The Poetics of "Madness": Shifting Codes and Styles in the Linguistic Construction of Identity in Matlab, Bangladesh

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No great genius has ever existed without some touch of madness.

—Seneca, "On Tranquility of Mind"[1]

I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together. . . .
I am the egg-man, they are the egg-men, I am the Walrus.

—The Beatles, "I Am the Walrus"

What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by: Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
    Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am. . . . My conscience hath a thousand several tongues, and every tongue brings in a several tale. . . .

—Shakespeare, *King Richard III*, Act V, Scene 3

Madness, Codes, and "Shifting"

This article considers the implications of evidence that the "mad" speak with "a thousand several tongues." I mean to imply neither that the discursive play of multiple identities is reducible even to such semantically challenging lines as those from the Beatles or Shakespeare nor that those lines are mad ravings. Though I recognize the dangers of associating code switching with madness, I propose nonetheless that the unique speech labeled "mad"—and the processes whereby it comes to be labeled so—should attract more of the analytic attentions of anthropologists. For even the speech of the so-called mad is not strictly idiosyncratic but plays on recognized codes and styles. Perhaps more than for others, ludic and conflictual uses of language by these persons entail a personalized poetics or stylistics that is constitutive of their identities.

I also want to avoid Othering code switching,[2] for it is in fact a common practice in many if not most speech communities. Code switching entails a sequential alternation between codes. However, Woolard (1998) has recently

demonstrated how this sequentiality is interpreted by actors and analysts as simultaneity. Since the work of Blom and Gumperz on metaphoric code switching (1972),[3] much code switching has actually been seen as a "tool for making salient *simultaneously* two or more positively valued identities" (Myers-Scotton 1993:122, cited in Woolard 1998:16, emphasis added). Past accounts have distinguished "code mixing"—in which lexemes from one code are inserted in utterance structured by the grammar of the matrix code—from code switching between utterances, sentences, or turns (McCormick 1994). We can distinguish both from diglossia, in which certain settings require an elite code and others a "homey" code, and from historical borrowing. Still, in another sense, both a marked variation in the frequency of usage of historically borrowed lexical items and code switching to *simultaneously* invoke multiple identities blur diachrony and synchrony as well as the identities in play. Code switching is always socially significant because it plays on the relatively fixed social indexicalities of the codes (Kroskrity 1993). Codes and varieties conjure up the social worlds or modes of being that they are "typically" used to constitute; such processes of indexicality—both interpretive and ascriptive—are filtered through linguistic ideologies that involve typification processes (Schutz 1970; Wilce 1998a: ch. 7).

To describe code switching as "shifting" has the advantage of evoking physical movement—the movement of socially engaged human bodies, for example: " 'In talk, it seems routine that, while firmly standing on two feet, we jump up and down on another' (Goffman 1981:155); the analytic concept of metaphorical [code] switching is meant to suggest this simultaneity of standing and jumping" (Woolard 1998:17). Although Goffman only intends to link talk and bodily action figuratively, the link is more than figurative. The embodied nature of the interactions described in this article is crucial, for bodies are important signifiers as well as agents in Hindu-Muslim relations in South Asia (Das 1996). Shifting codes serves in some natural speech to index the same complex intercommunal relations in which bodies are deeply implicated.

"Madness" can at times appear close to "artistic creativity," especially of a poetic sort (Bateson 1972; Sass 1992).[4] We can understand creativity as play(fulness). Ambiguities, multiple codes and styles, and polyvocality are more or less salient in speech events. The multiple meanings, voices, or subject positions found both within and across the different codes or styles that speakers deploy in speech events potentiate creativity and play. According to Bateson, play exploits tension between levels of meaning or message. Bateson describes how, under different circumstances, tensions among simultaneous and competing messages potentiate "pathogenic double binds" in some actors but push others, including porpoises, to a new level of creativity (1972:276–278). In fact, Bateson posits a profound connection between schizophrenogenic stress and creativity, between the "pathological" and "nonpathological." He lumps schizophrenia with the learning spurts that can occur under special stress, labeling both "transcontextual syndromes." Bateson's analogizing of schizophrenia and creativity parallels Sass's linking of "madness and modernism" (1992). What the

latter pair shares, in fact, is a hyperreflexivity not unrelated to Batesonian play/creativity. Without a large dose of reflexivity, codes and structures are taken for granted and reproduced rather than played with. What Sass calls "hyperreflexivity" (1998:12) is reflexivity run amok. In seamless interactions constitutive of "the everyday" we must use communicative codes intuitively and with a sense of *ease*. That, however, requires suspending unbelief and extreme reflexive awareness. Both madness and modernism as an artistic and cultural movement problematize such ease.

We will increase our understanding if we place the multiple levels of abstraction (Bateson 1972) and awareness (Sass 1992) that seem to be at play in madness within an encompassing model of semiosis. In fact, though this article presents realities particular to a few places—especially Bangladesh but also Boston—it also wrestles with the nature of language and semiosis in general, drawing on Charles S. Peirce's trichotomies. Peirce perceived three and only three possible "modes of being" or forms of logical relation: "the being of positive qualitative possibility, the being of actual [or brute] fact, and the being of law" (1960, 1:7). He calls these Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness—monadic, dyadic, and triadic relations. For Peirce, the three modes are hierarchically related, the lower potentiating or "founding" the higher but not vice versa. The three primal categories clearly relate to the world of human semiosis—at one point he also calls them "moods or tones of thought" (1960, 1:183), underlining their relevance to the analysis of human social life—but Peirce also sees them operating in cells, seeds, and the sun, pervading the universe.

Firstness "has no structure" or internal complexity; though it may entail a "quality of feeling" or sensibility, it excludes reflexive experience of that feeling (Lee 1997:112):

> The [idea of the absolutely] First is that whose being is simply in itself, not referring to anything nor lying behind anything. . . . The idea of the absolutely First must be entirely separated from all conception of or reference to anything else. . . . It cannot be articulately thought: assert it, and it has already lost its characteristic innocence. . . . Stop to think of it, and it has flown. [Peirce 1960, 1:183]

Genuine Secondness is the "existential" relation within a dyad (Peirce 1960, 1:195, 2:172), a correlation or "correlate," causality, a mere juxtaposition without "intelligibility" (Corrington 1993:124–127). A prototypical form of Secondness, according to Peirce, is "struggle": "By struggle . . . I mean mutual action between two things regardless of any sort of third or medium, and in particular regardless of any law of action" (1960, 1:161). We have Thirdness when intelligibility is added to a mere dyad or brute force, when convention or law is manifest in regularity. Thirdness brings Secondness and Firstness together (Corrington 1993:128): "All exaggerated language . . . is the furniture of minds which think of seconds and forget thirds. Action is second, but conduct is third. Law as an active force is second, but order and legislation are third. Sympathy, flesh and blood, that by which I feel my neighbor's feelings, is third" (Peirce 1960, 1:171).

Peirce's categories can be fruitfully applied to the diverse semiotic styles observable among those called mad. As Desjarlais discovered in and around a shelter for the homeless mentally ill in Boston, the life they knew on the streets was a series of random events best seen in terms of Secondness in all its surprising toughness, its brute actuality (1997:129, 131; Peirce 1960, 1:7). Confronted by such brute Secondness, they would return to the shelter but try to wrap themselves in a Firstness of direct, unmediated sensibility: "Firstness is the mode of being which consists in its subject's being positively such as it is regardless of aught else" (Peirce 1960, 1:7).[5] Peirce describes a form of consciousness that is not unlike the withdrawal (Corin 1990) seen in some mentally ill persons:

> Imagine, if you please, a form of consciousness in which there is no comparison, no relation, no recognized multiplicity[,] no change, no imagination of any modification of what is positively there, no reflection—nothing but a simple positive character. Such a consciousness might be just an odor, say a smell of attar; or it might be one infinite dead ache. [Peirce 1960, 5:44, cited in Desjarlais 1997:129]

At least the first part of this description is seductive; Firstness might offer comfort.

To the extent that psychosis is so intimately connected with semiosis or speech patterns that some clinical researchers consider it a disturbance of language rather than thought,[6] useful models of the nexus of creative hyperreflexivity and madness must be linguistically and semiotically informed. Admittedly, the dominant tradition in *linguistics* per se, from Saussure to Chomsky, builds on the myth of the monolingual individual in a homogeneous speech community; that narrow tradition will not help us much. An account of the semiotic resources used by those labeled "mad" in Bangladesh requires a *trans*linguistic perspective. That is, it calls for a focus on the multiplex semiotic repertoires at play in every speech event and speech community, a "translinguistics" that takes multivocality as its central datum (Bakhtin 1981; Woolard 1998).[7]

In any society, speech labeled mad tends to be shifting speech. "Shifting" implies not necessarily disorganized speech but, rather, speech whose principle of organization is markedly playful (not necessarily lighthearted) and, thus, potentially quite confusing. Connections between the utterances and topics of the mad may be metonymic or metaphoric; the semiotics of such connections often remains opaque to, or requires quite a bit of work from, their interlocutors (Desjarlais 1997). A shifting of styles and codes (Blom and Gumperz 1972), and not only topic or trope, characterizes the "mad" talk I recorded in Bangladesh and is also an undertheorized phenomenon evident at the margins of published case studies of psychotic discourse elsewhere.

Codes and Code Switching: Another Context for Bangladeshi "Madness"

So-called psychotic discourse is characterized by rapid shifts of code, frame, or Goffmanian "footing"—"participants' alignment, or set, or stance, or posture, or projected self" (Goffman 1981:128). The role of rapid shifts in footing

is clear, for instance, in the Brazilian sociolinguist Ribeiro's (1995) analysis of talk between a psychiatrist and her psychotic patient. In Ribeiro's transcripts, it is the shifting of footing and not codes that is salient.[8] Code switching does receive mention—if only in passing—in another analysis of "psychotic discourse." Swartz and Swartz (1987) use their account of conversations with a woman in a locked ward in a large South African psychiatric hospital to argue for the interpretability of such discourse and the role of the clinical listener in constructing "incomprehensibility." The patient reframed the interviewer (Sally Swartz) as in need of help or discursive scaffolding (Vygotsky 1978), playing with the therapy frame and with several codes. She shifted from English—virtually the only code the interviewer controlled—to French, Italian, and Afrikaans, signaling a one-upmanship of linguistic range. When the patient said, "You have big ears" (characterizing "therapy" as surveillance), *in Afrikaans,* her code switch was a playful means to keep the "metacommentary" from the interviewer. Desjarlais (1997) mentions no code switching in the shelter for the mentally ill homeless; but the speech style that some residents call "ragtiming" entails rapid shifts in style, topic, or perspective. Shelter resident Peter said of his fellow shelter residents, "They're talking ragtime all the time" (1997:164). Summarizing how Peter and his friend Richard used "ragtiming," Desjarlais describes it as " 'loose,' dreamlike associations between different sequences of speech, tangential asides, obscure references, neologisms, intense and stilted verbalizations, and other peculiar and often noisy phrasings common to—and often thought to be indicative of—schizophrenic discourse" (1997:164). Probing the raggedy grounds of the metaphor, Desjarlais finds that "ragtime" metapragmatically characterizes "disorderly, patchwork themes" or "offbeat talk" (1997:164). Peter described it as "talk about the sky falling down or cows on the roof. It doesn't make any sense. How can you listen to that?" (Desjarlais 1997:164). Peter's inability to tolerate such talk reflects his preferred semiotic style, his way of coping with others' communications—or, in the parlance of psychiatry, his symptomology (his tenuous "grip," easily threatened by others' "nonsense").

Although it is one observable pattern, shifting speech is by no means the only speech pathology associated with psychosis; speechlessness can also be considered a symptom. Also, though "psychotic speech" can be ludic and conflictual, it is not universally more flexible and full of shifts than that of other persons. It can, in some cases, be remarkable for its rigidity. Peter and his shelter friend Richard "were known for speaking a certain way and so acquired identities founded on the way they spoke to others" (Desjarlais 1997:172). Richard's recognized communicative style was what Desjarlais calls a literalism of language, environment, and inner states. Richard took others' words so seriously that we could say he was vulnerable to them. He felt immediate sensate correspondences between persons and spaces. His speech was full of tropes (we would say) that made those links. Richard, however, experienced these tropes as tangible, real signs that enacted (in Desjarlais's words) a literal "contiguity of qualities" across domains (1997:161). Peter, known for complaining about the

incomprehensibility of the others in the shelter, longed for "clarity, order, and understanding" in the midst of the others who acted with such "unpredictability." Richard said, "Peter is the only one who makes sense to me here," perhaps because Peter strove to speak of things in black and white (Desjarlais 1997: 164–165).

What Peter objected to as "ragtime" may be precisely the way (one sort of) "mad speech"—or "the confusion of tongues" associated with Babel or glossolalia—defies normativity and the very structure of language through and to which children are socialized in identification with their parents (Kristeva 1980:276). Paradoxically, even such a departure from normative symbolizing and its constituent structures can be sacralized, as in Catholic charismatic glossolalia (Csordas 1990:27)—though it is still likely to provoke a range of official responses, from bewilderment, to disapproval, to repression. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty's notion of the "preobjective," Csordas describes glossolalia as a radically embodied use of "speaking" that defies the semanticity of *langue*, celebrating the world and *parole* through the medium of the body: "The stripping away of the semantic dimension in glossolalia . . . reveal[s] the grounding of language in natural life, as a bodily act" (1990:25). Later Csordas writes,

> What better way to maximize the gestural element of communitas, and what better way to preclude the petrification of *parole* into *langue* than to speak in tongues, always a pure act of expression and never subject to codification. . . . The *multiplicity of tongues* resonates with Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that verbal form may not be as arbitrary as [Saussure's] linguistic theory would have it. [1990:27. emphasis added]

Csordas's meditation on glossolalia parallels Julia Kristeva's (1993:156) celebration of prelinguistic signs by infants, poets, and the mad, signs for the sake of *jouissance* rather than signification per se.[9] Certain very marked forms of heteroglossia, in which systems and structures themselves become playthings, mark a break with the mode of signification (which Lacan [1968] calls *Le Nom du Père*, the Law of the Father) to which we gradually socialize very young children.[10] Yet some forms of playful speech are more equal than others. Whereas the preobjective play of signifiers and of the multiplicity of tongues may be sacralized in glossolalia and perhaps in certain public speech rituals,[11] such sacralization is a form of metapragmatic empowerment unavailable to those dismissed as mad. Their verbal play—a sort of multiplication of tongues—brings them stigma. The challenge their heteroglossia presents to the dominant order of signs parallels that which Csordas ascribes to glossolalia (1990:25), but the result differs markedly.

Three Disclaimers

Before contextualizing and analyzing evidence from Bangladesh, some disclaimers are in order. Although a critique of postcolonial psychiatric discourses is fashionable and might be useful in relation to Bangladeshi psychiatry (cf. Ernst 1995, 1997, on colonial psychiatry in Calcutta), in only one of the

cases presented here would such a critique be clearly relevant; only Suleyman, a man whom I came to know early in my 1991–92 fieldwork, encountered the Bangladeshi psychiatric establishment. Nor does this article map Bangladeshi *pāgalāmī* (madness) in a one-to-one fashion onto psychosis.[12] Hence, we have the second disclaimer: this article scarcely engages the voluminous literature on psychotic speech or its debate over whether to regard schizophrenia as a disorder of thought, speech, or semiosis (Crow 1997; Swartz 1994).[13] Instead, my goal— following Swartz and Swartz (1987), Ribeiro (1995), and Desjarlais (1997)—is to apply the tools of pragmatics to a particular form of interaction: naturally occurring speech involving at least some elements that Bangladeshis call *pāgal*, "mad."[14]

Those eccentric speakers in Bangladesh who are labeled pāgal are among those "remaindered" by the system (Trawick 1990b), those who venture to "speak truth to power." But another note of caution is in order: Although this article reveals that the speech of the mad addresses the politics of culture in Bangladesh, I want to avoid romanticizing and politicizing madness and thus failing to come to grips with the frustration and suffering of real persons. As it bears witness to suffering, the speech of the mad includes, but is not reducible to, the poetic, the political, the historic, and the resistant (Kleinman 1992). For madness to be able to speak to sanity is a historical contingency, as Foucault has argued (1973). As Bangladesh is incorporated into a global semiotic order in which madness is very distinct indeed, such "conversations" currently seem threatened. Still, in this fragile historical moment in which Bangladesh's integrity and cultural future(s) are at stake, the link holds (Wilce 1998a:10, 1998b).

Life and Madness in Matlab, Bangladesh

Ethnographic Setting

One of the fairer labels that Pakistani soldiers, during their attempt to put down the independence struggle in Bangladesh, applied to the people of the rebellious eastern province was *bhat-e mach-e Bangali*, "rice- and fish[-eating] Bengalis." The implicit claim, obvious at least to the Pakistanis, was that one is what one eats, and that a diet of rice and fish is a humorally cooling and, thus, effeminate diet. Meat goes to the head; people believe it heats the head literally and also stirs passion.[15] Yet, however the Pakistani Army might have chosen to essentialize Bengalis, there is substantial variation in diet and crop patterns across Bangladesh. Matlab, the *upajelā* (subdistrict, roughly "county") where I did my fieldwork, in the district of Chandpur, happens to grow an abundance of potatoes, many of which the people export to other districts because potatoes have a lower status than rice.

Matlab is also unique as the site of a major, long-term demographic surveillance and public health program by the International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), which provided me with logistical support in carrying out my research. Psychiatry is not part of the ICDDR,B agenda, and psychiatric morbidity studies have yet to be carried out in Matlab

(or anywhere in Bangladesh as far as I know). More importantly, ethnographic studies of Matlab have taken a backseat to demographic and epidemiological studies (Fauveau 1994; Habte 1990). Apart from these unique factors, Matlab's peasants are like those in the rest of the country in having to eke out their livings on parcels of land smaller than an acre on average; in sending some members of most families to the capital city or even abroad in order to work and repatriate funds; in having their farms' growing cycles altered by major agroenvironmental interventions (in Matlab's case, an embankment that has controlled the annual floods); and in having a small (and shrinking) percentage of Hindus among them. After independence, the Hindu population was estimated to be 15 percent of the new state. Today it is less than 10 percent. The controversial Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin made the flow of frightened Hindu families out of Bangladesh the theme of the novel *Lajjā (Shame)* (1993; see Wilce 1998b). The communal balance has thus changed radically, although cultural "memories" of Muslims' minority status on the subcontinent are kept very much alive in the discourse of the religious/political Right in Bangladesh—another theme in Nasrin's novel.

Upajelās like Matlab consist of smaller units—which Bengalis, borrowing and adapting an English term, call "unions"—that in turn consist of several villages. Within Matlab my fieldwork was concentrated in the union I call Sonargaon (a pseudonym). The union gets its real name and its social reality (Bertocci 1969) from the face-to-face interactions spawned in its market town, the site of a *hāṭ bājār* (bazaar), a "weekly market." It was in the bazaar area of Sonargaon that I met the "dirt clod hawker" and the "bifurcate/transcommunal man" described below.

Matlab Madness

Market towns are rural Bangladesh's public spaces, and madness is more public in Bangladesh, which has only a few hundred beds in its two mental hospitals, than it is in the West. Thus, although we lack hard evidence of psychiatric morbidity, the presence of half-clothed people and those with matted hair is obvious in most bazaar areas. Prima facie evidence makes it doubtful that madness is rare in rural Bangladesh. Could it be mere coincidence that the 65 residents of the extended family compound in which I was a guest described suicide attempts accompanying what sound like mood disorders for three past and present generations of residents? or that they also described two affines, one living on the compound and one not (Suleyman, described below), as pāgal? Whether madness is rare or common in Matlab, there are but three treatment options for it in rural Bangladesh: admission to one of two distant urban hospitals, traditional ethnopsychiatric care, or home care. To keep a mad person at home, families must often use chains as physical restraints.

To assert individuality (or even multiples thereof) in Bangladesh—to speak "too much," to speak in idiosyncratic style, or to lay overt claim to autonomy or authority apart from hegemonic legitimation processes—invites the label pāgal or *pāglā,* "mad."[16] Although madness is often linked with the divine

and creative among at least some Bangladeshi (and Indian) classes, the link—however ancient it is—represents a sort of marginality. The association is semiotically available to Bangladeshis regardless of whether a particular instance of madness is viewed as religious-ecstatic. In Louis Dumont's (1970) description of Hindu society, one way to extricate oneself from embeddedness in hierarchy is the path of the Renouncers, the *sannyasin* who leave their responsibilities as "householders," renounce norms of caste and purity, and live outside of—they themselves might say "above"—everyday Hindu social life. In the sense that symbols "remaindered" by a system—the Hindu Renouncer or the pāglā (madman)—shape the meaning of that system's interior,[17] madness is not far from the heart of Bangladeshi discursive culture. Just as the Renouncer is both beyond the pale and yet idealized in Hinduism (Dumont 1970), so is the pāgal (or pāglā, especially as healer) in Muslim Bangladesh.[18]

Shifting Discourse by Four "Mad" Characters

Mr. Dilā Kalab (Dirt Clod): The Man Who Hawks Dirt

In Bangladesh the mad are known at times to speak in public and to perform or parody speech genres otherwise taken seriously.[19] In 1992, as I stood in the Sonargaon bazaar, near the river dock, one such man was confidently proclaiming the virtues of dirt, as though parodying hawkers of merchandise and medicine in the bazaar—and also Islamic orthodoxy, perhaps. The earthly product was a lump of soil—*dilā kalab*, "dirt clod." Bangladeshi Islam—presumably via mosque sermons, though I cannot attest to this—instructs men to wipe the end of their organs after urinating, lest urine droplets ritually pollute the clothing in which they would later pray. This man's public address, delivered in a unique pharyngeally constricted voice, called the faithful to wipe with this wonderful "natural" product. The codes he used—Bangla and, for a few Qur'anic verses, Arabic—were common, and the genres indexed were those of mosque and bazaar.

When "Mr. Dilā Kalab" (MDK) drew reflexive attention to his speech as a "lecture," he explicitly indexed the speech genre (called "lecture," using the English term) that the hawkers of "patent medicines" use to gather crowds at weekly bazaars where they loudly extol the virtues of their particular products. Whether or not MDK intended his speech to be parodic is not necessarily relevant. The laughter he elicited entailed public recognition that his delivery was sufficiently similar to, yet deviant from, hawkers' "lectures" and mosque sermons as to be parodic—that is, his Arabic quotes jarred with the openness with which he addressed the touchy topic of wiping. I suspect it was this jarring juxtaposition of discourse features that earned him the label mad. Most men in the bazaar paid him little attention beyond a smirk; a few younger men stayed to be entertained.

The Bifurcate/Transcommunal "Mad" Man

Four years later, in July 1996, I was sitting in a sweet shop only a few meters from where MDK had "lectured," when a man sat down at my table and began speaking to me. This markedly voluble man with a Muslim name—let us call him Munir—revealed that his father had died quite recently and then said that his own body was divided in two and that one half was Hindu and the other Muslim. I asked which was which and was not surprised to hear him locate the Hindu in his left side, which most Bengalis regard as unclean (Lindenbaum 1968).

Why is it unclean? "Food is the oral object (the abject) that sets up archaic relationships between the human being and the other" (Kristeva 1982:75). As Kristeva rightly perceives, food taboos violated by the Other provide psychocultural motivation for Othering. That is the principle underlying the Pakistani characterization of Bangladeshis by diet, though—in addition to "effeminacy"—the message conveyed by "rice- and fish-eating Bengalis" is also "These so-called Muslims are Hindu in their diet." There occurs in South Asia a schismogenetic (Bateson 1972; Wilce 1995) characterization of the religious Other that I would term intercommunal Othering. Once, when more Brahmans lived in East Bengal, a common form of Othering was the Brahmanic characterization of Muslims, along with lower Hindu castes, as unclean (Bandyopadhyay 1997) because of their consumption of beef. In today's Bangladesh, where Hindus are a small minority and most Brahmans have left, the process is exemplified by Muslims who represent local Hindus as unclean. The latter works by a logic related to the salience, among those Hindus who remained in Bangladesh after partition, of untouchable *Methor* sweepers, who eat pork and drink home-brewed hard liquor. For Muslims, Methors have become a synecdoche for all "Hindus."

As for the association of uncleanness with the left side, this is a metonym of the unclean tasks assigned to the left hand, an example of "thinking with the body" familiar to us from symbolic anthropology's treatment of the body.[20] I asked Munir what happens to his duplex body when he attends public prayers at the mosque. He confirmed that his Hindu left side goes along; thus, he is able to lift two hands and successfully follow the required Islamic body hexis described by Starrett (1995). The loss of Munir's father was fresh and presumably causing him much distress. At least in that time of distress, Munir was falling apart, fragmenting. But the idiom in which he depicted his fragmentation was fraught with ethnographic particularity. It reflects, inter alia, the historic shift in just over a century from a "porous and fluid" relation—one of unity in diversity (Eaton 1993:303) between "Hindu" and "Muslim" life and thought—to one of clear distinction and mutual Othering. The unity in diversity of the earlier era was consummated throughout South Asia in *urs*, carnivalesque (Bakhtin 1984) commemorations of the births or deaths of holy men. Those who attended such carnivals were, as individuals, fluidly Hindus, Muslims, or both, depending on the occasion—the distinction was not in force (Ahmed 1981; cf. Eaton 1993; Oberoi 1994; Talbot 1995). For a time, Munir at least *said* that he embodied

what we can consider a weak or dying rapprochement between what are now distinct socioreligious communities. His body contained what we can see as a dialogue between the two entities that were once fused in a " 'hidden' dialogue" (Trawick 1988:207). At the same time, Munir's embodied duality reflects the encroachment of a communalist monologue upon the noncommunal peasant body that had once celebrated those Bakhtinian carnivals, the relatively new demographic and political domination of Muslims that enables Munir's right side to drag his left side through prayers at the mosque.[21] In all, Munir allows me and others to see the changing status of communal relations, manifesting and conjuring for us the creative insightfulness of madness.

When I happened to see Munir again the next day, he was in the lumberyard near the river "port" of the bazaar, surrounded by important-looking figures in local business—figures who might well support intercommunal harmony but never the mad or carnivalesque blurring of communal lines. On that occasion, Munir denied having said what I had recorded. When I pressed him, he admitted to speaking the words but claimed he had made them up "to impress me." My sense is that, if indeed Munir had been trying to "impress me," he had only his imagination to rely on in guessing how to do so. At any rate, the insights of madness—in Munir's case but also in that of others (Wilce 1998a:226–227)—are fleeting. The next week the owner of the sweet shop (who had gesturally signaled to me that Munir was mad) told me that Munir is not actually mad but only acts that way. Madness itself can, in some circumstances, be a relatively tenuous identity construct, deployed strategically by self or other.[22]

MDK's public lecture juxtaposed sacred Arabic verses with Bangla discussion of a taboo subject, creating a jarring effect and eliciting embarrassed laughter. Munir neither code switched nor style switched markedly in his speech. There are commonalties, however. If MDK's speech is trying to embody Islamic purity while mixing codes in a deviant way, Munir's unshifting Bangla refers to his life as embodying a duality rather than a pure Muslim identity. Language is a useful point of entry for understanding sociocultural reality not only for its symbolic or semantico-referential function—what Munir talked *about* is significant—but even more for its indexical function. That is especially exemplified by MDK. The semiotic role of language is most like that of other cultural signs when both sorts of signs—for example, clothing or hairstyle on the one hand and accents or dialects on the other—serve as indexes (Silverstein 1976). The significance of the examples that follow, uncovering code and style switching by other Matlab residents, is illuminated by Munir, and vice versa. The decentering of indexes of identity, which is so vivid in Munir's image of his bifurcated body, can be precisely what is at stake in code switching. Multivocality of a linguistic sort is akin to Munir's dual embodiment; both represent a challenge to discourses on identity in which nation, blood descent, and codes (e.g., "English only") are ideologically linked in a single linear or equational chain. Obviously it is not only the mad who challenge those equational chains. A contemporary Indian poet writes, "I am half Hindu. I am half Muslim, I am all of Hindustan" (Singh 1997:139). It might, however, be the case that—in contrast

to the relatively secure urban elite, publishing for an audience not likely to confront a poet in anger—members of face-to-face societies such as Bangladeshi villages might be so restricted in resisting collective representations that only the mad are allowed to play with themes explored elsewhere by respected poets.

Suleyman

To the extent that those labeled mad in Bangladesh remain on some kind of continuum with those considered healthy, style and code switching in Bangladesh can be examined as part of their shared discursive world. Bangla, the dialect of Bengali spoken in Bangladesh, has borrowed heavily from Urdu; but such historical borrowing is not the same as code switching. Bangladeshis can play with Bangla, Urdu, and English in their discourse to invoke presupposed worlds, to entail relatively new worlds, or to hybridize modes of being.[23]

In the 1950s, Bangla (East Pakistan's predominant language) nearly lost all official status. Reacting to Urdu hegemony under (West) Pakistani rule, Bangla speakers mounted a campaign of resistance. Some twenty years later—during and after the liberation struggle of 1971—Bangla was an index of ethnonationalist patriotism, and Urdu was an index of West Pakistani hegemony and of its rear guard, East Pakistani "Biharis" whose loyalty was to Urdu and their brand of Islamic orthodoxy (Umar 1970). (Many of these were designated non-Bengalis and noncitizens and are only now leaving refugee camps in Bangladesh to be resettled in [former West] Pakistan.) Bangla served then as an index of the noncommunal literary heritage of its speakers, the nation's patrimony, epitomized by Rabindranath Tagore.[24]

Whether it still does so is an open question. A wealthy young multilingual woman reminded me during my 1996 fieldwork in Bangladesh that, for generations, the educated classes there were trained in Urdu—that, even today, the Urdu language is, for many, a metonym of the achievements of the religiously tolerant and otherwise glorious Mughal civilization throughout South Asia. This woman considers herself a Bangladeshi patriot but speaks Urdu as a second language at home. She questioned my historically shallow sense that speaking Urdu indexes disaffection from the recent secular origins of Bangladesh. Still, for Bangladeshis who are anticommunal activists, speaking Urdu is odd, marked, and even politically freighted in the same way that speaking Afrikaans may be for black South Africans today. That brings me to Suleyman, his use of Urdu, and his notion of a "Christian Bangla."

Suleyman's social-critical insights were more personal than the transcommunal sweet shop man's but were equally fleeting in that he is now "cured" and renounces his past behavior and what I consider past insights. In 1992 Suleyman had an episode in what he characterized as a lifelong engagement with madness—and in his case *madness* was self-ascribed. When his family members chained him to the posts of his house to prevent him from transgressing boundaries physical and behavioral, he verbally acted out his sense of unjust victimization. He lamented, melodically and prayerfully narrating how his family had deprived him of his rights. They, in turn, told me that switching often into Urdu

was another of his many idiosyncrasies, one more sign (in addition to wandering—and his sometimes violent resistance to his family's attempts to stop that) of his madness. Why they personalized this issue of Urdu use—rather than interpreting it in relation to his coming of age under Pakistani rule, as a sign of his exceptionally high education (high school) or Islamist politics, or as indicative of some other factors more commonplace than madness—might be explained if Suleyman code switched more during his eccentric moments than otherwise. I do not claim that his code and style switches are the only or even the primary "symptoms" leading to his diagnosis as pāgal; after all, for several reasons, people accepted his self-identification as mad. Still, the way he used such an unpredictable range of variants attracted attention in and of itself. In fact, it was the marked degree of intonational dynamism characterizing his speech, at least during a particular event in which his behavior was in other ways erratic, that was highlighted by his young kin who first mentioned him to me (Wilce 1998a: 72–74).[25]

Transcript 1: Suleyman's Self-Declaration as "Mad Emperor." In the transcripts below, shifts to Urdu are italicized, capitalized words represent emphatic stress, and speech surrounded by degree signs is markedly quiet. A colon indicates lengthening of the preceding sound segment; in the Matlab dialect of Bangla this is stylistic not phonemic. Single, left-facing brackets link overlapping with overlapped utterances (the overlapped portion above and the overlapping one below the bracket). Words within parentheses are alternative or problematic/uncertain hearings of the taped words. Sound segments within brackets are not realized in the pronunciation on tape but are included for ease of recognition by Bangla speakers and Indologists. I also use brackets for expanded notes on prosody and for exposing implicit meanings understood by the participants in situ:

1	Jim	to kitāb- ki kitāb partāsen cācā? . . . (4 lines omitted)	What holy book is it you're reading, Uncle?
2	Sul.	*ham bādśā hai TO!*	*We are Emperor!*
3	Jim	ācchā.	Oh.
4	Sul.	*bādśā hai.*	*The Emperor.*
5	Jim	hã, *bādśā*, nā?	Oh, *Emperor*, eh?
6	Sul.	°*bādśā hai.*° . . . (5 lines omitted)	°*The Emperor.*°
7		āmi pāgal bādśā hudā *arsā* hudā hudā.	I am the Mad Emperor. Emperor *without portfolio*, empty, empty.
8		(āŋgo āmi) (otālā OR potādā) [h]ay[e]chi āmi.	I am (all-in-all?)
9	Jim	Hmm.	Hmm.
10	Sul.	(ayḍār bodā gay āhammok garto [h]ay[e]chi.)	(I'm no better than an asshole.)

11	Daughter		
			Hmmm! Oooh! [shocked, rebuking tone]
12	Wife?	[Another female voice, much higher]—(cup!)	Quiet!
		. . . (10 lines omitted)	
13	Nephew	kat[h]ā kam kan!	Speak less!
15	Sul.	HE!	Hey!
16	Nephew	]	
		hā kat[h]ā kam kan.	Yeah, speak less.

Lines 1–6 above present Suleyman's declaration, "We are/I am the mad emperor." The way Suleyman declared himself emperor goes beyond his normally Urdu-mixed Bangla into Urdu grammar—a breakthrough into performing (Hymes 1981) the voice of the emperor, as it were. Speaking from the Mughal past, the emperor's voice sounds appropriately Persianized. Suleyman not only chose an Urdu pronoun for his self-designation but used *we* rather than *I*. Even if this use of *we* with singular sense and reference is common in Hindi and Urdu,[26] it takes on a "royal we" sense in collocation with *bādśā*, "emperor." His code switch into Urdu renders his speech style and his claim marked, altered, and ludic.

Transcript 2: Suleyman's Tuneful Prayer.   The words above were recorded in Suleyman's home. On another occasion I invited Suleyman and another man for a meal I arranged for them in my "office."[27] Suleyman showed his gratitude at one point by blessing me aloud—a form of prayer. After presenting the transcript below, I discuss how even the prayer was "marked" on three levels. Its focus on "family planning" was semantically marked. It was so prosodically marked—so tuneful or songlike—that my field assistant called it *sur diye kathā*, "words with melody." And finally, on a phonological-lexical level, Suleyman's use of "Christian" forms of otherwise common Bangla words was marked and remarkable. In the following transcript (lines 1–10) I use italics to indicate shifts to "Christian Bangla" and underlining for shifts to Arabic:

1	He Āllāh!	Oh Allah!
2	Tumi āmāke paribār parikalpo kare Āllāh![28]	Bless and plan thou my family, Allah!
3	Tumi (riziker) byabasthā kare dāw to Āllāh!	Arrange/provide (sustenance), Allah!
4	Rauzuki! Jiziker (riziker) byabasthā kare dāw!	Provide for me![29] Provide sustenance!
5	[2 second pause]	

Paribār parikalpanā is the technical term for family planning, that practice that is so strongly encouraged by Western donor agencies in Bangladesh. The prayer that God would take care of Suleyman's family planning confounds a secular public health discourse (see Lindstrom 1992:119) with a religious one. This is not a typical combination, given the resistance of some rural Muslim activists or clerics to family planning; more importantly, even clerics who favor birth

control would not be caught praying about it in public. Suleyman's heterology or juxtaposition of discourses jarred Bangladeshi ears, as did using Arabic and Bangla to hawk dirt clods for the purpose of wiping male organs. The prayer continues:

6	ami apnader janno dua kari	I pray for you all—
7	apnader, apnader bap para go	. . . your, your ancestors . . .
8	apnader *Jishu Khristoke aradhana-ta*	in the *worship of Jesus Christ*
9	ba barton—barkat dan kare barkat dan kare	[May he] give you ble— blessings. [May he] give you blessings.
10	al HAMdulilla	Praise to Allah!

Suleyman uttered this prayer of blessing several months after his emperor talk in the first transcript. The prayer exemplifies a different sort of shifting. Suleyman first prayed, tunefully and in his own rural Muslim "sociolect," for himself and his family. But then he prayed for me and my reference group as he understood it. In that second "stanza," and particularly line 8, Suleyman shifted his prayer language to the Bangla sociolect he thinks is mine—one markedly different from what we might expect to be "his." Rather than using "Islamicate" (Hodgson 1974) lexemes like *ebadat* for *worship* or *Isa Nabi* for *Jesus,* he fumbled for an unfamiliar word, then used phonological renderings like *Jishu,* used by the tiny Bangladeshi Christian minority that worships Jishu, or Jesus. Although it is quite typical for Muslims to animate this Christian linguistic Other in conversation with foreigners, it is highly marked to style switch like this in a prayer.[30] The switch did not last long; *barkat*, "blessing," and *Allah* are unmarked words in the context of a Bengali Muslim's prayer.

The prayer itself, too, performed tunefully, is intonationally and theologically marked. I say "theologically" because tuneful prayers are regarded as "unorthodox"—that is, inappropriately self-indexing or prima donna–ish—by the increasingly dominant voices of Islamic modernist theology. For Catholic charismatics in the United States, Csordas finds that praying in tongues is vouchsafed as authentic by the sheer intention to pray (1990:28), despite the fact that it might be regarded as a virtuosic and self-indexing performance by noncharismatics. But the rough counterpart in Bangladesh—tuneful praying—is not similarly accompanied by its own legitimating metadiscourse. Rural Bangladeshi voices critical of tuneful prayer resonate with an urban voice. One urban Bangladeshi woman clerk, on discovering that her customer was a psychiatrist, uttered these disdainful words: "Psychiatrists and the behavior they treat are both *bilasita*," which a Bangla-English dictionary glosses as "a luxurious pastime, self-indulgence, self-gratification" (Ali et al. 1994:561). As if in response to such criticism, when I visited Suleyman and his wife again in 1996 he was above such bilasita. The previous year, they told me, he had sought out a psychiatrist in the capital city who prescribed antipsychotic drugs, and Suleyman and his wife testified to his complete recovery—but also to some side effects. He was now subject to mental fatigue, which led to difficulty sustaining long

conversations. Also, at least from my perspective, the old man was cured not only of madness but also of his capacity for delivering incisive social commentary. In fact, Suleyman joined the chorus of those "normal" individuals I interviewed in 1996 who appealed to Islam to deny that it was legitimate to sing at all and claim that it was particularly misguided to sing a prayer as he had once done.[31]

Shefali

Though her Goffmanian footing—for example, the referent of "I" or "you"—shifted so rapidly as to leave one's head spinning and reminds one of "psychotic discourse" (see, especially, Ribeiro 1995), no one called Shefali mad. Perhaps Shefali would have been honored as mad—in the "divine, ecstatic" sense (McDaniel 1989)—had she been male. That is, her gender largely excluded her from being explicitly recognized as a *Pir*, or living saint.[32] Still, her kin and neighbors treated her as if she were just that, honoring in Shefali's case eccentricities that they would otherwise not even tolerate.

I was sitting in the village home of Shefali in November 1991, listening to her answer my field assistant Faisal's questions in a loosely structured interview. We had come to see her because of rumors that Shefali "rode" or "drove" a *parī*, "female spirit," every Thursday night, and that, while in trance, she offered curative advice. Actually, she said that it is the *parī* who gives the advice. Naively, we expected to hear a narrative history—the story, that is, of the weekly ritual renewal of her relationship with this spirit—whose form, at least, would be easily comprehended. It was the content of the narrative that I had expected to be exotic, forgetting for the moment how intermingled form and function are, how problematic was my unconscious dichotomization of form and content (as the whole history of linguistic anthropology makes clear).[33] In fact, Shefali lost us all too quickly in an intricate web of pronouns and identities (as in "I Am the Walrus" or King Richard III's soliloquy). One can see this in line 58 of the transcript of Shefali's story, and in fact she had been decentering her deictic references (Hanks 1990) like this well before the transcribed portion begins.

Faisal's Interview with Shefali. In the following transcript, first and second person pronominal "shifters" are in bold wherever they actually occur in Bangla rather than being added to make the English translation read more smoothly.[34] As an index of the intimacy between Shefali and her tutelary spirit, all of those second person shifters (and, in this excerpt, all are the spirit's references to Shefali) are in the intimate or demeaning form, *tui*. Unlike the spirit, Faisal maintains distance by addressing Shefali with the "V" (honorific-distant) form, *āpni* (line 57):[35]

Shefali	55	"**ĀMĀR** ROGĪR janno ay[e]che dharā jāy ni **tor**	"They have come for **my** 'patient'; no touching!
	56	**tor** ghare āi[s]yā bisrāitāche-re."	They come looking in **your** house."

Faisal	57	á rogĭ máne ápni.	Oh, patient means you?
Shefali	58	hyä. "ämär rogĭr janno äi[ye]che,	Yes. "They have come for my 'patient,'
	59	dharä jäy nä to ämär rogĭr däre	No touching [or coming] close to my patient.
	60	mänṣe täre mando kawto	If people spoke badly of you,
	61	(mäḍe) bandte pärti nä	You could not tie patients up in the (courtyard).[36]
	62	tui jadi mänuṣ	If you
	63	märe anos	bring [a lot of people] in[to your house],
	64	mäinṣe tore mando kaybo.	people will speak ill of you.
	65	jei śunto je owṣadh dey,	Whoever heard that I gave out medicine [through you],
	66	ämär rogĭrä more khäräp kaibe,	those people would speak ill of my patient, of me
	67	mänuṣ ä[s]wä jäwi karle beśi."	[that is,] if people were coming in and out too much."[37]

When Faisal and I heard Shefali speaking about someone as "my *rogĭ,* 'patient,'" we first took it that she was referring to one of the relatives or neighbors who came to hear from the spirit some healing words, or at least advice, while Shefali was "absent" (possessed). The porosity of Shefali's identities, however, extended to her use of pronouns. In fact, when Shefali spoke of "my patient," she was in a sense echoing and reanimating the voice of her tutelary spirit.[38] Perhaps, on some unconscious level, Faisal and I might also have expected that Shefali would betray some sign of awareness that her spiritual involvement—her own brand of ecstatic religion, divine madness—was somehow resistant to orthodox Islam. Instead, during the interview—and again when we heard her spirit speak on Thursday night—we felt that the world of spirits and that of mosques were blurring even as linguistic "form and content" blurred. In trance, she or her spirit gleefully described to the audience of family, friends, and ethnographers how she (as woman or as parī?) had been in the rice fields with her husband and had pushed him over. To her husband and the others listening, this revelation explained his "falling over"—but, as Shefali could well assume they were wondering, why had "she" pushed him? The voice of the spirit announced that Shefali's husband had forgotten to perform one of the obligatory five daily prayers. So the parī (alternatively, the newly assertive woman) turned out to be an enforcer of the pillars of Islam.

Shefali's identity play via footing shifts blurs lines between fundamentalist and feminist, between the modern *Bangladeshi* whose identity is increasingly caught up with scripturalist Islamist reform and the *Bengali* woman engaged in a form of spirit mediumship that predates not only the advent of Islam in Bengal but even that of Hinduism and Buddhism.[39] The function of this hybridity play is not connected with an explicit postcolonial political agenda (contra Bhabha 1994). In Shefali's case and others, many "I"s coexist, undermining the stable representations associated in Bangladesh with a *sustho man,* "sound mind." The link between this undermining, its object (the discourse on sanity), and the penetration of rationalizing global capitalism is at best indirect.[40]

Is Shefali mad? If anything, she might well resent the rural Bangladeshi Muslim symbolic economy that begrudged her that title. What her pronoun play illustrates, however, is a tradition of identity play associated with the divinely mad as well as the secularly mad. The fact that she is not called "Shefali Pāglā" (the Divinely Mad Shefali, Saint Shefali) does not take away from the truth that she reflects and helps reproduce a discursive tradition constituting madness in Bangladesh.

Others with Fancy Foot(ing)work

Space prevents giving a complete account of three other persons whom I describe elsewhere (Wilce 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). Baba, a Pir or Sufi preceptor to mostly elite men in Dhaka, was what Shefali seemed, for a time in her life, to want to be—a divine ecstatic, divinely mad. Speaking and acting within a well-established Sufi tradition in South Asia, Baba and his friends and followers moved more or less comfortably between discourses that invoke, by turns, Einstein and the Qur'an. They shifted between English and a Bangla that is well sprinkled with Arabic lexemes, marking the sacredness of their confab (Wilce 1998b). The way Baba's interactional stance vis-à-vis his interlocutors shifted was rapid and, to me, confusing enough to deserve the label mad, which Bengalis lovingly apply to such living saints. His *we* at times meant all of us in the room, at other times only Muslims (not me), and sometimes perhaps "we Pirs" (Sufi preceptors).[41] He would listen attentively and sympathetically to the problems of those in the room who called themselves his followers for a while, then begin to laugh at them for having aches and pains when they were only in their fifties or sixties. After all, as they "knew" so well, he "was" 120, though he appeared to be their age. And so he destabilized the discursive atmosphere and—I believe—encouraged us to put our faith in Allah's more stable mercy and his power over longevity *(hāyāt)*.

And finally, the young divorced woman Latifa's *shifting* (Wilce 1998a) was between licit and illicit spaces for rural women to speak (home versus any other place), between genres—lament (songlike texts of tragedy and rage) and unmarked speech—and between footings or Bakhtinian voices. In declaring her mad, Latifa's family spoke of her persistent verbal transgressions into the land of desire, the land where her beloved ex-husband lived. They also spoke of her spatial transgressions in the act of performing her laments. for some reports had

her wandering to neighbors' homes to weep there and tell of the abuse she suffered at her brothers' hands. In spatial and verbal terms she transgressed, and the two forms of "shiftiness" helped define each other.

Discussion

And so it is that some Bangladeshis who are called mad embrace and some abjure the label; some might seek it, whereas others find it applied to them, even when their form of "deviance" probably would not earn them a place in a psychiatric ward anywhere. What they share, I have argued, is a certain verbal playfulness or "shiftiness" among codes, styles, and footings. While I hope I have avoided either essentializing or romanticizing madness, I have uncovered evidence of creative multivocality in the speech of the so-called mad. Creativity in cultural production thrives on such multivocality. Reflexivity and even hyperreflexivity contribute to that potential; thus, the voices of the "mad" can be key to internal cultural criticism and renewal. Six decades ago, Sapir described "speech as a personality trait" (1949c) and affirmed that "mechanisms which are unconsciously evolved by the . . . psychotic are . . . tacit commentaries on the validity or invalidity of . . . culture" (1949a:513). What I have done here is to show how most of those "mechanisms" in pāgal or mad speech are just those that are available to any normal polyglot or to the normal speaker accessing many styles or footings.[42]

Together, the Bangladeshi words I have re-presented exemplify polyvocal identity construction within a constrained infinity of stylistic combinations. Identities link persons with collectivities, but those are always more or less contradiction-laden organizations of diversity, and identities are rarely more kaleidophonic (Wilce 1998b), poetic, and slippery than in the mouths of the mad. Suleyman's Bangla-Urdu code switching, which lends his speech some of its distinctiveness, is only one of a range of shifts available to Shefali and others.[43] The footing shifts, the idiosyncratic play with the "I of discourse" (Urban 1989; Wilce 1998a:57–58) that characterizes their speech, figure in their interlocutors' attempts to construe them as mad. From my perspective, however, what stands out is the creativity of their linguistic play as an exploration of and a challenge to a range of socially available identities.

Identities are constructed in relationships, not "regardless of aught else" as in Peirce's characterization of the Firstness that Desjarlais claims is a sought-after refuge for many in the homeless shelter. Identities emerge in dialogue with some Other. Even Desjarlais's friends in the shelter often sought that Firstness in the company of others—the Bible or a human companion, even a silent one (1997:134). Thirdness, conventional symbolicity carrying a kind of moral order of its own, seemed beyond them. Sometimes the Boston shelter residents' speech lacked clearly traceable referentiality—provoking Peter's complaints about the others' "ragtiming." Yet it, too, is guided by an ethic. In contrast with the "register of the real" and "ethics of understanding" which the shelter *staff* sought to inculcate, residents savored others' sheer listenership in what Desjarlais calls "an ethics of listening" (1997:195).[44] Sheer presence and copresence

unmediated by a symbolic order (in Kristeva's or Peirce's sense) was highly valued by residents. The shelter staff valued a more rigidly conventionalized sort of Thirdness (relations mediated by convention, symbol, and referentiality).

Things are not so different in Bangladesh. Speech as sound play, as phatic communion, or as hollow structure—"odd" deployments of linguistic signs that evoke familiar and comforting juxtapositions, contexts of Secondness—characterize the pāgal far beyond the comfort levels of their *sustho*, "healthy," interlocutors. It is true that the young Hindu woman Olna (Wilce 1999) was able, when I first met her (several months before she began to be treated with antipsychotic drugs), to engage me in perfectly competent phatic routines of greeting exchange. But then she would wander off into what I call "paradigm play" (Wilce 1999:587) with a half-dozen forms of a verb like *give*. The impression she gave was of one lost in awe inside langue as monumental structure, enamored of that structure as a Firstness, a quality, and unable to achieve the sympathy tied to Thirdness (Peirce 1960, 1:171). The young woman's family pleaded vainly with her to *sundar kare bal*, "speak beautifully," as she had before the onset of her troubles. And Suleyman's kin kept him locked up. When his speech wandered into tuneful prayers indexically linked with orthodox Islamic ritual but melodically indexical of unorthodox emotionality, kinsmen and male neighbors furiously demanded that he return to silence. It was better he not speak at all, if he could not control his verbal actions, to avoid what they saw as the bilāsitā (luxury) of privatistic emotionality. Thirdness as normative referentiality fought there with a Secondness seeking Firstness.

To the extent that the mad in Bangladesh or a Boston homeless shelter style or code switch "excessively," one of the reasons seems to lie in their resistance to a Thirdness that can be nailed down in a (mythic) kind of transcontextual fixity of reference. Kin, shelter supervisors, or bystanders in the bazaar push them to use a single code—or (in Mr. Dilā Kalab's case) to compartmentalize sacred and secular codes lest the pollution of everyday life cling to Arabic per se and to genres that should be performed in it—for the purpose of sending transparently referential messages. Still, something moves the mad instead to "shift," often either juxtaposing codes and realities (Secondness)—thereby drawing disturbing attention to problematic social realities—or attempting a chimerical flight into a primal Firstness.

Although social scientists speak glibly of identities being performed and identity repertoires constituted, such performances are themselves neither glib nor immune to conflict. Suleyman and others did not construct their shifting identities easily; identities emerge—if at all—in tense negotiations in which the label "mad" looms as a metapragmatic warrant for restricting their speech and movement. Yet they seem driven to keep performing these shifting patterns, some of which are perceived as sacrilegious, despite the risk of eliciting the labels mad or "blasphemer." Suleyman's laments index identities so theologically freighted as to evoke physical punishment (as did Latifa's; see Wilce 1998a:62). It is precisely these dimensions of the "poetics" of mad—culture-challenging, perhaps culture-producing (Sapir 1949a:513)—speech that should motivate

anthropologists to pay it more attention.[45] If we seek to deconstruct one-to-one mappings of essentialized language onto essentialized identity, speech labeled mad offers itself—where madness and sanity are still on speaking terms, as they may yet be in Bangladesh—as a local model of a limiting case. Even as a limiting case, mad speech in Bangladesh influences ideologies and practices associated with less marked speech forms. Pāgalāmī, thus, becomes a key signifier in the Bengali semiotic world.

Notes

1. The original is "Nullum unquam exstitit magnum ingenium sine aliqua dementia" (Seneca 1935, 17:10).

2. Othering (Ben Ari 1996; Wodak 1997) is a rhetorical (Riggins 1997), discursive, or interactive (Frith 1998) practice in which interactional partners—typically at the group level—construct and reify difference. The concept bears an affinity to Bateson's (1972) notion of "schismogenesis"—especially complementary schismogenesis, a process of mutual dissimilation (for an application to the intercommunal relationship in colonial and postcolonial Bengal, see Wilce 1996). The primary relevance of the notion of Othering to U.S. media coverage of Somalia has recently been debated in this journal (Besteman 1996; Lewis 1998).

3. Rampton (1995) prefers the term *figurative* because "ironic" as well as "metaphoric" code switches remind us that metaphor is only one of the possible "figures" constituted by double voicing. "Situational" code switching (CS) involves a one-to-one relation between code and situation—when one shifts, so must the other. By "metaphoric" CS, Blom and Gumperz (1972) mean its occurrence within a speech situation, such that the multiple codes signal the multiple identities simultaneously available to the speakers within that situation, such as (in their data) "rural person" and "university student."

4. For a popular rather than academic treatment hypothesizing a uniquely intimate connection between manic depression and creativity in Western history, see Hershman and Lieb 1994.

5. In addition to Sinatra's voice, this Peircean definition evokes, for me, a responding voice of one family member furiously trying to bring another back from "being as she or he is regardless of anyone else." From the perspective of the mad and of a few analysts (Corin 1990), however, "positive withdrawal" can be therapeutic.

6. Such controversies are reviewed in Swartz 1994.

7. In a loose sense, Bakhtin himself, in his work on the carnivalesque, and particularly that parodic tradition in Europe known as the "feast of fools" (1984), laid the foundations for a translinguistics specific to the discourses of madness. His later work on heteroglossia in the *novel* (1981) is even more relevant in that this present article stylistically resembles fiction, using a series of characterizations woven together by my authorial hand; still, my constructed story is one whose characters should be recognizable to any familiar with rural Bangladesh. The usefulness of Bakhtin in the interpretation of code switching has been richly demonstrated by others. Kroskrity's (1993) and Rampton's (1995) analyses of playfully "figurative" code switching and Woolard's (1998) notion of code switching as simultaneous indexing of "bivalent" identities or

code allegiances inform my approach to the speech of those Bangladeshis labeled "mad."

8. Although Ribeiro's focal patient does not code switch, Ribeiro reminds us that Goffmanian footing switches of the sort that confuse those who try to listen to the "mad" are, in other cases, often marked by switching of code or style (1995:54).

9. The "disorganizing energy" of "the speaking subject" is "a source of *jouissance,*" a term glossed in an editor's footnote to Kristeva's text as "orgasmic pleasure" (1993:155). That "disorganizing energy" or heterogeneity characterizes the semiotic, as opposed to the symbolic mode of significance, in Kristeva's thought:

> Heterogeneity is the proper term [for this mode of significance.] But it is not the modality of meaning or signification. There is no sign, no predication, no signified object, and thus no operative consciousness of a transcendent ego [of the sort necessary to sustain a Saussurian model of symbolicity in language]. This modality of significance we call *semiotic* . . . as with children it does not yet refer, and in psychotic discourse it no longer refers to a signified object for a thetic consciousness. [1993:156, emphasis added]

Johnson glosses *thetic consciousness* as "the positing or propositional aspect of language" (Kristeva 1993:153).

10. Kristeva stresses

> the heterogeneity between the libidinal-signifying organization in infancy (let us call it the "semiotic disposition") and the "symbolic" functioning of the speaker following language acquisition and the consequent parental identifications. On the other hand, and at the same time, this preconscious, presymbolic organization is grasped by the adult only as regression—*jouissance* or schizophrenic psychosis. [1980:276]

The structured language that Kristeva calls "the symbolic" and claims is inextricable from parental identification is what her psychoanalytic mentor Lacan called "the language of the Father." Margaret Trawick explicates this Lacanian theme thus:

> The Oedipus complex consists, for Lacan, in the rupture of a primordial, static, imagistic, different kind of wholeness, the wholeness of a being looking into a mirror, the wholeness—in Peircean terms—of Firstness[,] the original mother-child dyad. The rupture is effected by something from outside of this First wholeness; it is effected by an Other . . . called by various names: Logos, the Phallus, the Father, the Name of the Father, Language, Culture. [1990a:144]

11. As Ken Rasmussen wrote in a 1997 personal letter after reading a draft of this article, new semiotic realities were formed in Nazi public rhetoric by the use of verbal imagery that encourages a sort of regression to a chaotic, preobjective/preobjectified, preverbal psychic stage; Nazi rituals foregrounding this rhetoric represent a kind of sacralization of regression. He finds this to be part of a continuum of creative and destructive forms of regression to which autocrats, artists, and those labeled "mad" might have recourse (cf. Kristeva 1993).

12. The distinction is a theme of Wilce 1998c.

13. I work within the assumption that the sociocultural and interactive environment is significant for both the subjective experience of "psychosis" and its objective course and prognosis, an assumption many psychiatrists would at least de-emphasize. My model reflects the October 1998 symposium at the Russell Sage Foundation's "Schizophrenia, Subjectivity and Culture," organized by Janis Jenkins and Robert Barrett.

14. Throughout the remainder of the article I will drop the quotation marks around the words *mad* and *madness,* but I ask the reader to remember that they always represent

contested labels used in particular situations. I remain agnostic as to the validity of the diagnosis for those whom I present here.

15. Compare Marriott 1976 in relation to meat eating and violence as aspects of the "maximizing" strategy of some of the *Ksatriya* (kingly/warrior) *varna* (macrocastes). Something like the Ksatriya dharma (duty, way) is, I take it, a sort of constituting myth with which the Pakistani military identified at some level in 1970–72.

Most Bangladeshis ascribe to at least one oily fish *(iliś)* a heating potential like that of meat, but that fish is not affordable, not widely available inland, and not, I believe, what Pakistanis had in mind.

16. *Pāgal* and *pāglā* in Bangla (which is unlike other Indo-Aryan languages with grammatical gender in which /ā/ marks [masculine] grammatical gender) do not differ denotatively but, rather, pragmatically, the latter more often being used honorifically. Gender is implicated in the honorification; in Bangladesh at least (if not West Bengal, where the influence of Tantrism might be more salient), men are more likely than women to be honored with the label *pāglā*.

The link between derogatory and honorific/divine madness may derive from the association of both with Tantrism. On the link between madness and living sainthood and the negative social indexicality of the link in West Bengal (India), see Allen and Mukherjee 1982 and McDaniel 1989.

17. Kristeva's notion of remaindering—a structuralist precedent to the more recent and more practice-theoretic notion of Othering (Riggins 1997)—is beautifully exploited by Trawick to describe the poetics of abjection (1990b).

18. On the centrality of madness in the West's self-construction, see Lucas and Barrett 1995. The Hindu Renouncer finds his counterpart in the Sufi saint, who also achieves a unique individuality that is outside of, yet a kind of inspiration to, the experience of the common South Asian Muslim who respects the Sufi tradition, according to Pnina Werbner (1996).

19. Of the cases described here, the first two have not been described in print. Suleyman, the third case, is described in my book (Wilce 1998a), but the focus there is not on his code switching, and his prayer of blessing is not described there. The case of Shefali is described there and in Wilce 1998b. This article refers only briefly to the speech of a young woman I call Olna (Wilce 1998c, 1999).

20. Lindenbaum 1968 is an example of this literature as applied to Bangladesh and particularly the associations there between the uncleanness associated with both the left hand and women.

21. The early stages of the Islamization of Bengal, characterized by the "inclusion" of Islamic along with local agencies in Bengali cosmology, are epitomized in a 17th-century representation—a reconciling figure that was "half Krishna and half Muhammad" (Eaton 1993:270). Thus, what Munir creatively reproduced was an image that had characterized relations in a much earlier era.

22. I cannot evaluate whether or not Munir was mentally ill, but it is clear from his words that he foregrounded or backgrounded his identification with madness as the situation required. Waltraud Ernst wrote an e-mail to me in 1997, following his reading of an earlier draft, suggesting that Munir's desire to "impress" me should be taken seriously as a problematic dimension of this as data. However, I cannot believe that his story about his two-sided nature—Hindu and Muslim—reflects what he thinks foreigners like myself wanted to hear from him, for it is highly unlikely he had had much if any contact with foreigners in order to form such a concept. Thus, I cannot see it as mimetic behavior such as that described in Sherpa-Westerner interactions (Adams 1996), behavior that

projected an identity ostensibly desired by me. In my experience, behavior that aims to please is most often a consummate cultural performance and, thus, entails people acting "more like themselves" than they would otherwise (as Clancy [1986] says of her Japanese situation).

23. Kroskrity (1993) describes the relatively stable indexical meanings projected in metaphorical code switching by Tewa speakers into Hopi or English (distinct indexical meanings potentiated by the resistance of borrowing into Puebloan languages): Tewas speaking Hopi project a kind of spirituality, if only to question it. Tewas speaking English project themselves as U.S. citizens to invoke national sentiments, entanglements, and entitlements. On entailing and presupposing indexes, see Silverstein 1976.

24. On the modern notion of language as an ethnonational patrimony, see Chatterjee 1993 and Silverstein 1998.

25. Just before I met him, Suleyman had overstepped the bounds of piety and zeal, commandeering the microphone at a mosque. He told the muezzin and imam that he would both give the call to prayer and lead prayers:

Āmi āzān diBO,	I will give the call to prayer,
Āmi nāmāz parāBO!	I will lead the prayers!

I have tried here to reproduce graphically the marked, dynamic intonational contour in which these words of Suleyman were reported to me by his teenaged relatives, who found him very amusing.

26. I am indebted to one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing out this fact. The reviewer's Bangla/Urdu-speaking friend also mentioned that she has "a schizophrenic aunt" in Bangladesh who switches into Urdu when she "talks to" the Prophet Muhammad. My understanding is that, although this is not regarded as an appropriate Muslim analogue to devout Christians "talking to Jesus," it might well be a parallel to the religious nature of much mad talk in North American psychiatric institutions. Perhaps one path of "positive withdrawal" is just this sort of attempt at religious transcendence, as Corin implies (1990:184).

27. My "office" was a room I rented in the bazaar for use as a semiprivate space for conducting interviews, transcribing from tapes, and entering field notes on my laptop (because electricity was available there and not in my village home).

28. In this line, Suleyman seems to have omitted the seemingly necessary verb *dāw*, "give," which he includes in the very next line. Without it, rather than being pragmatically appropriate to prayer, the utterance is a statement about God guiding. Although that is possible in the context, Suleyman's speech was filled with so many restarts and other errors—see, for example, lines 7 and 9—that it is safe to say he simply forgot the word *dāw*, forgot to "pray it."

29. The Arabic *rzq*, "provide," enters Bangla in noun form as *rizik (rijik)*, "providence, subsistence." *Rauzuk-i* is Suleyman's realization of an Arabic verb form, probably an optative, jussive, or imperative toward God; the suffix *-i* is a pronominal object, "[for] me."

30. Such linguistic "perspective taking" is a form of accommodation, and Ochs and Schieffelin have helped us see the link between accommodation and deference (1984; Ochs 1992). Suleyman's style switch is, thus, congruent with the purpose of his prayer, which is, in a rough sense, "honorific."

31. The situation in Bangladesh contrasts not only with that among Catholic charismatics in the United States but with the semiotic norms of Gayo Muslims in Indonesia. To American charismatics, "glossolalia cannot be inauthentic as long as it is

accompanied by an intention to pray" (Csordas 1990:28). The ideological emphasis on intent in relation to prayer, good speech, and good action is one shared with Indonesian Muslims (Bowen 1997). In contrast, I never heard Bangladeshis appeal to "right intent" (*niyat* in Arabic) to justify an act.

32. The exclusion is not total, though the presence of women among the living saints whom McDaniel (1989) interviewed is limited predominantly to Hindu West Bengal, which is a very different, though still "Bengali," context.

33. A particularly relevant example is the way Reddy (1993) uses Whorf's insights to deconstruct the metaphoric complex of "contents" and "conduits" so pervasive in "Standard Average European" languages.

34. As a pro-drop language, a Bangla sentence with a well-formed verb that contains an agreement marker indicating the person of its subject need not realize that subject noun phrase. Pronominal subjects are so typically dropped that their presence causes attention (Wilce 1998a: ch. 4). Obviously a translation into English requires full realization of these implicit subject pronouns.

35. The form of the second person pronoun (or verb marking that agrees with it) varies in Bangla. In addition to the counterparts of *vous* and *tu* in French ("V" and "T" in the sociolinguistic literature), Bangla has an even more intimate level of shifter, which I designate "sT" or "sub-T" in other publications.

36. Speaking to me in Dhaka in 1992, psychiatrist Rezwana Quaderi reported, based on her extensive experience with psychiatric patients from rural areas, that tying the individuals up in a hot sunny courtyard, usually accompanied by a beating, is a common treatment for epilepsy and pāgalāmī.

37. This is referring to people entering Shefali's secluded space of womanly honor too often, that is, violating her purdah.

38. The spirit clearly transformed her identity, and the transformation was ongoing when I knew her—not only every Thursday night but, in some sense, every day. Shefali attested to the closeness of the spirit in a tree overlooking her residential compound throughout the week.

39. Thérèse Blanchet (1984) argues that the spirit beliefs prevalent in her study villages represent a pre-Aryan substrate of culture.

40. In recent contemplations of transnationalism and "hybridity," one voice has warned against imposing a kind of neoevolutionism on contemporary identity developments, a pretense that the postmodern condition entails progress over premodern social formations that were supposedly homogeneous (Thomas 1996). Although there is some question as to whether Bakhtin's belief in the inherently democratizing force of multivocality is naive, at least it does not pin hope exclusively on a cultural or communicative formation unique to modernism or postmodernism, for—as most of Bakhtin's successors have made clear—multivocality is *not* the exclusive product of modern novelistic discourse.

41. Admittedly, I never heard Baba's friends call him Pāglā—perhaps because of the pejorative class connotations of the term and the practices it conjures up (Allen and Mukherjee 1982; McDaniel 1989). However, the man who brought me into the meeting with Baba, and who admired him deeply, was also the one who warned me that Pirs can drive anyone mad.

42. I am hereby linking Sapir's vision of "speech as a personality trait" with his incomplete but prescient vision of a sociolinguistic science (1949b:592–593) in which diversity within speech communities potentiates creativity of the multivocal sort. Sapir's writings sometimes compare gestural and linguistic "codes," describing gesture as "an

elaborate and secret code that is written nowhere, known by none, and understood by all" (1949d:556). Still, only since the 1960s has intense attention been devoted to a sociolinguistics incorporating both and to a theory of embodiment in relation to language (Farnell 1995).

43. Those others include the person indirectly known to one of the anonymous reviewers of this article, a friend's "schizophrenic aunt" who lives in Bangladesh and resorts to Urdu whenever she "speaks with the Prophet."

44. When staff, impatient with the referential opacity of residents' speech, seem unwilling to "sit down and talk with" them, residents "wonder what they're here for" (Desjarlais 1997:195). Whereas staff tune in to the "complaints" that psychiatrists use to make discrete diagnoses, residents target the communicative regime set up by staff for what I have called "metacomplaints" (Wilce 1995). In fact, what provoked the residents' metacomplaint was a staff member's more repressive metacomplaint: "I'm not gonna stop and chat if you're gonna complain" (Desjarlais 1997:196).

45. Their shifting speech projects new permutations of protest, often in theological idioms. This increases the risk that the speech of Suleyman and Latifa will be seen as blasphemous. Such a risk seems, in fact, to be typical of lament in a variety of South Asian communities (Das 1996). I have avoided labeling these vocal productions "resistant," recognizing the risk in doing so (see Kleinman 1992).

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