

THE RAGE OF PARTY: A GLORIOUS REVOLUTION IN ENGLISH PSYCHIATRY?

by

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THE creed of science as value-neutral, and our experience of medicine's capacity to be perverted into a demoralizing "discourse of power", together strengthen our wish that psychiatry should be free of politics, as from Szasz to Solzhenitsyn, we confront the evils of conditioning and the disabling of dissidents as disturbed and insane.¹ But four hundred years ago, official dogma, the Elizabethan world-picture, proclaimed that the ordering of the commonwealth and of the self were indeed properly all of a piece, mirroring each other, interacting.² When the time was out of joint, men went out of their minds. When authority crumbled, the storm broke on the heath, and King Lear went mad all in one instant, the audience knew this was no mere melodramatist's trick, but the workings of the cosmic unity of macro- and microcosm. Drawing on the philosophical psychology of Antiquity, especially Plato's, doctors and humanists from the Renaissance to the Augustans characteristically depicted the psyche as possessing its own well-tempered rule. Reflecting cosmic order, the body natural, like the body politic, ideally comprised a constitution in which the four humours – the sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, and melancholic – complemented and balanced each other.³ The

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¹ For exposures of how politics-riddled psychiatry is, see T. S. Szasz, *The manufacture of madness*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971; *idem*, *The myth of mental illness*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1962; *idem*, *The age of madness*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975; M. Foucault, *Madness and civilization*, Eng. trans. by R. Howard, London, Tavistock Publications, 1967; *idem*, *Discipline and punish*, Eng. trans. by A. Sheridan, London, Allen Lane, 1977.

² E. M. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan world picture*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1943; T. Spencer, *Shakespeare and the nature of man*, New York, 1958; V. I. Harris, *All coherence gone*, London, Cass, 1966; J. Carey, *John Donne, life, mind and art*, London, Oxford University Press, 1981.

³ For Renaissance psychology, see Sir W. Osler, 'Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy', *Yale Review*, 1914, 3: 251–271; L. Babb, *Sanity in Bedlam: a study of Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy*, East Lansing, Michigan State College, 1959; I. Veith, *Hysteria: the history of a disease*, Chicago University Press, 1968, pp. 120–150; O. Temkin, *The falling sickness*, Baltimore, Md., Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, pp. 220–235; E. Welsford, *The fool: his social and literary history*, London, Faber, 1935; J. Lindsay (editor), *Loving Mad Tom: Bedlamite verses of the XVI and XVII centuries*, Welwyn Garden City, 1969; E. R. Harvey, *The inward wits: psychological theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, London, Warburg Institute, 1975; M. Weidhorn, *Dreams in seventeenth century English literature*, The Hague and Paris, Mouton, 1970; W. J. Kaiser, *Praises of folly*, London, Gollancz, 1964; P. B. R. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's children: Conventions in madness in Middle English literature*, New Haven, Conn., and London, Yale

despotism of any one temperament spelt sickness. Yet the mind's government was properly hierarchical, for the appetites were low, anarchic, blind, and tumultuous, lacking inner self-control, whereas Reason was a high and noble authority, "the sovereign power of the soul",⁴ their rightful lord and master (though in reality, too rarely: "Give me that man that is not passion's slave", pleaded Hamlet). Just as in society the breakdown of law and order sprang from the mob, so in the mind, mania flared when inflamed senses ceased to submit, usurped Reason's office, and became ruling passions. "Madness is nothing else but too much appearing passion", defined Hobbes.⁵ "*Madness and Phrensie*", thought Thomas Tryon, "do generally, and for the most part arise and proceed from various Passions and extream Inclinations, as *Love, Hate, Grief, Covetousness, Dispair*, and the like", which "stire up the *Central Fires*", leading to "Hurley-burley, Confusion, Strife and Inequality", an "intestine Civil War" – all of which "subverts the government of the inward Senses and Spirit of Wisdom, and puts Reason under Hatches".⁶ The appetites were thus the antipodes of Reason: wild, brutish, fickle, a runaway rabble threatening confusion and anarchy. A stereotype pictured them as brutish, a bucking horse, threatening to unseat its rider, Reason. John Bryall thought, "Reason being . . . laid aside, Fancy gets the ascendant, and *Phaeton*-like, drives on furiously, and inconsistently";⁷ or in Jonathan Swift's words, turmoil sets in "when a Man's Fancy gets *astride* on his Reason, when Imagination is at Cuffs with the Senses, and Common Understanding, as well as common sense, is Kickt out of Door".⁸

Thus the state was ordered, and the psyche likewise organically made up of parts; sanity was rational government of the parts, madness the appetites' insurrection. No wonder, then, metaphors of madness formed a malignant rhetoric of cursing. Political opponents, heretics, critics were dubbed "lunatic", "whimsy-headed", "witless". For his weird new cosmology, William Herschel was rated "in Bedlam".⁹ The South of

University Press, 1974; M. A. Screech, *Ecstasy and the praise of folly*, London, Duckworth, 1980; R. S. Kinsman, 'Folly, melancholy and madness: A study in shifting styles of medical analysis and treatment, 1450–1675', in R. S. Kinsman (editor), *The darker vision of the Renaissance*, Berkeley and London, University of California Press, 1974, pp. 273–320.

⁴ N. Robinson, *A new system of the spleen*, London, 1729, p. 43. Thomas Tryon in the 1680s wrote about the rational soul as a judge, a court, a councillor. Quoted in R. Hunter and I. Macalpine, *Three hundred years of psychiatry 1535–1860*, London, Heinemann, 1963, p. 234. There is a good discussion in L. Babb, *The Elizabethan malady*, East Lansing, Michigan State College, 1951, pp. 17–18.

⁵ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by J. Plamenatz, London, Collins, 1962, p. 107.

⁶ Quoted in L. Feder, *Madness in literature*, Princeton, N.J., and Guildford, Surrey, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 153; cf. T. Willis, who thought "Ambition, Pride and Emulation have made some mad" (*Two discourses concerning the soul of brutes*, London, 1683, p. 203).

⁷ Quoted in M. V. DePorte, *Nightmares and hobbyhorses: Swift, Sterne, and Augustan ideas of madness*, San Marino, Calif., The Huntington Library; Folkestone, Kent, Dawson, 1974.

⁸ J. Swift, *A tale of a tub and other satires*, London, Everyman, 1975, p. 108.

⁹ There is, for example, a long tradition (the voyage to the Moon literature) of associating one's scientific and philosophical opponents with the Moon and hence with lunacy, going back at least to William Barlow's *A brief discovery of the idle animadversions of Marke Ridley*, London, 1618, and forward at least to William Blake's *An island in the moon*, c. 1784–85. I am very grateful for this point and many others to Simon Schaffer. For "Herschel in Bedlam", see Simon Schaffer, 'Herschel in Bedlam: Natural history and stellar astronomy', *Br. J. Hist. Sci.*, 1980, 12: 211–239. See also, M. H. Nicolson, *A world in the moon*, Northampton, Mass., Smith College, 1936.

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England has become, wrote Alexander Wedderburn in 1768, “a great Bedlam under the dominion of a beggarly, idle, and intoxicated mob without keepers, actuated solely by the word, *Wilkes*”.¹⁰ Similarly, in a culture which long harboured court fools as the *Doppelgänger* of kings, where kings could be the wisest fools in Christendom, and which still licensed lords of misrule, small wonder that Britain and Bedlam were heads and tails of the same coin, captured in Hogarth’s 1763 re-engraving of the rock-bottom Scene VIII of the *Rake’s progress*, where one of Bedlam’s walls has a guinea scrawled on it, bearing the legend, “Britannia”.¹¹ In this topsy-turvy nonsense world where people were, as Robert Burton had put it, “*ad unum omnes, all mad*”, satirists presented mocking Bedlamite zanies convincingly mimicking saviours, conquerors, and kings (who were the real pretenders?). Visiting Bedlam in 1709, Richard Steele found three make-believe earls, five duchesses, one emperor, one prophet, and three heathen gods.¹² He suggested that Bedlam be expanded, and politicians, free-thinkers, etc., rounded up off the streets to fill the extra places.¹³ Rowlandson and Gillray later drew Fox and Burke in Bedlam; Horace Walpole dubbed a Tory foe an “outpensioner of Bedlam”;¹⁴ and, of course, Swift, in a modest suggestion, slipped into his *Tale of a tub* a “Digression Concerning the . . . Use of and Improvement of Madness in a Commonwealth” in honour of the distinguished public service record of maniacs:

For, if we take a Survey of the greatest Actions that have been performed in the World, under the Influence of Single Men; which are *The Establishment of New Empires by Conquest: The Advance and Progress of New Schemes in Philosophy; and the contriving, as well as the propagating of New Religions: We shall find the Authors of them all, to have been [mad]*.¹⁵

Thus lunacy was traditionally the destructive rage of passion – “*hysterica passio down*”, raved Lear – whose echoes of bestial civil anarchy shaped the way the mad were classed and treated. Lunatics were thought ferocious, wild, like animals.¹⁶ Being thus a mock and threat to civilization, they needed to be stigmatized, made an object lesson. Fit targets for scorn, ridicule, and revulsion, they might need – as did the

¹⁰ Quoted in P. Rogers, *Grub Street*, London, Methuen, 1972, p. 117.

¹¹ On images of Bethlem, see, Max Byrd, *Visits to Bedlam: Madness and literature in the eighteenth century*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1974; DePorte, op. cit., note 7 above; Feder, op. cit., note 6 above; P. Reed, *Bedlam on the Jacobean stage*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1952; E. G. O’Donoghue, *The story of Bethlehem Hospital*, London, Fisher Unwin, 1914; A. Masters, *Bedlam*, London, M. Joseph, 1977. For madmen believing they were kings, see J. M. Adair, *A philosophical and medical sketch of the natural history of the human body and mind*, Bath, 1787, pp. 86–87.

¹² R. Steele, *The Tatler*, 31 January, 1709, quoted in DePorte, op. cit., note 7 above, p. 31.

¹³ R. Steele, *The Tatler*, 26 January 1709.

¹⁴ O’Donoghue, op. cit., note 11 above, p. 275. For satirical depictions in cartoons, see M. D. George, *English political caricature to 1792*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959, especially p. 74, the mad bubbler’s “engine to remove the South Sea House to Moorfields”. See also, William Schupbach, ‘John Monro, MD and Charles James Fox: etching by Thomas Rowlandson’, *Med. Hist.*, 1983, 27: 80–83.

¹⁵ Swift, op. cit., note 8 above, p. 102; see also, Feder, op. cit., note 6 above; P. Harth, *Swift and Anglican rationalism*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1961.

¹⁶ For these perspectives, see M. V. DePorte, ‘Digressions and madness in *A tale of a tub* and *Tristram Shandy*’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 1970, 34: 43–57; R. Paulson, *Theme and structure in Swift’s Tale of a tub*, New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1960; J. R. Clark, *Form and frenzy in Swift’s Tale of a tub*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1970; D. B. Morris, ‘The kinship of madness in Pope’s *Dunciad*’, *Philological Quarterly*, 1972, 1: 813–831; G. Rosen, ‘Forms of irrationality in the eighteenth century’, in H. E. Pagliaro (editor), *Studies in eighteenth century culture*, Cleveland, Ohio, Case Western Reserve University, 1972, pp. 255–288.

Bedlamites – confinement, barred windows, chains, and severe therapies aimed to deplete and tranquillize – purging drugs, emetics, ritual bloodlettings, blisters, aperients, cold baths. No less important was the “brutal coercion” of chains, whippings, strait-waistcoats, and other physical terrors: or, as Dr Thomas Willis emphasized, the mad required “punishments”: “threatenings, bonds or strokes as well as physick”.¹⁷

Deep associations such as these – linking the divided self and the divided society – long remained potent, resonating, for example in anti-Methodist satire¹⁸ and anti-Jacobin hysteria; and overt political metaphors continued to inform models of the mind, Sir Richard Blackmore calling the animal spirits the “active Ministers of the Fancy and Imagination, as well as of the inferior and sensitive Government” and viewing a split mind as “a Seat of Strife and Opposition . . . Contests, and Contradiction in Debates”.¹⁹ But I want to ask how ideas of mental health were affected by the two generations of boiling turmoil – dynastic, political, ecclesiastical, intellectual – from the Exclusion Crisis and Glorious Revolution of the 1680s through to the sedative “growth of political stability” under Sir Robert Walpole; the age of the divided society, with its rage of party,²⁰ of manic panics such as the South Sea Bubble,²¹ of the bewildering gallimaufry of cosmologies associated with the New Science, of Enlightenment doubt, the polarizing posturings of the Ancients versus Moderns debate – in short, what Paul Hazard called *la crise de la conscience européenne*. Psy-

¹⁷ T. Willis, *Two discourses*, London, 1683, p. 106. In reality, most treatment in the seventeenth century for mental disturbance was routinely pharmaceutical. See M. MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam. Madness, anxiety, and healing in seventeenth-century England*, Cambridge University Press, 1981. On Willis, see P. Craneheld, ‘A seventeenth century view of mental deficiency and schizophrenia: Thomas Willis on “stupidity or foolishness”’, *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1961, 35: 291–316.

¹⁸ A. Lyles, *Methodism mocked*, London, Epworth Press, 1960.

¹⁹ Sir R. Blackmore, *A treatise of the spleen and vapours*, London, 1725, pp. 39, 49, 54. For argument against the intermingling of medical and political metaphors, see S. Sontag, *Illness as metaphor*, London, Allen Lane, 1979.

²⁰ See, for example, Charles Hornsby, *A caveat against the Whigs*, Part 1, 1710, p. 2: “If these gentlemen [i.e. the Whigs] were separated from the rest of this nation and assembled together in their fancied primitive state of equality, in one of Mr. Hoadly’s wildernesses, we here should not trouble ourselves about them; they might be welcome to put into practice their closet notions . . . and establish their reasonable form of Utopian government, their free state of Noland, according to such a model as they could agree amongst themselves and if they should never agree . . . if they should behave themselves like the Cadmean brethren, and fight it out to the last man, each in defence of his own darling whim, we should not be angry; they would only be the objects of our pity, and a fresh instance of popular frenzy, and the miserable condition of men left to themselves without law and government and infatuated with such notions as tend to the destruction of that order and subjection by which both are constituted and preserved.” I owe this example to Simon Schaffer. Bernard de Mandeville famously wrote in his *Fable of the bees* that to expect a society to be wealthy without “great vices” was a “vain Eutopia seated in the brain”. Daniel Defoe, deploring the lunacy of the South Sea Bubble, wrote “the Devil is now unemployed because of our own craziness” (*A system of magick*, London, 1728, p. 337). For introductions to the recent historiography, see G. S. Holmes (editor), *Britain after the Glorious Revolution*, London, Macmillan, 1969; *idem* and W. A. Speck, *Divided society. Parties and politics in England, 1694–1716*, London, E. Arnold, 1967; and Linda Colley, *In defiance of oligarchy*, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

²¹ Cf. J. Midriff, *Containing remarkable cases of person of both sexes and all ranks from the aspiring directors to the humble bubbler who have been miserably afflicted with these melancholy disorders since the fall of the South Sea and other public stocks*, London, 1721; J. Carswell, *The South Sea bubble*, London, Cresset Press, 1960.

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chiatry's symbolic echo of the French Revolution was to be Philippe Pinel striking the chains off the inmates at the Bicêtre.²² Did the English Revolution spur any such dramatic psychiatric gesture?

Clearly not. The Bill of Rights and confirmation of Habeas Corpus did not emancipate the Bedlamites. Locke's natural rights were for the rational. Indeed, increasing numbers were to be locked up as distracted – many of them, campaigners such as Defoe complained, forcibly and wrongfully (though the evils of confinement were also more publicized). Hence the rise of the asylum and the trade in lunacy have led some historians to see the eighteenth century as (in Michael MacDonald's words) "a disaster for the insane", two facets of society's alleged hounding of them being singled out. First, Foucault²³ has pinpointed the sinister accord between Reason and Absolutism. Authority used rationality as a stalking-horse, an agent of surplus repression, a rulebook disqualifying the attitudes and lifestyles of the idle poor, vagrants, feckless and truculent as Unreason. Thus judged, their liberty was at risk, threatened with punitive institutionalization in "the great confinement". Augmenting Foucault's approach, Klaus Doerner²⁴ has identified a specifically bourgeois rationality in English psychiatry after the Whig Revolution. The alienating, angst-making logic of competitive market-place capitalism in a cut-throat, profit-oriented acquisitive society, operating by the double standard of Mandeville's "private vices, public virtues", was driving merchants and investors to despair, indeed to suicide. To suppress its own contradictions, the blinkered rationality of bourgeois psychiatry unleashed a witchhunt against the "madness" of plebeian hedonism, leading, Doerner writes, towards the equation of the poor and the mad and the penalization of both indiscriminately in workhouses, "the sequestration of reason from unreason".

Unfortunately, neither of these accounts of the maddening tyranny of Enlighten-ment rationality and capitalist logic finds much support in the evidence of statutes, institutions, and the witness of contemporaries – indeed, the Georgian state made no concerted drive towards the certification and incarceration of pauper lunatics.²⁵ Rather, polarizing party politics, the Revolution of 1688, the Hanoverian succession, and the Whig hegemony had different psychiatric consequences, though ones no less momentous.

Élite society was indeed closing ranks – Whig and Tory alike – to defame its enemies as irrational. But, *pace* Foucault, the prime target, the focus of danger, was

²² On Pinel and the myths associated with him, see E. A. Woods and E. T. Carlson, 'The psychiatry of Philippe Pinel', *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1961, 35: 14–25; K. Grange, 'Pinel and eighteenth century psychiatry', *ibid.*, 442–453.

²³ Foucault, *Madness and civilization*, op. cit., note 1 above. MacDonald's phrase is in *Mystical Bedlam*, op. cit, note 17 above, p. 230.

²⁴ K. Doerner, *Madmen and the bourgeoisie*, Eng. trans., Oxford, Blackwell, 1981. Doerner's views are somewhat echoed in Andrew Scull, *Museums of madness. The social organization of insanity in nineteenth-century England*, London, Allen Lane, 1979, and *idem*, 'From madness to mental illness', *Archs Europ. Sociologie*, 1975, 16: 218–251.

²⁵ Though one "bourgeois" aspect of English madness lay in private madhouses for the well-off. See W. Ll. Parry-Jones, *The trade in lunacy: a study of private madhouses in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.

not the dregs but the godly.²⁶ From before the Civil War, the evangelical fanatics who abandoned the mundane *via media* of the once-born for a visionary New Jerusalem had come from all social strata and ranged the theological gamut from Counter-Reformation mysticism to Calvinist Saints, and sectarians such as the Quakers or the Camisards, the French Prophets. What connected them was their claimed privileged access to spiritual Truth transcending carnal reason or common sense, an Archimedean point for social protest; their authority coming from prophetic inspiration, inner light, private insight, or revelation of God's voice in dreams. Such pentecostalists drew their followings; yet what is significant is the unanimity with which after the Civil War all shades of élite opinion – philosophers such as Hobbes, Whigs like Shaftesbury, High Tories like Sacheverell and Swift, and Free-thinkers like Anthony Collins – united to discount the saints' claims to privileged divine illumination as credulity, superstition, and enthusiasm.²⁷

Enthusiasm was mistaken, it was dangerous; but above all it was delusion, obsession, madness. It was a consequence of passions – the craving for salvation, the horror of damnation, the presumption of election – slipping the reins of reason. Thus enthusiasm – ranting in tongues, seeing visions, falling into trances, “possession” by spirits, and convulsions – where it was not imposture, was a medical condition, akin to fits. And, psychiatric doctors claimed, like epileptic seizures, it had diagnosable somatic seats: an ill-channelling of animal spirits, lesions of the womb, dyspepsia, superfluity of bile.²⁸ Dr Nicholas Robinson, for example, claimed that the French Prophets were merely subject to “strong convulsive fits”, and that the visions of James Nayler, George Fox, and Lodowick Muggleton were “nothing but the effect of mere madness, and arose from the stronger impulses of a warm brain”.²⁹ Within the cynical

²⁶ For the early history of discounting possession on medical-psychiatric grounds, see D. P. Walker, *Unclean spirits. Possession and exorcism in France and England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries*, London, Scolar Press, 1981. See also, O. Diethelm, ‘The medical teaching of demonology in the 17th and 18th centuries’, *J. Hist. behav. Sci.*, 1970, 6: 3–15; and E. Midelfort, ‘Madness and civilization in early modern Europe’, in B. Malament (editor), *After the Reformation: essays in honor of J. H. Hexter*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980, pp. 247–267.

²⁷ B. R. Kreisler, *Miracles, convulsions and ecclesiastical politics in early eighteenth century Paris*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1978; R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm*, London, Oxford University Press, 1950; G. Rosen, ‘Enthusiasm: “a dark lanthorn of the spirit”’, *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1958, 42: 393–421; G. Williamson, ‘The Restoration revolt against enthusiasm’, *Studies in Philology*, 1933, 30: 571–603; S. I. Tucker, *Enthusiasm: a study in semantic change*, Cambridge University Press, 1972; H. Schwarz, *Knaves, fools, madmen, and that subtle effluvia. A study of the opposition to the French prophets in England, 1706–1710*, Gainesville, Fla., University Presses of Florida, 1978.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p 51: “The medical perception of enthusiasm continued throughout the period in tandem with a fear of the religious enthusiast and a belief that insanity – to which enthusiasm was related – was an illness treatable by human means. The increasing designation of hospitals for the insane in the eighteenth century would be an expression of social fears and medical rationalism: to keep the mad away from society but within distance of human treatment. Many critics of the French Prophets had a parallel view of religious enthusiasts, and John Tutchin, editor of *The Observer*, made the parallel explicit. He proposed the construction of a religious bedlam (Royal Bethlem lunatic hospital) for the French Prophets and their counterparts. Religious enthusiasts endangered society and the church, but they could not be handled by the rigidity of the law.”

²⁹ N. Robinson, *A new system of the spleen*, London, 1729, pp. 247, 250. Cf. G. Cheyne, *The English malady*, London, 1733, pp. 123–124: “There is a kind of melancholy, which is called religious because it is conversant about matters of religion, although often the persons so distempered have little solid piety. And this is merely a bodily disease, produced by an ill habit or constitution.”

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diagnostics of Swift and Pope, enthusiasm (like its cousin, poetic misinspiration) had its seat in the bowels.³⁰

At issue was not, despite some historians' claims,³¹ the medicalization of madness, for within the Galenic tradition, mania had always counted as a somatic disequilibrium responsive to drugs. Rather, it was the enlistment of psychiatry to annihilate independent, transcendental counter-reality, by saying it was all in the mind, and the mind was distempered, hallucinating.³² Henceforth, self-styled prophets who heard voices and spoke in tongues ceased to be listened to as Christian oracles – except by their cells of neophytes – for they were deluded; but neither were they listened to as madmen, their witness being just gibberish, best ignored or shut up. Till the Freudian talking-cure, the voices from beyond had become news from nowhere, with nothing to say, either about God's will or even the subjective inner consciousness.³³

Crusty post-Restoration Tories thought it was not just false prophets who were crazed. Precisely as Dr Johnson was to rue the passing of public executions at Tyburn, they warned that the whole society was “running mad after innovation”. The teratological menagerie depicted by Butler, Pope, Swift, and the Scriblerans is a nightmare hubbub of would-be inventors and *soi-disant* geniuses, Duncie poets filled with

³⁰ Swift, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, p. 102: “Tis recorded, that the Philosophers of each Country were in grave Dispute, upon Causes Natural, Moral, and Political, to find out where they should assign an original Solution of the *Phaenomenon*. At last the *Vapour* or *Spirit* which animated the Hero's Brain, being in perpetual Circulation, seized upon that Region of the Human Body, so renown'd for furnishing the *Zibeta Occidentalis*, and gathering there into a Tumor, left the rest of the World for that Time in Peace. Of such mighty Consequence it is, where those Exhalations fix; and of so little, from whence they proceed. The same Spirits which in their superior Progress would conquer a Kingdom, descending upon the *Anus*, conclude in a *Fistula*.” Cf. D. B. Morris, ‘The kinship of madness in Pope's *Dunciad*’, *Philological Quarterly*, 1972, 51: 813–831; Paulson, *op. cit.*, note 16 above; J. F. Sena, ‘Swift, the Yahoos, and the English malady’, *Papers in Language and Literature*, 1971, 7: 300–303.

³¹ M. G. Hay, ‘Understanding madness: Some approaches to mental illness’, University of York, PhD thesis, 1979.

³² The growing assault on witch-beliefs is a parallel case, as is the general Rationalism of Deistical attack on or refinement of the more mysterious and miraculous aspects of Christianity. For a programmatic account of this imperialism of Enlightenment Reason, see T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, trans. by J. Cumming, *The dialectic of Enlightenment*, London, Verso Editions, 1979.

³³ On the experiences of religiously mad patients in the eighteenth century, and the incommensurability, of their experience with medical therapies offered, see M. MacDonald, ‘Insanity and the realities of history in early modern England’, *Psychol. Med.*, 1981, 11: 11–25; Roy Porter, ‘Being mad in Georgian England’, *History Today*, December 1981, 42–48; A. Cruden, *The London citizen exceedingly injured*, London, 1739; *idem*, *The adventures of Alexander the Corrector*, London, 1754; E. Olivier, *The eccentric life of Alexander Cruden*, London, Faber, 1934; A. Sherbo, *Christopher Smart*, East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 1967; C. W. Cowper, *Memoir of the early life of William Cowper*, London, 1816; M. J. Quinlan, *William Cowper*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1953; M. Golden, *In search of stability: the poetry of William Cowper*, New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1969; C. A. Ryskamp, *William Cowper of the Inner Temple, Esq.*, Cambridge University Press, 1959; G. Bateson (editor), *Perceval's narrative*, New York, Morrow, 1974, p. xi. For some related suggestive analysis, see H. M. Feinstein, ‘The prepared heart: a comparative study of Puritan theology and psychoanalysis’, *American Quarterly*, 1970, 22: 166–176; F. Baker, ‘“Mad Grimshaw” and his covenants with God: a study in eighteenth century psychology’, *London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, 1958, 182: 211–215, 271–278; C. Garrett, *Respectable folly: millenarians and the French Revolution in France and England*, Baltimore, Md., Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975; J. Harrison, *The second coming*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.

afflatus³⁴ which proves nothing more than flatulence; windbag political saviours, crackbrained projectors, madcap philosophers like “Monsieur Des Cartes” and what Swift called fellow inmates of the “Academy of Modern Bedlam”; button-holing free-thinkers and puffed-up atheists, speculators in economic bubbles, gadgets, or cosmologies, frenzied fantastical egoists and their gulls like Gulliver – the vain, the proud, the opinionated, the fixated. Solvents of society, all lacked balance and self-knowledge; self-obsessed with singularity, they were symptoms – thought the Tory satirists – of a new, get-rich-quick, anything-goes mentality where, as paper money and the South Sea Bubble speculations proved, illusion was eclipsing reality. Endorsing the traditional view of madness as a curse, Tory satirists abominated these cranks as false, evil, and sick. Theirs was not divine madness; rather the divines were mad, the inspired full of wind, arising, in the case of the Aeolists, the Puritans in Swift’s *Tale of a tub*, from rotting guts; “the corruption of the senses is the creation of the spirit”.³⁵ Enemies of truth, order, and civilization, the mad were a scandal: endemic, incurable, not to be pitied, but vilified and punished. The sane needed to be protected.

This Tory horror that the world the Whigs were franchising was a world run mad, was echoed by many. It became a commonplace of foreign commentators such as Voltaire, César de Saussure, and Montesquieu that the English, in spite of, or rather because of, their freedom, political participation, religious toleration, commerce, and prosperity were singularly unstable, given over to gloom, spleen, hypochondria (for Addison, a “kind of demon that haunts the island”),³⁶ prey to suicide.³⁷ Le Sage thought the English, for all their liberty, property, and three meals a day, “the most unhappy people on the face of the Earth”. England is rich, wrote the Abbé le Blanc, with a certain *Schadenfreude*, “However, in the midst of this plenty, we easily perceive that the farmer is not so gay here, as in France; so that he may perhaps be richer, without being happier. The English of all ranks have that melancholy air, which makes part of their national character.”³⁸

Contemporary England boasted a clutch of fashionable psychiatric doctors, friends

³⁴ On fear of imagination, see DePorte, op. cit., note 7 above, p. 17, quoting Zachary Mayne: “Imagination is almost continually, in some Degree or other, hurtful and prejudicial to the Understanding. For let the Mind think never so closely and intently, and with the greatest Heed and Circumspection, it will frequently, unawares, bring before its View Ideas that have little or no Relation to the Subject Matter of its Thoughts and Meditations”; D. F. Bond, ““Distrust” of imagination in English neoclassicism”, *Philological Quarterly*, 1935, 14: 54–69; *idem*, ‘The neo-classical psychology of the imagination’, *Eng. lit. Hist.*, 1937, 4: 245–264; S. Cunningham, ‘Bedlam and Parnassus: Eighteenth century reflections’, in B. Harris (editor), *Eighteenth-century Studies*, 1971, 24: 36–55.

³⁵ ‘The mechanical operation of the Spirit’, in Swift, op. cit., note 8 above, p. 176.

³⁶ C. Moore, *Backgrounds of English literature 1700–1760*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1953, ch. v, ‘The English malady’, p. 185; O. Doughty, ‘The English malady of the eighteenth century?’, *Review of English Studies*, 1926, 2: 257–269; E. Fischer-Homberger, ‘Hypochondriasis of the eighteenth century – neurosis of the present century?’, *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1972, 46: 391–401.

³⁷ C. Noon, ‘On suicide’, *J. Hist. Ideas*, 1978, 39: 371–386; S. E. Sprott, *The English debate on suicide from Donne to Hume*, London, Open Court Publishing Co., 1961; R. Bartel, ‘Suicide in eighteenth century England: the myth of a reputation’, *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 1959–60, 23: 145–155; L. Crocker, ‘The discussion of suicide in the eighteenth century’, *J. Hist. Ideas*, 1952, 12: 47–72; M. MacDonald, ‘The inner side of wisdom: suicide in early modern England’, *Psychol. Med.*, 1977, 7: 565–583; A. Alvarez, *The savage god*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972.

³⁸ Moore, op. cit., note 36 above, pp. 183–184.

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to the Hanoverian order, serving the new alliance of Whig grandes, landed property, and moneyed wealth, supporting Addisonian politeness, Latitudinarian Churchmanship, Newtonianism, and in some cases freemasonry; physicians such as Sir Richard Blackmore (dullard butt of Pope), the broadbottom, one-time *bon viveur* George Cheyne, William Stukeley, Nicholas Robinson, and Bernard de Mandeville.³⁹ From shared premisses, they repulsed the Tory calumination of the Walpolean opportunity state as Bedlam. Their tactic was not to deny Albion's malaise, but to capitalize on it, putting the depressed and the distressed in a new light.

These Whig and Establishmentarian physicians made no bones about the prevalence of neurosis. Cheyne thought "these nervous disorders [are] computed to make almost one third of the complaints of the people of condition of England".⁴⁰ Such maladies should be brought into the open, objects not of shame or satire but sympathy, and almost pride.⁴¹ Indeed, they rendered agitation and depression as a peculiarly patriotic condition, Cheyne calling his analysis *The English malady*, and Blackmore stating "The temper of the Natives of Britain is most various, which proceeds from the Spleen, an Ingredient of their Constitution, which is almost peculiar, at least in the degree of it, to this Island."⁴² Why did the spleen flourish in England? As Cheyne explained, with a blimpish horror,

The title I have chosen for this treatise, is a reproach universally thrown on this island by Foreigners, and all our neighbours on the continent, by whom nervous distempers, spleen, vapours, and lowness of spirits are in derision called the English Malady. And I wish there were not good grounds for this reflection. The moisture of our air, the variableness of our weather, (from our situation amidst the ocean), the rankness and fertility of our soil, the richness and heaviness of our food, the wealth and abundance of our inhabitants (from their universal trade), the inactivity and sedentary occupations of the better sort (among whom this evil mostly rages) and the humour of living in great, populous and consequently unhealthy towns, have brought forth a class and set of distempers, with atrocious and frightful symptoms, scarce known to our ancestors, and never rising to such fatal heights, nor afflicting such numbers in any other known nation.⁴³

The English malady was thus a pollutant, a disease of civilization, a success tax on a people flourishing as never before – busy, affluent, sophisticated, aspiring, ambitious. "We have more nervous diseases", boasted Cheyne, "since the present Age has made Efforts to go beyond former Times, in all the Arts of Ingenuity, Invention, Study, Learning, and all the Contemplative and Sedentary Professions".⁴⁴

³⁹ On Cheyne, see C. C. Gillispie (editor), *Dictionary of scientific biography*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971, vol. 3, pp. 244–245; G. Bowles 'Physical, human and divine attraction in the life and thought of George Cheyne', *Ann. Sci.*, 1974, 31: 473–488; H. R. Viets, 'George Cheyne, 1673–1743', *Bull. Inst. Hist. Med.*, 1949, 23: 435–452; On Stukeley, see S. Piggott, *William Stukeley*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1950; On Mandeville, see H. Munro, *The ambivalence of Bernard de Mandeville*, London, Oxford University Press, 1975; I Primer, *Mandeville studies*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff; Hingham, Mass., Kluwer Boston, 1975. There is a fast-growing literature on Whiggish intellectual circles around 1700. For a major discussion, see M. C. Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution*, Hassocks, Sussex, Harvester Press, 1976; and for bibliography, see M. C. Jacob, *The radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, freemasons and republicans*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1981, pp. 1–19.

⁴⁰ G. Cheyne, *The English malady*, London, 1733, p. ii. Similar characterizations of the English malady continue throughout the century. Compare T. Beddoes, *Hygeia*, 3 vols., Bristol, 1802–03. vol. 3, p. 4.

⁴¹ Cheyne, *op. cit.*, note 40 above, p. 261.

⁴² Sir Richard Blackmore, *A treatise of the spleen or vapours*, London, 1725, p. v.

⁴³ Cheyne, *op. cit.*, note 40 above, p. ii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

In the Whig psychiatric theodicy, the pains of neurosis were the price to pay for the pleasures of enjoying advanced civilization – exacted not because (as later for Freud) civilization required repression, and repression bred neurosis, but because the stresses and strains of *la dolce vita* taxed the system. Wealth corroded health, for it meant high living, gourmandizing, lounging in warm rooms, exemption from manual labour, constricting fashions. Property granted leisure, but maintaining property and investments brought worries, and enjoying wealth encouraged sedentary idleness which could leave time weighing heavily on men's, and particularly women's hands. For, as Mandeville stressed, the spleen leeches on to the comfortable, those

as either by Estate, Benefices, or Employments have sufficient Revenue to make themselves easie: Men that are already provided for, or else have a livelyhood by their Callings amply secured, are never exempt from Solicitudes, and the keeping not only of Riches, but even moderate Possessions is always attended with Care. Those that enjoy 'em are more at leisure to reflect, besides that their Wishes and Desires being larger, themselves are more likely to be offended at a great many passages of life, than People of lower Fortunes, who have seldom higher Ends, than what they are continually employ'd about, the getting of their Daily Bread; which if they accomplish to satisfaction, they are commonly pleas'd and happy, because they think themselves so; if not, they labour under such a variety of Necessities, and are so diverted with their present Circumstances, that they have not time stedfastly to think on one thing, and consequently the vexations of the Mind have not so great an influence over them.⁴⁵

In short, the nervous diseases plagued the cream of society, people of refinement and delicate spirits, the brilliant and acute – those, wrote Cheyne, “who have a great deal of sensibility, are quick thinkers, feel pleasure and pain the most readily, and are of most lively imagination”⁴⁶ – the distemper having, thought Dr Purcell, a particular “gusto for the tender sex”.⁴⁷ Such nervous disorders, Cheyne believed, “I think never happen, or can happen to any but those of the liveliest and quickest natural Parts whose Faculties are the brightest and most spiritual and whose Genus is most keen and penetrating, and particularly when there is the most delicate Sensation and Taste, both of Pleasure and Pain.”⁴⁸ Cheyne's case histories bore this out, detailing patients

⁴⁵ B. Mandeville, *A treatise of the hypochondriack and hysteric passions*, London, 1711, pp. 150–151. Note that the assumption made by Cheyne, Blackmore, etc., is that the neurotics of eighteenth-century England are not businessmen or the poor but the idle rich, gentlemen of leisure and their ladies, *pace* Doerner; it is not directly capitalism but liberty and civilization which are responsible. Thus William Rowley, quoted in Byrd, *op. cit.*, note 11 above, p. 129: “In proportion as the arts, sciences, and luxury increase, so do vices and madness. In countries where the fewest wants and desires are experienced, there are the smallest number of mad persons; in those kingdoms where the greatest luxuries, refinements, wealth, and unrestrained liberty abound, are the most numerous instances of madness. England, according to its size and number of inhabitants, produces and contains more insane than any other country in Europe, and suicide is more common. In other nations mankind are obedient under either military or religious despotism, and are educated from infants in implicit submission and non-resistance; in Britain every one thinks and acts as he pleases; this produces all that variety and originality in the English character, and causes arts, sciences, and inventions to flourish. The agitations of passions, this liberty of thinking and acting with less restraint than in other nations, force a great quantity of blood to the head, and produce greater varieties of madness in this country, than is observed in others. Religious and civil toleration are productive of political and religious madness; but where no such toleration exists, no such insanity appears.”³⁶

⁴⁶ Cheyne, *op. cit.*, note 40 above, p. 104. This fashionable view had its opponents. Thus Dr Johnson warned Boswell *à propos* of Cheyne, “Do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness”. Quoted in Byrd, *op. cit.*, note 11 above, p. 121.

⁴⁷ Moore, *op. cit.*, note 36 above, p. 189.

⁴⁸ Cheyne, *op. cit.*, note 40 above, p. 261.

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exclusively from the *beau monde*, a “lady of great fortune”, one “eminent for fine breeding”, a “knight baronet of ancient family”, and so forth.⁴⁹ Stukeley thought melancholy afflicted “men that have been most famous for wars, for art, philosophy, legislature, poetry.”⁵⁰ “For it is evident by common experience”, agreed Blackmore, “that Men of a splenetick Complexion . . . are usually endowed with refined and elevated Parts, quick Apprehension, distinguishing Judgement, clear Reason, and great Vivacity of Imagination; and in these Perfections they are superior to the common Level of Mankind.”⁵¹ Thus the spleen was like a silver spoon, betokening birth into the *élite* of a progressive society. For Nature had divided mankind into “quick thinkers”, “slow thinkers”, and “no thinkers”.⁵² The quick were prone to nervous disorders; hence, thought Cheyne, nervous sickness was almost a litmus of fitness to rule, qualification for office:

There are two sorts of human Race, as different as the Sons of God, and the Children of Men, viz. those whose Eminence and dignity consists chiefly in their Heads, Faculties and Spiritual Nature, and those whose great Use and Design is to excel in the Exercise and Use of their Bodies, Limbs and material Organs; or, in one word, there are those who govern and those who are govern'd, originally form'd and mark'd out by Nature, in their original Frame and indelible Signatures: The last may safely, at least for some Time, wallow in sensual Pleasure, but they do not fear, because they do not think justly, having generally very blunt and obtuse intellectual Organs. . . . The first have more delicate and elastic Organs of Thinking and Sensibility, and the Pleasure of that kind in them are beyond those of Sensuality in others: they are like fine Lancets or Razors, that coarse Usage will soon ruffle and spoil; and therefore must forego gross and rank sensual Pleasures, to preserve their Organs of Thinking sound and intire; otherwise their sufferings will be intollerable, which is the Case of all nervous Hypochondriacal and Hysterical Persons; most of which were created Genii, Philosophers and Lawgivers.⁵³

The vapours were thus the stigmata of breeding, and depressives had their compensations – as Boswell put it, “*We Hypochondriacks* may console ourselves in the hour of gloomy distress, by thinking that our sufferings make our superiority”.⁵⁴ Rendered thus as the infirmities of the gifted, singularities and indulgences of temper were no longer occasions for shame and blame; they now had a medical certificate. The way

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 268–274.

⁵⁰ W. Stukeley, *Of the spleen, its description and history*, London, 1723, p. 66.

⁵¹ Blackmore, *op. cit.*, note 42 above, p. 90.

⁵² Cheyne, *op. cit.*, note 40 above, p. 182: “Persons of slender and weak nerves are generally of the first class”. For more general discussions of patrician and plebeian cultures in the eighteenth century, see P. Burke, *Popular culture in early modern Europe*, London, Maurice Temple Smith, 1978; and R. Paulson, *Popular and polite art in the age of Hogarth and Fielding*, Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 1979.

⁵³ G. Cheyne, *The natural method of cureing*, London, 1742, p. 82.

⁵⁴ J. Boswell, *Boswell's column*, London, Wm. Kimber, 1951, pp. 42–43. A genre grew up exalting the pleasures of melancholy and unhappiness, e.g., Thomas Warton, *The pleasure of melancholy*, London, 1747. See L. Bredvold, *The natural history of sensibility*, Detroit, Mich., Wayne State University Press, 1962. This genre could flourish by the device of making a distinction between melancholy and madness proper. Cf. James Boswell, quoted in DePorte, *op. cit.*, note 7 above, p. 128: “. . . ‘Dr. Johnson and I had a serious conversation by ourselves on melancholy and madness; which he was, I always thought, erroneously inclined to confound together. Melancholy, like “great wit” may be near allied to madness; but there is, in my opinion, a distinct separation between them.’ As always, Boswell speaks for the fashion: melancholy is something other than, better than, madness, which remains an undeniable evil (Boswell's brother John was insane intermittently all his life). By mid-century, melancholy, like great wit, had become a sign of deeper life; poseurs of all kinds claimed a compensated wound like Philoctetes.”

was being cleared for the social fêting of the wayward Romantic genius.⁵⁵

Moreover, all was for the best in another sense, because – more so than with that other classic disease of civilization, gout – hypochondria had its remedies. No mere *maladie imaginaire*, it was a real somatic disease,⁵⁶ understood anatomically through fashionable new theories of the nervous system, fast replacing residual Galenic humoralism. Mediating between the body and the soul, the nerves should be most elastic, vibrant, and sharp in fine-spirited people, whereas clodhoppers had hard, tough, dull fibres, and so “scarce any passion at all and any living sensations and are incapable of lasting impressions; so they enjoy the finest health, and are subject to the fewest diseases; such are idiots, peasants and mechanics.”⁵⁷

Amongst the fine-spirited, however, high-living clogged and relaxed the nerves, which needed retuning. A health-farm regimen of regulated diets, recreation such as riding, and the stimulus of rational conversation was prescribed: a kind of medical Spectatorialism. Because “study of difficult and intricate matters will infallibly do hurt”,⁵⁸ diversions were needed (one thinks of Hume, himself prey to depression, taking a break with billiards). Cheyne denied he was advocating such plebeian lifestyles as vegetarianism, and protested that his “low diet” did not mean he was “at bottom a mere Leveller, and for destroying Order, Ranks and Property”.⁵⁹ Unlike for Rousseau, civilization was not itself a disease; it bred diseases but these could be remedied (for civilization also bred physicians).

This formulation of civilization and its discontents, the psychopathology of progress and its therapy, was a remarkable ideological coup, comparable to Freud’s Viennese

⁵⁵ Thus Cheyne, quoted in Hunter and Macalpine, *op. cit.*, note 4 above, p. 353: “. . . If I said it was Vapours, Hysterick or Hypochondriacal Disorders, they thought I call’d them Mad or Fantastical: and if they were such as valued themselves, on fearing neither God nor Devil, I was in hazard of a Drubbing for seeming to impeach their Courage: and was thought as rude, as if I had given them the Lye; and even the very best has been, I myself was thought a Fool, a weak and ignorant Coxcomb, and perhaps dismiss’d in Scorn; and some I have actually lost by it. Notwithstanding all this, the Disease is as much a bodily Distemper (as I have demonstrated) as the Small-Pox or a Fever; and the Truth is, it seldom, and I think never happens or can happen, to any but those of the liveliest and quickest natural Parts, whose Faculties are the brightest and most spiritual, and whose Genius is most keen and penetrating, and particularly where there is the most delicate Sensation and Taste, both of Pleasure and Pain, so equally are the good and bad Things of this mortal State distributed! For I seldom ever observed a heavy, dull, earthy, clod-pated Clown, much troubled with nervous Disorders, or at least, not to any eminent Degree; and I scarce believe the Thing possible, from the animal Economy and the present Laws of Nature.” Blackmore agreed: “It is certain, that Hypochondriacal Men, as well as Hysterick Women, are often afflicted with various Pains and great Disorders; and could it be supposed that this was nothing but the Effect of Fancy, and a delusive imagination, yet it must be allowed, that let the Cause of such symptoms be never so chimerical and fantastick, the consequent Sufferings are without doubt real and unfeigned. Terrible ideas, formed only in the Imagination, will affect the Brain and the Body with painful Sensations . . .” (Quoted in Feder, *op. cit.*, note 6 above, p. 170.)

⁵⁶ J. Spillane, *The doctrine of the nerves*, Oxford University Press, 1981; G. S. Rousseau, ‘Nerves, spirits and fibres: towards defining the origins of sensibility’, in R. F. Brissenden and J. C. Eade (editors), *Studies in the eighteenth century*, University of Toronto Press, 1976, vol. 3, pp. 137–157; See also, T. H. Jobe, ‘Medical theories of melancholia in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries’, *Clio medica*, 1976, 10: 217–231. For a physiological explanation of why “Men of Splenetick Temperament excel their neighbours in Agitation and all Intellectual Endowment!”, see Blackmore, *op. cit.*, note 42 above, pp. 81–92.

⁵⁷ G. Cheyne, *A treatise on health and long life*, London, 1787, p. 126.

⁵⁸ Cheyne, *op. cit.*, note 40 above, p. 182.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. iv.

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tour de force in the 1890s. Whereas within the traditional Reason-passions, master-slave hierarchy of psychic health, the élite were sane and the masses raged, in the new model, bumpkins wallowing amid the idiocy of rural life remained “naturals” and the masses no longer possessed the intelligence, the spirits, the sensibility, to enjoy the dominant English malady.⁶⁰ “Fools, weak or stupid persons, heavy and dull souls”, wrote Cheyne, “are seldom much troubled with Vapours or lowness of Spirits.” Traditionally, it had been amongst the mob that the senses burned; now the cream had inflamed nerves, tender senses – “men of lively imaginations and great vivacity are more liable to the sudden and violent passions”.⁶¹ Thus, by literally Mandevillian sleight-of-hand, Whig psychiatry flattered neurosis, making the corruption of the oligarchy’s brains as natural as the corruption of their politics.⁶² Mental disturbance thus explained, normalized, managed, glamorized, stopped being inflammatory, or a scandal, and its dangers were domesticated. In a Pitt the Elder or a Clive, it became the fibre of empire-builders.

Establishment psychiatric writers thus shifted the focus of attention away from raving mania towards neurotic behavioural disturbance.⁶³ In the process, they turned age-old thinking about neurosis inside out. The melancholic who fretted as Jaques through Shakespeare’s Forest of Arden, or mottled the pages of Burton’s *Anatomy of melancholy*, differed little from his Greek progenitors. He was tormented by a dominant humour⁶⁴ – envy, jealousy, ambition, despair, grief, frustrated love, guilt – and was traditionally the undersocialized man, the solitary scholar, *il penseroso*, perhaps pitted against his fellows as a splenetic malcontent, a caustic railer, a morose

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52. Similarly, Locke distinguished idiots from the mad: “In fine, the defect in naturals seems to proceed from want of quickness, activity, and motion in the intellectual faculties, whereby they are deprived of reason; whereas *madmen*, on the other side, seem to suffer by the other extreme. For they do not appear to me to have lost the faculty of reasoning, but having joined together some ideas very wrongly, they mistake them for truths; and they err as men do that argue right from wrong principles. For, by the violence of their imaginations, having taken their fancies for realities, they make right deductions from them. Thus you shall find a distracted man fancying himself a king, with a right inference require suitable attendance, respect, and obedience: others who have thought themselves made of glass, have used the caution necessary to preserve such brittle bodies. Hence it comes to pass that a man who is very sober, and of a right understanding in all other things, may in one particular be as frantic as any in *Bedlam* In short, herein seems to lie the difference between idiots and madmen: that madmen put wrong ideas together, and so make wrong propositions, but argue and reason right from them; but idiots make very few or no propositions, and reason scarce at all.” (*An essay concerning human understanding*, edited by J. Yolton, London, Everyman, 1961, Book II, ch. xi, p. 127.)

⁶¹ Cheyne, *op. cit.*, note 57 above, p. 132.

⁶² Tory satirists, of course, did not miss the opportunity to mock the sick society. “But just disease to luxury succeeds, And ev’ry death its own avenger breeds.” (A. Pope, *Essay on Man*, Ep. iii, ll. 165–166.)

⁶³ I am not, of course, arguing that analysis of the English malady came to occupy the space hitherto filled by “madness” or that madness was somehow all transformed into the English malady. Rather, my argument is that, alongside a continuing traditional understanding of violent lunacy and of idiocy, a transformed understanding of “melancholy” assumed prominence. Hard and fast distinctions between “madness” and “melancholy”, “psychosis” and “neurosis” are, however, anachronistic, since most contemporaries saw them as distinguished more by degree than by kind. See Byrd, *op. cit.*, note 11 above, pp. 117–118.

⁶⁴ Thus Burton wrote of the “perturbations and passions” which dominated the self, “commonly reduced into two inclinations, *irascible* and *concupiscible* . . . if they be immoderate, they consume the spirits, and melancholy is especially caused by them”. (Quoted in B. Evans, *The psychiatry of Robert Burton*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1944, pp. 69–70.)

misanthrope.⁶⁵ The Augustans continued to warn, with Burton, “be not solitary”, but the image of the melancholic was being transformed. As innatist humoral psychology declined, the anatomy of melancholy yielded to its sociology, almost its epidemiology. For, perhaps reflecting Enlightenment interest in man as a social product rather than in the soul as pilgrim, Georgian psychiatry came to see melancholy as a social malaise, an anomie produced by the madding crowd (almost, in turn, requiring the Romantic invention of privacy and solitude).⁶⁶ George Cheyne characteristically spelt out how his own depression arose from the draining demands of clubbability.⁶⁷ Whereas Richard Napier and Robert Burton dreaded the melancholic as dangerous, the Georgians saw him as an object of sympathy.

Whig psychiatry – I’ve been arguing – sought to normalize and condition the disturbed into the managed, conformist, accommodating, pluralist Georgian world of polite repressive desublimation, while also invalidating transcendental opposition as senseless. Where does the Whig figurehead, Locke, fit? Ambiguously, but importantly; ambiguously, because he stimulated a minority tradition of conceptualizing madness in purely philosophical discourse within epistemology and not – surprisingly for a doctor – within anatomy and clinical medicine. By outlawing innate ideas, and suggesting through his sensationalism that metaphysics was ultimately psychology, and ontology epistemology, Locke relativized sanity and madness because he subjectivized reality and appearance. Similarly, by a radical stroke, Locke eroded the given self, the taken-for-granted Cartesian *ego*, and suggested self-identity could not be known except as a stream of consciousness or memory.⁶⁸ Thus the drift of Locke’s psychology was to distance objectivity, truth, and identity, permitting that fudging of sanity and madness so fully exploited in Lawrence Sterne’s Lockean *Tristram Shandy*.

⁶⁵ R. Burton, *The anatomy of melancholy*, 3 vols., London, Everyman, 1972; R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, and F. Saxl, *Saturn and melancholy*, London, Nelson, 1964; Evans, op. cit., note 64 above; R. and M. Wittkower, *Born under Saturn*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1963; B. G. Lyons, *Voices of melancholy*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.

⁶⁶ M. Foucault and R. Sennett, ‘Sexuality and solitude’, *London Review of Books*, 21 May to 3 June 1981, pp. 3–5.

⁶⁷ G. Cheyne, *Dr. Cheyne’s account of himself and of his writings*, London, 1743.

⁶⁸ Locke writes: “This also shows wherein the identity of the same *man* consists: viz: in nothing but a participation of the same continued life by constantly fleeting particles of matter in succession united to the same organized body. He that shall place the *identity* of man in anything else but, like that of other animals, in one fitly organized body, taken in any one instant and from thence continued under one organization of life in several successively fleeting particles of matter united to it, will find it hard to make an *embryo*, one of years, mad, and sober, the same man, by any supposition that will make it possible for *Seth. Ishmael. Socrates. Pilate. St. Austin. and Caesare Borgia* to be the same man.” (*Essay concerning humane understanding*, Book II, ch. xxvii, pp. 273–274.) See H. E. Allison, ‘Locke’s theory of personal identity: a re-examination’, in I. C. Tifton (editor), *Locke on human understanding: Selected essays*, Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 105–122; D. P. Behan, ‘Locke on persons and personal identity’, *Canad. J. Philos.*, 1979, 9: R. C. Tennant, ‘The Anglican response to Locke’s theory of personal identity’, *J. Hist. Ideas.*, 1982, 43: 73–90; and for important background, J. Wright, ‘Hysteria and mechanical man’, *ibid.*, 1980, 41: 223–247. This view was satirized in *The memoirs of Martin Scriblerus*, edited by C. Kerby Miller, New York, Russell & Russell, 1966, pp. 135–140. I am extremely grateful to Sylvana Tomaselli for this point.

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Like Whig medical psychiatrists, Locke discriminated between village idiotism and insanity, to vindicate the intelligence of the deranged. For Locke, madness was not the overthrow of reason by the passions, but misassociation, the generation of correct thought-trains from mistaken premisses. Madmen, he wrote in the *Essay*, “. . . do not appear to have lost the faculty of reasoning but having joined together some ideas very wrongly, they mistake them for truths, and they err as men do that argue right from wrong principles.”⁶⁹ Men convinced they were kings, by divine right appointed, now suffered not from twisted passions, but from misconceptions, false consciousness. Remaining methodical, they could be re-educated, for, as “custom settles habits of thinking in the understanding”, false associations could be corrected.⁷⁰ The superiority of nurture over nature meant that though fools were born, the mad were made, and were in principle capable of behavioural adjustment, reform, conforming.⁷¹

Through long and complex routes, Lockeian optimism bolstered Enlightenment faith that the mad should not be punished, or merely secured, but cured, and cured by reason and kindness.⁷² The deranged were less like animals than like children. Equally importantly, it contributed in the short run to the obsolescence of the model of madness as noble reason overthrown by bestial plebeian appetites.⁷³ Dethroning reason as he dethroned absolutism, Locke offered, paralleling his contractual political theory, a less hierarchical model of the self, where consensus counted for most, making it possible for Hume, musing on civilized morality, to contemplate with complete aplomb reason being the slave of the passions. The passions were being reassuringly civilized, gentrified; soon the tigers of wrath would have their wisdom.

In the Lockeian tradition, mental disturbance shed its objective reality in organic disease, diabolical possession, or brutish recidivism, and, tamed, could be seen as little more than a mistake, an error of judgement. Imagination and inspiration, which in their religious guise had terrified the Augustans, were cosmeticized by Addison and Akenside into a Whig aesthetics, as means of grace or quixotic hobbihorsicalism;⁷⁴ frenzy was sublimated into the fire of artistic creativity. Properly miniaturized,

⁶⁹ J. Locke, *Essay concerning humane understanding*, Book II, ch. xi, p. 127.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Book II, ch. xxxiii, p. 336.

⁷¹ J. Passmore, ‘The malleability of man’, in E. R. Wasserman (editor), *Aspects of the eighteenth century*, Baltimore, Md., Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965.

⁷² W. F. Bynum, ‘Rationales for therapy in British psychiatry: 1780–1835’, *Med. Hist.*, 1974, **18**: 317–334; A. Walk, ‘Some aspects of the moral treatment of the insane up to 1854’, *J. ment. Sci.*, 1954, **100**: 807–837; Sir Aubrey Lewis, *The state of psychiatry*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967, p. 7. See also, E. H. Ackerknecht, *A short history of psychiatry*, New York, Hafner, 1968 – on p. 40, Ackerknecht emphasizes the “radical change” made by Pinel; D. Leigh, *The historical development of British psychiatry*, 2 vols., Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1961, vol. 1; J. S. Bockoven, *Moral treatment in American psychiatry*, New York, Springer, 1963, pp. 12–16; E. T. Carlson and N. Dain, ‘The meaning of moral insanity’, *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1962, **36**: 130–140; N. Dain, *Concepts of insanity in the U.S.A. 1789–1965*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1964; A. Scull (editor), *Madhouses, mad-doctors, and madmen. The social history of psychiatry in the Victorian era*, London, Athlone Press, 1981.

⁷³ See the discussion in DePorte, *op. cit.*, note 7 above, pp. 22–23.

⁷⁴ E. L. Tuveson, *Imagination as a means of grace*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1960; R. Hoeldtke, ‘The history of associationism and British medical psychology’, *Med. Hist.*, 1967, **11**: 46–65.

enthusiasm could re-emerge. By suggesting how madness was all in the mind,⁷⁵ Locke sanctioned that exercise of the imagination that blossomed eventually in Romanticism.⁷⁶

My argument, then, is that the interests of leading oligarchical groups under the late Stuarts informed psychiatric dispute and eventually encouraged a new direction in psychiatry. Unlike some, I don't think these interests lay directly in imposing bourgeois economic rationality and shutting up the unreason of the poor: mad-doctors' interests in the poor were a nineteenth-century, not an eighteenth-century, development. The priority rather lay with defusing the threat to consensus posed by the transcendental truth-claims of prophecy, through removing its Archimedean point. This disqualification of spiritual authority, the possessors dispossessing the possessed, the provident annexing Providence, took many forms, but one lay in a reductionist psychiatry curing the voices of enthusiasm. That danger surmounted, and single vision established alongside single party government, the complaints of an acquisitive society could be rationalized, normalized, as neuroses, as the privilege of progress, and managed ever after by the emergent profession of psychiatry.

⁷⁵ "Since *the mind*, in all its thoughts and reasonings, hath no other immediate object but its own *ideas*, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them." (J. Locke, *Essay concerning humane understanding*, 4.1.1. Book IV, ch. i, p. 133.)

⁷⁶ E. Tuveson, 'Locke and Sterne', in J. A. Mazzeo (editor), *Reason and the imagination*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962, pp. 255–277; M. H. Abrams, *The mirror and the lamp*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1953; *idem*, *Natural supernaturalism*, New York, Norton, 1971; G. S. Rousseau, 'Science and the discovery of the imagination in enlightened England', *Eighteenth-century Studies*, 1969–70, 3: 108–135; B. Hepworth, *The rise of Romanticism*, Manchester, Carcanet Press, 1978, pp. 59, 161; P. M. Spacks, *The insistence of horror*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1962; N. Powell, *Fuseli's "The Nightmare"*, London, Allen Lane, 1973; G. S. Rousseau, 'Science', in P. Rogers (editor), *The context of English literature: the eighteenth century*, London, Methuen, 1978, pp. 153–207; J. Engell, *The creative imagination*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1981.