

Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, *Madness : Rebuilding of a Concept*, august 2025.

Mehdi Belhaj Kacem's latest book, *Madness : Rebuilding of a Concept*, is a must-read. Although it is primarily a new entry in his *System of Pleonectics*, it is nonetheless a fully coherent text that can be read independently, much to our delight.

Mehdi Belhaj Kacem invites us to engage in a true existential analysis of madness. As is often the case with him, it is not a question of going beyond, but of shifting the issue. Of taking a step away from tradition, placing madness on a different terrain and establishing a new concept for it. Madness is thus elevated before our eyes to nothing less than the dignity of an ontological concept.

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Let's get straight to the heart of the matter and follow the reasoning step by step, since Mehdi Belhaj Kacem's aim is to propose a thesis and demonstrate it rigorously.

The thesis is as follows: madness precedes Reason.

It all stems from the fact that the very emergence of Reason, whether at its origin (originally) or at every moment of daily life (originary), can only be considered pure madness.

As is often the case with pleonectic philosophy, there is a reversal of tradition. Thus, transgression precedes legislation, evil precedes good, lies precede truth, having precedes being, and so on. Madness therefore logically precedes reason.

Here, we must be careful not to rush into understanding too quickly. "If you understand," Lacan told his students, "you are surely wrong. " If madness precedes reason, this does not mean that before becoming reasonable and endowed with reason, humans were irrational and that reason came second in the sense that it appeared after madness. Otherwise, humans would have been mad before one fine day becoming reasonable.

To say that "madness precedes reason" simply means that madness and reason are inchoative, that is, they arise at the same time. Only those endowed with reason can be prey to madness, and it is because there is the possibility of madness that there is the possibility of Reason arising.

Mehdi Belhaj Kacem thus develops an extremely subtle dialectic between the original and the originary. The original is that which comes first, whether logically or chronologically. The originary is that which is more significant, which arises much more often, which is present at every moment in a deeper way, so to speak.

Madness is inchoative to reason: originally, madness and reason are born together, one being the condition of possibility for the other and vice versa. Reason comes about with the emergence of “techno-mimetic virtuosity,” with which it merges, so to speak, under the prism of the philosophy of pleonectics. It is precisely man's ability to appropriate the very laws of being that is the condition of possibility for madness. Ultimately, Reason, as techno-mimetic virtuosity, even merges with madness. Reason is madness. What could be more insane than the emergence of the capacity for science, than the appearance of technology within the human species itself?

Mehdi Belhaj Kacem gives the following example: if a tribe of monkeys started lighting fires with flint to make a barbecue and we witnessed the scene, we would immediately be seized with immense terror.

Originary, this time, it goes without saying that madness is much more prevalent in everyday life than reason. Just think about the simple act of getting up in the morning with the help of an alarm clock, then dressing in the latest fashion to go to work, crammed together on the subway, following a schedule set by others, with almost no choice in the matter, often for a salary that is just enough to continue this routine until a supposed retirement... Otherwise, one need only observe animals living to instantly grasp that humans are completely denatured, that they are very often completely insane.

Mehdi Belhaj Kacem highlights the fact that the emergence of Reason, this faculty, this “techno-mimetic virtuosity,” which ultimately allows us to give ourselves unnatural laws, rules that make no sense from the perspective of human animal survival, precisely leads to the fact that madness is more originary than reason. Reason certainly allows for freedom, which is unique to humans, but this freedom is constrained, masochistic in essence, since it consists mainly in being able to give oneself artificial, arbitrary rules that make no sense in terms of Nature—it is in this sense that they are crazy.

The essence of man, according to the philosophy of pleonectics, is nothing other than techno-mimetic virtuosity, which then merges with Reason as a supernumerary faculty. The latter allows for freedom under constraint, just as technology does. It is the source of all our ills (of Evil itself, and we know that the philosophy of pleonectics is fundamentally a philosophy of Evil, but also of all our diverse and varied psychopathologies), while also being the condition of possibility for Good. For example, it allows things that did not originally exist in the biological body of the human species to be grafted onto it (Mehdi Belhaj Kacem likes to illustrate this with the example of the activation of the clitoris in proto-human females).

Mehdi Belhaj Kacem would therefore say that “the human specimen manifests itself to us predominantly and massively, in every possible sense of both adverbs, in

the form of madness.” Madness is, in fact, much easier to observe at any given moment when observing a human being than their supposed reason.

Reason is indeed like a parasite; it attaches itself to understanding and thus distorts perception. Reason sometimes even short-circuits and reduces understanding to nothing. We may have seen and carefully analyzed the causality behind phenomena, but decide not to take it into account because of reason. If the purpose of science is to eliminate all contingency, the results obtained and the method that results from them cannot be transposed to subjective life (at the risk of paranoia, which often affects great scientists) or to politics (at the risk of collective psychoses such as totalitarianism).

In other words, it doesn't bother people to think it's daytime when it's actually nighttime. The West has a lot of examples of this. Every day, I see evidence that a supposed vaccine does not prevent the spread of a virus, since I am required to wear a mask even though I am “vaccinated.” I am told that a paper mask can prevent me from infecting others with a respiratory virus, when we know full well that given the size of these viruses, it would be better not to wear anything at all. My understanding and perception are working perfectly. And yet I “vaccinate” myself and wear a mask. Reason (“of state,” Mehdi Belhaj Kacem would add here) prevails. Or a country commits genocide to such an extent that soon nothing will remain but a field of ruins, I see the images every day, the proven testimonies, the evidence that women and children are dying every day under bullets, but I still consider, since the press in my own country repeats it over and over again, that this is a defensive war and that the army of this country is the most moral in the world...

It is therefore precisely Reason that can drive me mad. If only humans can be prey to madness, it is because they are the only ones to possess the faculty of reason. Animals, on the other hand, have only understanding and perception... and are thus protected from all madness (unless they have lived in contact with humans for too long).

This is why the question of madness is so important: it is intrinsically linked, from the outset and then at every moment, to the techno-mimetic virtuosity that is, in a sense, Reason itself.

And we now understand why reason conditions madness and vice versa: the rules we give ourselves, which are arbitrary civil laws, are in themselves completely delusional. These rules can only be created because Man one day came into possession of the scientific capacity that is techno-mimetic virtuosity, which is nothing other than Reason understood as a parasitic faculty. Civil laws arise from the use of techno-mimetic capacity and are nonetheless completely delusional as such.

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There is therefore no clear boundary between madness and reason. One conditions the other. And, as we now understand, Mehdi Belhaj Kacem is entirely justified in saying that “madness precedes reason.”

The demonstration was relentless. Madness exists only for the being for whom Reason is at stake, only for the being-in-science. Madness is therefore intertwined with reason. Reason has a lot to do with technology and freedom, which are its original and fundamental forms: reason arises at the same time as techno-mimetic virtuosity, which is not only crazy in itself, but also immediately brings about the possibility of madness arising at any moment in the form of totally arbitrary civil laws.

We have thus been presented with a new and unprecedented way of thinking about madness.

What surprises us every time, when it comes to the pleonectic system, which is still under construction, is that a new concept can be incorporated into it in such a way that it is rigorously, and in every detail, so finely connected to all the others. The pleonectic system is thus one of the most articulate philosophical systems in existence. It is extremely fine clockwork. There is no doubt that this is because Mehdi Belhaj Kacem is none other than the greatest dialectician of our time.

We are now eagerly awaiting the new version of the Pleonectic System, which Mehdi Belhaj Kacem has announced will be published in separate installments prior to the release of the magnum opus itself.

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