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# 'THE SAME AND THE OTHER': ON GEOGRAPHIES, MADNESS AND OUTSIDERS

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**'The Same and the Other':**

**On Geographies, Madness and Outsiders**

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The cover illustration is taken from a wood engraving by John Lawrence found in Robinson R (ed.), 1983, **John Clare's Autobiographical Writings** (Oxford University Press: Oxford), p.153. It shows the nineteenth century poet, John Clare, meeting a gypsy woman during his so-called 'journey out of Essex', when he attempted to escape from Dr.Matthew Allen's private madhouse at High Beach.

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## Introducing the Social Geography of Outsiders

In oral and written description and analysis persons should be led far away from the simplicity of geographical remoteness versus non-remoteness in conceptualising isolations. [1]

Some years ago Kirk H. Stone wrote a paper that explored the geographical dimensions associated with the term 'isolation', which he acknowledged to have been commonly and unquestioningly used for many years in both everyday conversation and academic journals. In the process he continued a theme of his earlier work on 'fringe-of-settlement' regions by stressing the isolation that certain people and places experience as a result of being spatially isolated from their nearest neighbours, perhaps because of the great distances between them or perhaps because of intervening obstacles such as mountains, snowdrifts and forests. [2] On the other hand - and as the above quote indicates - he also recognised that there is often more to the phenomenon of isolation than simple spatial separation, and this recognition led him to consider those individuals and groups whose isolation may acquire a spatial expression, but who are actually isolated at bottom on grounds that are social in origin. In consequence, he listed and briefly commented upon the social isolation sometimes prompted by bearing the marks of race ('member of minority group'), religion ('member of small sect') or physical disability ('unable to see or hear others'; 'men or women who are partly crippled'), and he even mentioned New York city-dwellers suffering from feelings of 'psychological isolation' despite being surrounded by crowds of jostling

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[1] Stone K H, 1972, 'The concepts of isolation', **Geoforum** 11, p.77. Stone's ideas have been taken up in Nutley S D, 1980, 'The concept of isolation: a method of evaluating a West Highland example', **Regional Studies** 14, pp.111-123.

[2] See Stone K H, *op.cit.*, esp. Table 1, where he lists a number of 'physical elements' that he supposes to bring about isolation. For his earlier work, see Stone K H, 1962, 'Swedish fringes of settlement', **Annals of the Association of American Geographers** 52, pp.373-393; Stone K H, 1966, 'Finnish fringe of settlement zones', **Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie** 57, pp.222-232. In these two papers he was interested in whether peripheral regions are isolated at a local scale, a regional scale or at both scales, and in order to measure these different sorts of isolation he calculated simple numerical indices based on the distances between dwellings, other dwellings and vehicular transport routes.

people. [3] In this one paper, then, he offered a few suggestions - however fragmentary and underdeveloped - that signposted a route away from a purely spatial conception of isolation towards a geography concerned with those people who, for whatever reason, have become social outsiders.

It should be acknowledged at the outset, of course, that the precise identification and delimitation of any one social outsider group remains hugely problematic. It is clear that questions about the size, content and context of the group under study must be addressed, but it is also apparent that the decision to use the label 'outsider' will depend greatly upon the sorts of claims - whether empirical, theoretical or polemical - that the researcher is looking to secure with reference to this group. For example, many Marxists would suppose - and not without justification - that the whole working-class of a capitalist society comprises an oppressed body of outsiders denied access to the means of production. Similarly, many feminists would suggest - and with at least as much justification - that women are outsiders in patriarchal society, relegated to a lesser status and denied any rights of self-determination, even over their own bodies. A parallel set of claims could be advanced for children and the elderly, and on a slightly different note some political scientists view ethnic minorities within multi-national states as outsiders debarred from full political and social citizenship. [4] I certainly have no quarrel with these perspectives: indeed, I applaud the sentiments being expressed, and am heartened by the desire to take seriously the spaces, places and geographies implicated in issues of class, gender, childhood, old-age and ethnicity. This being said, it remains the case that I wish to turn my own attention to those outsider

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[3] See Stone K II, 1972, *op.cit.*, esp. Table 1, where he lists a number of 'cultural elements' that he supposes to bring about isolation, and text on p.76. In Nutley S D, *op.cit.*, it is also acknowledged that "[t]he importance of sociological and psychological factors must...be emphasised. Some forms of isolation would be experienced by minority groups based on race, religion, politics or language, and the suicide case who feels isolated in the big city" (p.113).

[4] Another possibility is that development theorists may view native populations in Third and Fourth World countries as outsiders alienated from the technologies of a westernised development planning that so often steamrollers over their own cultures, traditions and ways of life.

groups who are very obviously in the minority, and who can boast no real attachment to any large expanse of territory such as an 'ethnic region', reservation or homeland. [5] As a result, my orientation here certainly owes something to Stone's preliminary remarks, but a better expression is perhaps to be found in a passage such as that gracing the jacket of Erving Goffman's book, Stigma:

[t]he dwarf, the dis-figured, the blind man, the homosexual, the ex-mental patient and the member of a racial or religious minority all share one decisive characteristic: they are all socially 'abnormal', and therefore in danger of being considered less than human. [6]

Goffman's list of outsiders could easily be extended to include several other populations - and most notably those traveller people such as tramps, gypsies and even tourists - but a vital initial point is that the many different characteristics, experiences and problems of these various groups must be respected and must not be conceptually submerged into what D.W.G.Timms once called

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[5] There are inevitably many situations where it is unclear whether or not a group 'satisfies' these criteria, and an excellent example of this can be found in two studies by Drakakis-Smith. See Drakakis-Smith D, 1980, 'Alice through the looking glass: marginalisation in the Aboriginal town camps of Alice Springs', **Environment and Planning A** 12, pp.427-448; Drakakis-Smith D, 1981, 'Aboriginal underdevelopment in Australia', **Antipode** 13(1), pp.35-44. In the later paper the author is principally concerned with Aborigines residing on land inherited from their ancestors - even though much of this land is now parcelled out as government-regulated reserves and grants - whereas in the earlier paper he is more interested in those Aborigines who have migrated into predominantly white towns and cities. In order to deepen his understanding of the white exploitation of traditional Aborigine land he turns to Marxist versions of dependency and underdevelopment theory, and so draws upon materials initially designed to account for unequal relationships binding together nation-states within a global economic order, but when he considers the plight of the urban Aborigine he supplements these materials with a sensitivity to how whites now view this particular urbanite as an economic, social and cultural 'fringe-dweller'. The first dimension of his work hence spirals away from the main theme of this essay, but the second dimension - the sensitivity to the fringe-dweller - parallels my own concern for outsider groups quite markedly.

[6] Goffman E, 1968, **Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity** (Penguin: Harmondsworth), which was originally published in 1963 by Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs.

...an underlying universe of content which could be called 'social defectiveness'. [7]

The isolation that these groups undergo as they are shunned by - and as they perhaps deliberately shy away from - the supposedly 'normal' mainstream of people, places and practices in a society has actually been touched upon in a variety of geographical studies, and it is possible to find geographers writing about racial and religious minorities, about the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped, and even about tramps, gypsies and tourists. [8] But much work remains to be done before it will be possible to speak of a distinctive geography of outsiders, [9] and it is as a contribution to this spadework that my paper here should be evaluated. My chief objective, then, is to identify a range of substantive issues that arise when the researcher tackles the complicated intersection of three pivotal categories - the categories of outsiders, society and space - and at the same time I aim to make a handful of closely related ontological, epistemological and methodological claims. Indeed, a rumbling subtext of my entire piece is that a geography of outsiders will not be well served by studies that labour with 'large' a priori theoretical apparatuses - be these spatial scientific, Marxist, phenomenological, structurationist or whatever - or by studies that endeavour to erect law-like generalisations far removed from the details of individual cases and situations. It seems to me that there are just too many different sorts of outsider, too many different ways in which outsiders interact with the supposedly 'normal' mainstream of society, and too many different ways in which space is implicated in these interactions to make excessively formal theorising or law-gathering appropriate to the task in hand. The alternative, so I argue, is to work with looser, less formal theories that

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[7] Timms D W G, 1963, **The Distribution of Social Defectiveness in Two British Cities: A Study in Human Ecology**, Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, p.161. Elsewhere in this study, though, Timms does acknowledge that "[s]ocial defectiveness is not a unitary phenomenon, but has many variations" (p.201).

[8] I cite and discuss a number of these studies further on.

[9] In identifying a 'geography of outsiders' I am recalling the 'sociology of outsiders' once popularised by Becker. See Becker H S, 1963, **Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance** (The Free Press: New York).



can illuminate the pursuit of substantive inquiry, but which can never 'explain' or capture all the richness of the individual case, situation or geographical context' where insider-outsider relations are being played out.

To be more specific, though, the structure of my paper involves three 'cuts' through three rather different substantive and theoretical terrains, and each of these cuts comprises a fairly self-contained mini-essay in its own right. The first of these provides a largely descriptive account in which I contrast - sometimes explicitly, but often by implication - two polar positions in the geographical literature: those geographies of 'defectiveness' and 'deviancy' bearing the stamp of geography as spatial science, and the geography of outsiders presented by David Sibley in his path-breaking work on gypsies and other travellers. [10] Following from this informal comparison, I outline several arguments that might be mobilised to justify a shift of position from a geography of 'defectiveness' and 'deviancy' to a more Sibley-like approach, and I illustrate these arguments by probing a little-known speciality area of the discipline concerned with the spatial distribution of mental illness. [11] By listening to both the claims and the qualifications of studies located in this speciality area - most of which possess a spatial scientific input - and by also confronting these studies with the many insightful features of Sibley's geography of outsiders, it can rapidly be seen that an untempered spatial science of outsiders is a

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[10] The key text here - as will be discussed in some detail further on - is Sibley D, 1981, **Outsiders in Urban Societies** (Basil Blackwell: Oxford).

[11] I should say at once that I do not intend to discuss the collected works of Dear, Smith and their various co-workers, even though these works have helped to forge a geography of mental health sensitive to the interactions between psychiatric clients, concrete facilities and organisational frameworks, and even though they contain theoretical and substantive arguments anticipating precisely the claims that I wish to make here. However, this is not the place to do justice to these efforts, and in consequence I will confine my comments to a small bundle of what have been called 'psychiatric geographies'. For summaries of the research being conducted by Dear and Smith, see Dear M J, Taylor S M, 1982, **Not On Our Street: Community Attitudes to Mental Health Care** (Pion: London); Smith C J, 1977, 'Geography and mental health', Association of American Geographers, Commission on College Geography, Resource Paper No.76-4.

highly deficient creation. Finally, I seek to bring together some of the threads unpicked earlier in the paper by suggesting that Michel Foucault's remarkable book, Madness and Civilization, offers a grand but flexible vision - a vision depicting the ever-changing landscape of 'the Same and the Other' - that can contextualise and energise the efforts of Sibley, James Duncan, K.G. Dean and other researchers who are striving to develop a viable and worthwhile social geography of outsiders. [12]

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[12] Foucault, the now deceased French post-structuralist thinker, has perhaps done more than anyone to translate certain themes from modern continental philosophy into the practice of historical inquiry. The book in question here is Foucault M, 1967, **Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason** (Tavistock: London), which is a translation by Howard R of Foucault M, 1961, **Histoire de la Folie** (Librairie Plon: Paris).

The Geography of Outsiders:  
Something Old and Something New

'Defectiveness', 'deviance' and the spatial science of outsiders

Among the more important of...phenomena is human behaviour. Very few geographers, however, have included behaviour in the compass of their study...So limited a delimitation of the subject greatly undervalues the significance of differences in behaviour and attitudes in the understanding of the likenesses and differences among places. [13]

When Timms wrote these words in 1963 he was signalling his unhappiness with the almost exclusive focus on 'material features' such as settlements, land uses and industrial enterprises that typified the inquiries of regional geography, and it was this unease that led him to argue for a geography more sensitive to the 'non-material' realm of human behaviour and attitude. In so doing he also voiced his dissatisfaction with those older geographical accounts that did mention the non-material, but which portrayed this as being subject to fairly strict determinations spearing from the natural environment. Following from these complaints, he sought to forge a brave new geographical interest in human behaviour, and he thereby embarked upon a detailed study of the spatial patterns traced out in the city by certain strains of human behaviour. In particular, he chose to investigate the geographies of criminal acts, alcoholism, mental disorder and even pulmonary tuberculosis, all of which were reckoned to be manifestations of 'socially defective' behaviour that

...not only departs from the dual norms of authority and public opinion, but which also is liable to lead to family breakdown and to impose a heavy burden on the social services. [14]

The resulting investigations of these geographies of 'socially defective' behaviour - as exhibited in the two English towns of Derby and Luton - undoubtedly heralded the first incarnation of the geography of

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[13] Timms D W G, *op.cit.*, p.ix.

[14] *ibid.*

outsiders. In other words, there was a subsequent upsurge in the number of studies tackling the spatial distributions displayed by behaviour that is unfortunately labelled 'defective' or 'deviant', although little attempt has been made to ensure any comprehensive coverage of the varieties of 'defectiveness' and 'deviancy' placed under this microscope. Hence Paul Knox is justified to claim that

[t]he notion of deviance covers a multitude of social sins, but geographers have been most interested in behaviour with a distinctive pattern of intra-urban variation, such as prostitution, suicide, truancy, delinquency and drug addiction. In fact, most aspects of deviant behaviour seem to exhibit a definite spatial pattern of some sort, rather than being randomly distributed across the city. [15]

The best developed field of inquiry here has probably been that referred to by Peter Scott in a presidential address as the 'spatial analysis of crime and delinquency', [16] and by David Herbert in a subsequent paper as the study of 'crime, delinquency and the urban environment'. [17] Yet, and as Knox's remark indicates, other sorts of 'misfit' behaviour have been mapped and analysed geographically, and of particular interest in this regard has been that small corpus of work endeavouring to describe and explain the distribution of mental illness in and around the city.

But it was not only the substantive orientation of Timms' investigations that anticipated the shape of later research, for many features of this research have also echoed Timms' own borrowings from the geography as spatial science that began to sweep the discipline during the early 1960s. The content, chronology and criticisms of this edifice are now reasonably familiar, but of especial note was the tendency to duplicate such conventional scientific concerns as 'measurement, relationship and classification' in the search for general laws of spatial

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[15] Knox P, 1982, **Urban Social Geography: An Introduction** (Longman: London), p.48.

[16] See Scott P, 1972, 'The spatial analysis of crime and delinquency', **Australian Geographical Studies** 10, pp.1-18.

[17] See Herbert D, 1977, 'Crime, delinquency and the urban environment', **Progress in Human Geography** 1, pp.208-239.

organisation. [18] It is wholly unsurprising, therefore, that Timms uses scalogram analyses to generate mathematical indices of urban ecological structure, or that he uses product-moment correlations to establish associations between these indices and certain numerical measures of 'defectiveness'. And it is also unsurprising that he passes beyond the simple description of associations to offer an explanatory account - and to posit causal mechanisms - that might render intelligible the urban geography of 'defectiveness'. As he concludes,

[t]he evidence from the present study suggests that four main factors are operative: social isolation [of which more later on], cultural transmission, problems of adjustment, and genetically-determined psychiatric deviations. As each of these factors varies spatially within the city, so too does both the rate and character of social defectiveness. [19]

Whilst this is a fairly modest statement, it does teeter on the brink of what Timms himself has called an 'over-generalisation' or an 'Aunt Sally', [20] and it remains the case - as will be argued further on - that certain worrying consequences flow from the law-seeking exercise lying behind an observation of this kind

A corollary of this search is that a focus upon local uniqueness should be subsumed by broader visions - or models - of how all regions,

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[18] A book which conveys this orientation most doggedly is Abler R, Adams J S, Gould P, 1971, **Spatial Organisation: The Geographer's View of the World** (Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs). Continual reference is made here to the 'science of geography', and Chapter 4 is entitled 'Measurement, relationship and classification'. One of the best appraisals of geography as spatial science remains Gregory D, 1978, **Ideology, Science and Human Geography** (Hutchinson: London), esp. Chapters 1 and 2.

[19] Timms D W G, *op.cit.*, pp.201-202.

[20] See Timms D W G, 1971, **The Urban Mosaic: Towards a Theory of Residential Differentiation** (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge), p.vii. In the preface to this text Timms voices the need to build up theories and generalisations that 'go beyond' the bounds of unreliable and limited evidence. See also Timms D W G, 1965, 'The spatial distribution of social deviants in Luton, England', **Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology** 1, pp.38-52, in which he upgrades his quantitative tool-kit to include indices of segregation and dissimilarity, a principal components analysis and a coefficient of association called 'Yule's Q'.

territories and settlements function, and on this count it is unremarkable that the 'background' of Timms' project involves a blending of urban models developed by the Chicago 'school' of human ecology with the spatial scientific tool-kit discussed above. It might be recalled that S.R.Eyre and G.R.J.Jones once wrote about the antithetical nature of 'ecological and statistical modes of thought', and in so doing nearly succeeded in pitting geography as human ecology against geography as spatial science, [21] but a more convincing story might tell of the spatial scientists actively appropriating those elements of human ecology - such as the models describing and supposedly explaining the physical organisation of space - that were amenable to a measure of numerical analysis. It is relatively easy to illustrate the correctness of this story with reference to the geography of outsiders, but - and as will also be argued further on - a number of unhappy outcomes lead from this highly partial borrowing from human ecology. For the moment, though, it need only be noted that the various statistical, law-seeking and ecological inputs mentioned here have turned the project pursued by Timms and his successors into not so much a geography of outsiders, as a spatial science of outsiders.

Although the bulk of my criticisms of this spatial science must be held in abeyance, I do wish to voice one preliminary complaint here, the spur for which resides with the highly negative portrayal of outsiders implicit in terms such as 'defectiveness' and 'deviancy'. It is true that these expressions may hint at the norms and rules that certain people are supposedly 'deviating' from - and this hint is clearly present in Timms' definition of 'social defectiveness' (see above) - but the use of such labels still manages to legitimise the governing norms and rules, whilst having the converse effect of attaching blame to the individuals in question. Indeed, the implication is always that the 'misfitness' of these individuals is both entirely their own problem and largely one of their own making. It could be argued that this characterisation is not totally inappropriate for those outsiders who commit criminal acts, but it is surely unjustifiable when applied to the mentally ill, to sufferers from

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[21] See Eyre S R, Jones G R J, 1966, 'Introduction' in Eyre S R, Jones G R J (eds.), **Geography as Human Ecology: Methodology by Example** (Edward Arnold: London), esp.pp.24-25.

pulmonary tuberculosis, and to other obviously 'innocent' groups. Indeed, and as Thomas Szasz observes,

[w]ords have lives of their own. However much sociologists insist that the term 'deviant' does not diminish the worth of the person or group so categorised, the implication of inferiority adheres to the word. [22]

### David Sibley, the gypsies and outsiders in urban societies

...in many parts of the country, and year by year more greedily (especially in southern and south-eastern England), suburbia absorbs the villages within commuter range of the cities. And with suburbia comes suburban ways of life and values: everything for the sake of smartness, a faith in appearances, pretentiousness...It is the face value that matters, not the real value. And that is not the ethos of the true village. If a gypsy family appears on the edge of this sort of society, it is lowering the tone of the neighbourhood and at once a complaint is made to the police. Invariably, the gypsies are moved on, and kept moving. [23]

Although this passage is not Sibley's, it could easily have appeared in the pages of his Outsiders in Urban Societies, [24] a book that may yet usher into being a second incarnation of the geography of outsiders. It is regrettable that this text has to date received only scant attention from within the author's chosen discipline of geography, but it is surely the case that readers picking their way through the contents - from the

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[22] Szasz T S, 1971, **The Manufacture of Madness: A Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement** (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London), p.xxv. For a similar comment, see Goffman E, **op.cit.**, Footnote 1, p.167.

[23] Vesey-Fitzgerald B, 1973, **Gypsies of Britain: An Introduction to their History** (Readers Union: Newton Abbot), pp.220-221. Although I do not spell out the connections, there is a large measure of overlap between the comments Vesey-Fitzgerald offers in his 'Valedictory' and Sibley's views on how the gypsies have suffered from the growth of an urbanism predicated - at least in planning theory - upon 'smartness', order and compartmentalisation of land uses.

[24] Sibley D, **op.cit.**

touching picture on the cover (see Figure 1) to the dramatic last sentence in the conclusion - cannot fail to be both impressed by Sibley's intellectual endeavour and heartened by his concern for the gypsy communities and other outsiders that he studies.

Sibley began his academic life by conducting spatial analyses of the locations occupied by urban shops, and in the process he examined changes in the 'patterns and density surfaces' of shops in the English towns of Leicester and Northampton during the period 1880 to 1969. [25] Despite the allegiance of this work to geography as spatial science, Sibley's PhD thesis was unusual for displaying an historical sensitivity towards long-term changes bound up with broader developments in the history of retailing, and it was also unusual for its contextual sensitivity towards the various decision-making 'environments' that could shape a shop-owner's locational choices. It is clear that these two sensitivities did not desert Sibley when he shifted his attention to the plight of gypsies and other outsider groups, and it might also be argued that his fears for the outsider in an ordered urban setting were anticipated, at least in outline, by his complaint that the small shop in the city constitutes a 'weak competitor' threatened with displacement from central areas dominated by large enterprises. [26]

By the middle of the 1970s he was becoming increasingly interested in the interaction between English gypsies and the official policies of both local authorities and central government, and the result was a series of papers pivoting about the eventual publication of Outsiders. [27] In one

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[25] See Sibley D, 1971, **A Temporal Analysis of the Distribution of Shops in British Cities**, Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge.

[26] See Sibley D, 1975, 'The small shop in the city', University of Hull, Occasional Paper in *Geography* No.22, esp. Chapter 7.

[27] See Sibley D, 1976, 'The location and layout of gypsy caravan sites: notions of deviancy in official policy', **Antipode** 8(1), p.83-87; Sibley D, 1978, 'Classification and control in local government: a case study of gypsies in Hull', **Town Planning Review** 49, pp.319-328; Sibley D, 1985, 'Travelling people in England: regional comparisons', **Regional Studies** 19, pp.139-147. Another paper - Sibley D, 1986, 'Persistence or change? conflicting interpretations of peripheral minorities', **Environment and Planning D: Society and Space** 4, pp.57-70 - appeared too late for me to discuss its contents in this essay.





Figure 1: The front cover of Sibley's book (from Sibley D, 1981, Outsiders in Urban Societies (Basil Blackwell: Oxford).

of the few reviews of this book that did appear R.E.Pahl confessed to finding its contents

...muddled and confusing, and desperately need[ing] a firm structure. It is as if [Sibley] has read accounts of various minority groups and the way they suffer discrimination, and then he has come across Mary Douglas on 'grid' and 'code', Basil Bernstein on elaborated and restricted speech codes, and through this has experienced a personal glimpse of some important connection which he feels he must try to communicate. Unhappily he does not quite succeed. [28]

There is undoubtedly a sizeable portion of truth in this assessment, but it is surely the case that 'not quite succeeding' does not equal outright failure, and my own view is that numerous valuable insights can still be extracted from - and may actually be inextricably bound up with - the muddledness of Outsiders. And, at the risk of doing violence to these insights, I now attempt just such an extraction. [29]

i) **Inside the outsider's world.** One of the most striking features of Sibley's project is his desire to see - as far as is possible - the reality of gypsies and other minorities that lies behind 'objective' statistics and popular stereotypes. He obviously distrusts the numbers reported in both government and academic publications, particularly where these seek to place travellers in mainstream occupational categories that are meaningless when applied to individuals who may do everything from being a 'housewife' to 'hawking' and 'farm-labouring'. Furthermore, he recognises the many untruths that spring up as myths and legends surrounding the life-styles of outsider groups, and a central plank of his argument is that official policies are often shaped more by these stereotypes than by

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[28] Pahl R E, 1981, 'Muted groups: review of Sibley's **Outsiders**', **Times Higher Education Supplement**: 27.11.81, p.14. Other reviews are Anon., 1982, 'Review', **Choice** 19, p.1334; Brune J, 1982, 'Review', **British Book News: January**, p.21. Both of these are basically complimentary.

[29] It might be noted that the only geographical interest in gypsies other than Sibley's appears to be that exhibited in Kearns K C, 1977, 'Irish tinkers: an itinerant population in transition', **Annals of the Association of American Geographers** 67, pp.538-548; Kearns K C, 1978, 'Irish tinkers are unwelcome', **Geographical Magazine** L, pp.329-334.

any informed perspective. In the case of the gypsies, for instance, he points to both the 'nomadic myth' and the 'rural myth':

[t]he first exaggerates the propensity of travellers to migrate and has been used in arguments against providing sites for travellers on the grounds that sites will attract families from a very wide area...The second myth is that travellers are traditionally (and properly) country people who do not belong in the town - 'real' gypsies as opposed to the families camped on derelict land in the city. This spurious argument has been used to justify exclusion of travellers from cities. [30]

Even more pernicious, though, are the images of 'deviancy and deprivation' that adhere to the gypsies, and once again Sibley bemoans the employment of these categories as 'crisply defined sets' that claim to be objective, but which can never be more than labels dreamed up by a settled community intolerant of alternative models for living.

By identifying the sorts of people who are travelling, by showing how they really live and work, and by finding out exactly the geography and timing of their movements, Sibley begins to put the record 'straight' with respect to the surface aspects of a gypsy existence. But he hopes to do more than this: he wishes to discover something of the internal aspects - the deeply-felt and deeply-held emotions, perceptions and more structured understandings - that lie at the very centre of gypsy life. Certain dangers obviously arise as the researcher pokes around in the recesses of other peoples' heads, but Sibley never allows his project to descend into a single-minded interrogation of these interior realms. Instead, he remarks that much of his work

...could conceivably be represented as a product of participant observation, but this would be misleading... Initially, there was no deliberate and considered research strategy; a potentially useful research problem occurred to me only after several

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[30] Sibley D, 1985, *op.cit.*, pp.139-140. Because of this rural gypsy myth, and also because the label 'gypsy' is occasionally used in a perjorative sense, Sibley prefers to employ terms such as 'traveller' and 'travelling people'. See his 'note on terminology' in Sibley D, 1981, *op.cit.*, p.xiii.

years of contact. Certain benefits derive from the nature of the contact, however. In particular, knowledge comes from unsolicited comment rather than from responses to pointed questions, while, reflecting on many conversations and incidents, it has been possible to resolve some of the contradictions that appears in travellers' attitudes to the larger society and to individual outsiders, like myself, with whom they have a social relationship. [31]

It is at this moment that Sibley voyages closest to conducting a 'straight' humanistic inquiry, and it is for this reason that he anticipates what might be called a humanised geography of outsiders. There is already a strand of thinking in humanistic geography that espouses an existential focus on the insider and outsider experiences of place, and this stems from both Edward Relph's reflection on the 'identity with place' [32] and David Seamon's attempt to recover place-orientated feelings of 'insiderness' and 'outsiderness' present in two novels by Doris Lessing. [33] It would be interesting to widen this focus to take into account the many ways in which the outsider groups under scrutiny here identify with and utilise different places, and Sibley gestures in this direction when enumerating the difficulties that travellers encounter when stopping on the official trailer sites provided by local authorities (see below). A more concerted statement of this kind is perhaps to be found in Duncan's study of the tramp's 'classification and use of urban

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[31] Sibley D, 1981, *op.cit.*, p.viii.

[32] See Relph E, 1976, **Place and Placelessness** (Pion: London), esp.pp.49-62. As he writes: "[t]he essence of place lies...in the experience of an 'inside' that is distinct from an 'outside'; more than anything else this is what sets place apart in space and defines a particular system of physical features, activities and meanings. To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identification with the place" (p.49).

[33] See Seamon D, 1981, 'Newcomers, existential outsiders and insiders: their portrayal in two books by Doris Lessing', in Pocock D C D (ed.), **Humanistic Geography and Literature: Essays on the Experience of Place** (Croom Helm: London), pp.85-100. This examination of 'insiderness' and 'outsiderness' with respect to the literary depiction of place is extended in Douglas Porteous J, 1985, 'Literature and humanist geography', **Area** 17, pp.117-122. For a sympathetic but telling critique of geographical attempts to excavate a 'sense of place' from literary works, see Daniels S, 1985, 'Arguments for a humanistic geography', in Johnston R J (ed.), **The Future of Geography** (Methuen: London), esp.pp.149-150.

space', [34] and a not dissimilar account is given by Daniel Clayton as he writes a social geography of the navvies who built the nineteenth century English railway network. [35] In this latter piece Clayton strives to reconstruct something of the 'topophilias' that attached the navvies to their work setting, to the 'community of strangers' manning the works on each line, and to the many public houses in walking distance of these works, and this enables him to challenge such features of the 'navvy myth' as the belief that the navvies felt no identification with - and hence felt no compunction about terrorising - the places where they worked, played and tramped.

ii) **Minorities and the larger society.** Whilst Sibley is quite sure about the value of trying to see outsiders 'for themselves', he is also sure that

...the intimate knowledge that might be gained from such contact is in itself insufficient if we are concerned with explaining the peripheral status of these communities in relation to the larger society. In order to obtain an appropriate perspective on the problem, it is necessary to look at the changes in the economy and social structure of the outsider group as they are affected by processes operating in the dominant social system. [36]

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[34] See Duncan J S, 1978, 'Men without property: the tramp's classification and use of urban space', *Antipode* 10(1), pp.24-34. This paper should be read alongside Duncan J S, 1978a, 'The social construction of unreality: an interactionist approach to the tourist's cognition of environment', in Ley D, Samuels M S (eds.), *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems* (Maaroufa: Chicago), pp.269-282, but - and as was the case with the work of Dear and Smith - there is not space here to do justice to the richness of these contributions. Other geographical texts which adopt a humanistic and empathetic line towards outsider groups include Flad H K, 1972, 'The urban American Indians of Syracuse, New York: human exploration of urban ethnic space', *Antipode* 4(2), pp.88-99; Godkin M A, 1980, 'Identity and place: clinical applications based on notions of rootedness and uprootedness [being a study of place in the 'lived experiences' of several alcoholics]', in Buttimer A, Seamon D (eds.), *The Human Experience of Space and Place* (Croom Helm: London), pp.73-85; Symanski R, 1979, 'Hobos, freight trains and me', *Canadian Geographer* XXXIII, pp.103-118.

[35] See Clayton D, 1986, '**Heroic Savagery**': A Social Geography of Navvies in England in 1846, Unpublished BA dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, esp.pp.40-43.

[36] Sibley D, 1981, *op.cit.*, p.vii.

It therefore becomes vital to consider the various economic and social transactions that bring outsider groups and dominant, supposedly 'normal' groups together, and this is why Sibley devotes so much of Outsiders to documenting the many ways in which these transactions can be played out. With respect to the economic, for instance, he references the many ways in which the 'traveller economy' can meet 'mainstream society's' otherwise unmet needs for certain goods and services, and in the process he describes gypsy activities such as scrap-metal dealing, farm-labouring, selling small goods and performing other menial services. The social reaction to the first of these is especially illuminating, chiefly because the sorting of metals and the burning off of non-metal constituents is considered to be dirty work unsuitable for the vicinity of the home environment, even where the 'home' is actually a mobile trailer. Nonetheless, the suggestion must be that English gypsies do not suffer greatly from economic exploitation at the hands of the majority. Indeed, there is a definite sense in which the exploitation occurs in the opposite direction, and Sibley goes so far as to suggest that the gypsy 'economy on the periphery' is regarded as an unwarranted nuisance by the managers of the country's strictly-ordered market economy.

The situation becomes rather more complicated when the whole gamut of social transactions is inspected, and when Sibley turns his attention to what he calls the 'important points of contact' between outsiders and professionals such as teachers, social workers, local government officers and the police. He also refers to these various individuals and institutions as 'social control agencies' struggling to protect some Parsonian consensus model of the social order, and in this connection he offers these observations:

I would suggest that the problem is not simply one of conflict between order and disorder, as if these were absolute and unambiguous states. Rather, it is a problem of the imposition of order on the peripheral group by the dominant society, because the economic and social life of the former, as it is manifest in the environment, is perceived as disorderly and threatening. The internal order of the peripheral

group is hidden, but it exists. [37]

The nub of the issue, therefore, is that the translation of the consensus model into practice requires 'putting people and things into categories', and it is here that the ideas of Basil Bernstein and Mary Douglas become important, [38] principally because both argue - albeit in somewhat different fashions - that the maintenance of order depends upon the erection of strong classifications, and also upon the patrolling of the boundaries between 'incompatible categories' that must not mix or 'pollute' one another. Since the lives of most outsiders are predicated on much looser and more fluid categories than those present in mainstream society, these outsiders are indeed perceived as 'disorderly and threatening', and the various social control agencies do indeed expend much energy in trying to impose stronger classifications upon this looseness and fluidity. A prime example of such an imposition - and one that Sibley recounts in some detail - involves the efforts of central and local authorities to replace existing gypsy stopping places, which are numerous and widely scattered, with a handful of easily policed official caravan sites boasting layouts that enforce an alien separation of the gypsy's home, work and play (see below).

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[37] *ibid.*, p.38.

[38] The key to Sibley's thinking here perhaps lies in Douglas' efforts as a social anthropologist striving to understand the 'systems of classification' peculiar to - and often held quite implicitly by - different cultural groupings. Of especial value for the reader trying to make sense of this project is the selection of writings collected in Douglas M, 1975, **Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology** (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London), which includes a review of Bernstein's work on 'speech codes' (Chapter 11: 'Humans speak', pp.173-180) - was it through Douglas that Sibley discovered Bernstein? - as well as essays on classification, boundaries, pollution and purification. In one of these essays (Chapter 14: 'In the nature of things', p.210-229) Douglas offers this passage: "[t]he interesting question in social anthropology used to be to know how we fabricate the categories we use. Now it is important to ask how we deal with anomaly [with 'misfits' or 'outsiderness'], strictly or generously. How many station-masters have we met who applied the book of rules as sacred and unstretchable?...Some social structures can tolerate anomaly and deal with it constructively, while others are rigid in their classifications. This difference is probably the most important subject on which sociological research can focus" (p.227).

Insofar as Sibley does advance any formal overview of how outsiders and the larger society come together, this is to be found in his thinking about the clash of what he terms 'world-structures'. He opens this analysis by attacking crude and overly economic Marxist accounts that depict the tensions between outsiders and larger society against a backcloth of more fundamental class conflict, and this leads him to highlight the antagonisms that often spring up between the working class and minority groups. [39] He moves next to a presentation cognisant of economic, social and cultural factors, and this brings him to the notion that most social groups carry around in their collective heads a 'world-structure' reflecting

...their conception of society, [as] shaped by routine encounters within the group and reinforced by the experience of dealing with people outside the community. The term suggests a distinctive categorial system and, thus, a distinctive interpretation of social life. [40]

It is not only the outsiders who possess their own peculiar conceptions, though, and it is vital to consider the distinctive 'interpretations of social life' held by society's dominant groups, and it is even more vital to consider the sparks that fly and confusions that result as the 'world-structures' of the outsider and dominant peoples come into contact with one another. The problem here is that various 'communication barriers' plague this encounter, and the upshot is that the conceptual contents of outsider 'world-structures' remain largely hidden from - and are thereby rendered 'mute' in the face of - the understandings possessed by society's mainstream members. To give an example, it is abundantly clear that the gypsies support a very definite world-structure, but that this in no way squares with the normative and twee mainstream image of gypsies as rural throwbacks to some idyllic past. And this means that those aspects of traveller life visible to society's watchful eyes - such as stopping in

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[39] Of particular use to Sibley in this respect is Parkin F, 1979, **Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique** (Tavistock: London).

[40] Sibley D, 1981, *op.cit.*, p.14. Sibley develops this argument about clashing world-structures over pp.13-19, and in the process he draws upon various strands of anthropological and feminist literature.



urban areas and dealing in scrap metal - inevitably deviate from the romanticised image, and it is this deviation that gives rise to official policies designed to curb supposedly 'deviant' gypsy behaviour (see Figure 2). What Sibley appears to be proposing, then, is a

...dominant-muted model, [in which] we have a representation of economic and social relationships that has a high level of generality, but is capable of elaborations to fit into specific cultural conditions. [41]

This construction in no way comprises an overarching and inflexible total or 'jumbo' theory: rather, it offers a thumbnail ontological sketch of how outsiders and society interact with one another - both conceptually and materially - and it also offers a tentative methodological blueprint to guide future inquiries into the geography of outsiders.

As yet very few geographical treatments of outsiders have operated with anything resembling Sibley's 'dominant-muted' model, although the work of Duncan on tramps and tourists should perhaps be mentioned as an exception to this rule. [42] The thesis by Clayton may also be an exception, and it is salient to consider his discussion of the economic and social interactions that passed between the railway navvies and wider society. [43] In particular, he details the manner in which the navvies were bound up in a complex maze of 'contractual relations' - involving many different permutations of the 'contractual hierarchy' and at least as many permutations of the 'truck system' - and he goes on to explain how geographical variations in these relations had implications for both 'regional economies and local social structures'. Furthermore, he mentions the claims and operations of those who wished to exert some social control over the navvies, and he therefore references the efforts of several missionary organisations to spread the Lord's word in favourite navvy haunts. There was hence a deep tension between a navvy 'world-structure'

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[41] *ibid.*, p.19.

[42] See Duncan J S, 1978, *op.cit.*; Duncan J S, 1978a, *op.cit.*

[43] See Clayton D, *op.cit.* Clayton discusses the economic and social 'ways of the line' over pp.20-39, and tackles the troubled meeting of navvy and 'respectable' world views over pp.3-10.

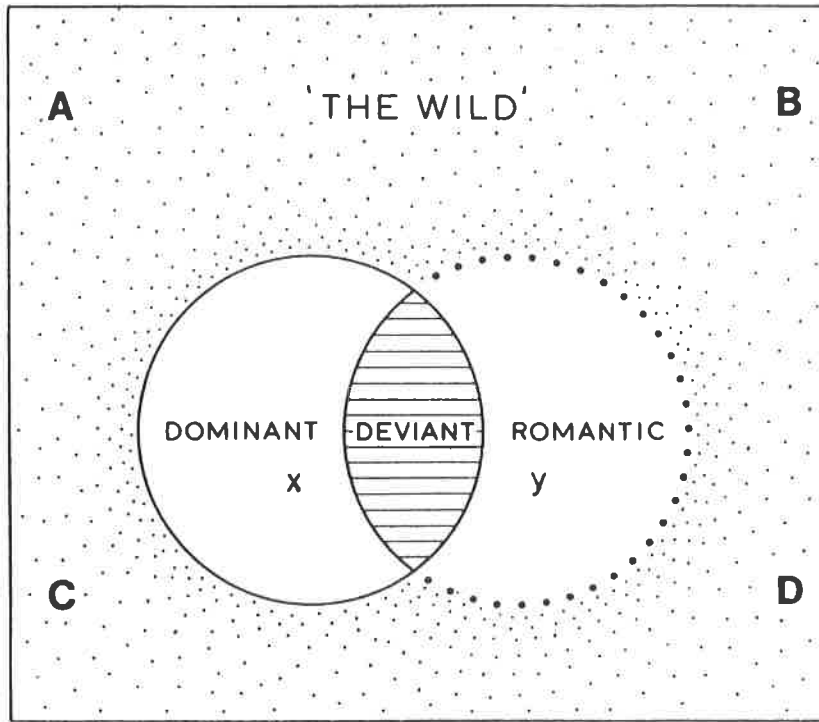


Figure 2: Sibley's depiction of the 'relationship between dominant and muted groups', which shows how a dominant group has little purchase on the 'world-structure' of outsider groups. However, the former may romanticise about the latter, with the almost inevitable consequence that members of mainstream society will interpret as 'deviant' those manifestations of the outsider 'world-structure' that do come to their attention. The 'Wild' refers to the natural world beyond the social interaction of dominant and muted groups, and into which the former supposes the latter to merge. In developing this model Sibley relies heavily on certain feminist analyses of how women are dominated in society (from Sibley D, 1981, Outsiders in Urban Societies (Basil Blackwell: Oxford), p.17).

that sanctioned drinking, fighting and a preference for 'social isolation' as activities generative of a sense of community, and the 'world-structure' of a settled, 'respectable' society that occasionally romanticised about the navvies as 'heroic savages', but which usually interpreted their life-style as

...a visible, open system of abuse and demoralisation that might threaten the status quo. To control and envelop this situation, the navvies were perceived as a social problem and treated as social outcasts in middle class consciousness. They were a degenerate race that needed civilizing and moralizing. [44]

iii) **Space and the 'purification process': space and the 'comparative framework'**. There are two aspects of how space is dealt with in Sibley's vision of outsiders: the first concerns his vision of how substantively space is implicated in the relationship between outsiders and society, and the second concerns the more philosophical and methodological understandings of space written into the heart of this vision. With respect to the first aspect, he appears to view space as a sort of resource that is manipulated in various ways - sometimes deliberately, but often quite inadvertently - as outsiders and society's dominant and supposedly 'normal' members seek to negotiate the nature of their relationship with one another. In short, his argument here is that tensions inevitably arise when the view of spatial order built into an outsider groups's 'world-structure' meets the parallel view built into a dominant group's 'world-structure', particularly when social control agencies attempt to impose the orthodoxy of the latter upon the more ambiguous spatial categories of the former.

With respect to the gypsies, for instance, it is not difficult to discern a feeling for spatial order in the arrangement of trailers into extended family groupings, in the internal organisation of trailers, and in the careful placing of china ornaments and cushions, but

...with a tradition of nomadism people do not feel an

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[44] *ibid.*, p.3.

attachment to a particular piece of land, and so do not feel an urge to put boundaries around it and defend it...Thus, there is a social and spatial order in gypsy culture that takes different forms to the order that is valued in mainstream society, and the two modes of order are largely incompatible. [45]

In the ensuing clash of 'modes' the gypsies try to find what Duncan refers to as 'marginal spaces' where it is possible to use 'landscape as a cover', [46] whilst the dominant society strives to tie the gypsies down to specific and readily delimited plots of territory. The problem is that the gypsy's use of space appears disordering and threatening to the neat parcellisation of land uses favoured by a society supportive of property and land ownership, and accustomed to the rigid classification and prevention of cross-category pollution enforced by the landscape's planners and other 'gate-keepers'. Sibley is hence led to the conclusion that the 'spatial syntax' of these professionals is a restricted one,

...whereby boundaries are strongly defined, there is an emphasis on homogeneity and purification within the space, and uses other than the assigned use within that space [are reckoned to] constitute pollution...By contrast a weakly classified space would be weakly bounded, heterogeneity would not constitute pollution... [47]

In order to pursue this argument at greater length Sibley turns to a discussion of the Parliamentary and associated local initiatives designed to resolve the 'problem' of nomadic, deprived and 'deviant' gypsies, and in the process he describes the attempt of the 1968 Caravan Sites Act to replace a polluting nomadism with a more purified caravan site existence. The implementation of this act has been distinctly patchy, however, partly because of county councils and county boroughs being reluctant to incur the costs of site provision, and partly because of the commonplace opposition to site proposals mounted by house-dwellers. One consequence of this fierce opposition is that most existing sites have sprung up at some remove from residential areas which they would otherwise pollute with

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[45] Sibley D, 1981, **op.cit.**, p.39.

[46] See Duncan J S, 1978, **op.cit.**, esp.pp.26-28.

[47] Sibley D, 1978, **op.cit.**, pp.320-321.

industrial activities carried on next door to trailers, and the majority have thus ended up in proximity to agricultural, industrial or waste disposal land uses.' Furthermore, and as Sibley shows when studying developments in the English town of Hull, this geography of caravan sites manages to

...remove travellers from the areas of the city where they are best able to make adaptations for work and residence...From observations on the relatively unconstrained behaviour of travellers on illegal stopping places, [it must be] conclude[d] that minimally equipped sites on vacant land in inner city residential areas would be preferable to the present policy. The advantages for travellers would be that they [are] able to practice self-help and continue their economic function of recycling the waste products of mainstream society. [48]

A final point in this connection is that the site designs themselves impose an alien spatial order upon the gypsies, and Sibley remarks that the model site layout (see Figure 3)

...shows an area allocated to trailers and toilet blocks and other areas for scrap-sorting, recreation and the warden's trailer. All uses, except the toilets, are spatially segregated...Thus, the usual zoning principle used in urban land-use allocation is employed in site design. The fact that this is quite alien to gypsy culture is ignored, but it expresses nicely the desire of the planner to regulate peoples' lives and 'to engineer conformity'...The simplified view of reality of the planner, of which classification and segregation are essential features, is incompatible with the disorderly but rational way in which the traveller organises space on a stopping site. [49]

Underlying all of these comments is a vaguely anarchistic interpretation of the problems inherent in mainstream spatial organisation, and Sibley himself identifies an 'anarchistic thread' that knits Outsiders together despite his reservations concerning the full

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[48] *ibid.*, p.326.

[49] Sibley D, 1976, *op.cit.*, p.85.

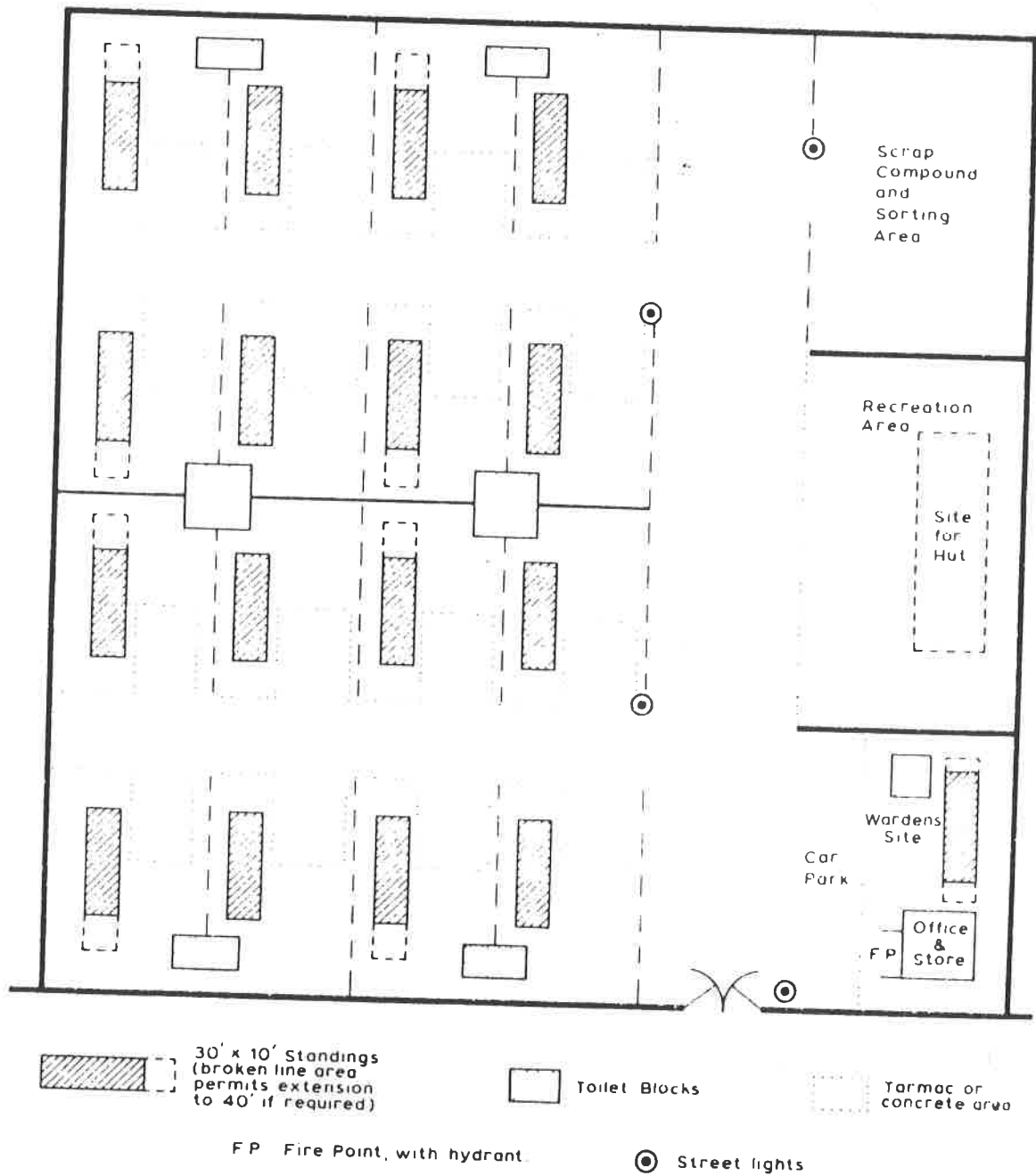


Figure 3: An official design for a gypsy trailer site, as proposed by the Caravan Sites Act, 1968, Part II (from Sibley D, 1981, *Outsiders in Urban Societies* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford), p.32).

portfolio of anarchist theory. [50] Even so, it is interesting to recall Richard Peet's equation of anarchist theory with geographical theory, [51] and to remember Myrna Breitbart's search through the writings of P.J.Proudhon and Peter Kropotkin for 'impressions of an anarchist landscape'. [52] One of Breitbart's key findings was that this landscape would witness the blurring of those iron spatial categories that make for inequality under capitalism, and that there would be a coincident lessening of distinctions between areas of urbanism, agriculture, resource-extraction, industry and resource-consumption. Moreover, there was also an indication that the anarchist 'micro-organisation' of the city would see a deliberate mixing of urban land uses, the encouragement of variety, and the consequent 'integration of living, working and recreation space'. [53] It is precisely this possibility that energises Sibley's own urging of planners to reconsider their advocacy of strong classifications and impermeable boundaries, and it is this possibility that leads him to support the likes of C.Alexander and Jane Jacobs as they complain about the planned obliteration of variety in the urban arena. Indeed, it is here that perhaps the widest tram-line of continuity between his early and his later work can be detected, since he once drew upon Alexander and Jacobs to argue for the retention of small shops in central business districts, and now he draws upon the same two authors when attacking a planning machine that seeks to pin down and gradually eradicate the gypsy population. [54]

The second aspect of Sibley's dealings with space concerns the more philosophical and methodological constructions that he brings to bear, and

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[50] See Sibley D, 1981, *op.cit.*, pp.ix-x and pp.196-198.

[51] See Peet R, 1975, 'For Kropotkin', *Antipode* 7(2), esp.p.43.

[52] See Breitbart M, 1975, 'Impressions of an anarchist landscape', *Antipode* 7(2), pp.44-49; Breitbart M, 1979, 'Introduction to special theme issue on anarchism', *Antipode* 10(3), pp.1-5. See also Peet R, 1979, 'The geography of human liberation', *Antipode* 10(3), esp.pp.126-128 and p.132.

[53] See Breitbart M, 1975, *op.cit.*, p.48. See also Horner G M, 1979, 'Kropotkin and the city: the socialist ideal in urbanism', *Antipode* 10(3), pp.33-45.

[54] Compare Sibley D, 1975, *op.cit.*, esp.pp.42-43 with Sibley D, 1981, *op.cit.*, esp.pp.35-36. The key references to the work of Alexander and Jacobs are Alexander C, 1966, 'The city is not a tree', *Design* 206, pp.47-55; Jacobs J, 1961, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Random House: New York).

at the root of these constructions is a rejection of the belief in an all-encompassing simple spatial order - as manifested in the search for general laws of spatial organisation - that was ushered in by geography as spatial science (see above). In his brief but intriguing paper on the 'notion of order in spatial analysis' he conducts an elementary quadrat analysis to demonstrate how spatial data may be manipulated

...so that it can be used to dress up any belief, such as a belief in a generally ordered space-economy, in the guise of an objective statement, [55]

and he goes on to suggest that the location theorist's desire to find order and laws may feed quite directly - though never conspiratorially - into the classificatory planning exercises that impose spatial rigidity upon gypsies and other outsiders. But this position must be understood quite precisely, [56] for Sibley is not denying that at some deeply-buried ontological level there may be a 'unitary cosmic order' - although he appears to doubt this possibility - and neither is he denying the existence of a social order created and policed by the state, by servile social control agencies, and by the economic 'needs' of society's productive base (be this capitalist or non-capitalist). Rather, he is contending that the spatial scientific search for order - which assumes, without any a priori justification, that this order must be compiled from

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[55] Sibley D, 1981a, 'The notion of order in spatial analysis', **Professional Geographer** 33, p.2.

[56] Confusion over these issues seems to cloud the response to Sibley's paper contained in Walker R A, 1981, 'Left-wing libertarianism, an academic disorder: a response to David Sibley', **Professional Geographer** 33, pp.5-9. Walker is clearly afraid that Sibley's attack on spatial science - which he would largely agree with - is actually part and parcel of a broader rejection of all science, and that it thereby risks jettisoning a scientific Marxism capable of illuminating the injustices of humanly-created social order. It is probably nearer the mark to suggest that Sibley does not reject science out of hand, that he is fully cognisant of humanly-created social order, but that he is unhappy with strident Marxist diagnoses about how this order is 'put together'. Thus, whilst he is prepared to engage with Marxist arguments and employ such Marxist concepts as the 'mode of production', he is sufficiently exasperated by Walker's doctrinal legislations to exclaim - in Sibley D, 1981b, 'Reply to Richard Walker', **Professional Geographer** 33, pp.10-11 - that "Walker demonstrates greater tolerance than Althusser, but has a tendency to pronounce with an air of certainty on issues that are problematic, even within the restricted field of Marxist social theory" (p.11).



such neat and regular primitives as lines, dots, polygons and smoothed surfaces - is misconceived, and that it necessarily informs a geometric planning intolerant of squiggles, shapeless blobs, erratic figures and lunar landscape surfaces. And it is this sort of understanding that leads him to declare that

[i]t is the...simple order [of 'straight lines and squares'] that characterises the built-forms of settlements where domination is a primary objective. The connection between the simple order of authoritarian regimes and the order that is 'discovered' by spatial analysis is that the analysis provides a scientific basis for policy... [57]

In place of the law-seeking inclinations of geography as spatial science Sibley appears to counsel a return to an old-style ideographic geography, and this means that the historical and contextual sensitivity peering through his early retailing studies once again comes to the fore. It is therefore telling that he offers repeated warnings about the dangers inherent in generalising away from individual 'cultural contexts', and that he speaks of 'societies' rather than simply 'society' in the title of Outsiders. One reviewer picks up on this subtlety when remarking that

...this book is not misleading in its generalised title, for the author draws from his personal experience and research to develop a theoretical perspective applicable to the 'outsider problem' of unassimilated urban ethnic groups in general...His approach is cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary. [58]

In other words, Sibley is obviously unhappy about the tendency of generalisation simply to extract common themes whilst junking the 'noise' peculiar to individual situations, and it is equally obvious that he prefers to proceed through a less wasteful procedure of comparing and contrasting the findings thrown up by different case studies. As he observes:

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[57] Sibley D, 1981b, *op.cit.*, p.10.

[58] Anon., *op.cit.*, p.1334.

[i]t is possible to point to several parallels between peripheral groups in regard to forms of social and economic organisation and in their significance as a political issue. High birth rates, low incomes, and identification by the larger society as groups in need of integration, for example, appear to be generally characteristic. In important respects, however, similarities of this sort may be misleading, and the search for parallels can obscure fundamental differences - theoretical inclusion can then do violence to reality. [59]

Given this orientation, it is unsurprising that he is so scrupulous in commentating upon both sameness and difference, and this is true whether he is comparing gypsy life in the two English towns of Hull and Sheffield [60] or whether he is comparing the experience of English gypsies with that of a more settled minority such as the North American Indian. [61]

It should now be apparent that Sibley's 'comparative framework' has much in common with recent efforts to reinvigorate human geogaphy using a concept such as contextuality, which undoubtedly echoes the thrust of an older regional geography whilst giving this a much more sophisticated theoretical anchorage than it ever possessed before. Indeed, geographical theorists such as Torsten Hagerstrand, Derek Gregory and Nigel Thrift all contrast a 'compositional' social theory - which aims to establish logical relationships between structural categories plucked from the ebb and flow of daily life - with a 'contextual' social theory where the essential 'togetherness' of categories within specific time-space 'settings for interaction' is regarded as sovereign. It is questionable whether or not these geographers still believe in foundational laws governing how contexts are assembled and then implicated in the doings of people and institutions, but - and whatever the answer - it remains the case that their theoretical accoutrements do not include any longing to uncover tidy, geometrical laws of spatial organisation. They would all acknowledge that there is just too much difference around for this to be a

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[59] Sibley D, 1981, **op.cit.**, p.148.

[60] See **ibid.**, Chapter 10. For the Hull case study see also Sibley D, 1978, **op.cit.**

[61] See Sibley D, 1981, **op.cit.**, Chapter 11.

meaningful exercise. [62]

A final point in this respect leads from Sibley's use of case studies to develop what the Choice reviewer calls a 'theoretical perspective' on outsiders. [63] A conventional scientific proposal would be that the theoretical act of positing relationships - or even causal connections - between categories, variables and conditions can only be taken seriously if it is rooted in a stockpile of empirical regularities culled from numerous case studies or, better still, from a large-scale and purpose-designed survey. Andrew Sayer has complained about the conceptual 'chaos' that can accompany this theoretical dependency on observed regularities, [64] but of more immediate interest here are those recent anthropological and sociological assertions that the movement 'from local truths to general visions' cannot be achieved simply by appeal to large and statistically significant samples. [65] The jist of these claims is that even the small events and phenomena sought out by an individual case study must be seen as 'comments on more than themselves', and this means that the detailed or 'thick' description of associations between these events and phenomena will always boast far-reaching theoretical ramifications. This line of reasoning seems to swing back towards the notion of contextuality referenced above, but for the present all I wish to suggest is that the philosophical and methodological treatment of space written into Sibley's geography of outsiders is shadowing - if not actually anticipating - some challenging new thinking about space, context and the role of case studies.

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[62] See Gregory D, 1985, 'Suspended animation: the stasis of diffusion theory', in Gregory D, Urry J (eds.), **Social Relations and Spatial Structures** (Macmillan: London), esp.pp.321-322; Thrift N, 1983, 'On the determination of social action in time and space', **Environment and Planning D: Society and Space** 1, esp.pp.27-28. Both of these accounts draw upon the ideas of Torsten Hagerstand.

[63] See Anon, *op.cit.*, p.1334.

[64] See Sayer A, 1984, **Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach** (Hutchinson: London), esp. Chapters 6 and 9.

[65] See, for example, Geertz C, 1973, **The Interpretation of Cultures** (Basic Books: New York), esp. Chapter 1; Clyde Mitchell J, 1983, 'Case and situation analysis', **Sociological Review** 31, pp.187-211.

The Geography of Mental Illness:  
From Something Old Towards Something New

Faris and Dunham, 'psychiatric geographies' and putting 'madness' on the map

Internationally, there is some evidence that perspectives on medical geography are expanding to encompass a wider range of mental and physical ill-health conditions. [66]

Are we...brought to consider...the idea of a 'disease pattern of community', in this case mental instability and depression? To what extent could one be justified in ascribing a territorial...basis to this, if it could be held to exist? [67]

It is perhaps surprising just how many statements and studies homing in on the spatial distribution of mental illness can be detected in the geographical literature, and in this respect it is pertinent to notice the second quote above from one of the discipline's more senior statesmen, W.B.Fisher, who was considering the social and economic milieu framing high depression and suicide rates in the North East of England. It is true that some of the statements and studies of relevance here would not be out of place in an older geographical 'paradigm' concerned with 'person-land' relations, [68] and it is also true that a few geographical inquiries concentrating primarily upon issues such as population overcrowding and

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- [66] Phillips D R, 1983, **Contemporary Issues in the Geography of Health Care** (Geo Books: Norwich), p.42.
- [67] Fisher W B, 1974, 'Geography and the organisation of medical services', **Journal of Biosocial Science** 6, p.263. Fisher is better known, of course, for his geographical studies of Asia.
- [68] See in particular Giggs J A, 1973, 'Mental health and the environment', in Howe G M, Loraine J A (eds.), **Environmental Medicine** (William Heinemann: London), pp.281-305. With respect to the influence of the natural or physical world, Giggs himself has reported on work that posits a causal chain leading from climate through national character to mental disorder in Giggs J A, 1977, 'Mental disorders and mental subnormality', in Howe G M (ed.), **A World Geography of Human Diseases** (Academic Press: London), pp.502-505. Alternatively, a few medical geographers have considered the natural determinants of thyroid disorders and the disease known as encephalitis, both of which are associated with mental instability and mental handicap. See *ibid.*, pp.484-490; Pyle G F, 1979, **Applied Medical Geography** (John Wiley: London), pp.85-107.

the generation of stress have touched upon the relationship between the social environment and mental disorder. [69] In addition, a number of recent works have begun to consider the influence of the 'created', socio-economic environment upon the sustenance of good mental health, and in this connection I am thinking of D.M.Smith's 'welfare' perspective on mental well-being, and also of C.J.Smith's compelling efforts to identify

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[69] Several geographers have remarked upon the connection between overcrowding and such 'pathologies' as crime, delinquency and mental disorder. See Boots B N, 1977, 'Population density, crowding and human behaviour', **Progress in Human Geography** 3, pp.13-63; Gad G, 1973, 'Crowding and pathologies: some critical remarks', **Canadian Geographer** 17, pp.373-390; Newling B E, 1969, 'Urban growth and spatial structure: mathematical models', **Geographical Review** 56, p.225. Much of this work shades into an assessment of the relationships binding together overcrowding, the production of 'stress' and the onset of mental problems, and in this respect see Pierce R M, 1974, **Behavioural Correlates of Percieved Stress in the Urban Environment: Spatial Restriction in Metropolitan Detroit**, Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Geography, Michigan State University; Regnert G F, 1974, 'Coping with urban stress: the case of school dropouts in Philadelphia', **Proceedings of the Association of American Geographers** 6, pp.120-124.

An intiguing and even more eplicit focus on 'stress' is to be found in Foster's proposals for a 'geography of stress' sensitive to spatial variations in how people perceive and cope with events such as natural disasters, or with noxious components of the landscape such as highways, quarries and sewage works. See Foster H D, 1979, 'The geography of stress', **Area** 11, pp.107-108, and see his application of these proposals in Foster H D, 1976, 'Assessing disaster magnitude: a social science approach', **Professional Geographer** 28, pp.241-247. A rather more tangible study - in which the impact of a major flood on the level of hospital admissions for mental disorder receives attention - is Hadmer J W, Smith D I, 1983, 'Health hazards of floods: hospital admissions for Lismore', **Australian Geographical Studies** 21, esp.pp.225-226.

A different tradition in the discipline has considered the influence that 'locational stress' - the stresses and strains prompted by a mismatch between a household's favoured and actual environments - may exert upon a household's decision to relocate or migrate. The key paper here is Wolpert J, 1966, 'Migration as an adjustment to environmental stress', **Journal of Social Issues** 22, pp.92-102. Various geographers have laboured to refine and mathematically model this notion, but in so doing the possible equation of mental problems, stress and residential relocation has gradually been forgotten. See Onaka J, Clark W A V, 1983, 'A disaggregate model of residential mobility and housing choice', **Geographical Analysis** 15, pp.287-304, who observe that, "[w]hile the earlier definition of stress relied in part on its interpretation as a psychological phenomenon, later researchers have adopted a more strictly economic perspective by identifying stress with disequilibrium in housing consumption, or the loss in household utility, net of transaction costs, associated with remaining in the intial unit" (p.289).

neighbourhood characteristics likely to prevent the 'recidivism' of ex-mental patients. [70] Even so, the one coherent and at all widespread 'tradition' within this geographical ragbag has been that employing a spatial scientific methodology with two basic components: firstly, an attempt to discover the general locational trends, describing the 'where' of mental illness in and around the city, and secondly, an attempt to relate these trends to spatial variations present in the physical, economic and social phenomena of the material realm. As C.J.Smith explains, the revealed relationships can then be used to make inferences about aetiology - or the causes of illness - and the finished package

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[70] See Smith D M, 1973, **The Geography of Social Well-being in the United States: An Introduction to Territorial Indicators** (McGraw-Hill: New York), esp.pp.94-98; Smith D M, 1977, **Human Geography: A Welfare Approach**, esp.pp.276-296. Smith's statistical analysis of well-being in the United States yields a principal component identifiable as an index of Mental Health, "being most closely associated with residence in mental hospitals, hospital expenditure, divorce, suicide and motor vehicle accidents (probably indicative of aggressive behaviour)" (1977, p.276), and the state-level 'scores' on this component suggest both an improvement in mental health from east to west and an association with areas of high population turn-over. But doubt has been cast on the ability of Smith's 'hard' aggregate indicators to adequately reflect the geography of real personal well-being or 'happiness'. See Allenstein D S, 1981, **Social Welfare or Subjective Well-being? The Geography of Mental Health in Vancouver, B.C.**, Unpublished BA dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge. Related studies here include Daiches S, 1981, 'People in distress: a geographical perspective on psychological well-being', University of Chicago, Department of Geography, Research Paper No.197; Irving H W, 1975, 'A geographer looks at personality', **Area** 7, pp.207-212; Warnes A M, 1981, 'Migration after retirement: the implications for health and mental health services', University of London, King's College, Department of Geography, Occasional Paper No.12, esp.pp.9-13.

As already indicated, I do not wish to discuss Smith's work here, but it might be noted that his early focus on the 'types of residential setting conducive to the psychological well-being of ex-mental patients' has now been replaced by a more general concern for the role of the neighbourhood in promoting positive mental health. See Smith C J, 1977, **The Residential Neighbourhood as a Therapeutic Community**, Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Geography, University of Michigan; Smith C J, 1980, 'Neighbourhood effects on mental health', in Herbert D T, Johnston R J (eds.), **Geography and the Urban Environment, Vol.III**, pp.363-415. Note also Smith's more general commentaries on the development of community mental health, a prime example of which is Smith C J, 1983, 'Innovation in mental health policy: community mental health in the United States, 1965-1980', **Environment and Planning D: Society and Space** 1, pp.447-479.

bears all the hallmarks of the 'traditional ecological approach'. [71]

This ecological imprint is to be expected, of course, given the huge influence of the classic text by Robert E.L.Faris and H.Warren Dunham entitled Mental Disorders in Urban Areas, which was published in 1939 as a volume in the University of Chicago 'Sociological Series'. [72] The allegiance of this text to the 'human ecology' of Ernest Burgess and Robert Park is explicit at every turn, and the whole work is plainly billed as an application of a 'refined ecological technique'. [73] The centre-piece of the study involves a series of maps depicting the 'urban distribution of insanity rates', and these are compiled from records of admissions to both public and private psychiatric hospitals in Chicago. The spatial distributions uncovered vary depending upon which institutional records are used, and they also vary with the type of mental disorder being mapped, but a definite picture of Chicago's geography of mental illness still begins to emerge. Thus, when all the available data is pressed into the service of constructing a map showing insanity rates for zones of differing distances from the city centre (see Figure 4), it is readily apparent that

...by far the highest rate for insanity in the city occurs in the central business district or Zone I. In every zone, in every section of the city, with the exception of the southwest side, there is a steady decline in the rate as one travels from the centre of the city to the periphery. On the southwest side there is a slight rise in Zone VII. [74]

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[71] See Smith C J, 1977, *op.cit.*, esp.p.3; Smith C J, 1978, 'Problems and prospects for a geography of mental health', *Antipode* 10(1), esp.p.1. These two papers - along with Smith C J, 1985, 'Mental health in an urban world', *Urban Geography* 6, pp.88-99 - comprise the sole reviews overseeing the geography of mental illness and mental health, and they are particularly valuable for identifying problems and setting research agendas. Conversely, they are perhaps a little weak in engaging at any length with the strengths and weaknesses of existing studies.

[72] See Faris R E L, Dunham H W, 1939, **Mental Disorders in Urban Areas: An Ecological Study of Schizophrenia and Other Psychoses** (University of Chicago Press: Chicago).

[73] See *ibid.*, p.xxi.

[74] *ibid.*, p.37.

Throughout the text an effort is made to compare this pattern - and also the subtle deviations from this pattern - to the 'ecological structure' of Chicago, which the authors portray as a mosaic of economic and cultural 'natural areas' delimited in terms of 'mathematical indices' like the percentage of foreign-born and the percentage of homes owned. [75] Following on from this exercise it becomes possible to identify a number of associations between certain 'natural areas' of the city and certain types of mental illness, but of particular salience is the finding that most mental illnesses - but notably the schizophrenias - tend to congregate in central areas boasting large collections of rooming-houses, lodging-houses and transients' hostels. And it is this finding that leads Faris and Dunham to speculate about a causal relationship linking the occurrence of mental illness to those areas where people are often living alone, rather than in stable families or communities. Yet, and as I will argue shortly, this hypothesis of 'social isolation' has considerably more built into it than simply an observation of empirical regularity.

It is not difficult to trace a lineage from Mental Disorders in Urban Areas to the more recent geographical inquiries, and it is beyond dispute - as J.A.Giggs and P.M.Mather report - that

Faris and Dunham's pioneer study...established a pattern of analysis which has survived almost unchanged to the present day. [76]

Indeed, this 'pattern of analysis' is clearly present in what is probably the best-known of these inquiries, Giggs' own 1973 study of the distribution of schizophrenics in the English city of Nottingham. Using records of first and chronic admissions to hospital, Giggs is able to ascertain the basic geography of revealed schizophrenia in the city, and - even when this is broken down according to different schizophrenia sub-groups, or adjusted to take into account population density and population 'at risk' - the pattern is largely dominated by a declining incidence of

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[75] See *ibid.*, Chapter 1 on 'Natural areas of the city'.

[76] Giggs J A, Mather P M, 1983, 'Perspectives on mental health in urban areas', Nottingham Monographs in Applied Geography No.3, p.7.



illness with distance from the city centre (see Figure 5). [77] Giggs' next manoeuvre is to relate this picture and its deviations back to various 'ecological factors', and he attempts to achieve this by subjecting the schizophrenia variables and numerous other 'social-environmental' variables to several different factor analytic routines. Thus, after conducting a second-order factor analysis on the first-order factors yielded by an oblique (Promax) rotational procedure, he succeeds in isolating an overarching 'social/environmental - schizophrenia' dimension. He maps the 'scores' registered on this factor by Nottingham's many enumeration districts, and then summarises his results in this fashion:

[t]he statistical and cartographic evidence shows that the majority of both first admission and chronic schizophrenic patients entered hospital from an area characterised by high levels of 'urbanism' and 'rented housing'. [78]

But this is hardly surprising given the high positive correlation ( $r = +0.58$ ) existing between the first factor produced by the first-order Promax rotation, which picks out the original schizophrenia variables, and the third factor produced by the first-order rotation, which picks out attributes that

...contrast mobile, economically and socially disadvantaged populations with relatively stable

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[77] See Giggs J A, 1973, 'The distribution of schizophrenics in Nottingham', **Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers** 59, pp.55-76. A reply to this paper appears in Gudgin G, 1975, 'The distribution of schizophrenics in Nottingham: a comment', **Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers** 64, pp.148-149, and Giggs offers a rejoinder in Giggs J A, 1975, 'The distribution of schizophrenics in Nottingham: a reply', **Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers** 64, pp.150-156. For a commentary on Giggs' study, which is introduced as a good example of an 'ecological' approach to medical geography, see Phillips D R, *op.cit.*, pp.107-112. Note the antecedent of Giggs' paper in Giggs J A, 1970, 'Socially disorganised areas in Barry: a multivariate analysis', in Carter H, Davies W K D (eds.), **Urban Essays: Studies in the Geography of Wales** (Longman: London), pp.101-143, where Giggs investigates the distributions of many 'social defects', but not the mentally ill. See also Giggs J A, 1977, 'The mental health of immigrants', in Bowen M (ed.), **Australia 2000: The Ethnic Impact** (University of New England: Armidale), pp.256-266.

[78] Giggs J A, 1973, *op.cit.*, p.69.

Figure 4: Insanity rates in Chicago by zones and sectors, showing the clear 'distance-decay' of rates away from the city centre (from Paris R E L, Dunham H W, 1939, *Mental Disorders in Urban Areas* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago), p.36).

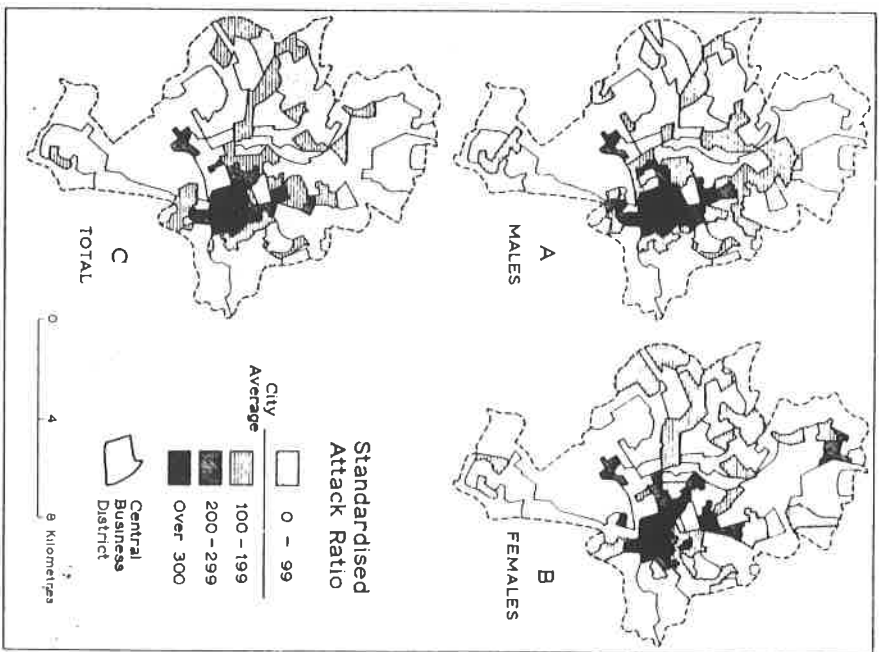
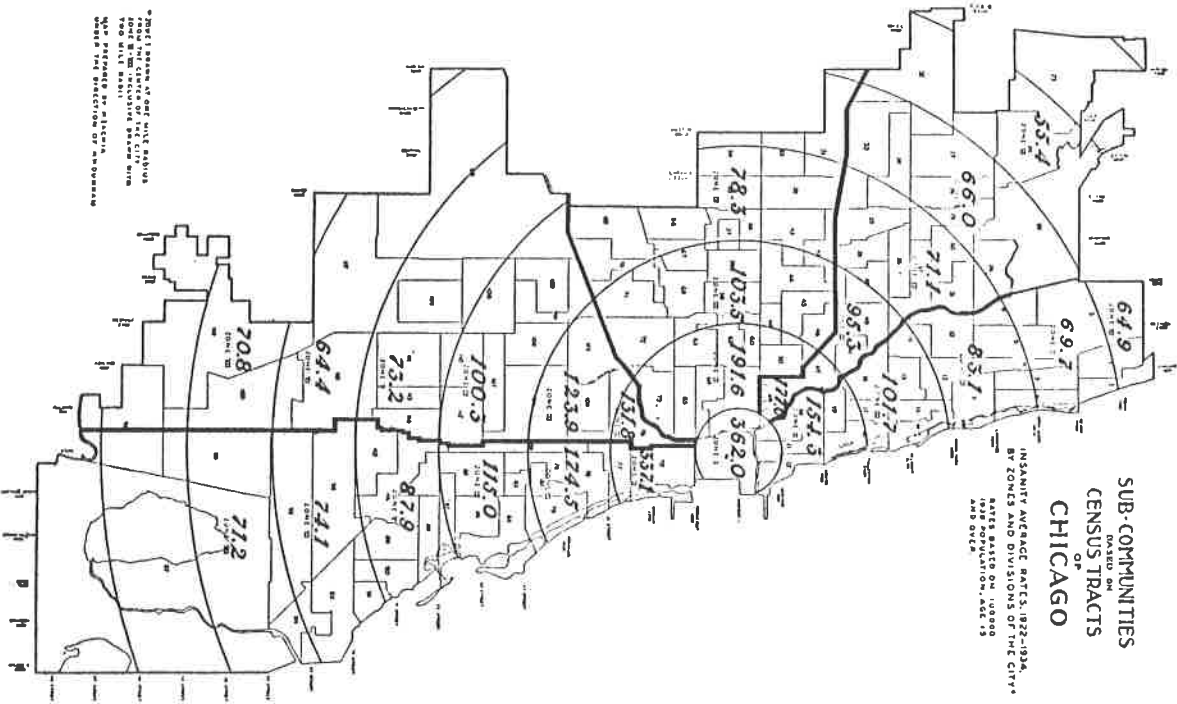


Figure 5: The distribution of standardised schizophrenia rates - as adjusted for variations in population density and population 'at risk' (which varies with an area's age structure) - in Nottingham (from Giggs J A, 1973, 'The distribution of schizophrenics in Nottingham', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 59, p.58).

family-based populations. Accordingly, the dimension is labelled 'urbanism-familism'. [79]

Giggs offers little interpretation of these results, and he sticks close to a multi-causal view of the ways in which the urban environment may 'create' schizophrenia, but the implication is that mental illness in Nottingham is being precipitated by those environments where people are likely to suffer from what Faris and Dunham call 'social isolation'.

And this sort of research design and findings can be encountered in a number of other geographical investigations of what S.D.Taylor calls the 'psychiatric geography' of the city. [80] For instance, Giggs himself continues to publish papers in which he refines his 1973 methodology, and in these he conducts stepwise multiple regressions designed to relate selected illness variables to the principal components derived from an extremely comprehensive and technical 'social ecology' of Nottingham. [81] Meanwhile, Timms deliberately draws upon the Chicago 'school' of human ecology to inform his own examination of 'social defectiveness' in Derby and Luton, and in the process he discovers that schizophrenia is a likely product of an inner-city 'rooming-house' environment where 'disorganisation and loneliness' prevail. [82] Another researcher is S.M.Bain, [83] who has found that the geography of psychiatric disorders in the North East of Scotland is marked by an increase of referral rates from rural, through small town to a city environment, but that in Aberdeen no obvious or consistent 'distance-decay' of referrals away from the city

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[79] *ibid.*, p.66.

[80] See Taylor S D, 1974, **The Geography and Epidemiology of Psychiatric Illness in Southampton, With Particular Reference to Schizophrenia**, Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Geography, University of Southampton, p.371.

[81] See Giggs J A, 1983, 'Schizophrenia and ecological structure in Nottingham', in McGlashan N D, Blunden J R (eds.), **Geographical Aspects of Health** (Academic Press: London), pp.197-222; Giggs J A, Mather P M, *op.cit.*.

[82] See Timms D W G, 1963, *op.cit.*; Timms D W G, 1965, *op.cit.*; Timms D W G, 1971, *op.cit.*, pp.244-248.

[83] See Innes G, Bain S M, 1964, 'The North East region of Scotland', in Baldwin J A, Millar W M (eds.), **Community Psychiatry**, (Little Brown: Boston); Bain S M, 1973, 'The geographical distribution of psychiatric disorders in the North East region of Scotland', **Geographica Medica** 1, pp.84-108; Bain S M, 1974, 'A geographer's approach in the epidemiology of psychiatric disorder', **Journal of Biosocial Science** 6, pp.195-220.

centre can be detected. A rather more sophisticated study in the spatial scientific tradition is that by S.D.Taylor, who compares the social geography of Southampton, England, with the city's 'psychiatric geography', and in so doing exposes a 'marked concentration' of mental illness in the inner city. [84] Finally, and more recently, K.G.Dean and H.D.James have examined the distributions of both schizophrenia and depressive illnesses in Plymouth, and have uncovered patterns that differ greatly depending on whether males or females, first admissions or readmissions, psychoses or neuroses are the focus of study. [85] It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the associations revealed between illness variables and assorted socio-economic, socio-demographic and housing variables are many and varied, or that this complexity is leading the two researchers to speculate about all manner of possible 'underlying processes', a few of which will merit some additional attention later in this essay. [86]

#### Threads of a sympathetic critique

[T]here is a danger that attempts to assimilate critical insights into the corpus of traditional geography will leave its foundations undisturbed and its primary allegiances unchallenged: negation can follow hard on the heels of recognition, no matter how

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[84] See Taylor S D, *op.cit.*

[85] See Dean K G, James H D, 1980, 'The spatial distribution of depressive illness in Plymouth', **British Journal of Psychiatry** 136, pp.167-180; Dean K G, James H D, 1981, 'Social factors and admission to psychiatric hospital: schizophrenia in Plymouth', **Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers** 6(NS), pp.39-52. Dean has moved some way from the spatial scientific leanings of these studies in Dean K G, 1982, **The Psychiatric Admission Process: A Geographical Perspective**, Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Geography, University of Hull. See also Dean K G, 1979, 'The geographical study of psychiatric illness: the case of depressive illness in Plymouth', **Area** 11, pp.167-171.

[86] It might also be noted that a handful of spatial scientific inquiries have concentrated upon the distributions and ecological correlates of alcoholism and suicide, both of which are reckoned to be unhappy associates of mental illness. See Burnley I H, McGlashan N D, 1980, 'Variations of suicide within Australia', **Social Science and Medicine** 14D, pp.215-224; Howe G M, 1979, 'Death in London', **Geographical Magazine** LI, esp.p.289; McGlashan N D, 1980, 'The social correlates of alcohol-related mortality in Tasmania, 1971-1978', **Social Science and Medicine** 14D, pp.191-203.

elaborate the ceremony, and the possibility ought not to be taken lightly. [87]

Having established in outline the character and claims of a spatial science of mental illness, my task is now to develop a few threads of critique in order to 'disturb foundations' and 'challenge allegiances'. However, whilst it would be easy to dismiss the whole enterprise with a handful of aggressive and destructive statements, this style of bludgeoning is unjust because it implies the researchers involved to be entirely bereft of theoretical or substantive insights, and it also downplays the social concern that many of these researchers must genuinely have felt. Moreover, although several of my own comments are quite polemical, and thereby home in on the weakest links in the presentations under scrutiny, I am also concerned to show that many of these presentations have already anticipated - in one way or another - a number of the criticisms that I am about to raise. I will organise my criticisms here into three subsections, the contents of which will closely parallel the three sets of arguments that have already been advanced with reference to David Sibley's geography of outsiders, and my hope is that the discussion will resonate beyond the parochialism of psychiatric geographies to amplify the general problems besetting a spatial science of outsiders.

**i) The lives of the mentally ill: from objects to reading case histories.**

It was suggested earlier that the spatial science of outsiders has been greatly taxed to discover the general laws governing the distribution of 'defectiveness' and 'deviancy' in and around the city, and it should now be clear from my comments on the methodology common to most geographies of mental illness that these have also entertained a search for general laws. Whilst it might be supposed that the 'proper' scientist would only hunt for such laws in the biochemical make-ups of the individuals affected, the limited success of studies with this purely internal focus has led some scientists to seek for more indirect - or removed - causes rooted in the environment external to the mental patient. It is this manoeuvre that opens up a niche for medical geographers to study mental illness, even

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[87] Gregory D, 1978, *op.cit.*, p.157.

though the law-like proposals tumbling from their subsequent projects have never been stated all that forcefully, as can be seen from Giggs' objection that his 1973 paper is not as 'surely' argued as one critic might suggest. [88] In a similar vein, Giggs and Mather argue that the sort of research design employed for their work on Nottingham

...is now more accurately described as 'associative analysis', because it offers statistical evidence, rather than absolute proof, of 'causal relationships'. [89]

Even so - and as is also the case with Timms' modest conclusions (see above) - this sort of reticence masks an underlying belief in the reality of general laws controlling the 'where' and the 'why' of mental illness, and it also hides the hope that science is indeed a cumulative enterprise building towards a revelation of these precious tablets of knowledge. But all is not well with these underlying beliefs and hopes, and this is because they inevitably lead to outsiders being viewed simply as natural objects. As Ian Taylor et al explain:

[t]he positivist attempts the scientific explanation of crime [or 'deviancy']...as having the qualities (no more and no less) of things - or objects in the natural world. With this in mind he [sic] denudes action of meaning, or moral choice and of creativity. For human behaviour to be studied scientifically it must be akin to the non-human world, it must be deterministically dominated by law-like regulations, it must be reified - have the quality of 'things'. [90]

This passage clearly warns that the treatment of outsiders as little more than dots on maps or statistics in tables inevitably neglects just what is 'going on' inside these dots and statistics, and is thereby in grave danger of considering the individuals concerned to be 'less than human'. But it is gratifying to find that this problem has not gone completely unnoticed in the spatial science of outsiders, and it can even be shown that the

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[88] See Giggs' reply to Gudgin in Giggs J A, 1975, *op.cit.*, esp.pp.151-152.

[89] Giggs J A, Mather P M, *op.cit.*, p.12.

[90] Taylor I, Walton P, Young J, 1973, *The New Criminology: For a Social Theory of Deviance* (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London), p.23.

tendency of psychiatric geographies to waste few words on the people churning around in their factor analytic routines is sometimes tempered by the doubt that something more ought to be said about the lives and thoughts behind the numbers.

As indicated above, the spatial science of mental illness owes a great deal to the human ecology of the Chicago 'school', and yet this enterprise has paid little attention to the way in which many early human ecologists softened the objectifying tendencies of their project by viewing the city-dweller as an intelligent, sensitive and creative subject. [91] This being said, the human ecology of the Faris and Dunham volume is not a variety that entertains any great concern for human values, even though these authors do strive to substantiate their 'social isolation' hypothesis with reference to both individual case histories and the particular experiences of an ex-'jailbird', a school-girl who had been attacked and a patient who thought he was Christ. [92] Similarly, Giggs is led to remark that a 'full investigation' of schizophrenia in Nottingham would necessitate a more detailed analysis of individual case histories [93] - a point echoed by Gudgin [94] - and S.D.Taylor offers the more forthright suggestion that

...an ecological approach combined with individual characteristics would allow the study of environment-individual interaction [my emphasis]. [95]

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[91] Janowitz M, 1967, 'Introduction', in Park R E, Burgess E W, McKenzie R D, **The City** (University of Chicago Press: Chicago) - which was originally published in 1925 - p.ix. Janowitz observes that, "[i]n their search for objectivity and generality [the human ecologists] did not find it necessary to deny a concern with the values that propel human beings" (p.ix). And this sensitivity to subjectively-held values and meanings was an especial feature of those inquiries that took the patient anthropological research of 'primitive' peoples as a model for producing 'ethnographies' of urban social groupings.

[92] See Faris R E L, Dunham H W, **op.cit.**, pp.173-177. One of the authors analyses 101 consecutive schizophrenia cases presented in an eastern hospital, and in the process he looks for childhood experiences that might have implanted the seeds of disorder.

[93] See Giggs J A, 1973, **op.cit.**, p.71.

[94] See Gudgin G, **op.cit.**.

[95] Taylor S D, **op.cit.**, p.16. Taylor's use of case histories brings him to a number of interesting conclusions - as will be discussed further on - and his Appendix 3 contains some sample individual case histories.

This suggestion that data pertaining to individuals should be employed to shed light on both the aetiology of mental illness and the factors controlling its areal distribution has been taken further by Dean, who makes the attempt to link aggregate and individual materials the touchstone of his whole project. [96] I will say a little more about his 'model' of 'aggregate and individuals' further on, but for the moment it is sufficient to report on how he sees his attempt to recover and contextualise the 'subjective realities' held by mental patients as an exercise with interpretative, hermeneutic and phenomenological leanings. As he states in the conclusion to his PhD thesis:

[a]lthough the present study makes virtually no use of such techniques as participant observation, it does employ an interpretative approach and demonstrates the importance of such an approach in the study of psychiatric hospital admissions. [97]

More particularly, though, he conducts a largely qualitative 'contents analysis' of 349 sets of case notes pertaining to individual patients, and this enables him to detect something of the experiences and misfortunes undergone by these patients, and also to glimpse something of the interpretations that they place upon their own predicaments. It can hardly be doubted, therefore, that Dean has gone a considerable way towards bringing individuals as subjects into the pursuit of psychiatric geography.

**ii) Mental illness and society: from naturalism to 'social construction'.**

There is undoubtedly a sizeable outcrop of naturalism present in the spatial science of outsiders, and it is not hard to trace this to the

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[96] See Dean K G, 1982, *op.cit.*. Dean gives a brief 'historical account' of attempts to utilise individual-level data in psychiatric geography, and concludes that "the success of such work has been limited, and there is a need for more systematic approaches to the linkage of aggregate areal and individual realities" (pp.58-59).

[97] *ibid.*, p.357. Some may quarrel with this claim, and argue that Dean's endeavours stop several steps short of any phenomenological or hermeneutic recovery of deeply-sedimented meanings and 'essences'. Nevertheless, I would reply that the precise ins and outs of these 'long words' are less important than what it is Dean has actually achieved.



predilection of the human ecologists for theories derived from plant and animal ecology. [98] And it is also not hard to see how this naturalism feeds into what Taylor et al refer to as the 'society as organism' vision, in which the image is of society as one large living entity comprised of many interlocking and mutually supportive parts. [99] The analogy can be taken further, of course, and some authors write about what happens when certain parts of society become ill, cease to function properly, and thereby display certain unpleasant symptoms. Since the latter may include the waywardness of 'defective' and 'deviant' populations, the impression must be one of a wholly natural association binding a basically healthy and organised society to a handful of unhealthy and disorganised outsider groups. Furthermore, just as sickness in a body is normally localised in one particular organ, so the sickness of society is usually to be found in those geographical localities identified by the human ecologists as 'socially disorganised'. Taylor et al provide a succinct commentary on this line of reasoning when noting how the human ecologists,

...having a fundamentally organic model of the healthy symbiotic society as their operating goal...are able to argue that certain environments - by virtue of their parasitical existence on the overweening social organism, and their insulation from its integrative culture - are pathologically disorganised. [100]

This sort of vocabulary and attendant conceptual framework surfaces repeatedly in the spatial science of outsiders, and it also features in many of the psychiatric geographies, but I will delay my discussion of the relevant materials here until the following subsection. What I do wish to discuss, though, are those few hints within the literature of psychiatric geography that point away from the naturalist outcrop, and in so doing point towards a rather more social conception of how the mentally ill - and outsiders more generally - come into contact with mainstream society.

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[98] A seminal paper displaying this predilection is McKenzie R D, 1967, 'The ecological approach to the study of the human community', in Park R E, Burgess E W, McKenzie R D, op.cit., pp.63-79.

[99] See Taylor I, Walton P, Young J, op.cit., pp.123-125.

[100] ibid., p.113.

Although the Faris and Dunham volume may seem an unpromising place to start in this respect, it is not too difficult to show that their 'social isolation' hypothesis is the product of some careful sociological thinking. The key that enables the reader to follow this thinking lies with the resemblance between the title of their Chapter X, 'Mind and Society', and the title of G.H.Mead's influential Mind, Self and Society. [101] Mead himself espouses a 'naturalism which sees thinking human beings in nature', but his understanding of mind and self veers away from a Watsonian 'stimulus-response behaviourism' towards a 'social psychology' sensitive to how the individual comes to understand and act upon the world through repeated social interactions. A central tenet of this vision is that the individual desiring an 'organised self' must learn to internalise the attitudes of - indeed, must be able to envisage playing the roles of - those other individuals encountered during the course of human interaction. Moreover, this individual must acquire the attitudes and roles, not just of immediate acquaintances, but of all these other people, and it is here that Mead introduces the celebrated idea of the 'generalised other' to refer to the sum of all these people together. [102] As he explains,

[t]he attitude of the generalised other is the attitude of the whole community...It is in the form of the generalised other that the social process influences the behaviour of the individuals involved in it and carrying it on, i.e. that the community exercises control over the conduct of its individual members; for it is in this form that the social process of community enters as a determining factor into the

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[101]See Mead G H, 1934, **Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist** (University of Chicago Press: Chicago). The material in this text is principally comprised by two sets of student notes on the 'Social Psychology' course that Mead gave at the University of Chicago during the first decades of the century. Mead is often portrayed as the founder of 'symbolic interactionism' - a catholic body of social theory that views the social world as a social product whose meanings are constituted in and through social interaction - but there is a danger that this label obscures much of the richness of his thinking. Faris and Dunham explicitly acknowledge his influence in Faris R E L, Dunham H W, **op.cit.**, Chapter X, Footnotes 2 and 4, p.152 and p.157.

[102]This term must not be confused with Foucault's depiction of 'the Other' (see below). Indeed, it could perhaps be argued that Mead's 'generalised other' is not so very different from Foucault's 'Same'.

individual's thinking [103]

The obvious corollary of this state of affairs is that a disorganised undisciplined self will arise in those situations when, for whatever reason, social interaction between an individual and the 'generalised other' is stunted. Although Mead appears to say little about this eventuality, Faris and Dunham step in to take up the argument with reference to the incidence of mental illness in the city. [104] Thus, following from the initial statement that

[m]entality, abilities, behaviour are all achievements of the person, developed in a history of long interaction with his [sic] surroundings, both physical and social, [105]

they discuss the 'folkways' and more formal 'mechanisms of social control' that are designed - as Mead might say - to facilitate the individual's internalisation of the 'generalised other'. Mental problems arise, so they argue, when these folkways and mechanisms are not present, and when the individual's own world view - or 'axiological world' or, to recall Sibley, 'world-structure' - is allowed to grow out of kilter with the world view supported by most of society's other members. In other words,

[s]uccessful transmission of the essential standardised cultural view of the world, and therefore successful production in the person of a sufficiently normal mental organisation, requires a normal family life, normal community life, reasonable stability and consistency in the influences and surroundings of a person, all supported on a continuous stream of

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[103]Mead G H, op.cit., p.155.

[104]Mead does suggest, though, that some individuals fail to identify with the community at large - perhaps as a result of experiencing only limited contact with this social body - and he goes on to conjecture that these individuals may relate to the 'organised other' provided by the companionship of a small clique or gang. But this, so he argues, is the way to 'deviancy', and he gives the example of the criminal who only identifies with a small group, and who thereby makes depredations upon a community that recognises and preserves the rights of property. See *ibid.*, p.265.

[105]Faris R E L, Dunham H W, *op.cit.*, p.152.

intimate social communication. [106]

The conclusion to be drawn from all this is that Faris and Dunham see their hypothesis of 'social isolation' - of isolation from a 'continuous stream of intimate social communication' - as rather more than just a depiction of empirical regularity, and they evidently see material phenomena such as rooming houses, broken families and transient populations, not as actual causes of mental illness, but as indicators of certain underlying mental and social processes generative of this condition. In practice, however, many psychiatric geographies miss this crucial distinction, and thereby remain under the illusion that 'explanation' can be achieved simply by inserting socio-economic variable after socio-economic variable into the technical melting-pot of associative analysis. Faris and Dunham's theoretical bedrock may not be entirely satisfactory in itself, but it does at least contain the seeds of a more social understanding of how society 'produces' its own outsiders. [107]

These seeds have lain dormant for a long time, but it may be that they are now beginning to germinate in Dean's recent work on the psychiatric geography of the English west country. It has already been mentioned that

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[106]Faris R E L, Dunham H W, *op.cit.*, p.158. Note that Sibley is explicit in his claim that the mentally ill can be accommodated into his 'dominant-muted' model. See Sibley D, 1981, *op.cit.*, where he writes that "we could fit into this scheme other groups whose needs are not articulated in the dominant world-structure for economic reasons and/or because they do not communicate in the idiom of the dominant group, such as the mentally ill or old people" (p.16). In addition, he mentions the mentally ill as a group that suffers because of strong classifications and boundaries, and in the process he alludes to the excellent arguments contained in Fincher R, 1978, 'Some thoughts on deinstitutionalisation and difference', *Antipode* 10(1), pp.46-50. Fincher's interest in the mentally ill appears to have been inspired by Dear, with whom she has collaborated.

[107]There is a problem here in that Faris and Dunham follow Mead in downplaying the validity of non-mainstream 'axiological worlds', and in thereby condoning the 'correct' mainstream view. As Driver has indicated to me in a personal communication, "it is a case of organisation v. disorganisation, conformity v. nonconformity. Is not there a contradiction between this kind of binary logic (in the Chicago school, for instance) and Chicago-type ethnography which recognises that life in 'deviant' subcultures was not at all without norms, order, routine?" And it is precisely the latter 'norms, order, routine' that Sibley disinters through his work on the gypsies.

the linking of individual and aggregate realities is one of Dean's central concerns, and it should also be noted that he situates his arguments here in the context of what has come to be known as the 'agency-structure' debate in contemporary human geography. [108] Indeed, throughout his intriguing 1984 paper he explicitly addresses this debate, and in so doing pays particular attention to both the phenomenological 'turn' in social geography and the insights to be gleaned from Anthony Giddens' 'structuration theory'. [109]

More concretely, though, the linch-pin of his PhD thesis involves - as reported previously - the detailed examination of case notes written up for individual mental patients, and this brings him to the 'critical task' of

...identify[ing] the points where external realities, summarised by concepts such as social class, social roles, critical life events and the like, confront subjective [perceived] realities. [110]

He is thus able to identify certain patterns in the associations between various admissions categories - defined in terms of diagnosis, sex and whether or not the patient is a first admission - and various pieces of information such as whether or not the patient is a parent, has

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[108]The pivotal paper in this debate is probably Gregory D, 1981, 'Human agency and human geography', **Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers** 6(NS), pp.1-18, although arguments over the relative merits of an agency-orientated (phenomenological, existential, idealist, hermeneutic, humanistic) geography and a structure-orientated (spatial scientific or radical-Marxist) geography can be found rehearsed in many places.

[109]See Dean K G, 1984, 'Social theory and prospects in social geography', **GeoJournal** 9, pp.287-299. Much of what geographers understand by the 'agency-structure' debate can be traced to Giddens' identification of this as a chronic dualism spintering the practice of social theory. Furthermore, many geographers have found 'structuration theory' - Giddens' attempt to transcend this dualism - a particularly illuminating tool, and it is perhaps possible to detect a new 'structurationist' orthodoxy emerging in the literature. For powerful commentaries, see Gregory D, 1981, *op.cit.*; Thrift N J, *op.cit.*. The essentials of Giddens' vision can still best be read in Giddens A, 1979, **Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis** (Macmillan: London), esp. Chapters 2 and 6.

[110]Dean K G, 1982, *op.cit.*, p.69.

experienced sexual or family problems, or has attempted suicide. And this exercise - along with a more conventional spatial scientific analysis - buttresses his proposals regarding the processes responsible for individuals being admitted to psychiatric hospital, and which therefore determine the undulations in a region's psychiatric geography. [111] In particular, he discusses a process that is similar to 'spatial drift' (see below), but which also embraces the more fundamental geographical parcelling out of 'domestic situations' likely to precipitate the initial onset of mental instability and likely to colour both family and professional judgements with respect to referral, diagnosis and admission. He calls this a process of 'residential sorting', and acknowledges that

...the accent is not on residential drift as a response to illness, but rather the spatial sorting of domestic situations which, through their relevance to aetiological and management processes, encourage admission. [112]

In addition, he outlines a second process, and this he refers to as the 'community causation' that occurs when

...the norms of the local community exert an influence on admissions and, since such norms vary from area to area, they are responsible for spatial variations in admissions frequencies... [I]nfluences may operate in terms of norms about what behaviour is tolerable and what is deemed necessary for referral and possible admission to hospital. [113]

Another factor that he reckons to be relevant here is the role of professionals in judging who should and who should not be admitted, and in

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[111]See *ibid.* Three general findings here are that "[f]irstly, in the admission of schizophrenics the interests of others often have a direct bearing on the decision to advise or require the patient to enter hospital. Secondly, with depressive neurotics, the interests of the patient are, in a sense, more dominant. The significance of others lies more in terms of the aetiology of illness or difficulties of management. In particular, domestic situations are seen as causing depressive conditions and as discouraging a good prognosis. Thirdly, especially with regard to the admission of depressive neurotics, a suicide attempt is a frequent antecedent" (p.305)

[112]*ibid.*, p.273.

[113]*ibid.*, p.274.

this connection he raises the possibility that professional judgements may exhibit some spatial variability, and he also goes on to examine the 'environmental causation' arguments that have usually been advanced in the geography of mental illness. [114]

The crucial thing to notice about these various components of Dean's study is that they nearly all stem from

...a recognition that mental illness is a social construction, and that it cannot be equated with admission to hospital [my emphasis]. [115]

For the most part the psychiatric geographers have adopted the orthodox medical view that mental illness is indeed an illness like any other, and that it probably results from disturbances to the physiology of the brain, but Dean wishes instead to work with a radical conception that challenges this naturalism by placing mental illness firmly in its social context. [116] But it is vital to be circumspect here because the notion of 'social construction' can mean several things, ranging from the view that psychological problems are actually produced by the stresses and strains of urban, industrial living to the view that mental illness is simply a label which - having no ontological reference point - is applied

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[114]It might also be noted that Dean has provided a preliminary reconceptualisation of the processes under scrutiny here using various 'structurationist' ideas, and that he has also sought to place greater emphasis on the way that the residential locations of mental patients are bound up with the workings of both the housing market and the practices of psychiatry. See his 'new formulation' for the geography of mental illness in Dean K G, 1984, *op.cit.*, esp.pp.292-293. Curiously enough, though, I am not convinced that this 'new formulation' has added all that greatly to the corresponding analysis and discussion found in his PhD thesis.

[115]*ibid.*, p.i. See also Dean K G, 1979, *op.cit.*, where Dean complains about the geographers neglecting "the implications of a full recognition of psychiatric illness as a social construction along the lines suggested by Szasz" (p.167). Szasz is usually lumped in with the 'anti-psychiatrists', although both his arguments and his politics distance him from radicals such as Cooper and Laing. See Szasz T, 1974, **The Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct** (Harper and Row: London), which was originally published in 1961 by Dell: New York.

[116]A useful route into the thorny debates over the concept and reality of mental illness is Clare A, 1980, **Psychiatry in Dissent: Controversial Issues in Thought and Practice** (Tavistock: London):

at the whim of society's social control agencies. It is pleasing, then, to find that Dean avoids the worst excesses of either of these two polar positions, and that he thereby steers a course sensitive to both the labelling process - which he tackles in terms of community norms and professional judgements - and the social production of real differences and problems resonating through the lives of the individuals behind his 349 case histories. And, interestingly enough, this middle course is exactly the one that Sibley recommends when warning that

...undue emphasis may be given to those who do the categorising, to the neglect of the groups or individuals who are identified as deviant or deprived. This leaves us with Becker's relativist position, namely that 'social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance and applying these rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders'. Whilst it is necessary to examine the values of the labellers, it is also necessary to consider the factors that make some social groups different from the rest, that is, the structural forces that lead to some groups being identified as outsiders. [117]

iii) **Mental illness and space: from disorganised 'natural areas' to the 'spatial implications of psychiatric careers'**. The substantive role accorded to space in most geographies of mental illness has already been suggested in the discussion of the 'society as an organism' analogy, where it was reported that the human ecologists identify certain 'socially disorganised' localities as the breeding grounds for 'defectiveness', 'deviance' and 'outsiderness'. An important point here concerns the sensitivity that these human ecologists originally showed to the geographically variegated nature of the city, and which led them to labour with the 'natural area' concept. For Park, for instance, it was clear that 'natural areas' grew up all over the city in this sort of fashion:

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[117]Sibley D, 1981, **op.cit.**, p.24. The reference here is to Becker's sociology of outsiders, as presented in Becker H S, **op.cit.**. This tension between a relativist, labelling perspective and a view that emphasises the societal production of real differences and problems is tackled at some length in Taylor I, Walton P, Young J, **op.cit.**, esp. Chapter 5.



[i]n the course of time every section and quarter of the city takes on something of the character and quality of its inhabitants. Each separate part of the city is inevitably stained with the peculiar sentiments of its population. The effect of this is to convert what was at first a mere geographical expression into a neighbourhood, that is to say, a locality with sentiments, traditions and a history of its own. [118]

And it does not require a great leap of the imagination to move from this construction to one that envisages areas that are by nature disorganised, both in terms of their scruffy outward appearance and in terms of the thoughts and behaviour exhibited by their residents.

There need not be an 'environmental determinist' flavour to this presentation, however, and Park's quote gives the impression of people making places at least as much as places making people, but an undeniable determinism still floats to the surface when the psychiatric geographers - along with other spatial scientists interested in outsiders - talk about disorganisation and 'natural areas'. Hence, following from their attempt to delimit Chicago's disorganised 'natural areas', Faris and Dunham proceed to equate physical, social and mental disorganisation in these terms:

[i]n these most disorganised sections of the city and, for that matter, of our whole civilization, many persons are unable to derive sufficient mental nourishment from the normal social sources to achieve a satisfactorily conventional organisation of their world. [119]

This line of thought strongly pervades the work of both Timms, who writes about 'social defectiveness' spilling out of areas 'characterised by a

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[118]Park R E, 1967, 'The city: suggestions for the investigation of human behaviour in the urban environment', in Park R E, Burgess E W, McKenzie R D (eds.), *op.cit.*, p.6.

[119]Faris R E L, Dunham H W, *op.cit.*, p.159. Note that their Chapter I - entitled 'Natural areas of the city' - opens with a discussion of how "[e]xtreme disorganisation is confined to certain areas and is not characteristic of all sections of the city" (p.1), and carries on with an attempt to identify Chicago's 'natural areas' using both Burgess' 'concentric-ring' model and a more fine-grained description of the 'sifting' of population and institutions on the ground.

breakdown in social interaction', [120] and Giggs, who tackles 'socially disorganised' areas in the Welsh town of Barry [121] and describes the presence of 'highly localised pathogenic areas' in Nottingham. [122] Furthermore,, the principal objective of a later study by Giggs and Mather is to produce an extremely technical and detailed 'social ecology' of the Nottingham Psychiatric Register area - seemingly as an 'essential prelude' to investigating the area's psychiatric epidemiology - and it is claimed that

[t]he resulting composite social areas [as identified by the social ecology] would be the quantitatively derived equivalents of the descriptively defined 'natural areas' recognised by the Chicago school of sociologists. [123]

There is thus a definite sense in which the ecology of the city - an ecology impregnated with a logical patterning of buildings, roads, institutions and people - is seen as having its own 'causal powers' and its own ability to govern the distribution of mental illness.

But this determinist understanding of spaces, places and geographies has not passed completely unchallenged, and it is revealing in this respect to consider the antagonism that separates protagonists of the 'stress-reaction' hypothesis from proponents of the 'spatial drift' hypothesis. The first of these is the above-mentioned vision of mental illness being produced in - and even because of - disorganised inner-city areas, and the second is summarised by G.Gudgin as the possibility that

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[120]See Timms D W G, 1963, **op.cit.**, esp. Conclusion; Timms D W G, 1965, **op.cit.**, esp.p.52.

[121]See Giggs J A, 1970, **op.cit.**. Note that Giggs, in common with many other writers, connects the notion of 'social disorganisation' to a Durkheimian notion of the 'anomie' that results in the absence of those social norms and controls designed to curtail otherwise unfulfillable human desires. A useful guide to the role of 'anomie' and other ideas in the development of 'social disorganisation' concepts is Heathcote F, 1981, 'Social disorganisation theories', in Fitzgerald M, McLennan G, Pawson J (eds.), **Crime and Society: Readings in History and Theory** (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London), pp.341-370.

[122]Giggs J A, 1973, **op.cit.**, p.72.

[123]Giggs J A, Mather P M, **op.cit.**, pp.115-116. Note that these authors also suggest that "a good case can be made for exploring the 'natural area' concept still further" (p.9).

...sufferers from schizophrenia move into areas of poor housing, and may thus not be a product of that environment in any meaningful sense. Schizophrenics will often not have a permanent job, may have left home and have few friends or money, especially if young and single. The poorest quality accommodation may be all that is available, especially in the light of actual and potential eccentric life-styles. [124]

Faris and Dunham are not entirely convinced by this latter suggestion, though, and they claim to find many cases of schizophrenics who were born in and have always lived in 'deteriorated areas'. Similarly, Timms asserts that the 'weight' of evidence does not square with the occurrence of drift, [125] whilst Giggs overlooks the possible role of drift when concluding that particular social and urban settings may 'create schizophrenia of a reactive type'. [126]

In more recent statements, however, and following Gudgin's use of drift arguments to criticise Giggs' reactive model, the 'spatial drift' hypothesis has begun to make more headway in psychiatric geography. In his mammoth PhD thesis, for example, S.D.Taylor casts doubt on the reality of 'stress-reaction' by considering whether or not the stability of Southampton's social geography between 1961 and 1966 - as revealed by comparing the results of principal components analyses conducted on census data for these years - is mirrored by a similar stability in the geography of mental disorder between roughly the same dates (1959-'61 and 1964-'66). But he can find no such stability, and he sets this finding alongside the output from his other spatial analyses when confessing that

...in overall terms the effect of macro-social environmental factors in the distribution of psychiatric disorders is of small importance. [127]

Moreover, from his inspection of individual case histories he finds that many of the individuals responsible for inflating the inner-city mental

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[124]Gudgin G, *op.cit.*, p.148.

[125]See Timms D W G, 1963, *op.cit.*, pp.58-59.

[126]See Giggs J A, 1973, *op.cit.*, p.71.

[127]Taylor S D, *op.cit.*, pp.390-392.

illness rates had only lived in this location for a year or so prior to admission, and that the

...high rates of schizophrenia in the centre of Southampton are [therefore] the product of the drift of 'vulnerable' or potentially schizophrenic persons into such areas. This appears to be particularly true of those patients living in a 'non-family' setting. [128]

A parallel bundle of conclusions tumbles from the Dean and James studies in Plymouth, from which the two authors disentangle convincing evidence of depressive neurotics drifting into older waterfront wards between first and subsequent admissions, [129] and from which they also discover pre-admittance male schizophrenics becoming 'over-represented' in central wards as a result of actual residential shifts and their tendency not to participate in 'suburbanisation'. [130]

It is true that these findings are hardly earth-shattering, but they are nonetheless valuable in demonstrating that the manner in which spaces - or, rather, environments - are implicated in the generation of mental illness is rather more complex than the determinist disorganised 'natural area' concept might imply. But it is necessary to go beyond 'merely undermining' this concept, [131] and some effort must now be made to reconceptualise the role played by spaces, places and geographies in the lives of the mentally ill. And once again, it is in the recent work of Dean that some signposts for this reconceptualisation can be encountered. I have already outlined Dean's attempt to forge a 'social constructionist' understanding of the relationship between the mentally ill and society at large, but of more immediate relevance here is his recognition that

[t]he development of potential mental illness symptoms, the referral of mentally ill persons, the definition and diagnosis of illness, and judgement concerning appropriate treatment are complicated

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[128] *ibid.*, p.536.

[129] See Dean K G, James H D, 1980, *op.cit.*, esp.pp.176-180.

[130] See Dean K G, James H D, 1981, *op.cit.*, esp.pp 49-50.

[131] As Driver asks in a personal communication, "does not the drift hypothesis merely undermine the 'natural area' concept?"

processes. However, it is possible to identify a number of points where these processes have spatial implications or potentialities. Their recognition is crucial to an adequate conceptual framework for the geography of mental illness [my emphasis]. [132]

He summarises some of the possible 'spatial implications or potentialities' in a diagram that traces the 'psychiatric career' of a mental patient (see Figure 6), and it is not difficult to see the connections between the boxes in this diagram and the obvious geographical dimensions of those processes that he refers to as 'residential sorting', 'community causation', 'professional practice', and so on (see above). It should be apparent, then, that the enormous value of Dean's thinking is that it moves towards a Sibley-like view of space as a resource over which all manner of conscious and not-so-conscious conflicts are waged, and as a resource that repeatedly enters into the transactions passing between society's supposedly 'normal' members and those individuals who are experiencing psychological problems, are recipients of professional psychiatric help, or are trying to 'pick up the pieces' after a spell in a psychiatric establishment. For instance, as the process of 'residential sorting' takes place - and as the frantic hustle and bustle to secure and police 'good' domestic settings goes ahead - so two consequences must follow: firstly, those persons already adjudged to be mentally ill will continue to be excluded and consigned either to institutional or highly 'marginal' locations, and secondly, those individuals 'at risk' and unable to compete economically or socially will be filtered down into environments where symptoms of mental disorder are likely to be both elicited and then given stigmatising labels by well-meaning professionals. The indelibly social and spatial nature of these two consequences cannot be denied, and it should be readily apparent that a study sensitive to such consequences voyages some distance from a spatial determinism, and is thereby reaching towards what Edward Soja once called the 'socio-spatial dialectic'. [133]

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[132]Dean K G, 1984, *op.cit.*, p.295.

[133]See Soja E, 1980, 'The socio-spatial dialectic', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70, pp.207-225, where the argument about society and space being mutually interpenetrating dimensions of reality is pursued most illuminatingly.

Phase of the patient's psychiatric career:

	PRE-DEFINITION	DISPLAY OF PSYCHIATRIC SYMPTOMS	DEFINITION OF PSYCHIATRIC SYMPTOMS	TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT	POST-TREATMENT
Examples of relevant events and processes:	Experience of interpersonal relations difficulties and likelihood of single person status	Aetiological processes involving stressful life events (in reactive conditions) and age (with some psychotic conditions)	Referral of the patient by G.P., relatives or social workers - diagnosis by psychiatrist	Admission decisions involving the patient's attitude, domestic circumstances and possibilities for treatment in the community	Full recovery - maintenance in the community with out-patient treatment - readmission
Examples of spatial implications:	Single person accommodation - residential segregation through drift or immobility from central districts	Distribution of stressful life events linked to such factors as family and social status - age distribution	Deployment and practice of referral agencies - social class bias in diagnosis	Location of households with illness management problems, as determined by performance in the housing market - social status of the patient with reference to processes of negotiation	Residential relocation - spatial variations in readmission rates, as linked to social status and other factors relevant to the management of illness

Figure 6: Dean's model of the 'spatial implications of psychiatric illness conceptualised as a career' (from Dean K G, 1982, The Psychiatric Hospital Admission Process Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Geography, University of Hull, p.75; Dean K G, 1984, 'Social theory and prospects in social geography', GeoJournal 9, p.295).

A final issue warranting attention is to be found in the philosophical-cum-methodological treatment of space buried away in the geographies of mental illness, and it is hence signal to reflect on the tension already hinted at between the determinist line, which hopes to erect general laws dictating how mental illness and space intersect in every place at every time, and Dean's rather more contextual awareness of the complexities and confusions inherent in the meeting of mental illness, society and space. It is important not to be too dogmatic about this claim, though, because several of the earlier researchers did display some sensitivity to the geographical context in which their studies were conducted. Indeed, in her otherwise very 'straightforward' work on the situation in the North East region of Scotland, Bain revealed a prior training in an older geographical tradition by opening her account with a sketch of the region's physical, economic and population geographies. [134] And yet she still justified her specific focus on North East Scotland with comments such as these:

[t]his area, with its natural geographical barriers confining a large population with an almost equal urban/rural division makes an ideal setting for epidemiological studies...Geographically, socially and demographically it is close to the ideal for a population laboratory. [135]

In a like-minded fashion, Dean and James offer these remarks:

Plymouth had a population of 239,452 at the 1971 Census. It is the largest city in Devon and has a relatively stable population. There are well-marked geographic boundaries, the rivers Tamar and Plym to the west and east respectively, Dartmoor to the north, and Plymouth Sound to the south. This, together with the fact that all psychiatric admissions are dealt with by

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[134]This was the principal purpose of her 1964 paper with Innes - see Innes G, Bain S M, *op.cit.* - and a later paper of hers boasts a similar setting of the geographical 'stage'. See Bain S M, 1973, *op.cit.*, pp.84-87, where she mentions everything from the mountain ranges of the Scottish Highlands, through the region's 'cultural separateness' during the Roman occupation of Britain, to the population changes associated with the herring fishing industry in Peterhead and Fraserburgh.

[135]Bain S M, 1973, *op.cit.*, p.85 and p.87.

the one hospital make the area ideal for epidemiological study. [136]

The problem with observations such as these is that they give the impression of particular study areas being chosen - after much rigorous, analytical deliberation - as places where complexifying and distorting influences are at a minimum, and as places where it should therefore be possible to arrive at the real 'truth' of how mental illness and space interact. [137] But this is transparently to downplay the significance of particular places in the search for 'big' organising principles, and it is to fly in the face of both Sibley's attempt to preserve difference by employing a 'comparative framework' and the more theoretically-informed advocacy of a contextual approach. The time has perhaps come, then, for a researcher like Dean to translate his sensitivity to individual case histories into a corresponding sensitivity to the specificities of places and case studies, and in so doing to provide psychiatric geography with an appreciation that sometimes - to paraphrase Allan Pred - all that will have 'taken place' is the place. [138]

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[136]Dean K G, James H D, 1980, *op.cit.*, p.168.

[137]They thereby deny what are probably the real reasons for studies being conducted in particular places, and here the influence of where researchers themselves live and work must be at least as important as any other consideration. It is illuminating to compare these statements from the psychiatric geographers with Sibley's discussion of how he chose where to conduct his two case studies, in the course of which he admits that "Hull and Sheffield were not selected for study after a careful consideration of alternatives". See Sibley D, 1981, *op.cit.*, p.120.

[138]See Pred A, 1985, 'The social becomes the spatial, the spatial becomes the social: enclosures, social change and the becoming of places in the Swedish province of Skane', in Gregory D, Urry J (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp.337-365.



## Michel Foucault and the Landscape of 'the Same and the Other'

...in Western Culture a polar antiworld of human types has been developed, populated by the Black, the Jew, the Gypsy, the madman, amongst others. The 'otherness' of the representatives of these categories is defined in many different ways, not the least of which is the strict delineation of what the culture designates their appearance to be. [139]

The history of madness would be the history of the Other - of that which, for a given culture, is at once interior and foreign, therefore to be excluded (so as to exorcise the interior danger) but by being shut away (in order to reduce its otherness); whereas the history of the order imposed on things would be the history of the Same - of that which, for a given culture, is both dispersed and related, therefore to be distinguished by kinds and to be collected together into identities. [140]

It is often alleged that Foucault's earliest major text, Madness and Civilization, must be read as rather more than a remarkable rewriting of psychiatric history - even though such a reading is certainly legitimate - and must also be read as a sustained commentary on the shifting nature of the so-called 'Reason-Madness nexus' or, in the vocabulary of The Order of Things, the relationship between 'the Same and the Other'. [141] This is not the place to enter into the bewildering variety of commentaries on Madness and Civilization - which range from a fairly 'straight' evaluation of Foucault's achievements as a historian, to a capturing of the text for a Habermas-like discourse on 'modern self-critical subjectivity' [142] - and I will simply repeat the words that Foucault himself uses to describe his

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[139] Gilman S L, 1982, **Seeing the Insane: A Cultural History of Madness and Art in the Western World** (John Wiley: New York), p.xi.

[140] Foucault M, 1970, *op.cit.*, p.xxiv.

[141] See Foucault M, 1967, *op.cit.*, esp.p.xi. An insightful exposition of both the chief thrust and the subtleties written into this history remains Sheridan A, 1980, **Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth** (Tavistock: London), Chapter 1.

[142] Contrast Erik Midelfort H C, 1980, 'Madness and civilization in Early Modern Europe: a reappraisal of Michel Foucault', in Malament B (ed.), **After the Reformation: Essays in Honour of J.H.Hexter** (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia), pp.247-265 with Dews P, 1984, 'Power and subjectivity in Foucault', **New Left Review** 144, pp.72-95.

project:

[w]e must try to return to that zero point in the course of madness at which madness is an undifferentiated experience, a not yet divided experience of division itself. We must describe, from the start of its trajectory, that 'other form' which relegates Reason and Madness to one side or the other of its actions as things henceforth external, deaf to all exchange, and as though dead to one another. [143]

Foucault has been criticised for giving the impression here of some absolute and coherent 'otherness' - of some beguiling language behind all madnesses that was familiar to the ancients, was then reduced to silence by the 'Age of Reason', and only occasionally surfaces today in such odd places as surrealist poetry - but it should still be possible to pursue the themes of Madness and Civilization without lapsing into a phenomenology insensitive to differences within 'the Other'. [144] Indeed, it is abundantly clear that Foucault's chief objective is to document the many ways in which Western rationality has defined itself - indeed, has had no choice but to define itself - in opposition to a heterogeneous and unconsolidated 'Unreason', the components of which have usually included

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[143]Foucault M, 1967, *op.cit.*, p.ix.

[144]The phenomenological and hermeneutic overtones of this work are championed as favourable features in Matza D, 1966, 'Review', **American Sociological Review** 31, pp.551-552, who suggests that "Foucault's account of madness strives for the deepest level of human understanding...he grapples with the intricate process by which the human meaning of madness has been assembled and then obscured" (pp.551-552). Others, however, have seen these overtones less charitably, and Derrida criticises Foucault for theoretically obliterating the fragmentation within the category of madness by mistakenly pedalling an 'assured and rigorous precomprehension of this concept'. See Derrida J, 1981, 'Cogito and the history of madness', in Derrida J, **Writing and Difference** (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London), which is a translation by Bass A of Derrida J, 1967, **L'Ecriture et la Differance** (Paris), esp.pp.33-45. It is perhaps as a result of this line of attack that Foucault has subsequently moved to a more aggressive anti-phenomenological and anti-hermeneutic position, and it is telling to learn that he now reacts against the portrayal of madness as a 'permanent, unchanging, singular experience' by suppressing the 1961 preface - where this portrayal is most explicit - in later editions of **Madness and Civilization**. See Sheridan A, *op.cit.*, p.209. For an excellent commentary in this respect, see Dreyfus H L, Rabinow P, 1982, **Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics** (Harvester: Brighton), pp.11-12.

those labelled as insane alongside a great many other occupants of Gilman's 'polar antiworld of human types'. As a result, whilst Foucault concentrates chiefly upon the changing nature of mainstream society's perception and treatment of the mentally disturbed person, his discussion cannot avoid alighting on related issues such as the Medieval fear of lepers or the 'great confinement' of all manner of unreasonable people - including vagrants, beggars, spendthrift sons, prostitutes and also the lunatic - during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Furthermore, even when he writes of madness per se, it is evident that his words do not necessarily add up to a unitary vision, and this is precisely the point that Paul Hirst and Penny Woolley seize upon:

[i]f Western culture closes its ears to unreason this still does not mean that madness speaks with a single voice, that all the insane are seers or prophets... There is no implication that madness is one thing, that it is positive rather than negative: on the contrary, its existence as a phenomenon is dependent on the forms in which it is apprehended and constructed. [145]

It should be obvious, then, that Foucault's enterprise is far from closed around just one category of 'misfit', since at almost every turn he gestures towards possible contacts with the history, the sociology and even the geography of many different outsider groups. The last connection is the one of immediate interest here, of course, and I wish to voice the further claim that Foucault labours with conceptions of outsiders, society and space not so very different from those that might be deployed in a new geography of outsiders. And this means that a useful way to conclude my essay could be to sketch out some parallels between Madness and Civilization and the sorts of theoretical and empirical materials utilised by Sibley and a psychiatric geographer like Dean.

The pivotal point of agreement between Foucault and the geographers is perhaps to be found in the belief that a proper appreciation of outsiders - be these lepers, gypsies or mad people - can only be achieved by setting

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[145]Hirst P, Woolley P, 1982, **Social Relations and Human Attributes** (Tavistock: London), p.194.

these 'misfit' groups against the context of a wider society, and Foucault takes this argument even further by claiming that, not only must outsiders be understood in relation to society more generally, but society more generally can only be understood in relation to its perception and treatment of outsiders. Foucault and the geographers would also agree, no doubt, that the associations binding outsiders to a wider society must be understood, not in terms of a diseased natural organism displaying unhappy symptoms, but as a diffuse bundle of material and conceptual meeting-places. With respect to the material realm, for instance, there is a marked symmetry between Foucault's specific account of outsiders being subjected to a police action, and thereby being incarcerated in 'houses of confinement' as

...one of the answers the seventeenth century gave to an economic crisis that affected the entire western world, [146]

and the account that Sibley gives of how gypsies enter into economic and (often enforced) social transactions with society's supposedly 'normal' members. Similarly, there is a symmetry between Foucault's vision of an unstable dialogue between 'the Same and the Other', in which certain mainstream 'frameworks of perception' [147] encounter the various languages of unreason, and Sibley's depiction of the conflict-ridden

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[146]Foucault M, 1967, *op.cit.*, p.49. Foucault suggests that the onset of confinement 'marked a decisive event' in the history of unreason: it was "the moment when madness was perceived on the social horizon of poverty, of incapacity for work, of inability to integrate within the group; the moment when madness began to rank amongst the problems of the city" (p.64). Unsurprisingly, a number of authors have tied this notion of mass confinement to an analysis of the specific labour requirements of an embryonic capitalist social and economic order, and in a personal communication Sibley stresses "the connection between the exclusion of 'deviant' groups, the separation of the useful members of society from those that are threatening or dispensable, and the development of industrial capitalism". Moreover, he references the insightful work of Scull A, 1979, **Museums of Madness: The Social Organisation of Insanity in Nineteenth Century England** (Allen Lane: London), in which Foucault's more general claims about the economic roots of confinement are effectively translated into the context of the English late eighteenth century (see esp.pp.30-36).

[147]The phrase 'frameworks of perception' is not Foucault's, but derives from the commentary on **Madness and Civilization** in Cousins M, Hussain A, 1984, **Michel Foucault** (Macmillan: London), esp.p119.

clashing of dominant and outsider 'world-structures'. In addition, it would appear that both Foucault and Sibley recognise the intricate interleavings of the material and conceptual meeting-places written into the outsider-society relationship, and it might be recalled that M.Cranston once disentangled the 'three layers of explanation' - the sociological, the philosophical and the economic - that Foucault uses as the theoretical scaffolding for Madness and Civilization. [148] These sorts of threads are perhaps less explicit in Dean's attempt to expand the brief of psychiatric geography, although it is important to register his awareness of both the material transactions involved in 'residential sorting' and the differing conceptual lenses involved in 'community causation' or 'professional practice'. Moreover, had the psychiatric geographers taken the 'social isolation' hypothesis more seriously, and had they sought out its intellectual roots in G.H.Mead's interactionist theory of individual and society, then maybe Dean would not have had to set himself such a difficult task in the first place.

Another point of agreement is to be found in the way that the 'early' Foucault, Sibley and Dean all reject the presentation of outsiders as natural objects bereft of any feelings, values or more structured understandings of the world. As already indicated, Madness and Civilization exhibits a deep sympathy for the contents and meanings comprising the experience of unreason, and this sensitivity squares well with both Sibley's investigation of gypsy life from the 'inside' and Dean's reading of the stories, mishaps and sadnesses contained in the case histories of individual mental patients. However, it would be wrong to finish the discussion here without addressing the the more anti-humanist message embedded in some of Foucault's later writing, and without mentioning that this message runs directly counter to his earlier project of 'listening' to the true voices of 'the Other'. Thus, rather than

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[148]See Cranston M, 1966, 'Michel Foucault', **Encounter** 30(6), pp.34-42. Cranston identifies a sociological layer stressing the need of the 'Age of Reason' to isolate and forget unreason; a philosophical or existential layer involving the need to reduce unreason to a harmless 'nothingness' - to the mere 'empty negativity of reason'; and an economic layer where a bourgeois desire to oil the running of a nascent capitalist economy fed into the exclusion of disruptive and idle people from the workforce.

envisaging some state of 'otherness' blessed with an ontological status all of its own, he begins to argue that madness, criminality and even physical illness are simply 'discursive constructions', and that their only reality lies in what psychiatrists, penologists and doctors say and then do. Furthermore, he goes on to explain how these discursive constructions feed into the concrete practices of psychiatry, penology and medicine, and how they thereby end up being heavily implicated in the modern era's attempt to produce 'normal' and 'docile' individuals. [149] The power and richness of these ideas is indisputable, and it will surely be necessary for a future geography of outsiders to engage with their contents at some length, but I cannot escape the nagging feeling that they are relegating outsiders with quite real psychological and social problems to a curious analytical limbo-land. It seems that Hirst and Woolley are not immune to these doubts either, and in consequence they attack the 'relativism' that they detect in radical sociologies of mental illness:

[e]ven if there is no essential or given 'madness', there are substantial numbers of disorientated, depressed, suicidal or irresponsibly dangerous persons who may need more than tea and sympathy, and who also may be unwilling to accept the reality of their own impairment. [150]

It should now be apparent that this debate is practically identical to the one detailed earlier in relation to the thesis of 'social construction', and - as was reported then - it is evident that both Sibley and Dean remain alert to real differences and problems that predate any professional attempt to impose discursive labels and interpretations. In this sense, therefore, I find the sensitivity of Madness and Civilization to both the vaguaries of the labelling process and the ontology of 'otherness' more

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[149]These arguments first surface in any sustained fashion in Foucault M, 1977, **Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison** (Allen Lane: London), which is a translation by Sheridan Smith A of Foucault M, 1975, **Surveiller et Punir** (Gallimard:Paris). See in particular the account of the modern 'carceral' regime, and note also the compelling - if sometimes obscure - thoughts about power, knowledge and the body that come to the fore. An extremely helpful discussion of this text is to be found in Driver F, 1985, 'Power, space and the body: a critical assessment of Foucault's **Discipline and Punish**', **Environment and Planning D: Society and Space** 3, pp.425-446.

[150]Hirst P, Woolley P, **op.cit.**, p.97. See also pp.viii-ix.

convincing than some of the author's subsequent deliberations.

It is not hard to detect a further set of parallels to do with both the substantive and philosophical-cum-methodological treatments of space. On the first count, it is evident that Foucault shadows Sibley and Dean by placing great stress on the resource-like role that space plays in the fluctuating relationship between madness and reason. At the very beginning of Madness and Civilization, for example, he documents the changing occupancy of 'wastelands' beyond the city gates from the fourteenth century, when lepers disappeared from their ex-urban colonies and 'hospitals', to the sixteenth and seventeenth century 'great confinement' of madness and other unreasonables in workhouses and the hopitaux generaux. [151] He then proceeds to argue that, whilst attempts were made to discipline and work all the idle and unreasonable people presenting at these 'houses of confinement', the impossibility of ordering the massive disorder of 'true' lunatics prompted their gradual removal to such specialist sites as the private madhouse, lunatic hospital and public asylum. [152] But these too were often geographically isolated, and a great many followed the famous example of a late-eighteenth century English establishment called the York 'Retreat', which was 'situated a mile

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[151] See Foucault M, 1967, **op.cit.**, Chapters II and III, The geography of Medieval leper-houses remains to be written, but there can be no doubt that this was marked by an 'outside the city walls' location pattern. In Medieval England and Wales there were several hundred leper 'hospitals', most of which were run by minor religious orders. See Knowles D, Hadcock R N, 1953, **Medieval Religious Houses in England and Wales** (Longmans, Green and Co.: London), esp.p.46 and entries in catalogue, pp.250-324, who remark that "[w]hile and where the disease was endemic, a hospital for lepers was a not uncommon feature on the outskirts of towns" (p.46).

Although Foucault's argument about leper-houses becoming general 'houses of confinement' is loaded with symbolic overtones, it is also the case that such transitions did actually occur, as a number of historians have found when investigating the changing nature of institutional charity in Europe between the Medieval and Early Modern periods. In the English case, for example, see Rubin-Ungar M E, 1984, **Charitable Activity in the Middle Ages: the Case of Cambridge**, Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of History, University of Cambridge, who documents the way in which the leper-house of the later Middle Ages came to be, not just the 'traditional exclusion zone' for the leprous, but "an almshouse and an asylum for those unable to fit in society's norms" (p.121).

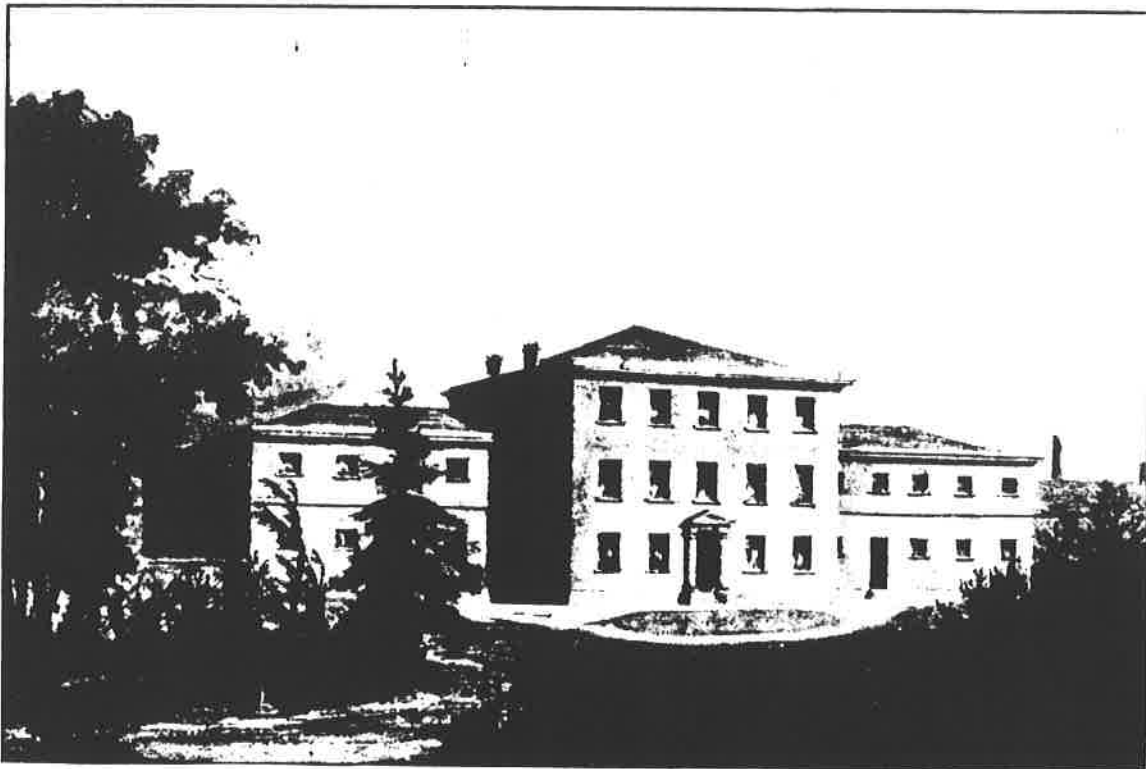
[152] See Foucault M, 1967, **op.cit.**, Chapters VIII and IX.



Figure 7: Two institutional spaces in the historical geography of 'the Same and the Other':

i) the Medieval leper-house known as Harbledown Hospital, near Canterbury, England (from Clay R M, 1909, The Medieval Hospitals of England (Methuen: London), p.36).

ii) the charitable lunatic hospital known as the York 'Retreat', England, established in 1796 (from Digby A, 1985, Madness, Medicine and Morality (Cambridge University Press), p.44).





from York...in the midst of fertile and smiling countryside'. [153] The founder, William Tuke, believed that the cure of mental derangement depended on substituting a quiet and unpolluted rural environment for the 'anarchy of industrial society', [154] and upon then encouraging the development of a homely and family-like atmosphere in which the lunatic - like the child - could cultivate feelings of self-respect and self-restraint. [155] Foucault sums up the thrust of his arguments about the role of space in all of these developments with this highly geographical passage:

[t]he asylum was substituted for the lazar house, in the geography of haunted places as in the landscape of the moral universe. The old rites of excommunication were revived, but in the world of production and commerce. It was in these places of doomed and despised idleness...that madness would appear and soon expand until it had annexed them. A day was to come when it could possess these sterile reaches of idleness by a sort of very old and very dim right of inheritance. The nineteenth century would consent, would insist that to the mad and to them alone be

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[153] This well-known observation appeared in a letter written by a Genevan visitor, Dr. Delarive (or de la Rive), who visited the 'Retreat' in 1798. See Foucault M, 1967, *op.cit.*, p.242 and Note 1, p.298. Digby suggests that much of Foucault's discussion of the 'Retreat' is coloured by his reading of Delarive's letter. See Digby A, 1985, **Madness, Morality and Medicine: A Study of the York Retreat, 1796-1914** (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge), p.58. It might be added that by no means all of the eighteenth and nineteenth century houses for the insane adopted a remote rural location, and the English charitable lunatic hospitals - of which the 'Retreat' was an eccentric example - actually had an affinity for urban locations in proximity to general infirmaries.

[154] See Digby A, *op.cit.*, esp. Chapters 2 and 3. See also Doerner K, 1981, **Madmen and the Bourgeoisie: A Social History of Insanity and Psychiatry** (Basil Blackwell: Oxford), which is a translation by Neugroschel J and Steinberg J of Doerner K, 1969, **Burger und Irre** (Europäische Verlagsanstalt), pp.80-81.

[155] Both Foucault and Doerner stress the more insidious aspects of proclaiming 'madness as childhood', and of thereby replacing the chains that previously restrained the 'free terror of madness' with the internal self-restraint that knows the 'stifling anguish of responsibility'. See Foucault M, 1967, *op.cit.*, esp. pp.243-255; Doerner K, *op.cit.*, esp. pp.77-82. However, Digby criticises this stance, and seeks to identify ways in which the 'madness as childhood' metaphor either had positive ramifications at the 'Retreat' or failed to square with other therapeutic practices. See Digby A, *op.cit.*, esp. Chapter 4.

transferred these lands on which, a hundred and fifty years before, men had sought to pen the poor, the vagabond, the unemployed. [156]

Given this kind of presentation it is wholly unsurprising that the 'geography' burnt into Madness and Civilization excites some attention, and Pamela Major-Poetzl precises the work of Michel Serres, who

...interprets Foucault's categories of inclusion and exclusion in terms of spatial relationships, and...views Foucault's concept of unreason as a 'geometry of negativities'. The pre-Classical [pre-1600] period, Serres suggests, can be imagined as an original chaotic space in which madness had many points of contact with the world. The Classical [c.1600-late 1700s] space, by contrast, was dualistic, with the space of unreason (hospitals [or hopitaux generaux] and later asylums) functioning as a negative image of a space of reason (society, in particular the family). [157]

The suggestion must be, therefore, that Foucault is here signposting a spatially-aware study of the 'Same and the Other', and in so doing is opening the door for an historical geography of 'the Same and the Other' that tackles, not just the leper colony and the rural 'Retreat', but all the spaces, places and geographies bound up in the lives of the many and varied outsider groups that make up 'the Other'.

An additional consideration in Foucault's substantive treatment of space relates to his key contention that the modern era has reduced unreason, 'otherness' and 'outsiderness' to a life of silence policed by psychiatrists, psychoanalysts and many other social 'gatekeepers'. As he

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[156]Foucault M, 1967, **op.cit.**, p.57. The phrase 'geography of haunted places' has already made its way into the geographical literature via Dear M J, Taylor S M, **op.cit.**, p.37, but it seems to me that - valuable as their brief comments on the 'social history of the asylum' (Chapter 3) undoubtedly are - they really need to take from Foucault, not just this 'catchy' phrase, but also many of his other theoretical and empirical achievements.

[157]Major-Poetzl P, 1983, **Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Western Culture:Towards a New Science of History** (Harvester: Brighton), p.120. Serre's own deliberations are paraded in Serres M, 1968, **Hermes I: La Communication** (Editions de Minuit: Paris), esp. Deuxieme Partie, Chapitre 1.

is also well aware - and as my commentary should have demonstrated - this silencing process has been accompanied by the careful manipulation of space in and around asylums, workhouses, prisons and hospitals, [158] and the corollary has been that society's managers, moralists and 'social engineers' have succeeded in pressing an alien sense of order into the apparently disordered relationships with space sanctioned by the 'world-structures' of outsider groups. One implication of this is that, given the great desire of spatial scientists to detect and prescribe spatial order in the geographies exhibited by outsiders and by institutions housing outsiders, it is but a short step to suggesting that the spatial science of outsiders has become an unwitting accomplice in the silencing of unreason. And this means that Foucault's vision regarding the ever-changing landscape of 'the Same and the Other' effectively ensnares the spatial science of outsiders as an integral part of this landscape's history, and this also means that Foucault provides materials for a radical critique of the spatial scientific edifice that parallels the arguments pursued elsewhere by Sibley. [159] Furthermore, a claim implicit in Foucault's account but rather more explicit in Sibley's anarchistic passages is that the future landscape of 'the Same and the Other' should witness a much 'messier environment' because

...a messier environment, with greater mixing of categories and the weakening of boundaries between social groups, would benefit peripheral minorities. [160]

Perhaps, then, a concerted attempt to create less geometric and rigid spaces, places and geographies in which outsider groups can live, work and

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[158]In this connection it is particularly instructive to read **Madness and Civilization** alongside Foucault M, 1977, *op.cit.*. In the latter text Foucault discusses the thorough-going manipulation of space, geometry and architecture written into Bentham's proposed carceral institution, the Panopticon, and goes on to suggest that this constituted a sort of model or blueprint for a great many nineteenth century establishments designed to pacify and discipline 'deviant' populations (see esp. Part 3, Chapter 3). See also Driver F, *op.cit.*.

[159]Recall the warning that Sibley gives with respect to the practical consequences spilling from a geographical search for tidy patterns and laws. See Sibley D, 1981a, *op.cit.*; Sibley D, 1981b, *op.cit.*.

[160]Sibley D, 1981, *op.cit.*, p.197.

play would help to reverse much of the damage inflicted by the silencing of unreason over the past couple of centuries.

With respect to the more philosophical-cum-methodological understanding of the spatial question, there may be some divergence between the geographers and Foucault because the latter's sensitivity to geographical context - to the delicate specificities of particular countries, regions and localities - is not especially pronounced in Madness and Civilization. Indeed, in one interview a questioner objected that

...one finds in your work a rigorous concern with periodisation that contrasts with the vagueness and indeterminacy of your spatial demarcations. Your terms of reference are alternatively Christendom, the western world, Northern Europe and France without the spaces of reference ever being justified or even precisely specified...You accord a de facto privilege to the factor of time, at the cost of nebulous or nomadic spatial demarcations whose uncertainty is in contrast with your care in marking off sections of time, periods and ages. [161]

It is pleasing to report that Foucault found himself largely in agreement with this criticism, and that he even added his own comment about the need to 'make the space in question precise'. [162] In more general terms, though, he displays precisely the sensitivity that Sibley and Dean show when confronting the details of case studies or case histories, and in this connection it is salient to consider what Charles Lemert and Garth Gillan refer to as Foucault's use of the 'exceptional case'. [163] In the course of an extremely thought-provoking commentary they discuss the finely-tuned descriptions of particular phenomena, events, pieces of writing or paintings that pepper his many texts, and they suggest that these descriptions reflect a deeply-felt desire not to submerge the

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[161]Foucault M, 1980, 'Questions on geography: interview with the editors of Herodote', in Gordon C (ed.), **Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977**, by Michel Foucault (Harvester: Brighton), p.67.

[162]See **ibid.**, p.68.

[163]See Lemert C G, Gillan C, 1982, **Michel Foucault: Social Theory as Transgression** (Columbia University Press: New York), pp.30-31.

richness of the particular in a presentation of broader themes and overarching theoretical frameworks. As they explain:

[Foucault's] cases are exceptional in their concreteness. They do not serve to capture the spirit of an epoch. They are not totalising devices. Their specificity is not, thereby, determined by the power, normality, importance or frame of the event described...They do not stand for a larger category. Neither statistical members of an aggregated class, nor significant representatives of general propositions, nor poignant illustrations of a cultural totality, these strange beginnings do not point to something outside Foucault's text. They bring into what is written the concrete details of the larger structures Foucault presents. In their specificity, they are sufficient unto themselves. [164]

And it is in much the same spirit that Mark Cousins and Athar Hussain offer this remark about Madness and Civilization:

...the reference to asylums is restricted to the pioneer asylums at the end of the 18th century only...But the reference to the pioneer asylums does not imply that from then on all asylums of the Western world were organised like them...The references to them have to be taken literally for what they are. [165]

And with this discussion of the need to take seriously - or even literally - the details displayed by one of Foucault's 'exceptional cases', so my argument returns to the rumbling subtext where formal a priori theories and law-like generalisations are being exorcised from the geography of outsiders. This subtext has never been far from the surface, of course, although I have not wanted it to obscure the noteworthy substantive issues surrounding the plight of gypsies, navvies, the

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[164] *ibid.*, p.31. It must always be remembered that Foucault's 'description of instances' in no way precludes a concern for 'larger structures', and it is also the case that this manoeuvre is in no way anti-theoretical. Rather, Foucault has the simple wish to escape from those 'totalising' or 'globalising' theories that effectively claim to know 'what is going on' in a case study before they encounter its contents. There are, of course, strong points of contact between Foucault's position and those anthropological and sociological arguments mentioned earlier.

[165] Cousins M, Hussain A, *op.cit.*, p,105.

mentally ill and many other outsider groups. Nevertheless, I have endeavoured to show that there are many different sorts of outsider group, each with their own distinctive 'world-structure', and that these groups cannot be conceptually reduced to one unitary category of 'social defectiveness'; I have also endeavoured to show that there are many different ways in which outsider groups and society's supposedly 'normal' mainstream members come into contact with one another, and in this respect I have pointed to the confusing nexus of material and non-material relations through which both real differences and perceived or mythical differences can be produced; and, finally, I have endeavoured to show that spaces, places and geographies are implicated in insider-outsider relations in a fashion quite unlike that suggested by the environmental and geometric determinists, and in so doing to indicate that the complexity and diversity tied up with the presence of different countries, regions and localities must be respected and possibly captured through the slotting of geographically-specific, Foucault-like case studies into a Sibley-like 'comparative framework'. In short, then, at almost every turn in the paper I have sought to highlight the difference, complexity and diversity that a viable geography of outsiders must come to terms with, and in presenting such an account I have deliberately echoed the claims of what Alex Callinicos calls a 'philosophy of difference'

...which insists on the priority of mutiplicity, which denies the possibility of a simple essence at the origin of things. [166]

Thus it seems to me that the geography of outsiders - and geography in

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[166]Callinicos A, 1982, **Is There a Future for Marxism?** (Macmillan: London), p.112. The extreme protagonists of this 'philosophy of difference' are probably the two French thinkers, Deleuze and Foucault, and Callinicos emphasises how they reject both the hegelianism of the 'Absolute Idea' and the constructions of Marxists such as Althusser, who themselves espouse an anti-hegelianism but seek to retain the notion of the social formation as an articulated whole (see esp. Chapters 4 and 5). Foucault offers a clear account of what it means to write a history that 'insists on the priority of multiplicity' when contrasting his 'general history' with the 'total history' pursued by most other historians. See Foucault M, 1972, **The Archaeology of Knowledge** (Tavistock: London), which is a translation by Sheridan Smith A M of Foucault M, 1969, **L'Archeologie du Savoir** (Gallimard: Paris), esp. Introduction.

general, given its traditional concern for the uniqueness of events and phenomena found in different regions - is extremely well-placed to be a site in the arena of social science where this new 'philosophy of difference' can attain some concrete expression. [167]

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[167]It might be noted, though, that it is impossible to ever conduct an intellectual enterprise that deals solely in difference - having completely ousted the spectre of totality (or 'grand theory') - and Derrida argues that philosophers and social scientists have no choice but to continually struggle with both the grand, well-formed conceptual edifice and the humble, concrete and rather more formless details that can never quite add up to this central edifice. See Derrida J, 1981, 'Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human sciences', in Derrida J, *op.cit.*, pp.278-294. This being said, given that the pendulum has for so long swung towards the axes of totality and structure, it may now be appropriate that philosophers and social scientists - perhaps with the informed help of geographers - should begin to pay more attention to the axes of difference and play. In connection with these sorts of arguments I am greatly indebted to Manning P, 1986, 'Reading Goffman: on form and formlessness', Unpublished typescript, Department of Sociology, University of Cambridge.