary stability. He lacks conceptual resources to take account of himself as object of observation by others—and as himself aware of being observed in thoughtful intimacy.⁹ To pursue that theme would be another study but the very mention of it gives us some idea of what has set off Derrida and Foucault's mutual antagonism.¹⁰

COGITO AND THE HISTORY OF MADNESS

Derrida writes his paper, "Cogito and the History of Madness" in reaction to Foucault's diagnosis of Descartes' refusal to take on the possibility of his own madness. Derrida dares to allege that "the sense of Foucault's entire project can be pinpointed in these few allusive and somewhat enigmatic pages." Foucault's reading of the Cartesian *Cogito* "engages in its problematic the totality of this *History of Madness* as regards both its intention and its feasibility" (Cogito, 32).¹¹ This allegation aggravated Foucault greatly (Madness, 575), but in his text he does place, as part of the 17th century strategy of isolating and intensifying the phenomenon of madness, Descartes' summary rejection of being demented in his hyperbolic doubt. In any case, Derrida does not take issue with this socio-historical claim, even while suggesting that imposing such an external framework prevents a precise reading what is going on in Descartes' text. So—to the issue—how can an author entertain the possibility of his own writing as a kind of dementia? Derrida thinks that a writer can do no more than this:

[T]o add [nothing] whatsoever to what Foucault has said, but perhaps only to *repeat* once more, on the site of this *division* between reason and madness of which Foucault speaks so well, the meaning, a meaning of the cogito or (plural) Cogitos... and also to determine that what is in question here is an experience which ... is perhaps no less adventurous, perilous, nocturnal and pathetic than the experience of madness and ... much less ... accusative and objectifying of [madness] than Foucault seems to think (Cogito, 33)

Thus, in the next twelve pages Derrida raises in his own terms a problem about any study of madness that would redress the tendency to isolate, confine and intensify the phenomenon of madness. Foucault appears to be in the same situation as Descartes. No more than Descartes can *he* encompass the thought that he is writing his study of madness in the language of the insane. Hence, it would seem that we must question the insinuation that the assumed sanity of one's own enterprise objectifies the insane as "Other". Foucault writes an intelligible history without, thereby, "isolating" the mad on the far side of his textual fence. It is from within a glasshouse that he throws a rhetorical stone at Descartes for *excluding* the insane from discourse by excluding the possibil-

ity of his own unreason.

Foucault is on edge¹² when he complains, “[Derrida] thinks he can capture the meaning of my book ... from ... the only three pages that are given over to the analysis of a text that is recognised by the philosophical tradition” (History, 575). He accuses Derrida of being incapable of a judgement about the impact of a historically oriented text upon a “contextually bound” enterprise. In his replies to Foucault, Derrida attends to this deep question about Foucault’s project of *writing madness*. Unless Foucault is to take on *writing madness* from within its own world he must take for granted the legitimacy of his own implicit division between sanity and madness. Derrida resumes his close analysis of Foucault’s reading of Descartes: “Descartes, then, is alleged to have executed ... a summary expulsion of the possibility of madness from thought itself” (Cogito, 45). Having registered a reason for doubting the senses—that sometimes how things appear other than as they are—Descartes notes that such problems usually arise about things that are *hardly perceptible, or very far away*. This gives us no reason to doubt what is close and immediate. And so Descartes evokes what is immediate, in a physically self-reflexive pronouncement—*Quoi! Mais ce sont des fous!*—that we can liken to his point of certainty. “I think, I exist” also depends on a certainty generated by self-reference.

Now, Foucault takes Descartes as refusing to encompass the possibility of his own madness, rather than encompassing the impossibility of the writer thus diagnosing himself. Foucault also takes Derrida to task for suggesting that the momentary “possibility” of madness is a rhetorical flourish to pave the way for the acceptable supposition that one might be dreaming.¹³ Foucault is right to say that Descartes’ hyperbolic doubts are of a different genre from the thought that one might be demented in one’s own “clear and distinct” thoughts. And Derrida *does* do what Foucault complains about—he does reckon, also rightly, that to create philosophy one has to take for granted one’s being *mented—mindful*.

Derrida notes that Foucault takes no position about textual analysis and historical context, but he does insist on one methodological claim to which Foucault will take great exception:

[O]nly when the totality of this (textual) content will have become manifest in its meaning to me (but this is impossible) will I rigorously be able to situate it in its total historical form. It is only then that its reinsertion will not do it violence, that there will be a legitimate reinsertion of *this* philosophical meaning *itself* (Cogito, 44).

We shall take up the issue in due course, but first let us make our own brief, impure and partial reading of Descartes—then interweave that with what Derrida observes.

DESCARTES’ PROGRESS

Foucault takes Derrida to mean that some pure philosophical analysis must precede and dominate studies of historical context and practice. What happens as Descartes progresses?

Having reckoned that he can doubt everything that he relies on from using the senses—since the senses are “trompeurs” (“deceivers”)¹⁴—Descartes listens to a voice of caution or moderation about his grounds for doubting *everything* he has accepted from the senses:

But although the senses may sometimes deceive us about some minute or remote objects, yet there are [*would be, perhaps—sed forte*] many other facts as to which doubt is plainly impossible: e.g. that I am here, sitting by the fire ... holding this paper in my hands (Descartes, 62)

He expostulates, “How can the existence of these things be denied?” To this, in mock reply,

Unless I likened myself to some lunatics (‘*nisi me forte comparem nescio quibus insanis*’)—unless I were to liken myself to I do not know which persons of unsound mind (*si ce n’est peut-être que je*

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me compare à ces insensés) (Descartes, 62).

For Foucault, in excluding the possibility of his own unsoundness of mind, Descartes 'circumvents' the possibility of a sensory failure to register what is real. By placing the possible insanity of the sceptical thinker outside the philosophical arena he controls the philosophical scene so as to deal with what he can handle. Thus, despite the "hyperbolic" doubts about the senses he discovers what cannot be doubted even were he to be dreaming—and even if the most powerful demon were trying to deceive him.¹⁵

Derrida responds critically: In rejecting the possibility of his own derangement, Descartes is engaged in a rhetorical device whereby he can mention such a possibility while making light of it (Cogito, 50). He can represent the problem of madness as what would be posed by a newcomer to philosophy. He can then retort "*Mais quoi!*" to that philosophical innocent. Descartes mocks himself: "A fine argument!" For Derrida, Descartes is expostulating *against* excluding doubt even about what is immediately apparent. I do not have to be *mad* to doubt that I am sitting by *this* fire, with *this* piece of paper in *these* hands. You, my sane readers (he is implying) are quite capable of dreaming such a thing. Nevertheless, says Derrida,

[B]eneath this natural comfort ... is hidden ... a ... principled truth: ... if discourse and philosophical communication ... are to have an intelligible meaning ... they must ... in fact and in principle escape madness. They must carry normality within themselves ... And this is not a defect or mystification linked to a determined historical structure, ... for it belongs to the meaning of meaning ... [And yet] Descartes never interns madness ... *He only claims to exclude it during the first ... non-hyperbolic moment of natural doubt* (Cogito, 53-54).

After detailing the extremity of the doubts that Descartes evokes from the possibility that he is dreaming¹⁶, Derrida can still claim this:

(In Descartes) everything can be reduced to a determined historical totality except the hyperbolic project ... [which] belongs to the narration narrating itself and not to the narration narrated by Foucault. It cannot be recounted, cannot be objectified as an event in a determined history (Cogito, 57-8)

It is with such flourishes that Derrida shows how Descartes incorporates, within his doubt, possibilities that Derrida reckons to be *more* extreme than one's own lack of soundness of mind. In the final six pages of his *Cogito and the History of Madness* Derrida also works to assure the reader that he does not place the certainty of 'I think' in some a-temporal region beyond historical reach. He insists, rightly, that the certainty of 'I think' or 'I am' is bound within its own moment of immediate recognition:

Descartes must 'temporalize' the Cogito, which is itself valid¹⁷ only during the instant of intuition ... And here one should be attentive to this link between the Cogito and the movement of temporalisation. For if the Cogito is valid even for the ... madman, one must¹⁸ not be mad if one is to reflect it and retain it, if one is to communicate it and its meaning. ... And here, with the reference to God *and* to a certain memory, would begin the hurried repatriation of all mad and hyperbolically wanderings which take shelter ... within the order of reasons, in order ... to take possession of the truths they had left behind. For finally [for Descartes] it is God alone who ... insures (against madness) my cognitive determinations, that is, my discourse against madness. ... Otherwise, the Cogito ... could only open itself up to (madness) in the most hospitable way (Cogito, 58).

Derrida proceeds to praise Foucault's reading of Descartes,

not at the stage ... that he cites ... anterior to the Cogito ... but [rather] from the moment which immediately succeeds the .. Cogito at its most intense, when reason and madness have not yet been separated, when to take the part of the Cogito ... is to grasp ... the source which permits reason *and*

madness to be determined and stated. ... For if the Cogito is valid even for the madman ... to be mad —... the other of each determined form of the logos - is not [yet] to be able to make the Cogito appear as such for an other ... who may be myself (Cogito, 58).¹⁹

In his final five dramatic and closely worked pages, Derrida states his position on the relation between Descartes' presumption of sane thought and his method of doubt. Reason has an ambiguous role when it expels madness. Derrida's theme is of madness as a "voluble silence"—noisy with words but silent in having lost the capacity to *think what one says*. The "silence" is the lack of an answer to the question of what he *means*—even to himself:

Within the movement of the Cogito, the hyperbolic extreme is not the only element that should be, like pure madness, silent (Cogito, 58).

Thus, just as you cannot refute the one of unsound mind who denies that he thinks, you cannot refute the one who *says*²⁰ that *we* (!) might be dreaming. The recognition of the error [that I might be mad, or dreaming] is "held in silence", then.²¹ The recognition of the error [that I might be mad, or dreaming] is "held in silence" in the sense that if one were of unsound mind one could not *say* so. In one's volubility one would be "silent". Derrida reminds us of how Descartes tries to exit doubt *via* the reassurance of God's existence. But to do so Descartes must *proffer* and *reflect* the Cogito. He must "temporalise ... what is valid only during the instant of recognition." As we have noted, Derrida proceeds to argue:

[Even] if the Cogito is *valid for* the madman, one must not be mad if one is to reflect and contain it—if one is to communicate it. [And so] Descartes begins to repatriate all the mad and hyperbolic wanderings within the order of reasons. Within Descartes' text, the internment takes place here ... God alone protects me against the madness to which the Cogito ... [otherwise] opens up hospitably (Cogito 58).

Derrida points out that even before Descartes shores up the "clarity and distinctness" of ideas with an all-powerful and benevolent being, he has "identified the 'Cogito' with reasonable thought under the protection of the 'natural light' of reason". It follows that

the act of the Cogito, if it puts itself against madness, must be repeated and distinguished from the deductive system in which Descartes inscribes it [thus relating it to others]. It is through a relation of self with other that meaning reassures itself as not madness (Cogito, 59).

It is in this way that Derrida aligns his reading of hyperbolic doubt with that of Foucault:

It is the system of certainty that limits hyperbole and does so both by determining it in the ether of natural light or by making hyperbolic doubt a transition point within a chain of reasons. It has its own time and place only as detached from hyperbole (Cogito, 59-60).

It is from this point that Derrida combines his own critical reflections on Foucault and Descartes with an assessment of the over-all achievement of Foucault's "monumental book" and sets about characterizing philosophy in its aftermath. In contrast with his remark on Foucault's "naïve" reading of the *Meditations*, Derrida says that he admires Foucault's placement of Descartes' remarks on madness in the context of his own historically centred study of defining insanity in confining the insane. Nevertheless, being more interested in the fate of philosophy, Derrida finds Foucault's book "great" because it "makes him anticipate the degree to which the philosophical act can no longer be in memory of Cartesianism in the sense that Descartes understood it":

[In the] attempt-to-say-the-demonic-hyperbole from those heights, thought ... *frightens* itself, and [then] *reassures* itself against being annihilated in madness or in death. [H]yperbole (uneconomic

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expenditure) is always re-embraced by an *economy* ...

[For] the relationship between reason, madness and death is an economy ... The economy of this writing is a regulated relationship between that which exceeds and the exceeded totality: the *différance* of the absolute excess (Cogito, 60-61).

This interpretation of the place of “madness” (“excess”, “hyperbole”) *within* a philosophical understanding annoys Foucault, who regards Derrida as a conservative in respect of making the welfare of philosophy the prime issue. But however one judges Derrida’s priorities, by standing on the shoulders of Foucault’s new historical ‘monument’ he says something significant about philosophy. In saying that the book makes him “anticipate” how the “philosophical act” can no longer be in memory of Cartesianism, he admits that it shows something *against* philosophy—in its historically repeated guise of the attempt-to-say-the-hyperbolic. Philosophy constructs itself in betraying the sense of crisis contained within the “act” of its hyperbole. Derrida does not contest but rather reiterates Foucault’s emphasis on the philosophical gesture of excluding madness from its activity by objectifying it as a distant *object* of thought. In reaction to the hazard of philosophical hyperbole being indistinguishable from the movement of an unsound mind, philosophy pursues a homogenizing mode that *institutionalises* the moment of excess within classifications that make a static and harmless object of its existential angst. Thus Derrida concludes in again praising Foucault’s achievement:

[His work] enrich[es] the concept of crisis. In one sense [it is like] Husserl’s vision of objectivism that menaces reason as meaning .. [Though] the crisis is also one of decision .. between the way of the *logos* and that of the *labyrinth* ..., to opt for *logos* as separated from madness is an exile of *logos* from itself—[it is to] forget[] its own origin and possibility (Cogito, 62)

Thus, Derrida concludes, ‘Michel Foucault teaches us to think that there are crises of reason in strange complicity with what the world calls crises of madness’ (Cogito, 63).



MY BODY, THIS PAPER, THIS FIRE

In an opening section of *The History of Madness*, Foucault interprets the dismissal by Descartes of the idea that the philosopher in his hyper might be mad. To doubt his senses concerning what is immediate to him, Descartes expostulates, would resemble those who think they have a body of glass and a head of clay—“*sed amentes sunt iste!*” Derrida says that Descartes means only to summon up the astonished response of someone unaccustomed to philosophical doubt; the phenomenon of madness is fully admitted within the field of bizarre experience within dreaming,—and in the hypothesis that a demon might deceive the thinker about everything that appears evident in sense or in logic.

Foucault points out, however, the difference between a controlled *meditation* on these radical possibilities, and the importation of possible madness within the philosopher’s very thought processes. The philosopher’s *thinking* does not become chaotic when he thinks he might be dreaming, or that a demon might be deceiving him. That possibility is contained within the resolute mind of the thinker who *outwits* the demon:

If [the demon] deceives me, then again I undoubtedly exist; let him deceive me as much as he may, he will never bring it about that, at the time of thinking that I am something, I am in fact nothing (Descartes, 67).

In any case, to be *insensé*, *demens*, or *amens* is to mistake or radically confuse the here and now of experience, whereas to have bizarre dreams is to be safely asleep—quite outside the risk of error.²² Foucault, though he does not fully articulate the difference between wild dreams and madness, does describe the radical difference

in their philosophical roles. Descartes' possibilities of dreaming (or of an evil demon) form part of a *discursive practice* of hyperbolic doubt. It is this *practice* that keeps *being of unsound mind* at arms length from philosophical meditations:

[T]he resolution to think about dreams does not merely have the consequence of turning sleep and wakefulness into a theme for reflection. This theme ... *takes effect* in the meditating subject in the form of memories, vivid impressions, voluntary movements ... astonishment and [finally] an indifferenciation [an 'inability' to tell whether one is awake or asleep] which is close to the feeling of sleeping. To think of dreaming is not at all to think of something exterior ... it is not simply to evoke a whole strange phantasmagoria ...; thinking of [whether I am awake or] dreaming [has as] its effect to scramble ... at the very heart of [one's] meditation, the perceived limits of sleeping and wakefulness. The dream *troubles the subject* who thinks about it (History, 554).²³

Foucault points out that the supposition of dreaming has a real *effect* within the meditation contained. In contrast, the hypothesis of madness is excluded from meditative practice.²⁴



ONE MIGHT BE DREAMING! BUT SUCH PEOPLE HAVE DEPARTED FROM THOUGHT!²⁵

Even as you might allow that Foucault has made manifest what Derrida at best left implicit, you will find that Foucault is congruent with Descartes in writing as if the "I" that is Descartes can coherently be thought of as falling into error while asleep, dreaming. That is the supposition that Foucault and Derrida share. There can be no platform for the *expression* of such a thought, however. Foucault himself insists, cannily, on a difference in type between the supposition of dreaming and that of madness. If I had had to "liken" myself to "madmen" in order to deny that *these hands and my whole body* are mine then I would be *demens*. This legal term classifies me publicly as mentally disturbed to such an extent that I cannot speak for myself. In contrast, when as sceptical philosophers we invoke dreaming, it is as sane people that we share this fact of dreams. I call upon my memory and yours.

Foucault insists that I cannot thus incorporate the possibility of my own unsoundness of mind into a meditation about whether some certainties withstand all possible doubt. Descartes does not carry out the test of where "my" doubt that "I" am sane might lead since he cannot pretend to philosophize on that basis. Furthermore, to think that one might be dreaming what the insane *experience* is to emphasise the difference between the insane and those who only dream. The hyperbolically doubting philosopher does not take himself for a madman who takes himself for a king—or a king who thinks he is a philosopher who has sought solitude in order to meditate. Foucault duly notes and dispatches the difference between the supposition of "madness" and our knowledge that we all dream. Always it is we sane people—author and readers—who *know* those wretches who think they are kings—*sed amentes sunt isti*.

The shaky part of Foucault's ground, however, will emerge as he tracks Descartes' discursive practice in the *Meditations*. The geological "fault" will be disguised by his (salutary) emphasis on the meditation as a *practice*, with real effects. As he says, there can be no effect of playing the madman and so Descartes dismisses the theme. In contrast, by playing the one who is asleep ("dreaming all of this"), Descartes' narrator can half persuade himself that he *is* dreaming: "I begin to feel dazed". I am in the "stupor" of indistinction between sleeping and waking. The test of dreaming *works* as discursive practice. I *am* "dazed", whereas the test of madness fails even to register.

So it would appear that the exercises of the *demens* and the *dormiens* run in parallel, on tracks that cannot intersect. That one might be *dormiens* is admissible—that one might be *demens* is not. Foucault claims that Derrida

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trivialises Descartes' rejection of the possibility of madness as only a "clumsy pedagogy" that opens the scene of dreaming as a stage upon which the theme of madness may appear. There is, however, a deeper reason for this difference between the status of dreaming and of madness within hyperbolic doubt—a difference that ensures that Foucault and Derrida stay each on his own turf when marking the difference between "dream" doubt and "insane" doubt. The difference is this. The one who is mad *is* mistaken while the one who dreams is not. The dreamer is not *mad* because not in any way *mistaken* when dreaming what in waking life would be the experience of someone deranged.

Neither Foucault nor Derrida challenge Descartes in his use of the possibility that he is dreaming as reason for thinking that his senses are not entirely to be trusted. Dreams, however, are a source of error only if to dream is to come to new erroneous *opinions*. That in your *dream* you insist that it is all real, does not implicate you, upon waking, in having committed some error of thought during the night. When Descartes was dreaming it did not *seem* to him that he was seeing things. He had been dreaming, not hallucinating. His dream figure's thought is no more a *thought* than is his dream figure's flying his *taking to the air*. Foucault is right to mark the difference between the roles of dreams and madness in philosophical scepticism. That difference, however, has a more extreme consequence for a critique of Descartes' doubts than either he or Derrida fully realize.

Foucault does approach the difference between dreamed thoughts and mad thoughts. He points out that whereas the ragged deranged person thinks he is dressed in gold, to think one might be dreaming one is dressed in gold is to *doubt* that one is dressed in gold. The madman is convinced. The philosopher is doubtful. The one who thinks he might be dreaming is already cautious in what he concludes. But this analysis is only half-right; it goes only halfway. If the philosopher is dreaming—as Foucault assumes to be thinkable—then now is not the time when he can form any opinion. If he is only dreaming then he only dreams that he thinks. He presently stands upon no platform from which he can state anything, or think of stating it, whether to himself or to another.

When he awakes from a dream in which he is flying, swooping from hilltop to hilltop, he does not have to conclude that when he dreamed he *took himself* for Superman—that during the night he had had a fit of madness in which he *believed* such a crazy thing. While he was dreaming he was not conscious to himself so as to have any current opinion. That is the fundamental difference between trying to suppose that one might *be* dreaming, and trying to imagine that one might be in a psychotic fugue.

FOUCAULT'S PROGRESS

Certainly, it is Foucault's analysis of the effects of Descartes' meditations in terms of discursive practice that brings us towards this conclusion. As he says, we do not only "read" the meditations. Each takes the "I" as him or herself and works through the exercises as his or her own task. Foucault's observation helps us to understand how the supposition "I might be dreaming" differs from "I am currently deranged":

Any discourse is made up of a group of enunciations with formal rules that link its parts; the subject of the discourse remains fixed, invariant, as though neutralised. But a meditation produces new enunciations that modify the enunciating subject, as it passes from darkness to light, impurity to purity, constraint of passions to detachment (History, 563).²⁶

Thus a meditation that liberates the subject from his convictions illuminates other issues and permits new enunciations. We read Descartes' meditations not only as a group of propositions that form a system that we check for consistency and truth but also as practices that affect us readers as we engage in them. So there are "moments of pure deduction" *and* "chiasms" where two forms of discourse intersect. The two forms of discourse that modify the subject, order the succession of propositions. Or they command the junction of different demonstrative groups. This "deductive fragment" is of that order:

I must be wary of anything that has once deceived me
 The senses have sometimes deceived me—and so
 I no longer (entirely) trust the senses.

Then I think discursively.²⁷ The wariness has been justified only when it concerns objects that are distant or obscurely sensed. Then I challenge myself—would I not be mad to doubt what is most immediately and clearly sensed—this body, this paper I hold, this fire that warms me? And so the inner discourse continues²⁸—I need not mime those who have lost their powers of reason and judgement, or risk being dismissed by others as someone no longer accountable or credible for their utterances. I need only remind myself (as will each person taking up the exercise) that I when I go to sleep I dream, and that within a dream what happens may seem just as clear and immediate as my present waking experience.

Now, this meditative practice changes me. If there are no “sure and certain marks” of the difference between what I perceive and what I dream then I cannot say with any certainty that I am now dealing with present waking experience. I have brought myself to a new and deeply troubling stage, not of a controlled process of thought that I may exit at any moment. “*J'en suis tout étonné, et mon étonnement est tel, qu'il est presque capable de me persuader que je dors*”. (From the 1649 translation by le duc de Luynes, on which Descartes collaborated.) It is at this point that Foucault remarks:

The meditation has been successfully carried out. Now, since the doubting subject can reasonably think he might be dreaming, he can now reasonably think that intelligible truths (geometry, arithmetic) that seem evident, might be logical delusions prompted by a demon (History, 567).

Yet, as Foucault insists, the judgment ‘not mad—not me!’ still holds. However hyperbolic its content, the exercise remains an enterprise chosen by a sane and accountable subject.²⁹ Foucault considers that Derrida did feel the unique place of the passage on madness and that this does emerge, perforce, in his text. Foucault notes how Derrida “invents different voices”—that of the sophisticated thinker, and that of the naïve fellow who thinks the philosopher would be *insensu* to doubt the existence of his own body. For Derrida, the philosopher (who “might” be dreaming) “circumvents” the incredulity of commonsense by the hypothesis that he might be dreaming—an experience common to all, whether sophisticated or naïve.

For Foucault, Derrida’s Descartes who substitutes dreaming (or the demon) for the possibility of madness does not really speak of madness at those places where the theme is overt, but does speak of it at those places where it makes no mention of the theme.³⁰ If Derrida were to have faced the possibility of being one of the *insani*, or *dementi*, he would have had to remove the status of the “evil demon” hypothesis as a voluntary exercise under the reasonable control of the philosophical thinker. The supposition of an “evil demon” is quite other than a supposition that the thinker might be mad. It is the contrary, Foucault suggests. He reminds us of how in madness, I would *believe* that a robe covers my nakedness whereas within the supposition of an evil demon, I *do not believe* that “this” dressing gown covers me. The “evil genius”, Foucault continues, “takes over the power of madness only *after* the exercise of the meditation has excluded the thinker as possibly mad”.

Descartes will choose to imagine that “the sky and all external things” are delusions of dreams or promptings of the evil genius, whereas the madman would take his illusions and dreams as real things. Consequently, when faced with this possible cunning deceiver, the meditating subject behaves as an equally cunning adversary, whereas Descartes’ initial apprehension about *madness* was of something that, as Foucault puts it, “*I would be unable to master*, since it was *inflicted* upon me by hypothesis, and *I am not responsible for it*” (History, 572).

DOUBTING YOU THINK; THINKING YOU MIGHT BE DREAMING

Descartes’ discovery of certainty is his realisation that whatever the demon does, he cannot bring it about that Descartes does not exist while he is engaged in the very process of doubt. In the Discourse IV, he says “I

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noticed that while I was trying to think everything false, it must needs be that I, who was thinking this, was something" (Descartes 31). He puts this in some other ways. "If I did convince myself [that nothing in the world exists then] I must have existed ... the demon will never bring it about that, at the time of thinking that I am something, I am in fact nothing ... 'I am', 'I exist' whenever I utter it or conceive it in my mind, is necessarily³¹ true" (Descartes 67).

Descartes would have had no effect if he had spoken impersonally, thus: "It could not be doubted that a person who took himself to be sitting by the fire, holding a piece of paper in his hands was entirely correct." We can think of someone who is deceived by hypnosis, or woken up within a staged set-up. Descartes' appeal to *this* fire, *this* piece of paper, and *my* hands as part of *my* body—the self-referential gesture involved in making his claim—produces the immediacy and proximity of what is said to the event reported.

This fire means the fire towards which *I* gesture with *my* hand—one of the same pair of hands that hold *this* piece of paper that *I* read. How can doubt—by the very one who is securing these references—get a purchase? Upon *what* does it gain purchase? I might raise an ordinary kind of doubt by asking whether *this* "fire" is no more than an illusion of flickering lights on make-believe coals. I might wonder whether *this* paper is perhaps some new synthetic substitute. But I cannot doubt, at the same time as securing reference to it, that *this* (fire or fire-like contraption) is *there*, before *me*.

Descartes is right in implying that I would have had to suffer some kind of *dementia* (or *a-mentia*) in order to deny the very thing to which I am currently making reference. Or at least I would have to think of myself as failing, in some drastic moment, to keep my mind upon its task. To say that I might be referring to a dreamed fire, in the same linguistic gesture with which I refer specifically to it would involve some form of *de-mentia*. I would not be referring at all if I were dreaming. A psychiatrist sitting opposite me at the same fire hearing me say that I am dreaming *this* fireside at which I sit and *this* paper that I have in my hands, might diagnose me as being in some state of radical disassociation. And if I were to diagnose myself in that way, still I would no closer to sanity were I to attempt to integrate, within my own gestures, such a possibility of mal-function.

As one opens up the situation in this way, various possibilities then come to mind. I would only compound the diagnosis of my insanity were I, within the one speech act, both to secure specific reference and to reject that there was anything relevant whatsoever to refer to. One can imagine a different kind of scene, however. Imagine. I have been seeing a psychiatrist about my hallucinations. I have learned some signs of when they impend, and I have begun to work on how to deal with their onset. I have been walking across parkland, and thus can assess that an hallucination has begun when, as I sit down on a bench I "see" a fire before me within the walls of a "room", and "find" a piece of paper in my hand. I make notes of my hallucination to offer to my psychiatrist when next we meet. As preserving some sanity as I heed the onset of hallucination, my notes would refer only to how things seem. If still sane, I would only *mention* my desire to include the linguistic gestures, *this* fire, *this* paper and *my* hands that hold *it*. What I would report *as the case* for my psychiatrist would have a referentially undecided character. "Suddenly" (I write) "it appears to me as if I am sitting not on a park bench but on an easy chair beside a fire—as if I were at home."

ON THE MOMENT OF VALIDITY

We observed earlier how in praising Foucault's reading of Descartes, Derrida raised the question of whether the Cogito is "valid for the madman":

[Foucault's reading is successful] from the moment which immediately succeeds the ... Cogito at its most intense, when reason and madness have not yet been separated, when to take the part of the Cogito ... is to grasp ... the source which permits reason *and* madness to be determined and stated. ... For if the Cogito is valid even for the madman [then] to be mad ... is not [yet] to be able to make the Cogito appear as such for an other—who may be myself (Cogito, 58).

In using “*valid for the madman*”, Derrida confuses the issue. The point is not to relativize validity to time or person but to distinguish logical (atemporal) validity from what is particular to the immediacy of the ‘*cogito*’. The thought of Descartes’ *cogito* registers how something becomes properly evident *in the moment* of its being undoubtable. If we are strict about this distinction then we shall see how the possibility of the thinker him or herself being of unsound mind does operate, but at a different register and as from another site from the doubts born of dreams and imaginary demons. After all, someone of unsound mind might *not* be convinced by the self-authenticating declarative, “I think; I exist”, though each proposition is, in Descartes’ sense, undeniably true in being meaningfully uttered. Someone of unsound mind who is going to deny that he finds certainty in Descartes’ discoveries may still be firm and correct in their obsessive use of logic. One of unsound mind may accept the logic, also—“I think *therefore* I exist”. And he is about to display that same unsound judgement when he agrees that “therefore” is supported by the *conditional* “If I doubt that I exist then still, I exist in order to doubt” while systematically denying that he *is* conceiving in his mind *I think*, or, *I exist*. “If I *were* thinking either of those things then certainly I would exist”, he would say, firmly. “But since I don’t exist it is quite impossible that I should be saying or thinking any such thing.” Such a deductively impregnable, interactive, and yet self-belying discourse is possible for someone of unsound mind. The *logic* in such “madness” exposes what is at play, too loosely, in Derrida’s gesture, “valid even for the madman.”

Descartes can write: “However the demon deceives me he cannot bring it about, while I am thinking or conceiving that I exist, that I should not be somewhat.” That the “madman” would be unmoved is no objection to what Descartes (and every sane reader) does comprehend— that whether the demon makes him think he does exist or that he does not, still he does exist. The madman, unmoved, maintains the same *logic* but refuses its premise. He does not exist and does not think he does, he stoutly maintains. We judge the Cartesian situation overall, not *arguing* with, but *observing* what the demented *do*. They say and think that they are not saying or thinking at all.

ON DERANGED THINKING

Foucault does, properly, mark the difference between the *demens* and the *dormiens*. He is not as clear about the *demens* as *deceived*, and the *dormiens* as *dreaming*, however. He rightly emphasises *demens* as a failure in the thinker, and *dormiens* as a state in which there is simply the presentation of a series of “eccentric” experiences. No more than Derrida does he explore the significance of that difference for Descartes’ sceptical use of the possibility of dreaming. There is a crucial difference between the first reason for doubt (that sometimes the senses deceive us) and the second (that one might be dreaming when one takes oneself to be sitting by the fire). Descartes’ first reasons for being cautious in using the senses were proper and (as he admits) properly limited in application. He takes a misstep, however. He infers from the fact that we do *dream*, that we are *thus* sometimes mistaken in trusting our senses. To dream I am being pursued by a lion does not amount to my having sense impressions to that effect. Furthermore, since I am unconscious I am in no state to be tricked into *thinking* that I am being pursued. To be *deceived* into *thinking* one is pursued is to be awake. It is only within the *dream* that its centralising figure has sense impressions or thoughts.³²

While dreaming, the person is asleep, unaware of what he is doing. He is not aware that he is dreaming, either, when the dream figure says “This must all be a dream.” There is a *field* of the dream within which figures think, move and feel. A dream figure is there within it as dream subject of a dreamed narrative. *I am not there* to be deceived, any more than I am there to be eaten by the lion that pursues the dream subject across that dreamed field. The dream figure that is in panic *at the lion* is dreamed also—though during the dream my body may show sign of anxiety and disturbance. The truth of Descartes’ reminder, “You or I could dream any of this” occludes a falsity—that I would still be there to *think* it was real, were I to be asleep and dreaming. There is no coherent sense in the idea that *I*, the one who sits by *this fire* holding *this paper*, could be in process of being deceived by a dream while sound asleep.³³ The “I”, the “fear”, and the “lion” are all equally “stuff that dreams are made of.”³⁴

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As we enact hyperbolic doubt Descartes asks us to play a double game. First we take ourselves as common-sense creatures—"As though I were not a man who habitually sleeps at night." This slides into "*having* the same (or wilder) impressions in sleep than do these [mad] men do when awake" (Descartes, 62). It might seem petty to insist, immediately, that these "impressions while asleep" are no more than *dreams*. (After all, we agreed to play the game of hyperbolic doubt.) But it would have been wise to intervene straight off. The absurd idea that we are *misled while asleep* slips past our guard. The notion that to dream is to think while asleep was already incorporated within the gesture of hyperbolic doubt that called into question the line between one's waking memory of dreams, and dreams of being awake.³⁵

We can return now more confidently to Foucault's insistence that "I might be currently of unsound mind" is of a different order from "Now, in typing these words I am only dreaming." As Foucault points out, if I were of unsound mind then what I am currently "seeing" and "doing" might well involve my being "deceived" by the senses. While dressed in rags I would perceive myself as dressed like a king—a king with a body of glass and a head of pottery. To dream these things poses no danger to yourself or others. To have sense impressions and to think they are real is to be liable to engage in dangerous behaviour, however.

That we dream stands in a relation to the *practice* of hyperbolic doubt that is altogether different from that of the questioning thinker being of unsound mind.³⁶ Foucault has made good this claim. In so doing he almost recognised why the rational sceptic can say "I could dream any of this" but not "I might be insane in seeming to sense this." Foucault's own good reason for the distinction is this: to think oneself insane is to discount one's own thinking. To take oneself as incapable of rational thought is to proceed no further. In contrast, the hyperbolic doubter is interested in meditative *discursive practice* as something that can have real effects; the doubting philosopher is driven forwards:

[T]he resolution to think about dreams does not merely have the consequence of turning sleep and wakefulness into a theme for reflection. This theme ... *takes effect* in the meditating subject in the form of memories, vivid impressions, voluntary movements ... astonishment and [finally] an indifferenciation [an 'inability' to tell whether one is awake or asleep] which is close to the feeling of sleeping. To think of dreaming is not at all to think of something exterior ... it is not simply to evoke a whole strange phantasmagoria ...; thinking of [whether I am awake or] dreaming [has as] its effect to scramble ... at the very heart of [one's] meditation, the perceived limits of sleeping and wakefulness. The dream *troubles the subject* who thinks about it (History, 554).

Foucault shows how it is that within hyperbolic doubt it can come to seem that one has thought what one cannot *think*—that one is only dreaming when one says (internally or to others) that *this* body is holding *this* piece of paper and being warmed by *this* fire. Foucault's method reveals something about "I might be dreaming" that we can retain beyond its role in his dispute with Derrida. To imagine one can really think "I might *be* dreaming this" is to be spooked by the truth that I *might* dream this, or *might have* dreamed it. This (coherent) thought that I *might have* dreamed the very thing that now I live through connects with Foucault's observation that the dream "troubles the subject who thinks about it." It is such facts that lend a certain aura of sense to "I might be dreaming all this for all I know."

It is these conscious connections of waking life with what happens during sleep that lubricate the mind's slip-page from the truth that I might dream anything that I live through, to the non-sense uttered while awake, that I "might" ("for all I know") be dreaming all *this*. For "all this" would have to be the verbal gesticulation at various events and objects (fire, paper, body) as if contents of a present dreaming in which, *ex hypothesi*, I would *not* be gesturing, identifying or even thinking anything.

To mime Descartes' argument from *dreaming*—in terms of *thinking*—exposes what has gone wrong in the argument that in dreaming I am deceived by the (apparent) senses:

Anything that I experience, I might have thought, or could later think. So perhaps as I now take myself to be sitting by this fire I am doing no more than to *think* I am doing that. My presently sitting at *this* fire might be only my *thinking* that I am sitting here.³⁷

Certainly, just as I may dream anything that I experience in waking life, I can think of seeing and doing them, too. But I cannot coherently think that the apparent presence of the shoes on my feet and the pen with which I write these very words might be no more than my *thinking* of them. In the same way, that I might be dreaming them, in the mistaken *thought* that I am awake, it is not something that I can coherently think. The gestures of immediate reference—*my body, this paper, this fire* betray that I have already identified, not dreamed them. If I were presently dreaming I would not even be *thinking them* as thus identified.

It is no escape from this objection to say that I might be *awake*, thus able to think—thinking I was sitting by the fire even while having no such sensory experience at all. To satisfy a scenario where pure *thinking* rather than rich *dreaming* deluded me, I would have to be able to *think* that, in the midst of my not even *seeming* to see or *seeming* to see or hear anything, I am now taken in by my own pure thinking so as to think that I *am* immersed in a such a world of sensory experience.

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NOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence*. Seuil, Paris 1967. (*Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass, Routledge, London, 1978.) I refer to the dates of publication by each in French, in order to track their interchanges. References to the chapter, 'Cogito and the History of Madness' will appear as 'Cogito'.
2. Michel Foucault, 'My Body, This Paper, This Fire', *A History of Madness*, trans. J. Murphy & Jean Khalfa, London: Routledge, 2006, 573 (hereafter, 'History'); *Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu* in *Histoire de la Folie à l'âge classique*, Paris: Gallimard, 1972). All subsequent references to Foucault will be to this edition as 'History'.
3. My references to Descartes in English are to *Descartes: Philosophical Writings*, trans. E. Anscombe & P Geach, Nelson University Paperbacks, 1970.
4. It is typical of those who either derogated or trivialized Derrida's approach to textuality to take 'il n'y a pas de hors-texte' as a key to his whole approach rather than as a compression of something specifically going on in the text of which it formed a part. For example, in his *History of Madness*, Foucault, in the first of his appendices ('My body, this paper, this fire') defends and restates his position against Derrida's reading of Descartes' reference to madness and the method of hyperbolic scepticism. He declares him to be engaged in a 'historically determined little pedagogy ... which teaches the student that there is nothing outside the text [my emphasis]... that it is never necessary to look beyond it ... a pedagogy that inversely gives to the voice of the masters that unlimited sovereignty that allows it indefinitely to re-say the text.
5. Foucault's references in the *History of Madness* to Descartes' treatment of madness occur on pages 138-141, 157-159, 181 and 225. On 261 there is an interesting reference to the question of madness in animals, and one might consider also, the discussion of 'la folie' in Diderot's *Le neveu de Rameau* on pages 344-352. A total of eight pages that make serious reference to Descartes, and then what is a work in itself, the appendix 'Ce papier, mon corps, ce feu' which runs (in translation) to 25 pages.
6. Here I refer to the Cottingham, Stoothoff and Murdoch translation as cited in *The History of Madness*. This and subsequent references to the Cottingham (et al.) translation will appear as 'Cottingham'.
7. It is in the Sixth Meditation, after suspending his method of hyperbolic doubt that he reinstalls the order of commonsense by appeal to criteria such as the orderliness of waking experience in contrast to that of dreaming. Such a criterion would have been useless if he had appealed to it within the operation of hyperbolic doubt. Why should he not be dreaming that it is in dreams that experience is more disorderly. And, if it were true that just when he most seems to be awake, he is dreaming, then it is not true that experience in dreaming is more disorderly than in waking life.
8. In due course we shall consider the 'madness' of denying that one thinks or exists.
9. Foucault borrows this 'Other' from the Sartre/Beauvoir lexicon.
10. There is a remark at p.225 to the waning of the notion of 'passion as the interface between body and soul' as both preceding Descartes and outlasting him. And the final reference to a philosophy—Diderot in his study of the mad 'Neveu de Rameau'—is to a way of thinking that has now transcended Descartes in its ability to describe madness for what it is without placing the mad as conceptually outside the fringe of sanity, but as embodying inflexions of troubles that lie always within the world of the sane (History, 344-352).
11. 'Cogito and the History of Madness', Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, London, Routledge, 1978.
12. 'Reply to Derrida', (History, 575)
13. We shall see whether the possibility of insanity does haunt the thought that he might be in the grip of a demon who makes illogical thoughts seem as plainly true as '2+2=4'.
14. Descartes accepts this literary personification of the senses. The shift is a natural one from his 'hos autem interdum fallere deprehendi'—sometimes I have caught them deceiving [me]'.
15. Derrida makes a great deal of arguments that many readers pass over as not directly touching his profoundest doubts. Thus, Descartes argues that what can be imagined, and what can be put in one's mind as true, must be composed of elements colour, sound, taste, clarity and distinctness of idea—that are beyond the capacity of imagination to construct. Thus, at worst, we dream, or are made to think that what are in any case real elements are composed in a manner unlike their true arrangement.
16. For the present I omit the different kind of reason—that a demon might be deceiving him.
17. Since Derrida himself is (correctly) distinguishing the certainty of the 'cogito' from that of logic, he needs some term such as undeniably evident rather than 'valid' in the sense of tautological or logically deducible.


18. I would interpose 'nevertheless' at this point.
19. Derrida confuses the issue with his 'valid for'. I shall discuss this issue later ('On the moment of validity')
20. But can he say what he voices?
21. To suggest that we are involved is to take for granted that we are conscious of each other and thus awake.
22. My own argument will be is that neither Foucault nor Derrida state that difference plainly enough.
23. I shall take up this 'troubling' aspect of dreams in the concluding sections of this paper.
24. Foucault's language of 'discursive practice' is useful, but his derision of Derrida's language of textual 'traces' as part of a pathetic 'little pedagogy' is empty abuse. Derrida's method does not prevent one from pointing out how Descartes, as thinking subject, is modified by his philosophical practice as the meditations proceed.
25. Author's exclamation.
26. Thus, Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* is such a meditation.
27. A placeholder for any reader who undertakes such meditations. It is not 'I' as against 'you' or 'them'.
28. An inner discourse made public by its written form that permits any reader equally to take part in it.
29. At this point I omit discussion Foucault's extended attack on Derrida's reading of the Meditation as involving 'voices off'—that of the naïve reader shocked at the 'madness' of the doubts, and pedagogic reassurances that the necessary point can be made within the familiar language of dreams.
30. One could draw a comparison here with the way in which Le Dœuff's Pierre Roussel denies sexual difference 'to an object or place which commonsense holds it actually to possess, with the compensating attribution of that same quality to everything but that objet or place.' Michèle Le Dœuff, *The Philosophical Imaginary*. Trans. Colin Gordon, Athlone, London, 1989.
31. Since it is a contingent fact that I exist, or that I think, the correct phrasing of this ought to be 'I am' (etc.) is, necessarily, true'. That punctuation ensures that the 'necessarily' governs the whole sentence, 'Whenever I utter or conceive in the mind that I am then I am'.
32. Any operation of the senses—as when my blanket has fallen to the floor and I dream I am drifting on an ice floe—is as a trigger or stimulus to the dream, not as the supply of sensory objects what I dream I perceive. Note, however, that we had to do more than to point out that in dreaming one is not using one's senses. Descartes can claim that it need only appear to us that we are. It is at that juncture that we reveal what is wrong with his appeal to the fact of dreaming. We only dream that it appears that we are by a fireside.
33. One can be deceived afterwards by having had a dream. In recalling early childhood one might think one were recalling an event when it is only a significant dream that has been held in memory.
34. It is to repeat the same error to object, 'Ah! But I might be dreaming now that dream deception is not deception. I might be dreaming of things that, were I to believe them in waking life, *would* thus deceive me.'
35. These points about the all-enveloping character of the dream are connected with the standard 'Philosophy 101' objections to Descartes—that he cannot use as a *fact* that we dream when attempting to show that we do not *know* that we are awake. Only to the extent that we are correct in our waking experience are we in a position to assert that we *do* dream, from time to time.
36. In the same hit, he deals with what to say about the 'evil demon' that deceives us about what we sense.
37. Author's constructed example.

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