

A stylized graphic of the London Underground map. It features several colored lines: a purple line at the top left, a grey line running vertically and curving, a yellow line at the top right, a red circle in the center, and a brown line at the bottom. Two black circular nodes are connected by a line at the top, and another black circular node is on the brown line. A dark blue horizontal band crosses the center of the image, containing the title text.

**THE LONDON UNDERGROUND:
A LABYRINTHINE HETEROTOPIA**

WRITTEN BY HAYDEN MARTIN

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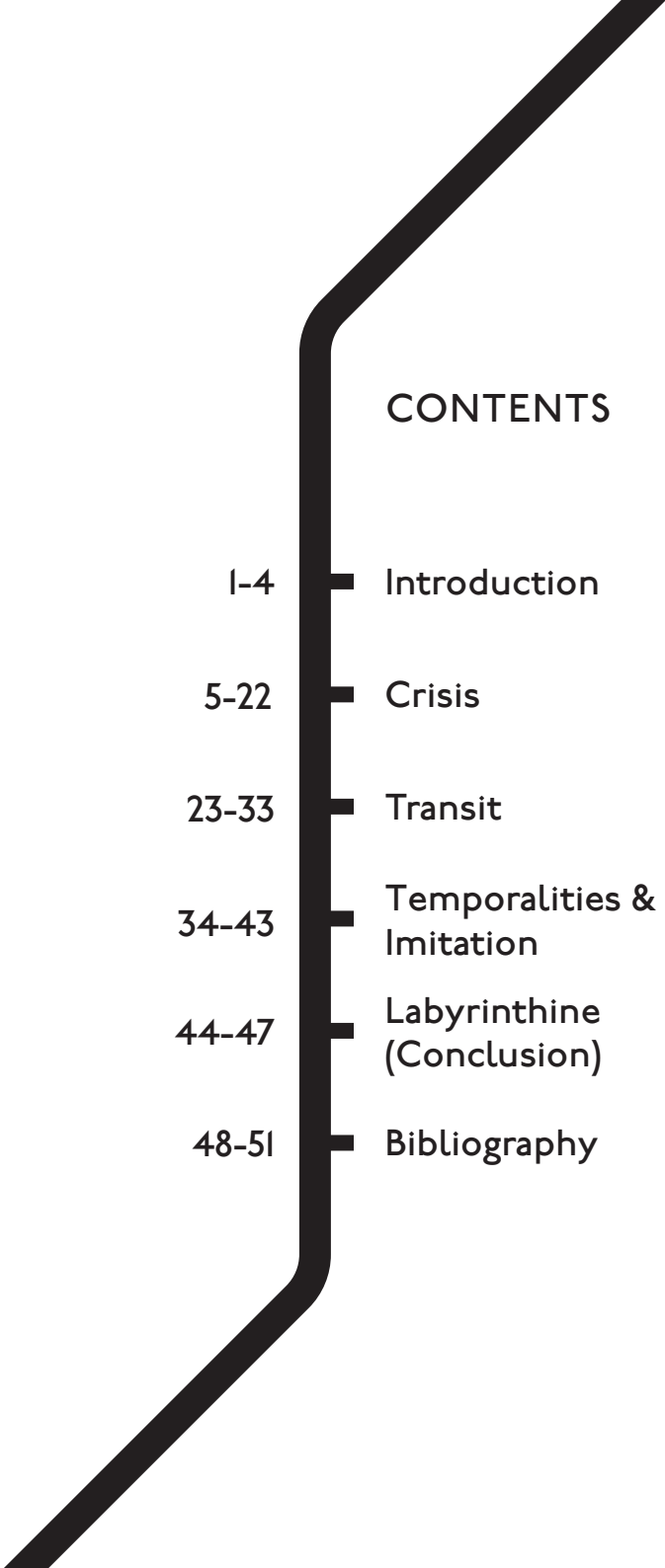


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“SORRY FOR THIS SHORT DELAY, WHY DON'T
YOU TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK
UP FROM YOUR PAPERS AND SMILE AT A
STRANGER. OR EVEN SAY HELLO”

- LONDON TUBE DRIVER



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Introduction

This book undertakes a mission to categorise the London Underground within French philosopher, Michel Foucault's (1967) concept of heterotopias, which theorises these spaces as mirrors of society that also have the capacity to disrupt. Through methods of fictional and historical narratives and critical theory this endeavour will attempt to find a suitable theoretical conclusion as to the sacred importance of the London Underground to the individual, 'lost' or 'at home', within its tunnels.

After introducing Michel Foucault's writing on themes of space and power, his views on purpose and the meaning of place were eye opening for me and I saw the potential for a new style of architectural analysis. A rationalisation of important societal places that used their rules of function, principles of their design choices and practical coincidences to show how social conformity is a way in which we can judge the importance of a 'place'. In 1967 Foucault gave a lecture titled "Des Espaces Autres" ("Of Other Spaces") in which he introduced the term 'Heterotopia' and six principles that a site can fit in order to earn the theoretical title. The principles each dissect a different social dimension that is hidden behind the illusion of a utopia.

This book uses Foucault's principles to outline how the London Underground traverses through these dimensions in its labyrinth. A singular expanding and sprawling site that reflects the values of London's culture overground and that gives anxiety, compulsion, disorder and faith a home beneath its surface.

I believe that when writing about, reading about, or experiencing architecture, guided by interest, it is the unique moments and special stories that best convey the significance of a place. Perhaps, yes, the common roles of functional spaces do provide comfort in knowing that they are working, and they do allow our brains to make logical and critical comparisons for us to appraise our experiences. However, in including comparison and commonality in our thinking we tend to miss the less obvious impressions architecture and designed spaces encapsulate.

When thinking about applying a dimension of storytelling in academic writing, it is important to try and blend sources with first-hand experiences, bridging the gap between literary fantasy and factual events. In my research for this book, two pieces of writing in particular accomplished this with methods I believed would aid me in reaching the best conclusion to my questions. The first is a book titled 'A Ficto-Historical Theory of the London Underground' written by Marko Jobst, who I had the pleasure being taught by in my first year at the University of Greenwich. In his explanation for the mode

of writing he uses; he argues that “theory is prone to erasing the voice of the author” (Jobst, 2017), and so his question to himself was in what way is it worth the space and time it demands for a reader to separate fact from fiction? Whilst sitting with the question myself, I read a second book titled ‘Underground Overground: A Passenger’s ‘History of the Tube’ whose author, Andrew Martin, was clearly more at home on the Underground than on the streets above it. His incredible knowledge and stories of the Underground included such detail, humour, and surprise that my instant engagement with it answered Marko’s question for me.

With the goal of understanding and analysing complex theories, the method of engineering a journey for the narrator leaves gaps for the reader’s interpretation to fill. In this book the narrator’s journey is a conversation between the media, real Londoners, fictional Londoners, Foucault and the narrator. The conversations are split into three chapters that each focus on services that the Underground provides and matches them with one of Foucault’s principles.

The aim of the endeavour is the collection of stories, as one, showing the power of Foucault’s principles working together in building a collective respect for the London Underground that celebrates its importance and brings to light how, through the mirror of heterotopias, London’s character is reflected in the Underground.





Figure I – War Poster London Underground WWII Blackout Inside Its Bright, James Fitton, 1941.



Crisis

'JOURNAL DE GUERRE'
-JOZEF MASSART

Monday 14-10-1940

At about 11.30h Alan is asking if he can go to the Golf Club with Loline to pick up wood: so that they can have some distractions.

They leave at about 1h, the alert is ringing. At 1.10h we hear a plane suddenly dive towards the earth. Two explosions follow, quite near here. Doors are opening, others are slamming closed. The house is vibrating.

As we go out, Bert and I see a tower of black smoke going up on the side of the Golf Club. Ivy, leaning over me and half gone out, can no longer speak but, in her movements, I understand what she means to say: "the children went on, that way!" Maisie is crying shouting: "Loline... Loline... Loline!"

Bert and myself hurried to go and find the children. Arriving at the corner of the street, I see the children accompanied by an air raid warden. I quickly run back to Maisie to calm her and tell her that Lol is safe and sound.

Lol later tells us when the bombs exploded the Warden had thrown them on the ground and had stretched out over them to protect them.

During the night, the plane activities are more intense. Starting from 7h in the evening, the planes are passing, one after the other. We hear the whistling of shells and the explosions in the neighbourhood. It is one of the more serious raids on London.

“all clear” rang at 1.30h. The raid had been suspended.

Tuesday

After the scares of yesterday and little sleep, I arrived at Wimbledon station at 7h. As I descend underground, I am surprised to see the London Underground

logo on the front page of the paper.

It read:

65 dead after Nazi bomb hits London Street
They drown as split mains pipe floods tube

At Balham Station, a large bomb had exploded in the middle of the street, just in front of the underground. The underground water main exploded and the water pressure inundating the latter in just a few minutes. It had a disastrous effect! The Tube was full of people: mainly women and children who were looking for refuge and who had settled themselves there believing that this shelter was quite secure. And there you are, after a few minutes, hundreds of people perished in the mud...

Being underground myself I cannot help but feel uneasy on what is a regular commute to work. I too, like the people at Balham, had trusted these tunnels to be place of refuge, a place for my fear to rest. That trust is now fraying...



I had to interrupt him here. Or am I being too nosy? It can wait. There is a delay to the next arriving train. But this is a man in crisis. His writing exemplifies this.

London had found its site of safety in the war, the London Underground. However, it had not been easily accepted in the first weeks of the Blitz. It has had its purpose challenged and the government had made its discouragement towards it clear. "It was feared that once the working class went underground, they'd never come up again. Yet for years beforehand, Londoners had been encouraged to think of the Underground as a place of cosiness and security, 'Where it is always warm and bright'." (Martin, 2013. p227). But as the city will soon find out, the Underground's shift in identity is inevitable. Soon the people who shelter will not be labelled as cowards but as "the guests of the station staff – stationmasters, foremen, ticket collectors, book clerks and porters, will all turn a blind eye and completely ignore the Board's instructions" in regulating the public's access. "This fact should be fully apprehended by all of us as a splendid example of working-class solidarity" (Cooper, 2014. p48). The Underground stations had become a place of crisis and social defiance, with it revealing our first heterotopia.

As this gentleman and I await our tube, I can cement a clearer definition as to what a heterotopia truly is. We can start with how utopias give them purpose. We can see utopias as visions of perfected societies. In the real

world they are places and cultures that worship and try to enact these visions. If we metaphorically translate the utopias, say, into reflections in a mirror they become “a placeless place. In the mirror, I can see myself, there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself.” (Foucault, 1967). Parallel to that is the physical form and properties of the mirror itself that provides my reflection; the frame, the size, and the imperfections of the glass, all altering what I can see beyond it. That is the heterotopia, a real object that requires interaction. Without it the utopia would not exist, and so a heterotopia is the physical link that stands between real-world cultures, civilisations and societies and the imagined versions of them.

I hope that is clear. Or perhaps I don't. I do though trust that in reading this book you can find your unique perspective of what a heterotopia is to you, whether it is similar to mine or not.



The flickering lights and ear-piercing shrieks of the tracks remind me where I am. It is easy to get lost in our own minds down here, despite all of our senses being persistently urged back to reality.

“Prepare to board!”

I seat myself next to the man and his journal, now closed on his lap, reading Jozef Massart and 'Journal de Guerre'. As I ready to introduce my intrigue into his writing, I see that the fear in his words is not at all reflected in his person. His posture, confident, his eyes, focused and his faint smile, friendly.

"Excuse me, Sir..." I say.

"Yes?", Jozef replies as he appears to jump slightly.

"I'm aware that your journal there is most likely private, but I have a question."

"Of course, go ahead! ...I am Jozef by the way", he says, offering a friendly handshake, clearly welcoming the interest. I think I catch what I hear to be a Belgian accent.

"How is it that you decide which of your thoughts to note down and which to ignore?"

I'm not entirely sure he knew the reason, but he answered, nonetheless.

"Well... I like to think of them as the things I try to ignore but that come back more complicated. My journal has become a different way to store them before that happens. A different way to ignore them I guess..."

"So, you do not read them back at all?" I ask.

“No, never. Not even to myself.”



I understand this, our thoughts do remain simple that way, turning the page on them before our imaginations take control. It is easy to quickly obsess over fear. Especially when thinking beneath the surface of the ‘real world’. The Underground has exemplified this in its fictional history, film in particular, that emerged in a genre that follows a Victorian imagination, dramatising its qualities that are “attributed to the archaic underground and the mythic underworld — shelter, riches, hidden knowledge, atavism, danger, and death.” (Pike, 2013. p227). Visually exemplified by the film *Quatermass and the Pit* (1967) (Figure2).

With the Blitz at its most violent Jozef has clearly found his journal to be that of a shelter from dramatisation. Giving any potentially dangerous thoughts a place that avoids them developing into anything more harmful to himself or those close to him. And this is evident in his character and the way he carries himself. In moments of crisis his fears are not spread to infect the people around him, instead they stay sheltered within his writing, offering silent reassurance to those nearby, including myself.

In this context, perhaps for Jozef, his journal is a



Figure 2 – Back to the future: mirroring the contemporaneous construction of the Victoria Line, workers excavating the ‘Hobbs Lane’ station on the Central Line uncover a five-million-year-old spaceship. Quatermass and the Pit (1967). DVD frame enlargement (Anchor Bay, 1998)

heterotopia that fits Foucault’s first principle in and of itself. Foucault describes crisis heterotopias as “privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis.” (Foucault, 1967. p25). Take a church and its confession booth as an example that fits the first principle. It is a place that requires a privilege given to them by their faith and is reserved for those who are willing to share their sins. Similar to a priest’s confessional, the journal is

reserved only for Jozef and his confessions, but despite lacking a geographical marker like a confessional or a church, I would argue that a place that evokes Jozef's vulnerability to record them becomes the site of his crisis heterotopia. In this case the London Underground and more specifically the northbound platform of the Wimbledon Underground Station.

In further understanding Jozef and his heterotopia, I believe that he is deserving of some reassurance of his own as he begins to lose trust in the safety of London's public shelters.



"Have you or your family found yourselves down here during a raid Jozef?"

"We have not, and I will avoid us doing so if I can" He replied, drawing my attention to the newspaper by his side:

65 DEAD IN BALHAM STATION BOMBING

"And as things stand those 65 people died as trespassers" He added.

Jozef was right. As of now, signs had been erected at the front of Underground stations announcing that they were not to be used as shelters. Despite this, "it was

reported that 30,000 people had slept in Tube stations the previous night.” (Cooper, 2014. p47).

“But seeking safety in crisis cannot be condemned. Can it?” I ask.

“I have seen for myself those who have been bombed out of their homes. Their humanity encouraged back out of them on these platforms. Anxieties they have seem to vanish underground, not dissimilar to how they vanish in the pages of your journal, Jozef”.

He glanced down at his journal for a second; I imagine, having been displaced by the war himself, making his own comparisons with the shelterers.



The process of London’s understanding and sympathy for those intruding into the London Underground could be explained by its heterotopic quality of being a ‘turning point’ in society’s optimism for survival. The improvement of attitudes towards shelterers from distaste and discouragement to embracement and sympathy aligns with Foucault’s principle. He states that crisis heterotopias have emerged in both modern and primitive forms.

The classification of these two categories is broken

down further in an alternative translation and summary of Foucault's 'Of Other Spaces'; 'Heterotopia and the City: Public space in postcivil society'; edited by Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter. The summary in this journal explains how a primitive form of heterotopia attempts to separate the people experiencing 'crisis', in order "to be managed safely away from the regular patters of public life" (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008. p18) avoiding any challenges of societal norms. This crisis management was exemplified in the London Transport's posters published in the first week of the Blitz; addressing the able-bodied men regularly taking refuge in the deep level shelters (Figure 3).

But the discouragement quickly dwindled. The longer the Blitz continued the stronger the shelter's infrastructure and services became. Soon it was impossible to ignore the impact the system was having on the city's morale. Though the new residents of the Underground were still settling into life in the shelters. Additions of catering services, three-tiered bunks and daily refreshment trains (Figure 4) conceived an incredibly abnormal yet welcoming underground community. The warmth of the platform communities stemmed from "those who could not afford to buy enough furniture for a new home; those who liked the night life of a shelter – the chatting, card-playing and singing, the canteens and the medical facilities" (Cooper, 2014. p59).

The stations had developed into an underground hub

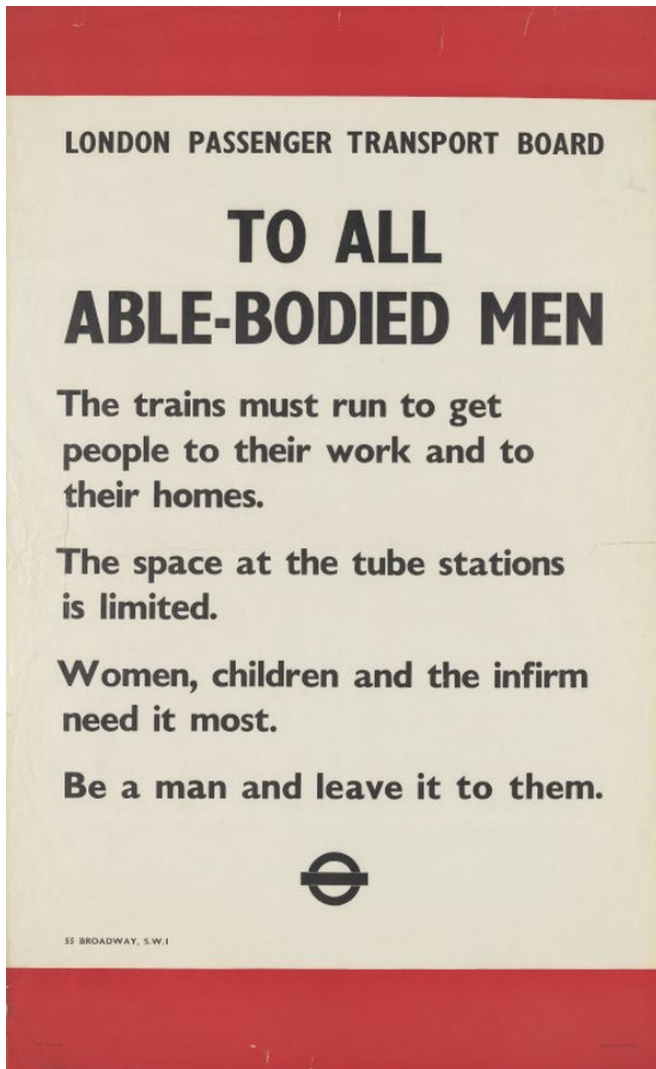


Figure 3 – Poster; To all able-bodied men, unknown, Image from London Transport Museum 1995/266.



Figure 4 – Tube Refreshments Special train. Image from London Transport Museum 1998/84948

for those most vulnerable on the surface and the total shelterers had now reached their peak at nearly 160,000 people (TFL Corporate Archive figures). With the population of the tunnels at this level, the methods of 'crisis' management seen in the primitive heterotopian form were no longer applicable. The tolerance staff had for rule breakers, seen in the first week of the Blitz, was no longer an option. Though the shelter communities were generally well-behaved, deviance, petty crime and seditious activity, inevitably, did creep through. It is the word 'deviance' that Foucault employed to describe the

second category, or modern form, of crisis heterotopia.

In Dehaene and De Cauter's summary of Foucault's words they explain that "a heterotopia of deviation is necessary in a society too vast and complex to manage social disorder in an organic way." They give an opposing example of a small town where most people know each other: "One person may break the local rules. The collective response is not to build a prison but instead to resolve the perceived problem in less formal ways, either to tolerate that person's eccentricities, to request (or coerce) adjustments in that person's behaviour, or to banish (or destroy) that person altogether." (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008. p18). Modern societies are unable to manage rule-breaking with these methods and so they must produce or adapt sites in order to manage deviance more consistently. The Underground was now serving a group of society that had become too complex, and so ticketing systems and strict conditions of their issue were introduced (Figure 5 and 6). Enforcing this level of management marks the point that the shelters evolved into the modern heterotopia of deviation.

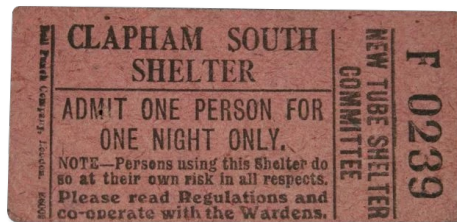


Figure 5 – Ticket for Clapham South deep-level shelter, 1944

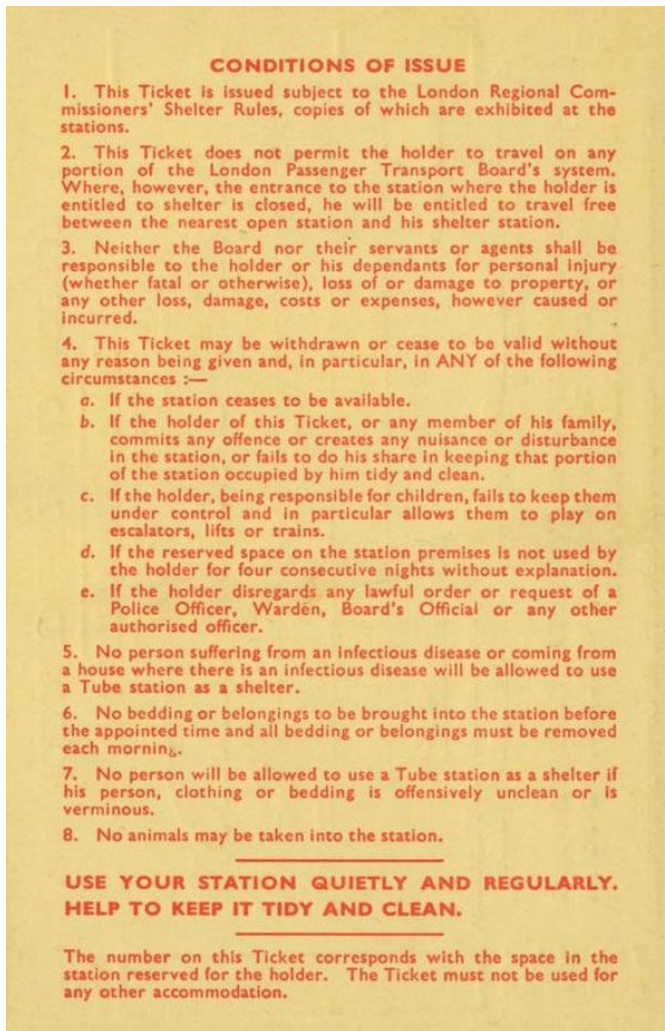


Figure 6 – Permit; Shelter permit by London Civil Defence Region City of Westminster for use at Covent Garden Station during World War Two, 1940 - 1945



I turn back to Jozef to find him buried into his journal once again, scribbling away at a new entry. Hopefully he is beginning to correct the tone of scepticism he was writing with earlier. I decide against intruding into his thoughts for a second time. For I am not his priest to be witness to his confessions. We barrel through station after station, the platforms filled with bedding, suitcases, posters and hope. Jozef has stopped writing now to absorb it all under a slightly different light.

Arriving into Westmister Station, Jozef rises, hands me his pen and tears out a blank page of his journal.

As I accept his gift with hesitance, he nods to me and says, "Perhaps give it a try yourself, just for today".

I smile and nod back, "I shall. Thank you."

"That is no trouble, good luck." He replies

"You too Jozef. And do return back down here later. Nothing up there beats the tea and fresh cakes of the Underground"

He chuckles to himself as the doors close between us.

Continuing on to Waterloo, I begin to plot which of my confessions are deserving of the first line in my new diary.

Note: 'Journal De Guerre' was organised and published by Jozef's son, Ray Massart. The Journal was given to me to read by my grandfather David Hillbery, seen in the photo below. David was Jozef's nephew.



Figure 7 – 1941, Jozef Massart (Left), Preparing to begin his service in Malvern, Worcestershire (Belgian Camp). On the right: Front row:left to right: David Hillbery, Raymond Massart, John Hillbery, Loline Massart Back row: Alan Lane, Ivy Lane, Daisy Hillbery, Burt Lane, Lilian Massart 252 Lynmouth Avenue, Morden, Surrey, 1942 In front of air raid shelter.

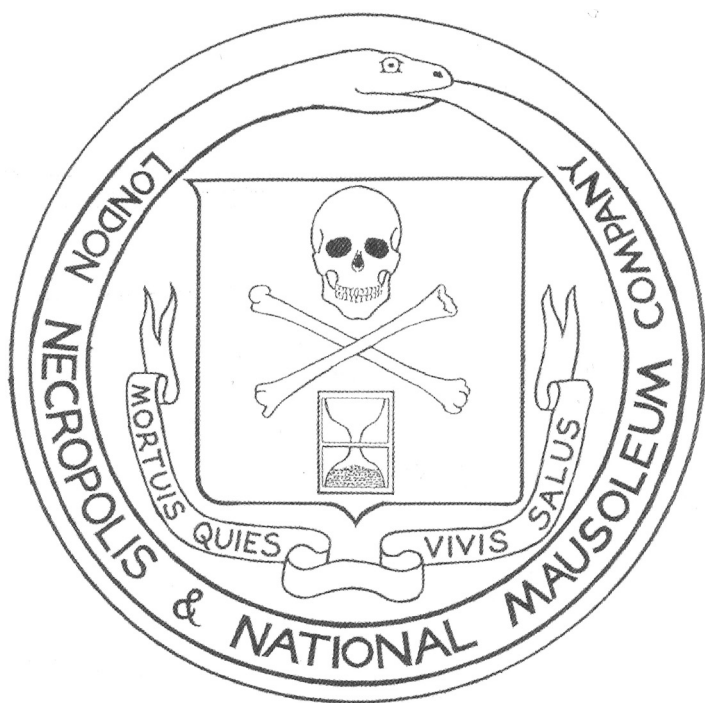


Figure 8 – Great Seal of the London Necropolis and National Mausoleum Company, 1852.



Tuesday 12-02-1918

After emerging from the depths of Waterloo station, I took a seat by the window of the ticket hall and began watching London scramble by. There was more than enough passing me to offer inspiration for thought, however, it was a group of pallbearers loading a coffin into a hearse that stuck out.

Knowing that the 'Burials Act' in 1851 had forbid any new burials within the centre of the city, I made my way out of the station and approached the driver of the hearse. I asked him what his destination was, and he informed me that the coffin was not being taken far, only to the London Necropolis Railway station on Westminster Bridge Road.

I had never visited, what must be, the most peculiar railway station in the country, and so I took the opportunity to set it as my own destination as well. Following on from my conversation with Jozef, this site would further establish the London Underground and

its expanding branches of railways in the category of a heterotopia. This time focusing on Foucault's second principle.



Opening in 1854 The London Necropolis Railway Company served to provide a 'novel infrastructural solution to the problem of over population in the capital's churchyards' (Kirkby, 2024). For centuries parish church grounds had been the sole public burial sites in London, but those centuries brought with them a population rising from 200,000 to 2.5 million. Churchyards themselves had risen due to the huge number of burials that came with it. So much so that in 'Our Mutual Friend', Charles Dickens wrote that they had been "conveniently and healthfully elevated above the living".

The Necropolis Railway Company's proposal was linking Brookwood Cemetery in Woking, Surrey to the centre of London via the newly established railway systems in the south of England, promoting their cemetery as the most attractive burial option for any Londoner of any class with any religious belief. With the location of the cemetery secured the next question was where the new Railway Station for the dead would be situated. Waterloo Bridge Station provided the most advantages; "it was close enough to the River Thames for bodies to be transported to the station by water, a relatively

inexpensive means of transport” (Jones, 2018) and its connections to the London Underground’s network made it easily accessible for mourners too.



Walking up to the entrance of ‘Cemetery Station’ the hearse I had just seen is pulling in through a set of ornate iron gates, that of which you would expect to see to the entrance of a modern bank of this time. Beside the driveway was a sign reading ‘First Class Mourners’, not a combination of words that you might expect to be grouped together. The station building (Figure 9) was clearly designed for attractiveness and originality, avoiding any connotations to the gloomy nature of the funeral industry. I slip through the First-Class entrance and hide myself in the corner of one of the 5 separate waiting rooms.



Here I can introduce Foucault’s second principle of the ‘transit’ heterotopia. The description reads that in “a society, as its history unfolds, can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion; for each



Figure 9 – Westminster Bridge House - the second station for the London Necropolis Railway

heterotopia has a precise and determined function within a society and the same heterotopia can, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or another.” (Foucault, 1967. p26). The rising population and the ‘Burial Act’ were ‘history unfolding’ for the cemetery as a heterotopia within the metropolis of London. The function of the churchyards that had remained since the 16th century was failing and with it, the heterotopia was shifting outside of the city’s borders to places such as Brookwood. But in this transition of function, the heterotopia needed aid in its physical transition. The railways and the London Necropolis Company (LNC) supplied it, with anything between 50-60 bodies being transported daily along with their mourners.



Looking up from my diary I find that I am no longer alone. An old woman had joined me in the waiting room, her head is hung low, and her face obscured by a black widow’s bonnet.

Without lifting her head, she asked, “Did you know John well? I assume you must have worked with him?”

I hesitate but reply honestly. “I’m sorry, I did not. I am just a visitor. I can leave if you would like.”

"No, no, don't be silly, stay." The woman replied as the pallbearers I had seen outside of Waterloo marched by the waiting room.

"That's my John there. His life was on the railways so I am sure he will feel at home today." Her head had lifted now to reveal a wry smile.

"What did your husband do for work?" I ask.

"He was a talented engineer. Knighted for it actually! Sir John Wolfe Barry. You may have heard of his name?"

I had. Incredible! Sir John Wolfe Barry had been the lead engineer of Tower Bridge and had also played a vital part in the construction of the District Line and the Metropolitan Line on the London Underground. Without them, of course, my journey here today would have been far less simple.

"Are you religious Madam?"

"Please, call me Rosaline. I am not, but my husband was. Why?" She answered.



It may seem an odd question to ask, but it was an increasing divide between science and religion that had led Foucault to argue his second principle. His argument

was that the introduction of transiting funeral services and the shifting of the cemeteries' location had "reflected an anxious attitude that modern folks have toward death." Death, as a process that was seen by many to be a 'natural occurrence', had begun to be viewed more so as a 'medical failure'. (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008). And so, in an urban society that was starting to doubt that their dead were truly under the supervision of God, people were far more inclined to lay their loved ones to rest away from the centre of public life.

With the physical remains of the dead now possessing more importance within all levels of society, the LNC's services had become essential. However, with that, came a duty to separate theists from atheists and to respect the established class hierarchy of the period.



So, in response to Rosaline's question about my interest in her beliefs, I asked whether that meant she would be travelling in an Anglican carriage of the train or not.

"I will be yes; the ticket I have is for the coffin and not the mourner. Here, see..." She said, handing me her ticket. (Figure 10)

"Interesting" I say, handing the ticket back to Rosaline just as the Train Conductor's whistle sounds.



Figure 10 – First Class London Necropolis Coffin Ticket

“You’re more than welcome to join us for the journey sir.” Rosaline offers.

“That is very kind, but I have too much left to see in the city. Also, graveyards give me the creeps!”

“Me too!” She says chuckling. “John just loved the country though you see. Hence this last little escape from the city. And he thought it was only right to do it by train.”

I give Rosaline my best wishes and wave goodbye as the train slowly begins to chug away, filling the station with steam.



Following on from the modern form of ‘crisis’ heterotopia, this second example also displays a similar important quality in strictly managing the divides in society. Though the class and religious divides were nothing new to those living in London above ground, they hadn’t before had an impact on those laying 6 feet under it. Sparked by the simultaneous changes in law, religion and nature, the LNC was forced to bring the societal divides closer together. Even on to the same train. And finally, into the same grave.

In concluding his description of a ‘transit’ heterotopia, Foucault makes it clear that the point of the principle, although the sole example he uses is cemeteries, is that the relevance of heterotopian analysis is justified by the importance of the social change that prompts a heterotopias ‘transit’ of location. In modern societies, innovation of technology has been trusted to adapt to the changes. And in London, the Underground and its branches of railways have been given that trust.

The two examples discussed already have adapted very differently. The deep-level shelters, you might say, were ‘in the right place at the right time’, whereas the Necropolis Railway required ‘thinking outside the box’ to address an unusual issue. The final example though, will show how the Underground has archived the social changes in its long history and how it has done it in a space that displays more characteristics of Foucault’s theory of heterotopias.



Figure II – Sir John Wolfe Barry's grave at Brookwood Cemetery



Figure I2 – For Property Lost, by Tom Eckersley, 1945.



Temporalities & Illusions

Just as the 11.30h Necropolis train disappeared out of sight, I turned back to make my way off the platform. But before I can take a step, a silver glare from the waiting room meets the corner of my eye. As I got closer, I could see that it was a silver pin with the words 'Per Ardua ad Astra' inscribed on it. It was the RAF's motto that translated to 'Through Adversity to the Stars'. Rosaline must have dropped it before she boarded the train.

I ask a member of the station staff where I can hand it in, and he advises me to use the London Underground's lost property at Lambert North Station.

12-11-19

Arriving at the Lambert North's lost property there is an interesting poster stuck up beside the front door.

THE LOST COLLECTION

-AN EXHIBITION OF UNCLAIMED ART FROM
TRANSPORT FOR LONDON LOST PROPERTY OFFICE
200 BAKER STREET, LONDON, NW15RZ

I leave Rosaline's pin with a woman in the office, along with the details I have for it. I then note down the address of the LPO exhibition and jump onto the first train to Baker Street.



Figure I3 – The Lost Collection TFL Poster, Kessel Kramer

The LPO and its Lost Collection will together serve as an example for two of Foucault's principles. The first one being a site that is "indefinitely accumulating time" that only begins to "function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time." (Foucault, 1967. p27). We can call this a 'temporal' heterotopia. The second is the final principle of Foucault's lecture; a heterotopia of 'imitation'. It describes the trait of a heterotopia that "creates a space of illusion". A place that exposes the 'interior' or habits of human life and the "messy and disorganized nature of even our most well-disciplined public spaces." (Dehaene & De Cauter, 2008).

The Lost Property Office within Baker Street Station opened its doors in 1933, subsequent to the London Passenger Transport Board's establishment. 86 years later and it has processed over 15 million items and has become the largest lost property warehouse in Europe, but as you can imagine a large majority of items are left unclaimed: 78% to be exact. A short film created by the LPTB in 1955, humorously describes some of the logistics of the sorting process and the variety of articles that end up with a lost property label tied around them. (London Transport Museum, 2022)

"You've got to make sure the glass eyes don't go in with the false teeth, so to speak. That's where the form filled out in the depo comes in. There's a form to describe every article and every article is labelled. Then they're both numbered. 23444 on the form, 23444 on the label.

23445 on the form, 23445 on the label. Then tupets in with the wigs. Men's umbrellas. Lady's umbrellas. Pairs of gloves together, single gloves alone. And. Uh. Miscellaneous..." (London Transport, 1955. Cine Gazette No. 14).

The uncollected items only remain within the Baker Street storage for 3 months. After that they are taken everywhere but the dump. The LPO works with many charities such as The Salvation Army, The British Red Cross and Scope that all find homes for what was 'one man's trash'. The rest are auctioned off, with any value they hold being invested back into the lost property service. On some occasions, items with historical or social importance remain in the office as a token of the time that has accumulated on The London Underground. But this is not for the staff's gratification; it is "only to illustrate the work of the office or as a snapshot of London at a particular time" (Martin, 2013).



As my head pops up over the end of the escalator from the Baker Street platform, I spot a man branding a LPO jumper emerging from a door cloaked by a rush hour crowd. The door has been left very slightly ajar, so I take the opportunity, in the name of research, to sneak through.

The tunnels I came from had now been furnished into

what looks like a never-ending fairground prize wall. Metal shelves ran the length of tube platforms and in what I expected to be a space of unaesthetic chaos, I find an organic and regulated museum. I turn a corner into an aisle lined with thousands and thousands of umbrellas of all shapes and colours with their paper tags hung proudly. (Figure 14) At the end of the corridor is a young man sifting through a stack of wooden frames. He has a shopping trolley parked behind him as if collecting his weekly groceries.

"Afternoon, Sir" I say, the long corridor adding a strange echo to my voice.

"Good afternoon" He replies.

"Have you lost something?" I joke.

He laughs. "No, no, I'm opening an exhibition next week"

"The Lost Collection? That one?" I ask.

"Yes! Exactly that one."

"I saw your poster in Lambert North station earlier. It's how I found myself here actually. What has been your inspiration?"

"Oh, amazing! I've always been drawn to the history of domestic things" He explains. "You can't get a more

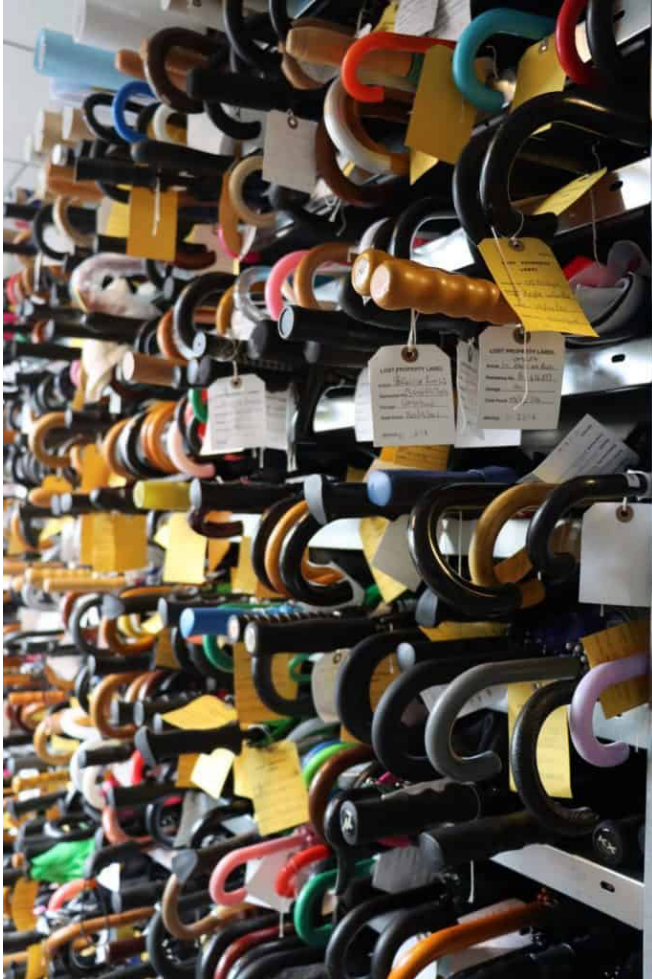


Figure 14 - The LPO's wall of umbrellas.

honest portrait of London at this specific moment than the TfL Lost Property. Museums are, in essence, filled with objects people left behind, and this place is the same, except it evolves, it's a living archive." (Brewer, 2017)



He is right, this is a very special example of a heterotopia. It adds another dimension to Foucault's words, building on how archives are indefinite, living sites. Modern heterotopias are evolving, and they may possibly begin to outgrow their own principles in this new age of technology. In the Lost Property Office, the desire to display a miscellaneous portrait of London has only strengthened in the digital age. It has promoted the value of a tangible history of London that has not yet been understood and encourages imagination and humour to form the stories for the objects found in the archive.

The LPO as a 'temporal' heterotopia, however, has a limited opportunity to share their collection with the public, as their service in reuniting property does come with a duty to protect the information and its rightful owners. The Lost collection upholds this duty in a playful way, using the anonymous nature of the artwork to highlight art's intrinsic need for the interpretation of the viewer. It imitates the purposes of a professional gallery without the need for monetary valuation and it

does not try to find an owner searching for profit from the art, but instead the rightful owner searching for their personal property.

This aim for the gallery did come to fruition as in the opening week, Richard Walker, the director of the collection that I have just met, received a call from a young artist claiming ownership of a piece. Walker explained how the artist “was trying to get his work into exhibitions and he wasn’t being very successful. Then he just left his work on the train, which must have been absolutely gutting for him. He never got it back and it then it turned up in an exhibition. He was quite thrilled and shocked at the same time.” (Lynch & Mullens, 2013)

I believe that these two forms of heterotopia working together highlight that sites sometimes reach limitations without a strong relationship with the public. Physical temporal heterotopias, such as archives, libraries and museums, can fall short of impacting the society they find themselves in as the sacred nature of the spaces lose out to the freedom of the internet. With a second trait of a heterotopia attached, they can begin to overcome this issue by combining different groups of society searching for different levels of interaction with their surroundings. The LPO and The Lost Collection are both services looking for specific audiences but without one another, some members of their intended audiences may have never recovered what was rightfully theirs.



After talking with Richard some more about the potential stories that may have led the art to find its way here, he hands me his card and tells me he would love to walk me through the exhibition when it opens. I gratefully accept his offer and make my way back through the door I had entered in.

Just before I make my way back into the labyrinth of Underground, I head to the receiving office of the LPO and ask the lady at the desk if she could check her database for the name Rosaline Barry. I had wondered if her pin had found its way back to her.

“I have one item under that name. A silver pin.”

“Was it ever collected?” I ask.

“Nope, it’s still here” She replies.

I lie to the lady and tell her that Rosaline was my great grandmother. She doesn’t seem to buy it, but she disappears into the back anyway and minutes later returns with the pin.

I pay a small collection fee and sign a piece of paper before placing the pin onto my jacket and descending back onto the conveyer belt that is the London Underground.



Figure I5 – London Transport, by Man Ray, 1938



Labyrinthine (Conclusion)

As it was stated in the introduction to this book, the endeavour of the analysis was to group the Underground's heterotopic qualities together as a collection. With this in mind, I believe there are links and similarities to the heterotopias the narrator has experienced and the impacts they have had on London and the Underground's passengers. In this conclusion to the book, these similarities will be used to form a seventh principle of heterotopias, unique to a site that is able to adapt and display multiple traits of the other 6. Let's define it as a "Labyrinthine" heterotopia; a word that is defined as something or somewhere that has many interconnected paths that create confusion or complexity.

If the 'labyrinthine' heterotopia is to answer one question it is the question that came in partnership with the introduction of Foucault's theory. What sorts of spaces should we study and how might we best understand them?

The concluding words in Foucault's lecture in 1967 was a brief idea that all the principles of a heterotopia could be compared to a boat or a "heterotopia par excellence" (Foucault, 1967). He encourages exploration of the necessity heterotopias have in modern societies.

Interestingly, he adds that despite the pleasures they offer, they allow little freedom for movement or imagination. I though, completely disagree. This book and final principle directly challenge this, but maybe if Michel Foucault could see today's societies, he might rescind those words.

The London Underground's unique feature is the faith that its passengers put in it. Despite its complexity, chaos and quite honestly overwhelming environment, 3.2 million people depend on it every day, and if you asked them, some might even say they are proud of it (minus the fares). England's capital would most likely crumble without it as "Infrastructure is almost always built to exceed present needs: it is built in anticipation of a not-yet-achieved future" (Gupta, 2018). The Underground has provided the space for the entire city to adapt and develop as a society. The imagination the system was conceived through has spread all over London and has inspired people throughout history to problem solve and to use the freedom of movement it provides to their advantage. It has allowed London to continue to be a major global city that exerts a strong influence on world art, commerce, education, healthcare, science, technology, tourism and transport.

From the deep-level air raid shelters providing safety in the lowest moments in the city's history, to the Necropolis Company supplying a dignified and peaceful burial site for Londoners of any class or religion, and

finally the Lost Property Office visualising a special portrait of London's present and past through humble items people may easily forget, the London Underground has given access to every dimension of life in the city no matter the audience it has or the amount of praise it receives. I believe it is this longevity and seemingly eternal necessity to the subterranean system that cements its importance and sacrality as a "labyrinthine" heterotopia, or 'heterotopia par excellence', in Foucault's words.

THIS IS THE END OF THE LINE





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Figure 1 – War Poster London Underground WWII
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Figure 2 – Back to the future: Quatermass and the Pit
(1967). DVD frame enlargement (Anchor Bay, 1998)

Figure 3 – Poster; To all able-bodied men, unknown,
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Figure 4 – Tube Refreshments Special train. Image from
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Figure 5 – Shelter ticket for Clapham South deep-level
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Figure 6 – Permit; Shelter permit by London Civil
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Figure 7 – Massart, J. (1945) Journal de Guerre: 1940-1945

Figure 8 – Great Seal of the London Necropolis and
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Figure 10 – The Wingate Bett Transport Ticket Collection Vol. 152-87

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Figure 12 – For Property Lost, by Tom Eckersley, 1945.

Figure 13 – Walker, R. (2018). TFL – Kessels Kramer.

Figure 14 – ‘There is an army of umbrellas’ Picture: Rob Greig / Time Out

Figure 15 – London Transport, by Man Ray, 1938

"HURRY UP AND LET THE
DOORS CLOSE. I WANT
MY DINNER."

- LONDON TUBE DRIVER

