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Mad spaces

By Chris Philo

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Mad ways: an introduction

You mishear things, out of synchronisation with other people, out of sync. You're outside. Things keep jumping into your mind. You feel like an animal, you feel like you're in touch with the universe, y'know you are outside yourself, in touch with nature. You go along with the momentum of the illness, it's just a different way of thinking – you see and hear the world differently.

[Chris, interview 1994, in Parr, 1999: 683]

Chris, a person who has experienced serious mental health problems, is here reflecting on what it feels like to him, on occasion, when wandering in the public spaces – the common places – of a large city in the English East Midlands. 'You see and hear the world differently', he suggests, and he hints at a rather different sense of interacting with the spaces all around him – a more muddled, fused, dynamic, restless, interweaving, interleaving kind of encounter; one in which people, animals, objects (culture, nature, technology) spin together instead of being clearly held apart, segmented and suspended in a static combination with one another. And so we can take a first cut at what I mean by the term *mad spaces* in this presentation today.

I have elaborated somewhat on the specifics of Chris's quote, but we can point to countless more instances that echo, reinforce and extend his words.

Turning into the street turmoil hit me
Children's shouts and laughter
Hurled and lurched in unpredictable curves.
Techno music's bass thump disrupted
The fragile rhythm of my heart
Facades of abandoned buildings
Shifted imperceptibly towards the ground

Stale smell of greasy food
Insinuated its hot breath behind my heels
Newspapers proclaimed
Another thousand dead in Bangladesh
Acrid poison pumped from engines

Jammed at corners with no turnings.
It was later than I thought.

[in *Borderland Voices*,¹ 2001: 5]

Maybe we have all felt something like this at some time – and to an extent this is a key point, to deny a hard-and-fast boundary between madness and reason. But the evidence across the ages from the voices of those who have experienced madness, insanity, mental illness, mental health problems (the terms are many, various and always problematic) is that the encounter between madness and space can often ratchet up these more ‘normal’ moments into something quite different again. And thus for those people entering a state that gets labelled as irrational – ‘mad’, ‘mentally ill’, ‘psychotic’, ‘manic depressive’ – the story can sometimes be, if not always, riddled by quite *other* spatial modes of being-in-the-world, marked by crumples, schisms, stretching, compression, unsettlement, ecstasy and despair (admittedly to use flat and flawed words to describe what is entailed). And, crucially for today’s purposes, these are spatial modes running against the familiar, the conventionally shared, what is routinely discussed and planned for in the hallways of architecture, design and planning. As such, the question arises about the extent to which the people concerned can share common places with those who, at any given moment, sit on (or at least towards) the opposite pole in the reason-madness axis. Thus, a further question arises about what might be termed, if too simplistically, the relationship *between mad spaces and rational spaces*.

What I have said so far is pregnant with philosophical, political and ethical implications, a handful of which I will expand upon shortly, but we might underline how the process of deinstitutionalisation – the closing of large mental hospitals, the asylums of old, and the turn to care in the community as the preferred (if contested) approach to assisting society’s mentally distressed members – is now stirring a whole new population of people with mental

¹ Several quotes in this paper are taken from a small book published by the *Borderland Voices* arts and mental health group based in the North East Staffordshire Moorlands. The book, called *Landscapes of the Mind*, contains writing, poems and pictures produced during workshops participated in by people with mental health problems. The editorial makes clear that the book is understood as a variety of reflections on mental health, mental illness and all manner of spaces, worldly, remembered, experienced, imagined and also deeply wedged in individual psyches. It is pointed out that “[t]he physical backdrop of our work ... is the dramatic moorland scenery around the Roaches, close to the county boundaries that meet at the Three Shire Heads. We drew particular inspiration from the Knivedon Garden setting in Leek and from our school and community base at Warslow. These are the landscapes, which gave us courage to explore that other shadowy borderland which spans the reaches of the mind” (in *Borderland Voices*, 2001: iii).

health problems into the everyday spaces of our villages, towns and cities. There are many features of these new post-asylum geographies, but one is precisely to do with the notion of common places – whether or not it is going to be possible to create common places in which the supposedly ‘sane’ and the allegedly ‘insane’ can co-exist, mutually tolerate one another, foster a democracy of exchange and support on the streets, in parks, pubs, cafés, cinemas and local neighbourhoods. In his wonderful contribution to the catalogue for the COMMON-PLACE exhibition, Iain Borden warns against a sense of common-place – a template of urban citizenship – that ultimately rests on “a certain model of polite society”: one spatialised as the city of public squares, soft-spoken reflective conversation, “latté coffee, big Sunday papers, designer lamps, fresh pasta and tactile fabrics” [Borden, 2003: XX]. As he worries:

[This] is not the city of shouting, loud music, running, sex, pure contemplation, demonstrations, subterranean subterfuges. It is not the city of intensity, of bloody-minded determination, of getting out-of-hand ...

[Borden, 2003: XX]

The enlarged population of people with mental health problems now occupying the city – many of whom end up being familiar figures in public spaces; too many of whom slip through the safety-net into homelessness and a life almost perpetually outdoors – cannot but be key protagonists of this under-city, this getting-out-of-hand city, shouting, being intense, maybe acting differently, subversively, perversely, precisely because their spatial modes of being-in-the-world are not the same as (and I use this word advisedly) ‘ours’. How can ‘we’ make common-place with ‘them’? And what happens if and when ‘we’ become ‘them’ and ‘they’ become ‘us’ (this can easily happen)? And what about the possibility, signalled in the poem earlier, that certain people with mental health problems may find it hard to cope with established patterns of urban life, finding it disturbing and a threat to their precarious toe-hold on mental (good) health? A maze of further questions hence bundle into view, full of policy relevance: a challenge to those thinking seriously about matters of art, architecture, design and, indeed, common-place.

The hegemony of reason; the tyranny of rational spaces

The view from my work room window:
a rolling landscape into another world.

Space, freedom, open hills
smells of summer and freshly mown hay
skylarks and linnet songs fill the air.
The trek along the track I rarely make –
bogged down by a jigsaw puzzle of words
which I squeeze into blocks of time and space
as heavy as the thick and squelching mud.

[in *Borderland Voices*, 2001: 1]

It might be claimed that, if pretty much unavoidably, most discourses about common-place assume the basic rationality of the people encountering the public spaces of the world – assuming there to be a process of encounter that is itself amenable to rational inquiry, to careful and calm dissection, and available for re-presentation in intellectual fora and even reworking in exhibitions of art, architecture and design. However radical, however phenomenological, however psychoanalytical, however apparently pushing against the strait-jackets of the academy, it might be objected that the danger remains of projecting a vision of the rational human being – self-aware, self-contained, able to articulate, to emote, to mobilise certain apparatuses of thought, word and judgement – on to *all* of the peoples ‘out there’ in the spaces of the everyday. It is hard to be genuinely open to *otherness*, to do much more than convert *otherness* (if noticed at all) into a caricatured opposite of the *same*, since those who take on the role of cultural commentary – whatever the personal experiences of such individuals – will have been socialised into certain parameters of intellectual and aesthetic labour. In part, of course, this is Wittgenstein’s ‘prison-house of language’, but it is also the boot-camp of logical reasoning where, no matter how hard we try, we find it tough to imagine a world in which it is not *a or b* but, rather, *a and b* or something **in-between** *a* and *b* – and where the spaces of reasoning are not bounded, Euclidian shapes but sprawling lunar landscapes full of bulges, levels, distortions and shifts of perspective.² Because the intellectual guardians of our society cannot readily imagine things *otherwise*, the alertness to mad spaces – to the mad ways of encountering spaces *otherwise* – cannot but be limited as a resource to draw upon in wider discoursing.

I am of course glossing over issues of immense complexity, but some may

² This is what the poet above is getting at when considering a sense of landscape, space and freedom that he or she gains when looking out the window. He or she then laments that this sense cannot be easily represented in writing – “bogged down by a jigsaw puzzle of words” – because the act of writing

realise my indebtedness to the remarkable claims of the French theorist-historian Michel Foucault. His epic 1961 text *Histoire de la folie* (translated as *Madness and Civilization*) recasts the history of the West in terms of how 'Reason' has progressively identified, incarcerated and reduced to silence its polar opposite of 'Madness' or 'Non-Reason'; the crux of the story being how 'Non-Reason', the state of being without conventionally defined attributes of reason, has become progressively equated with 'Madness', itself increasingly understood as a medical, ie. a pathological, condition. I am allowing the book to retain its phenomenological overtones – to some extent later disavowed by a more (post-)structuralist Foucault – in that here Madness is reckoned to possess some interior truths, to be a fundamentally *other* state of being, almost a language or a grammar, into which some people slip entirely or which others glimpse on occasion. (And, for Foucault, the writings and paintings of a de Sade, a Van Gogh, an Artuad, a Nietzsche, etc., comprise outcrops of Madness into the run of rational intellectual life and aesthetic introspection.)

This is not the place to debate the pros and cons of *Madness and Civilization*, nor to rehearse its many supporters and critics, but I can note my own reading of this book – echoing others, I must admit – as a distinctively 'spatial history' of how, over the centuries, *rational spaces* have gradually pressed down upon, obscured and even destroyed *mad spaces*. The cover of my 1965 edition nicely illustrates this theme: the rational, calm, ordered realist space of an engraving by Escher cups in its hand the irrational, frenzied, disordered, fantastical space of a fragment from Goya's *The Madhouse*. Reason captures Madness, inspects it through the detached lenses of what we might now term 'Enlightenment' thinking, and both conceptually and materially consigns Madness (and its own *mad spaces*) to the set-apart spaces of the lunatic asylum (and, later, the psychiatrist's clinic or the psychoanalyst's couch). The latter spaces are essentially those of Reason, where Reason dominates, even though behind the walls provided and on the couch Madness is still given some room to be itself. Nonetheless, the socio-spatial rationale – note the word – is to keep Madness away from the rest of 'us'; and at the same time to operate upon it in the hope of transforming irrationality back into rationality, with shackles and manacles slowly replacing psycho-surgery, drug treatments, talking cures and various 'normalisation' activities. No wonder, if Foucault's account holds any credence, that so many problems now arise in an era of desinstitutionalisation

forces the original sense into the rational 'geography' of directed thought and shared language –

seeking to reverse the exclusionary trajectory in this long-term spatial history.

Moreover, I detect in Foucault's work – both here and in a later text such as *Discipline and Punish* [Foucault, 1976] – a sense of a progressively geometric approach to spatial order, typified by that ideal prison-house designed by Jeremy Bentham in the late-1700s and known as 'The Panopticon', being brought to bear in a great battle against the forces of Unreason (all species of deviancy, criminality, sexual difference and even bodily illness included). We must be careful here, since many of the disciplinary experiments about which Foucault speaks – the Tukes' York 'Retreat', a charitable lunatic hospital; the Mettray colony for delinquent boys in France; the policing of nineteenth-century urban and social spaces – did *not* resemble 'The Panopticon', and cannot be reduced to tidy geometric figures on the architect's drawing board. Yet, in the inquiries of someone like Thomas Markus, an historian of architecture, design and culture, we see a comparable sweep of historical argument regarding a highly spatialised imposition of order upon disorder: indeed, of *rational spaces* pressing down upon *mad spaces*. Revealingly, Markus borrows from Piranesi's *Carceri* series of etchings from the 1740s as an entrée to what might be termed the changing spatialities in play:

Here there are vast subterranean spaces – ambiguous, paradoxical and dynamic – with staircases leading to nowhere, impossible perspectives and unfinished vaults. All the categories of classical form and space are dissolved. Above the ground, glimpses can be caught of a light, orderly, upper world, obeying all the rules of the Academies and Schools. It seems likely that Piranesi saw that world of reason, light and order as the real prison, which sits on the hidden, dark, disorganised, unclassified, creative forces of human nature and society.

[Markus, 1989: 106]

The erection of a superstructure of order, light and reason over a secret dark and chaotic netherworld never had such a good architectural exponent as Piranesi . . . Piranesi saw that all formal architecture was, potentially at least, alienating in this way – its organised forms and static divisions of space denying, through the power of light, reason and order, the force of individual freedom, feeling and germination in the darkness of a deeper order.

[Markus, 1982: 106-107]

With these passages, Markus of course gestures to still grander and more

“squeeze[d] into blocks of time and space, as heavy as the thick and clogging squelching mud”.

controversial arguments about how *all* 'establishment' architecture is dehumanising, hostile to individual expression and a block on accessing deeper human truths. Perhaps this is too simplistic, too binary, and maybe we should envisage more complex entanglings of spatial orders from 'above' and 'below': of *rational spaces* (tending towards geometric precision) co-mingling with *mad spaces* (tending towards organic inhabitation). But, once thought about in these terms, I, for one, find it difficult to avoid seeing in a range of settings, activities and spaces – including in the common places of the city – numberless low-level skirmishes where attempts are made to impose relatively narrow constructions of rational spatiality on to *others* with *other*, possibly 'mad', connections to their world(s).

Learning from mad spaces I: a happy tale of madness and freedom

The world is so full of likeness and difference, memory and creation, it makes your head spin – and so we go on spinning – for ever part of the moving, circling universe, getting further and further from the earth and nearer and nearer to the stars.

[in *Borderland Voices*, 2001: 4]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, projects have emerged that aim to take a cue from mad spaces – from the *other* ways of piecing the world together apparently found therein – when pursuing alternative perspectives, orientations and theories. Socrates once mused that “[m]adness, provided it comes as a gift from heaven, is the channel by which we receive the greatest blessings”, concluding that “madness is a nobler thing than sober sense ...” [Socrates, in Douglas, 1997: 34]. The supposed closeness of madness and genius is indeed a well-known theme, traceable to Ancients like Socrates, and the notion of ‘good madness’, insights made available through a divine gift of madness to certain chosen individuals, runs through certain biblical tracts and their reinterpretation (Screech, 1985). But the impetus to learn from madness, and even more so from the *other* spatialities experienced by ‘real’ mad people as they dwell in the asylum, clinic, drop-in centre or homeless shelter, is perhaps something more specific and still more challenging.

Think of so-called ‘outsider art’, for instance. While now generalised to mean a wide variety of artistic productions by non-professional artists, it has its origins in ‘the art of the insane’ to be found in the likes of the Prinzhorn Collection (containing over 5000 works made by people in European

psychiatric institutions between the 1880s and the early-1920s: Hayward Gallery, 1997). As Colin Rhodes explains in his book *Outsider Art*, tellingly subtitled 'spontaneous alternatives':

The artist outsiders are, by definition, fundamentally different to their audience, often thought of as being dysfunctional in respect of the parameters for normality set by the dominant culture. ... Thus, the emergence of a heterogeneous group has been made possible which includes those *labelled* as dysfunctional through pathology (usually, though not always, in terms of psychological illness) or criminality (often in tandem with the first), or because of their gender or sexuality [etc.] ...

[Rhodes, 2000: 8-9: original emphasis]³

"Psychiatric patients, self-taught visionaries and mediums", he continues, "are the groups at the heart of early definition of outsider art". For the pioneers who stumbled on the compositions of the former grouping around the time of the First World War, "these powerful works seemed to be spontaneous expressive outpourings from the well-springs of creativity, unmuddied by artistic training or received knowledge". Much that has since been said about this art has unavoidably touched upon questions of space: how is the space of a canvas being organised? how are the spaces *on* the canvas being configured? how are real world spaces here being represented, if at all? what might the artworks reveal about the spatial modes of being inhabited by the artists? what alternative visions of space, of how to be in and to deal with everyday spaces, might be gleaned for consideration in other domains (eg. those of architecture, design, planning)?⁴ As just one tiny example, note Hans Prinzhorn's discussion of a common feature in outsider art: "namely, the tendency for the artist to fill every part of the sheet, often with purely decorative elements, as if in an attempt to deny empty space: 'whole sheets are filled with scribbles to the very edge as if a *horro vacui* gave the drawer no rest until every empty place was covered'" [Rhodes, 2000: 64: embedded quote from Prinzhorn]. For the Surrealists who became interested in the art of the insane, "[m]adness ... was a metaphor for absolute freedom", and as such

³ The term 'outsider art' was coined in 1972 by Roger Cardinal as an English equivalent to the French term 'Art Brut' proposed by the painter Jean Dubuffet in the mid-1940s: see Rhodes's skilful review of the many traditions and contradictions within 'outsider art' / 'Art Brut'.

⁴ For an exciting geographical treatment, thinking about 'the interior landscapes of a schizophrenic artist', Adolfi Wölfi (1864-1930), a resident for much of his adult life in the Waldau Asylum near Bern, Switzerland, see Park *et al* (1994). They observe how a host of 'real', symbolic and hyperbolic geographical features – undisciplined by linear perspective and vanishing points – spin together in Wölfi's painted "landscapes ... of despair, pessimism and tension" (p.207).

“[i]ts name was repeatedly invoked as a provocation for what they regarded as a banal and complacent dominant value system” [Rhodes, 2000: 84]. For them, the asylum was a place of liberty, and once the asylum door swung shut the rest of ‘us’ were left as the real prisoners: of a system, a set of spatial orders, that ultimately allow no freedom for difference, creativity, passion, imagination.

A genealogy can surely be traced from this theorising about madness, resistance and space to that of, say, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their more recent post-structural raging against the orthodoxies of Western philosophy, politics and practice (as contained most obviously in the two *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* volumes of 1983 and 1986). These authors invent the term ‘schizoanalysis’ in the process of taking an understanding of schizophrenia as the one (psyche) shattered, multiplied and distributed, and then putting it to work as a tool for ‘destroying’ the certainties present in so many other walks of intellectual life: “[t]he task of schizoanalysis goes by way of destruction Destroying beliefs and representations” [Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 311, 314]. And at the heart of this enterprise is a differing sense of space engendered by watching schizophrenia, learning from its unsettlement, as the poststructuralist geographer Marcus Doel outlines:

[I]t is important to clarify that schizoanalysis does not dwell on elements, aggregates, organs, subjects, relations, fragments or structures. To the contrary, it pertains only to *lineaments* which traverse the entire molar [large-scale] order, running through individuals as well as groups: a swarming proliferation and infolding of lines: the ‘schiz’ of schizoanalysis as traced by the ‘random walk’ of a space-filling fractal of infinite dimension and interminable ravelling ...

[Doel, 1995: 238]

This is difficult writing, and I cannot pretend to follow exactly what it all means. But the point for the moment is simply that Deleuze and Guattari appear to find in madness, in the *mad spaces* of how schizophrenics engage with the world – in the fluidity and boundedlessness of schizophrenic being, identity and conduct – exciting new possibilities from which to learn.

Learning from mad spaces II: a sad tale of madness and freedom

Perhaps this attempt to enclose is less capture than freedom.

[in *Borderland Voices*, 2001: 4]

But there are surely objections to be raised to this happy tale of learning from madness, a danger of celebrating madness that leads some writers on outsider art, for instance, to insist on “[s]etting aside any romantic notions” and on remaining “aware of the terrible suffering that always accompanies mental illness” [Douglas, 1997: 46]. Rhodes raises a similar caution when assessing the Surrealists on madness and freedom, suggesting that:

The reality of psychosis and the horrific treatment regimes that operated at times, even in the middle of the twentieth century, were brought directly into the Surrealist camp with the mental collapse of the poet and playwright Antonin Artaud in 1937. ... [T]heir experience of madness from the inside, so to speak, stripped Surrealist attitudes of their naïve romanticism.

[Rhodes, 2000: 85]

Similarly again, while finding much to admire in the poststructuralism of Deleuze and Guattari, Derek Gregory, a renowned theoretical geographer, remarks that “there is ... something cruel – at the very least insensitive – about analogising schizophrenia like this” [Gregory, 1994: 156]. And it is well-known too that considerable controversy has long surrounded Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization*, with critics objecting to a ‘romanticising’ of some real grammar of madness, and with others even complaining that his advocacy of freeing Madness from the constraints of Reason has led directly to the plight of homeless people with mental health people roaming the streets of Western cities (for a discussion, see Philo, 2003, Chap.8).

Moreover, I draw inspiration here from James Glass, a political scientist, whose 1985 work *Private Terrors/Public Life* is a compelling account of the inner worlds of psychiatric patients. Glass frames an account of how the internal selves of these individuals, their own inner *mad spaces*, enter into a fraught engagement with a public community residing in the supposedly *rational spaces* of the rest of “us”. He considers internal boundaries, borders, identifiable places and delimited geographies, and – most suggestively – describes the *lack* of such spatialised conceptions within the psyches of many mentally unwell individuals. For these people, he continues, the private terrors are actually those of acute *placelessness*, occasioned by a constant fear of internal fluidity where nothing stabilises, nothing stops, nothing permits a sense of anchorage in the world. He thereby writes about “psychological placelessness” as “a horrifying experience of loneliness and disconnection”

that “becomes the norm” [Glass, 1985: 58], leading to a deeply problematic relationship between the person concerned and the wider public. Glass elaborates, quoting from the voice of someone with severe mental health problems:

When I’m psychotic, reality disappears and my mind moves away from ordinary experience. I find myself in places no one understands, worlds that bear no relation to this one.

[in Glass, 1985: 32]

Delusion replaces consensual reality as the focus of being, meaning orientation, and reference for psychotic states lies in the command of voices, hallucinations and delusions. ... [T]he schizophrenics ... find themselves psychically outside the social forms of identification. The self may inhabit alien universes, the bodies of animals, other planets, machines, subterranean caves, computers and so on. Logic, thought and association proceed according to delusional premises, and the linear and serial logics of civil society possess little or no significance.

[Glass, 1985: 56]

Delusional time and space replace the self-rootedness and identity in interpersonal and social situations; the result is a loss of the self’s public being, a reversion to private knowledge systems, and most important a complete loss of the sense of community.

[Glass, 1985: 212]

For people in these ‘delusional spaces’, these most extreme of *mad spaces*, there is not necessarily anything to celebrate – no exciting new spatial mode of being to enthuse about, maybe as an input to Surrealist art, maybe as a prompt to poststructural theorising – yet what they doubtless would still claim that there *is* an experience from which it may be possible for the rest of “us” to learn. For them, bridges to the common places of everyday public life are fragile and precarious, and in fact for many – far from wanting to burn such bridges as a subversive act of escaping the system – the sincere hope is to be able to strengthen them so that they can indeed find a moment of anchorage, a path of return to public life, a way back to common places of civil society shared relatively unproblematically with others.

What Glass goes on to propose is that sometimes, although not always, the drifting and ‘unplaced’ internal spaces of the troubled self *can* be at least partially anchored by certain varieties of conducive ‘real’ space. Listen to this example of Annie and the mundane space of a country ranch:

Annie had no fixed, constant sense of reality, no grasp of a place where she should be; throughout her life, her voices would tell her what to do. The ranch, however, gave her a sense of meaning in social context; its very physical activity provided her with measures of her capacity and effectiveness; it also framed and defined her will to live and diminished her persistent confusion over who she was and how she should conceive of her purposes in life,

[Glass, 1985: 168]

It may therefore be less than coincidental that so many therapies for people with mental health problems – both mainstream and alternative; both contemporary and with historical precedent – revolve quite explicitly around striving to provide a safe, non-threatening and quite often fairly bounded space that can be a trustworthy mooring for anchoring, and helping to tend to, minds distressed.

Conclusion: glimpsing mad spaces in the Scottish Highlands

[T]here is a specific place that I would go – I would go when I feel low and weepy too. ... It's called a port, they lobster fish out of it It's like a little bay ... you can go round the headland a bit and no one can see you and you can have a little cry.

Well, that's what everyone misses, the grounds. I used to love walking up to the duck pond and over, stuff the ducks with bread – already been given five loaves that day! The grounds were brilliant, used to wander round ...

TAG! Well, what I like about here is the space we have. Although I work in an office, I look out on all this and I have a door right beside me, so I can nip out any time I want. I often have the door open, so the outside is inside. The sun often beats down when I am working at my side desk and so I am actually sitting in the sun inside. ... I mean TAG, as I'm sure many others will tell you, is an oasis for us. I mean the grounds up here, we all feel very, very, strongly and deeply Although it's a tacky old building, the situation [is] just beautiful.

These quotes all come from people with mental health problems who myself and two co-researchers have been interviewing as part of an ESRC-funded project on mental health in the Scottish Highlands. We have been particularly interested in what people have had to say about their relationships to the spaces and places all around them, and I repeat here three quotes where people are reflecting positively upon certain spaces that mean something to them – and in which they perhaps gain a sense of ‘psychological placement’ or

overcome the placelessness (and its attendant feelings of isolation, persecution, disconnection) endemic to certain states of being mentally troubled. And so we hear about one person's feelings for a small west-coast lobster port, another's for the grounds of the now-closed Craig Dunain Mental Hospital near Inverness, and another's for the Training and Guidance Unit sited in one of the few buildings (an old ward) still open on the Craig Dunain site. And we could multiply these instances over and over again, giving examples too of people indicating their deep love of the remotest Highland mountain scenery, or of people explaining the places that they really hate, referencing both crowded urban centres and deserted upland glens. The range of comments that we have collected is remarkable, and we are only now starting to map out the contours, as it were, comprising this perceptual geography of the Highlands residing in the imaginings, experiences, memories and hearsayings of more than 100 individuals. Some of what we have heard hints at the most delusional end of *mad spaces*, where the Highlands in anything like a conventional geographical sense becomes but the most distant point of reference. Most of what we have heard is more to do with transitional *mad spaces*, wherein people are struggling – in precisely the fashion implied by Glass – to hold in train connections between their conditions, often in this sample varieties of depression, and their encounters with everyday spaces from the beach to the street, from the home to the mental hospital. So much of what we have been told can be configured, I would argue, in terms of the people concerned trying to find highly personal spaces conducive to their own sense of mental well-being, but also at the same time more collective common places – with both other users of mental health services and a wider community – where at least a partial feeling of public involvement becomes possible. To some extent, then, this project and its findings offer a resoundingly empirical counterpart to the more speculative currents of my presentation today.

Bearing in mind this project, then, let me move to a final conclusion. In short, to think about *mad spaces* is to wonder at the sheer otherness of the spatial modes of being inhabited by many people with mental health problems; and it is to speculate about how such people and such spatial modes can 'fit' with – can be welcomed into – the diversity of common places (shared spaces of public life) both familiar and more experimental. It is to ponder the countless ways, dramatic and routine, whereby *mad spaces* are pressed down upon and

maybe obliterated by the demands of *rational spaces*, reflecting the accepted values, systems and spatial orders of mainstream society – with its Enlightenment roots and seemingly instinctive prioritising of Reason over Unreason (or Madness). It is to imagine learning from these *mad spaces*, these other spatial modes, as an input to art, architecture and design, or to politics and philosophy, and at the same time to envisage that more democratic civil society or urban nexus – as imagined by Glass, as hinted at by Borden – in which civility is rethought, intensity is re-admitted, the underlife and the disruptive are given more time, space and credence. And yet it is also to avoid risking an over-romanticising of *mad spaces*; it is to insist upon not denying the terrors, fears, anxieties and sadnesses of many mental health problems; it is to realise that such conditions may often go hand-in-glove with a pervasive sense of ‘psychological placelessness’ that is actually calling for a *re-connection* with quite ordinary spaces – the library, the café, the hairdressers, the coastal walk, the asylum duck-pond, etc., etc., etc. – wherein, for all of its failings, a kind of democratic tolerance, that holding of the door open for strangers, can still often be found. By considering *mad spaces*, thereby, our attention is forced at one moment to the most bizarre of delusional spaces (a realm of private knowledges), but then at the next to the most mundane of everyday spaces (a realm of public interaction) which may be where people struggling to cope with delusion, despair and disconnection once again find their connection.