II

THE GREAT CONFINEMENT

Compelle intrare.

By a strange act of force, the classical age was to reduce to silence the madness whose voices the Renaissance had just liberated, but whose violence it had already tamed.

It is common knowledge that the seventeenth century created enormous houses of confinement; it is less commonly known that more than one out of every hundred inhabitants of the city of Paris found themselves confined there, within several months. It is common knowledge that absolute power made use of *lettres de cachet* and arbitrary measures of imprisonment; what is less familiar is the judicial conscience that could inspire such practices. Since Pinel, Tuke, Wagnitz, we know that madmen were subjected to the regime of this confinement for a century and a half, and that they would one day be discovered in the

wards of the Hôpital Général, in the cells of prisons; they would be found mingled with the population of the workhouses or *Zuchthäusern.* But it has rarely been made clear what their status was there, what the meaning was of this proximity which seemed to assign the same homeland to the poor, to the unemployed, to prisoners, and to the insane. It is within the walls of confinement that Pinel and nineteenth-century psychiatry would come upon madmen; it is there—let us remember—that they would leave them, not without boasting of having "delivered" them. From the middle of the seventeenth century, madness was linked with this country of confinement, and with the act which designated confinement as its natural abode.

A date can serve as a landmark: 1656, the decree that founded, in Paris, the Hôpital Général. At first glance, this is merely a reform—little more than an administrative reorganization. Several already existing establishments are grouped under a single administration: the Salpêtrière, rebuilt under the preceding reign to house an arsenal; Bicêtre, which Louis XIII had wanted to give to the Commandery of Saint Louis as a rest home for military invalids; "the House and the Hospital of La Pitié, the larger as well as the smaller, those of Le Refuge, situated in the Faubourg Saint-Victor, the House and Hospital of Scipion, the House of La Savonnerie, with all the lands, places, gardens, houses, and buildings thereto appertaining."[1] All were now assigned to the poor of Paris "of both sexes, of all ages and from all localities, of whatever breeding and birth, in whatever state they may be, able-bodied or invalid, sick or convalescent, curable or incurable." These establishments had to accept, lodge, and feed those who presented themselves or those sent by royal or judicial authority; it was also necessary to assure the subsistence, the appearance, and the general order of those who could not find room, but who might or who deserved to be there. This responsibility was

entrusted to directors appointed for life, who exercised their powers, not only in the buildings of the Hôpital but throughout the city of Paris, over all those who came under their jurisdiction: "They have all power of authority, of direction, of administration, of commerce, of police, of jurisdiction, of correction and punishment over all the poor of Paris, both within and without the Hôpital Général." The directors also appointed a doctor at a salary of one thousand livres a year; he was to reside at La Pitié, but had to visit each of the houses of the Hôpital twice a week.

From the very start, one thing is clear: the Hôpital Général is not a medical establishment. It is rather a sort of semijudicial structure, an administrative entity which, along with the already constituted powers, and outside of the courts, decides, judges, and executes. "The directors having for these purposes stakes, irons, prisons, and dungeons in the said Hôpital Général and the places thereto appertaining so much as they deem necessary, no appeal will be accepted from the regulations they establish within the said hospital; and as for such regulations as intervene from without, they will be executed according to their form and tenor, notwithstanding opposition or whatsoever appeal made or to be made, and without prejudice to these, and for which, notwithstanding all defense or suits for justice, no distinction will be made."[2] A quasi-absolute sovereignty, jurisdiction without appeal, a writ of execution against which nothing can prevail—the Hôpital Général is a strange power that the King establishes between the police and the courts, at the limits of the law: a third order of repression. The insane whom Pinel would find at Bicêtre and at La Salpêtrière belonged to this world.

In its functioning, or in its purpose, the Hôpital Général had nothing to do with any medical concept. It was an instance of order, of the monarchical and bourgeois order being organized in France during this period. It was di-

rectly linked with the royal power which placed it under the authority of the civil government alone; the Grand Almonry of the Realm, which previously formed an ecclesiastical and spiritual mediation in the politics of assistance, was abruptly elided. The King decreed: "We choose to be guardian and protector of the said Hôpital Général as being of our royal founding and especially as it does not depend in any manner whatsoever upon our Grand Almonry, nor upon any of our high officers, but is to be totally exempt from the direction, visitation, and jurisdiction of the officers of the General Reform and others of the Grand Almonry, and from all others to whom we forbid all knowledge and jurisdiction in any fashion or manner whatsoever." The origin of the project had been parliamentary, and the first two administrative heads appointed were the first President of the Parlement and the Procurator General. But they were soon supplemented by the Archbishop of Paris, the President of the Court of Assistance, the President of the Court of Exchequer, the Chief of Police, and the Provost of Merchants. Henceforth the "Grand Bureau" had no more than a deliberative role. The actual administration and the real responsibilities were entrusted to agents recruited by co-optation. These were the true governors, the delegates of royal power and bourgeois fortune to the world of poverty. The Revolution was able to give them this testimony: "Chosen from the best families of the bourgeoisie, . . . they brought to their administration disinterested views and pure intentions."[3]

This structure proper to the monarchical and bourgeois order of France, contemporary with its organization in absolutist forms, soon extended its network over the whole of France. An edict of the King, dated June 16, 1676, prescribed the establishment of an "*hôpital général* in each city of his kingdom." Occasionally the measure had been anticipated by the local authorities; the bourgeoisie of Lyons

had already organized in 1612 a charity establishment that functioned in an analogous manner. The Archbishop of Tours was proud to declare on July 10, 1676, that his "archepiscopal city has happily foreseen the pious intentions of the King and erected an *hôpital général* called La Charité even before the one in Paris, whose order has served as a model for all those subsequently established, within or outside the kingdom." The Charité of Tours, in fact, had been founded in 1656, and the King had endowed it with an income of four thousand livres. Over the entire face of France, *hôpitaux généraux* were opened; on the eve of the Revolution, they were to be found in thirty-two provincial cities.

Even if it had been deliberately excluded from the organization of the *hôpitaux généraux*—by complicity, doubtless, between royal power and bourgeoisie—the Church nonetheless did not remain a stranger to the movement. It reformed its own hospital institutions, redistributed the wealth of its foundations, even created congregations whose purposes were rather analogous to those of the Hôpital Général. Vincent de Paul reorganized Saint-Lazare, the most important of the former lazar houses of Paris; on January 7, 1632, he signed a contract in the name of the Congregationists of the Mission with the "Priory" of Saint-Lazare, which was now to receive "persons detained by order of His Majesty." The Order of Good Sons opened hospitals of this nature in the north of France. The Brothers of Saint John of God, called into France in 1602, founded first the Charité of Paris in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, then Charenton, into which they moved on May 10, 1645. Not far from Paris, they also operated the Charité of Senlis, which opened on October 27, 1670. Some years before, the Duchess of Bouillon had donated them the buildings and benefices of La Maladrerie, founded in the fourteenth century by Thibaut de Champagne, at Château-

Thierry. They administered also the Charités of Saint-Yon, Pontorson, Cadillac, and Romans. In 1699, the Lazarists founded in Marseilles the establishment that was to become the Hôpital Saint-Pierre. Then, in the eighteenth century, came Armentières (1712), Maréville (1714), the Good Savior of Caen (1735); Saint-Meins of Rennes opened shortly before the Revolution (1780).

The phenomenon has European dimensions. The constitution of an absolute monarchy and the intense Catholic renaissance during the Counter-Reformation produced in France a very particular character of simultaneous competition and complicity between the government and the Church. Elsewhere it assumed quite different forms; but its localization in time was just as precise. The great hospitals, houses of confinement, establishments of religion and public order, of assistance and punishment, of governmental charity and welfare measures, are a phenomenon of the classical period: as universal as itself and almost contemporary with its birth. In German-speaking countries, it was marked by the creation of houses of correction, the *Zuchthäusern;* the first antedates the French houses of confinement (except for the Charité of Lyons); it opened in Hamburg around 1620. The others were founded in the second half of the century: Basel (1667), Breslau (1668), Frankfort (1684), Spandau (1684), Königsberg (1691). They continued to multiply in the eighteenth century; Leipzig first in 1701, then Halle and Cassel in 1717 and 1720, later Brieg and Osnabrück (1756), and finally Torgau in 1771.

In England the origins of confinement are more remote. An act of 1575 covering both "the punishment of vagabonds and the relief of the poor" prescribed the construction of *houses of correction,* to number at least one per county. Their upkeep was to be assured by a tax, but the public was encouraged to make voluntary donations. It ap-

pears, however, that in this form the measure was scarcely ever applied, since, some years later, it was decided to authorize private enterprise: it was no longer necessary to obtain an official permit to open a hospital or a house of correction; anyone who pleased might do so. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a general reorganization: a fine of five pounds was imposed on any justice of the peace who had not established one in the area of his jurisdiction; the houses were to install trades, workshops, and factories (milling, spinning, weaving) to aid in their upkeep and assure their inmates of work; a judge was to decide who was qualified to be sent there. The development of these "bridewells" was not too considerable; often they were gradually absorbed by the prisons to which they were attached; the practice never spread as far as Scotland. On the other hand, the workhouses were destined to greater success. They date from the second half of the seventeenth century. An act of 1670 defined their status, appointed officers of justice to oversee the collection of taxes and the administration of sums that would permit their functioning, and entrusted the supreme control of their administration to a justice of the peace. In 1697 several parishes of Bristol united to form the first workhouse in England, and to designate the corporation that would administer it. Another was established at Worcester in 1703, a third the same year at Dublin; then at Plymouth, Norwich, Hull, and Exeter. By the end of the eighteenth century, there were 126 of them. The Gilbert Act of 1792 gives the parishes facilities to create new ones; at the same time, the control and authority of the justice of the peace is reinforced; to keep the workhouses from becoming hospitals, it is recommended that all contagious invalids be turned away.

In several years, an entire network had spread across Europe. John Howard, at the end of the eighteenth century, undertook to investigate it; in England, Holland, Germany,

France, Italy, Spain, he made pilgrimages to all the chief centers of confinement—"hospitals, prisons, jails"—and his philanthropy was outraged by the fact that the same walls could contain those condemned by common law, young men who disturbed their families' peace or who squandered their goods, people without profession, and the insane. Proof that even at this period, a certain meaning had been lost: that which had so hastily, so spontaneously summoned into being all over Europe the category of classical order we call confinement. In a hundred and fifty years, confinement had become the abusive amalgam of heterogeneous elements. Yet at its origin, there must have existed a unity which justified its urgency; between these diverse forms and the classical period that called them into being, there must have been a principle of cohesion we cannot evade under the scandal of pre-Revolutionary sensibility. What, then, was the reality represented by this entire population which almost overnight found itself shut up, excluded more severely than the lepers? We must not forget that a few years after its foundation, the Hôpital Général of Paris alone contained six thousand persons, or around one per cent of the population. There must have formed, silently and doubtless over the course of many years, a social sensibility, common to European culture, that suddenly began to manifest itself in the second half of the seventeenth century; it was this sensibility that suddenly isolated the category destined to populate the places of confinement. To inhabit the reaches long since abandoned by the lepers, they chose a group that to our eyes is strangely mixed and confused. But what is for us merely an undifferentiated sensibility must have been, for those living in the classical age, a clearly articulated perception. It is this mode of perception which we must investigate in order to discover the form of sensibility to madness in an epoch we are accustomed to define by the privileges of Reason. The act

which, by tracing the locus of confinement, conferred upon it its power of segregation and provided a new homeland for madness, though it may be coherent and concerted, is not simple. It organizes into a complex unity a new sensibility to poverty and to the duties of assistance, new forms of reaction to the economic problems of unemployment and idleness, a new ethic of work, and also the dream of a city where moral obligation was joined to civil law, within the authoritarian forms of constraint. Obscurely, these themes are present during the construction of the cities of confinement and their organization. They give a meaning to this ritual, and explain in part the mode in which madness was perceived, and experienced, by the classical age.

Confinement, that massive phenomenon, the signs of which are found all across eighteenth-century Europe, is a "police" matter. Police, in the precise sense that the classical epoch gave to it—that is, the totality of measures which make work possible and necessary for all those who could not live without it; the question Voltaire would soon formulate, Colbert's contemporaries had already asked: "Since you have established yourselves as a people, have you not yet discovered the secret of forcing all the rich to make all the poor work? Are you still ignorant of the first principles of the police?"

Before having the medical meaning we give it, or that at least we like to suppose it has, confinement was required by something quite different from any concern with curing the sick. What made it necessary was an imperative of labor. Our philanthropy prefers to recognize the signs of a benevolence toward sickness where there is only a condemnation of idleness.

Let us return to the first moments of the "Confinement," and to that royal edict of April 27, 1656, that led to the

creation of the Hôpital Général. From the beginning, the institution set itself the task of preventing "mendicancy and idleness as the source of all disorders." In fact, this was the last of the great measures that had been taken since the Renaissance to put an end to unemployment or at least to begging.[4] In 1532, the Parlement of Paris decided to arrest beggars and force them to work in the sewers of the city, chained in pairs. The situation soon reached critical proportions: on March 23, 1534, the order was given "to poor scholars and indigents" to leave the city, while it was forbidden "henceforth to sing hymns before images in the streets." The wars of religion multiplied this suspect crowd, which included peasants driven from their farms, disbanded soldiers or deserters, unemployed workers, impoverished students, and the sick. When Henri IV began the siege of Paris, the city, which had less than 100,000 inhabitants, contained more than 30,000 beggars. An economic revival began early in the seventeenth century; it was decided to reabsorb by force the unemployed who had not regained a place in society; a decree of the Parlement dated 1606 ordered the beggars of Paris to be whipped in the public square, branded on the shoulder, shorn, and then driven from the city; to keep them from returning, an ordinance of 1607 established companies of archers at all the city gates to forbid entry to indigents. When the effects of the economic renaissance disappeared with the Thirty Years' War, the problems of mendicancy and idleness reappeared; until the middle of the century, the regular increase of taxes hindered manufactures and augmented unemployment. This was the period of uprisings in Paris (1621), in Lyons (1652), in Rouen (1639). At the same time, the world of labor was disorganized by the appearance of new economic structures; as the large manufactories developed, the guilds lost their powers and their rights, the "General Regulations" prohibited all as-

semblies of workers, all leagues, all "associations." In many professions, however, the guilds were reconstituted. They were prosecuted, but it seems that the Parlements showed a certain apathy; the Parlement of Normandy disclaimed all competence to judge the rioters of Rouen. This is doubtless why the Church intervened and accused the workers' secret gatherings of sorcery. A decree of the Sorbonne, in 1655, proclaimed "guilty of sacrilege and mortal sin" all those who were found in such bad company.

In this silent conflict that opposed the severity of the Church to the indulgence of the Parlements, the creation of the Hôpital was certainly, at least in the beginning, a victory for the Parlement. It was, in any case, a new solution. For the first time, purely negative measures of exclusion were replaced by a measure of confinement; the unemployed person was no longer driven away or punished; he was taken in charge, at the expense of the nation but at the cost of his individual liberty. Between him and society, an implicit system of obligation was established: he had the right to be fed, but he must accept the physical and moral constraint of confinement.

It is this entire, rather undifferentiated mass at which the edict of 1657 is aimed: a population without resources, without social moorings, a class rejected or rendered mobile by new economic developments. Less than two weeks after it was signed, the edict was read and proclaimed in the streets. Paragraph 9: "We expressly prohibit and forbid all persons of either sex, of any locality and of any age, of whatever breeding and birth, and in whatever condition they may be, able-bodied or invalid, sick or convalescent, curable or incurable, to beg in the city and suburbs of Paris, neither in the churches, nor at the doors of such, nor at the doors of houses nor in the streets, nor anywhere else in public, nor in secret, by day or night . . . under pain of being whipped for the first offense, and for the second

condemned to the galleys if men and boys, banished if women and girls." The year after—Sunday, May 13, 1657 a high mass in honor of the Holy Ghost was sung at the Church of Saint-Louis de la Pitié, and on the morning of Monday the fourteenth, the militia, which was to become, in the mythology of popular terror, "the archers of the Hôpital," began to hunt down beggars and herd them into the different buildings of the Hôpital. Four years later, La Salpêtrière housed 1,460 women and small children; at La Pitié there were 98 boys, 897 girls between seven and seventeen, and 95 women; at Bicêtre, 1,615 adult men; at La Savonnerie, 305 boys between eight and thirteen; finally, Scipion lodged 530 pregnant women, nursing women, and very young children. Initially, married people, even in need, were not admitted; the administration was instructed to feed them at home; but soon, thanks to a grant from Mazarin, it was possible to lodge them at La Salpêtrière. In all, between five and six thousand persons.

Throughout Europe, confinement had the same meaning, at least if we consider its origin. It constituted one of the answers the seventeenth century gave to an economic crisis that affected the entire Western world: reduction of wages, unemployment, scarcity of coin—the coincidence of these phenomena probably being due to a crisis in the Spanish economy. Even England, of all the countries of Western Europe the least dependent on the system, had to solve the same problems. Despite all the measures taken to avoid unemployment and the reduction of wages, poverty continued to spread in the nation. In 1622 appeared a pamphlet, *Grievous Groan for the Poor*, attributed to Thomas Dekker, which, emphasizing the danger, condemns the general negligence: "Though the number of the poor do daily increase, all things yet worketh for the worst in their behalf; . . . many of these parishes turneth forth their poor, yea, and their lusty labourers that will not

work . . . to beg, filch, and steal for their maintenance, so that the country is pitifully pestered with them." It was feared that they would overrun the country, and since they could not, as on the Continent, cross the border into another nation, it was proposed that they be "banished and conveyed to the New-found Land, the East and West Indies." In 1630, the King established a commission to assure the rigorous observance of the Poor Laws. That same year, it published a series of "orders and directions"; it recommended prosecuting beggars and vagabonds, as well as "all those who live in idleness and will not work for reasonable wages or who spend what they have in taverns." They must be punished according to law and placed in houses of correction; as for those with wives and children, investigation must be made as to whether they were married and their children baptized, "for these people live like savages without being married, nor buried, nor baptized; and it is this licentious liberty which causes so many to rejoice in vagabondage." Despite the recovery that began in England in the middle of the century, the problem was still unsolved in Cromwell's time, for the Lord Mayor complains of "this vermin that troops about the city, disturbing public order, assaulting carriages, demanding alms with loud cries at the doors of churches and private houses."

For a long time, the house of correction or the premises of the Hôpital Général would serve to contain the unemployed, the idle, and vagabonds. Each time a crisis occurred and the number of the poor sharply increased, the houses of confinement regained, at least for a time, their initial economic significance. In the middle of the eighteenth century, there was another great crisis: 12,000 begging workers at Rouen and as many at Tours; at Lyons the manufactories closed. The Count d'Argenson, "who commands the department of Paris and the marshalseas," gave orders "to arrest all the beggars of the kingdom; the marshalseas will

perform this task in the countryside, while the same thing is done in Paris, whither they are sure not to return, being entrapped on all sides."

But outside of the periods of crisis, confinement acquired another meaning. Its repressive function was combined with a new use. It was no longer merely a question of confining those out of work, but of giving work to those who had been confined and thus making them contribute to the prosperity of all. The alternation is clear: cheap manpower in the periods of full employment and high salaries; and in periods of unemployment, reabsorption of the idle and social protection against agitation and uprisings. Let us not forget that the first houses of confinement appear in England in the most industrialized parts of the country: Worcester, Norwich, Bristol; that the first *hôpital général* was opened in Lyons, forty years before that of Paris; that Hamburg was the first German city to have its *Zuchthaus*, in 1620. Its regulations, published in 1622, were quite precise. The internees must all work. Exact record was kept of the value of their work, and they were paid a fourth of it. For work was not only an occupation; it must be productive. The eight directors of the house established a general plan. The *Werkmeister* assigned a task to each, and ascertained at the end of the week that it had been accomplished. The rule of work would remain in effect until the end of the eighteenth century, since John Howard could still attest that they were "knitting and spinning; weaving stockings, linen, hair, and wool—and rasping logwood and hartshorn. The quota of a robust man who shreds such wood is forty-five pounds a day. Some men and horses labour at a fulling-mill. A blacksmith works there without cease." Each house of confinement in Germany had its specialty: spinning was paramount in Bremen, Brunswick, Munich, Breslau, Berlin; weaving in Hanover. The men shredded wood in Bremen and Hamburg. In Nuremberg

they polished optical glass; at Mainz the principal labor was the milling of flour.

The first houses of correction were opened in England during a full economic recession. The act of 1610 recommended only joining certain mills and weaving and carding shops to all houses of correction in order to occupy the pensioners. But what had been a moral requirement became an economic tactic when commerce and industry recovered after 1651, the economic situation having been re-established by the Navigation Act and the lowering of the discount rate. All able-bodied manpower was to be used to the best advantage, that is, as cheaply as possible. When John Carey established his workhouse project in Bristol, he ranked the need for work first: "The poor of both sexes . . . may be employed in beating hemp, dressing and spinning flax, or in carding wool and cotton." At Worcester, they manufactured clothes and stuffs; a workshop for children was established. All of which did not always proceed without difficulties. It was suggested that the workhouses might enter the local industries and markets, on the principle perhaps that such cheap production would have a regulatory effect on the sale price. But the manufactories protested. Daniel Defoe noticed that by the effect of the too easy competition of the workhouses, poverty was created in one area on the pretext of suppressing it in another; "it is giving to one what you take away from another; putting a vagabond in an honest man's employment, and putting diligence on the tenters to find out some other work to maintain his family." Faced with this danger of competition, the authorities let the work gradually disappear. The pensioners could no longer earn even enough to pay for their upkeep; at times it was necessary to put them in prison so that they might at least have free bread. As for the bridewells, as Howard attested, there were few "in which any work is done, or can be done. The prisoners

have neither tools, nor materials of any kind: but spend their time in sloth, profaneness and debauchery."

When the Hôpital Général was created in Paris, it was intended above all to suppress beggary, rather than to provide an occupation for the internees. It seems, however, that Colbert, like his English contemporaries, regarded assistance through work as both a remedy to unemployment and a stimulus to the development of manufactories. In any case, in the provinces the directors were to see that the houses of charity had a certain economic significance. "All the poor who are capable of working must, upon work days, do what is necessary to avoid idleness, which is the mother of all evils, as well as to accustom them to honest toil and also to earning some part of their sustenance."

Sometimes there were even arrangements which permitted private entrepreneurs to utilize the manpower of the asylums for their own profit. It was stipulated, for example, according to an agreement made in 1708, that an entrepreneur should furnish the Charité of Tulle with wool, soap, and coal, and in return the establishment would redeliver the wool carded and spun. The profit was divided between the entrepreneur and the hospital. Even in Paris, several attempts were made to transform the buildings of the Hôpital Général into factories. If we can believe the author of an anonymous *mémoire* that appeared in 1790, at La Pitié "all the varieties of manufacture that could be offered to the capital" were attempted; finally, "in a kind of despair, a manufacture was undertaken of a sort of lacing found to be the least costly." Elsewhere, such efforts were scarcely more fruitful. Numerous efforts were made at Bicêtre: manufacture of thread and rope, mirror polishing, and especially the famous "great well." An attempt was even made, in 1781, to substitute teams of prisoners for the horses that brought up the water, in relay from five in the morning to eight at night: "What reason could have

determined this strange occupation? Was it that of economy or simply the necessity of busying the prisoners? If the latter, would it not have been better to occupy them with work more useful both for them and for the hospital? If for reasons of economy, we are a long way from finding any."[5] During the entire eighteenth century, the economic significance Colbert wanted to give the Hôpital Général continued to recede; that center of forced labor would become a place of privileged idleness. "What is the source of the disorders at Bicêtre?" the men of the Revolution were again to ask. And they would supply the answer that had already been given in the seventeenth century: "It is idleness. What is the means of remedying it? Work."

The classical age used confinement in an equivocal manner, making it play a double role: to reabsorb unemployment, or at least eliminate its most visible social effects, and to control costs when they seemed likely to become too high; to act alternately on the manpower market and on the cost of production. As it turned out, it does not seem that the houses of confinement were able to play effectively the double role that was expected of them. If they absorbed the unemployed, it was mostly to mask their poverty, and to avoid the social or political disadvantages of agitation; but at the very moment the unemployed were herded into forced-labor shops, unemployment increased in neighboring regions or in similar areas. As for the effect on production costs, it could only be artificial, the market price of such products being disproportionate to the cost of manufacture, calculated according to the expenses occasioned by confinement itself.

Measured by their functional value alone, the creation of the houses of confinement can be regarded as a failure. Their disappearance throughout Europe, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as receiving centers for the in-

digent and prisons of poverty, was to sanction their ultimate failure: a transitory and ineffectual remedy, a social precaution clumsily formulated by a nascent industrialization. And yet, in this very failure, the classical period conducted an irreducible experiment. What appears to us today as a clumsy dialectic of production and prices then possessed its real meaning as a certain ethical consciousness of labor, in which the difficulties of the economic mechanisms lost their urgency in favor of an affirmation of value.

In this first phase of the industrial world, labor did not seem linked to the problems it was to provoke; it was regarded, on the contrary, as a general solution, an infallible panacea, a remedy to all forms of poverty. Labor and poverty were located in a simple opposition, in inverse proportion to each other. As for that power, its special characteristic, of abolishing poverty, labor—according to the classical interpretation—possessed it not so much by its productive capacity as by a certain force of moral enchantment. Labor's effectiveness was acknowledged because it was based on an ethical transcendence. Since the Fall, man had accepted labor as a penance and for its power to work redemption. It was not a law of nature which forced man to work, but the effect of a curse. The earth was innocent of that sterility in which it would slumber if man remained idle: "The land had not sinned, and if it is accursed, it is by the labor of the fallen man who cultivates it; from it no fruit is won, particularly the most necessary fruit, save by force and continual labor."[6]

The obligation to work was not linked to any confidence in nature; and it was not even through an obscure loyalty that the land would reward man's labor. The theme was constant among Catholic thinkers, as among the Protestants, that labor does not bear its own fruits. Produce and wealth were not found at the term of a dialectic of labor and nature. Here is Calvin's admonition: "Nor do we be-

lieve, according as men will be vigilant and skillful, according as they will have done their duty well, that they can make their land fertile; it is the benediction of God which governs all things." And this danger of a labor which would remain sterile if God did not intervene in His infinite mercy is acknowledged in turn by Bossuet: "At each moment, the hope of the harvest and the unique fruit of all our labors may escape us; we are at the mercy of the inconstant heavens that bring down rain upon the tender ears." This precarious labor to which nature is never obliged to respond—save by the special will of God—is nonetheless obligatory in all strictness: not on the level of natural syntheses, but on the level of moral syntheses. The poor man who, without consenting to "torment" the land, waits until God comes to his aid, since He has promised to feed the birds of the sky, would be disobeying the great law of Scripture: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Does not reluctance to work mean "trying beyond measure the power of God," as Calvin says? It is seeking to constrain the miracle,[7] whereas the miracle is granted daily to man as the gratuitous reward of his labor. If it is true that labor is not inscribed among the laws of nature, it is enveloped in the order of the fallen world. This is why idleness is rebellion—the worst form of all, in a sense: it waits for nature to be generous as in the innocence of Eden, and seeks to constrain a Goodness to which man cannot lay claim since Adam. Pride was the sin of man before the Fall; but the sin of idleness is the supreme pride of man once he has fallen, the absurd pride of poverty. In our world, where the land is no longer fertile except in thistles and weeds, idleness is the fault *par excellence*. In the Middle Ages, the great sin, *radix malorum omnium*, was pride, *Superbia*. According to Johan Huizinga, there was a time, at the dawn of the Renaissance, when the supreme sin assumed the aspect of Avarice, Dante's *cicca cupidigia*. All

the seventeenth-century texts, on the contrary, announced the infernal triumph of Sloth: it was sloth which led the round of the vices and swept them on. Let us not forget that according to the edict of its creation, the Hôpital Général must prevent "mendicancy and idleness as sources of all disorder." Louis Bourdaloue echoes these condemnations of sloth, the wretched pride of fallen man: "What, then, is the disorder of an idle life? It is, replies Saint Ambrose, in its true meaning a second rebellion of the creature against God." Labor in the houses of confinement thus assumed its ethical meaning: since sloth had become the absolute form of rebellion, the idle would be forced to work, in the endless leisure of a labor without utility or profit.

It was in a certain experience of labor that the indissociably economic and moral demand for confinement was formulated. Between labor and idleness in the classical world ran a line of demarcation that replaced the exclusion of leprosy. The asylum was substituted for the lazar house, in the geography of haunted places as in the landscape of the moral universe. The old rites of excommunication were revived, but in the world of production and commerce. It was in these places of doomed and despised idleness, in this space invented by a society which had derived an ethical transcendence from the law of work, that madness would appear and soon expand until it had annexed them. A day was to come when it could possess these sterile reaches of idleness by a sort of very old and very dim right of inheritance. The nineteenth century would consent, would even insist that to the mad and to them alone be transferred these lands on which, a hundred and fifty years before, men had sought to pen the poor, the vagabond, the unemployed.

It is not immaterial that madmen were included in the proscription of idleness. From its origin, they would have

their place beside the poor, deserving or not, and the idle, voluntary or not. Like them, they would be subject to the rules of forced labor. More than once, in fact, they figured in their singular fashion within this uniform constraint. In the workshops in which they were interned, they distinguished themselves by their inability to work and to follow the rhythms of collective life. The necessity, discovered in the eighteenth century, to provide a special regime for the insane, and the great crisis of confinement that shortly preceded the Revolution, are linked to the experience of madness available in the universal necessity of labor. Men did not wait until the seventeenth century to "shut up" the mad, but it was in this period that they began to "confine" or "intern" them, along with an entire population with whom their kinship was recognized. Until the Renaissance, the sensibility to madness was linked to the presence of imaginary transcendences. In the classical age, for the first time, madness was perceived through a condemnation of idleness and in a social immanence guaranteed by the community of labor. This community acquired an ethical power of segregation, which permitted it to eject, as into another world, all forms of social uselessness. It was in this *other world*, encircled by the sacred powers of labor, that madness would assume the status we now attribute to it. If there is, in classical madness, something which refers elsewhere, and to *other things*, it is no longer because the madman comes from the world of the irrational and bears its stigmata; rather, it is because he crosses the frontiers of bourgeois order of his own accord, and alienates himself outside the sacred limits of its ethic.

In fact, the relation between the practice of confinement and the insistence on work is not defined by economic conditions; far from it. A moral perception sustains and animates it. When the Board of Trade published its report on the poor in which it proposed the means "to render them

useful to the public," it was made quite clear that the origin of poverty was neither scarcity of commodities nor unemployment, but "the weakening of discipline and the relaxation of morals." The edict of 1657, too, was full of moral denunciations and strange threats. "The libertinage of beggars has risen to excess because of an unfortunate tolerance of crimes of all sorts, which attract the curse of God upon the State when they remain unpunished." This "libertinage" is not the kind that can be defined in relation to the great law of work, but a moral libertinage: "Experience having taught those persons who are employed in charitable occupations that many among them of either sex live together without marriage, that many of their children are unbaptized, and that almost all of them live in ignorance of religion, disdaining the sacraments, and continually practicing all sorts of vice." Hence the Hôpital does not have the appearance of a mere refuge for those whom age, infirmity, or sickness keep from working; it will have not only the aspect of a forced labor camp, but also that of a moral institution responsible for punishing, for correcting a certain moral "abeyance" which does not merit the tribunal of men, but cannot be corrected by the severity of penance alone. The Hôpital Général has an ethical status. It is this moral charge which invests its directors, and they are granted every judicial apparatus and means of repression: "They have power of authority, of direction, of administration, of commerce, of police, of jurisdiction, of correction and punishment"; and to accomplish this task "stakes, irons, prisons, and dungeons"[8] are put at their disposal.

And it is in this context that the obligation to work assumes its meaning as both ethical exercise and moral guarantee. It will serve as *askesis*, as punishment, as symptom of a certain disposition of the heart. The prisoner who could and who would work would be released, not so much because he was again useful to society, but because he had

again subscribed to the great ethical pact of human existence. In April 1684, a decree created within the Hôpital a section for boys and girls under twenty-five; it specified that work must occupy the greater part of the day, and must be accompanied by "the reading of pious books." But the ruling defines the purely repressive nature of this work, beyond any concern for production: "They will be made to work as long and as hard as their strengths and situations will permit." It is then, but only then, that they can be taught an occupation "fitting their sex and inclination," insofar as the measure of their zeal in the first activities makes it possible to "judge that they desire to reform." Finally, every fault "will be punished by reduction of gruel, by increase of work, by imprisonment and other punishments customary in the said hospitals, as the directors shall see fit." It is enough to read the "general regulations for daily life in the House of Saint-Louis de la Salpêtrière" to understand that the very requirement of labor was instituted as an exercise in moral reform and constraint, which reveals, if not the ultimate meaning, at least the essential justification of confinement.

An important phenomenon, this invention of a site of constraint, where morality castigates by means of administrative enforcement. For the first time, institutions of morality are established in which an astonishing synthesis of moral obligation and civil law is effected. The law of nations will no longer countenance the disorder of hearts. To be sure, this is not the first time in European culture that moral error, even in its most private form, has assumed the aspect of a transgression against the written or unwritten laws of the community. But in this great confinement of the classical age, the essential thing—and the new event—is that men were confined in cities of pure morality, where the law that should reign in all hearts was to be applied without compromise, without concession, in the rigorous

forms of physical constraint. Morality permitted itself to be administered like trade or economy.

Thus we see inscribed in the institutions of absolute monarchy—in the very ones that long remained the symbol of its arbitrary power—the great bourgeois, and soon republican, idea that virtue, too, is an affair of state, that decrees can be published to make it flourish, that an authority can be established to make sure it is respected. The walls of confinement actually enclose the negative of that moral city of which the bourgeois conscience began to dream in the seventeenth century; a moral city for those who sought, from the start, to avoid it, a city where right reigns only by virtue of a force without appeal—a sort of sovereignty of good, in which intimidation alone prevails and the only recompense of virtue (to this degree its own reward) is to escape punishment. In the shadows of the bourgeois city is born this strange republic of the good which is imposed by force on all those suspected of belonging to evil. This is the underside of the bourgeoisie's great dream and great preoccupation in the classical age: the laws of the State and the laws of the heart at last identical. "Let our politicians leave off their calculations . . . let them learn once and for all that everything can be had for money, except morals and citizens."[9]

Is this not the dream that seems to have haunted the founders of the house of confinement in Hamburg? One of the directors is to see that "all in the house are properly instructed as to religious and moral duties. . . . The schoolmaster must instruct the children in religion, and encourage them, at proper times, to learn and repeat portions of Scripture. He must also teach them reading, writing and accounts, and a decent behaviour to those that visit the house. He must take care that they attend divine service, and are orderly at it."[10] In England, the workhouse regulations devote much space to the surveillance of morals and

to religious education. Thus for the house in Plymouth, a schoolmaster is to be appointed who will fulfill the triple requirement of being "pious, sober, and discreet." Every morning and evening, at the prescribed hour, it will be his task to preside at prayers; every Saturday afternoon and on holidays, he will address the inmates, exhorting and instructing them in "the fundamental parts of the Protestant religion, according to the doctrine of the Church of England." Hamburg or Plymouth, *Zuchthäusern* and workhouses—throughout Protestant Europe, fortresses of moral order were constructed, in which were taught religion and whatever was necessary to the peace of the State.

In Catholic countries, the goal is the same but the religious imprint is a little more marked, as the work of Saint Vincent de Paul bears witness. "The principal end for which such persons have been removed here, out of the storms of the great world, and introduced into this solitude as pensioners, is entirely to keep them from the slavery of sin, from being eternally damned, and to give them means to rejoice in a perfect contentment in this world and in the next; they will do all they can to worship, in this world, Divine Providence. . . . Experience convinces us only too unhappily that the source of the misrule triumphant today among the young lies entirely in the lack of instruction and of obedience in spiritual matters, since they much prefer to follow their evil inclinations than the holy inspiration of God and the charitable advice of their parents."[11] Therefore the pensioners must be delivered from a world which, for their weakness, is only an invitation to sin, must be recalled to a solitude where they will have as companions only their "guardian angels" incarnate in the daily presence of their warders: these latter, in fact, "render them the same good offices that their guardian angels perform for them invisibly: namely, instruct them, console them, and procure their salvation." In the houses of La Charité, the

greatest attention was paid to this ordering of life and conscience, which throughout the eighteenth century would more and more clearly appear as the *raison d'être* of confinement. In 1765, new regulations were established for the Charité of Château-Thierry; it was made quite clear that "the Prior will visit all the prisoners at least once a week, one after the other, and separately, to console them, to exhort them to better conduct, and to assure himself that they are treated as they should be; the subordinate officer will do this every day."

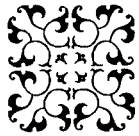
All these prisons of moral order might have borne the motto which Howard could still read on the one in Mainz: "If wild beasts can be broken to the yoke, it must not be despaired of correcting the man who has strayed." For the Catholic Church, as in the Protestant countries, confinement represents, in the form of an authoritarian model, the myth of social happiness: a police whose order will be entirely transparent to the principles of religion, and a religion whose requirements will be satisfied, without restrictions, by the regulations of the police and the constraints with which it can be armed. There is, in these institutions, an attempt of a kind to demonstrate that order may be adequate to virtue. In this sense, "confinement" conceals both a metaphysics of government and a politics of religion; it is situated, as an effort of tyrannical synthesis, in the vast space separating the garden of God and the cities which men, driven from paradise, have built with their own hands. The house of confinement in the classical age constitutes the densest symbol of that "police" which conceived of itself as the civil equivalent of religion for the edification of a perfect city.

Confinement was an institutional creation peculiar to the seventeenth century. It acquired from the first an importance that left it no rapport with imprisonment as practiced

in the Middle Ages. As an economic measure and a social precaution, it had the value of inventiveness. But in the history of unreason, it marked a decisive event: the moment when madness was perceived on the social horizon of poverty, of incapacity for work, of inability to integrate with the group; the moment when madness began to rank among the problems of the city. The new meanings assigned to poverty, the importance given to the obligation to work, and all the ethical values that are linked to labor, ultimately determined the experience of madness and inflected its course.

A sensibility was born which had drawn a line and laid a cornerstone, and which chose—only to banish. The concrete space of classical society reserved a neutral region, a blank page where the real life of the city was suspended; here, order no longer freely confronted disorder, reason no longer tried to make its own way among all that might evade or seek to deny it. Here reason reigned in the pure state, in a triumph arranged for it in advance over a frenzied unreason. Madness was thus torn from that imaginary freedom which still allowed it to flourish on the Renaissance horizon. Not so long ago, it had floundered about in broad daylight: in *King Lear*, in *Don Quixote*. But in less than a half-century, it had been sequestered and, in the fortress of confinement, bound to Reason, to the rules of morality and to their monotonous nights.

III



THE INSANE

FROM the creation of the Hôpital Général, from the opening, in Germany and in England, of the first houses of correction, and until the end of the eighteenth century, the age of reason confined. It confined the debauched, spendthrift fathers, prodigal sons, blasphemers, men who "seek to undo themselves," libertines. And through these parallels, these strange complicities, the age sketched the profile of its own experience of unreason.

But in each of these cities, we find an entire population of madness as well. One-tenth of all the arrests made in Paris for the Hôpital Général concern "the insane," "demented" men, individuals of "wandering mind," and "persons who have become completely mad." Between these and the others, no sign of a differentiation. Judging from the registries, the same sensibility appears to collect them, the same gestures to set them apart. We leave it to medical archaeology to determine whether or not a man was sick, criminal, or insane who was admitted to the hospital for