



2016

Minding the Gap: Uncovering the Underground's Role in the Formation of Modern London, 1855-1945

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Digital Object Identifier: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13023/ETD.2016.339>

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MINDING THE GAP: UNCOVERING THE UNDERGROUND'S ROLE IN THE
FORMATION OF MODERN LONDON, 1855-1945

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By
Danielle Kristen Dodson

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Philip Harling, Professor of History

Lexington, Kentucky

2016

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ABSTRACT

MINDING THE GAP: UNCOVERING THE UNDERGROUND'S ROLE IN THE FORMATION OF MODERN LONDON, 1855-1945

My research examines how the London Underground – the first subway in the world - provided new public spaces and forms of mobility that redefined how Londoners interacted in, moved through, and imaged the city.

Perhaps nothing embodies the Underground's iconic status in London quite as completely as the phrase, "Mind the Gap." This phrase, which originally referred to the gap between the train and the platform at Embankment station on the Northern line, has since become an enduringly popular symbol of London in the minds of travelers and visitors. The fact that a behavioral command about how to move through Underground space has become synonymous with visiting London suggests the deep connections between spatial behaviors and identity in the modern city. People had to be taught how to "Mind the Gap" – and railway officials were never completely able to control the ways in which people used, traveled through, and imagined these spaces. Illuminating these tensions between railway technicians and ordinary passengers demonstrates how the Underground provided a new type of space in which men and women from different classes and backgrounds could assert claims to freedom of movement within the city.

Aside from the gap between station platforms and Underground trains, this cultural history of the Underground also reveals how Londoners negotiated and bridged other important gaps - between rich and poor, men and women, and concepts of what constituted being modern or backwards, progressive or dangerous - as they embraced this public space as a part of their everyday lives. My dissertation interweaves works of art and fiction, literary scholarship, and elements of geography and sociology into a cultural history of London's transport. Though it was owned and operated by a series of private companies throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Underground offered a relatively affordable means of traversing the capitol for Londoners of all classes and backgrounds, and therefore the spaces of the Underground network (stations, platforms, and train cars) acted as public spaces where new ideas about democratic order in society were challenged and negotiated.

My dissertation will bring a new perspective to studies of urban history by using interactions within the Tube to demonstrate how modernity was experienced and given meaning through particular spatial practices. I argue that the Underground helped challenge and redefine urban identities in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, particularly for women.

KEYWORDS: Subways, Urbanization, Spatial Studies, British Transport History,
Women and Mobility

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July 20, 016

MINDING THE GAP:
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I first got the idea to write about the Underground for a research paper during my first year of graduate school, I had no idea that I would still be as enthralled with this subject seven years later (well, most of the time). This work owes an enormous debt of gratitude to a number of people who I would like to thank here.

First, I would like to thank my committee members – Dr. Karen Petrone for giving me the initial idea to study the cultural history of public celebrations and for providing thoughtful analysis; Dr. Akiko Takenaka for being willing to teach me all about spatial studies and help me prepare a qualifying field on the subject when I had almost no idea what I was actually talking about; Dr. Srimati Basu for challenging me to think more broadly about issues of gender and empire in British society (there aren't enough of either subject here, probably, but that fault is entirely my own); and Dr. Jonathan Allison for being so enthusiastic and helpful about reading the completed dissertation. I would especially like to thank Dr. Jim Albisetti for providing lightning-fast feedback and thoughtful encouragement and friendship over the years. In particular, his support for the graduate program at the University of Kentucky enabled me to travel to London for research on two occasions, and this work is made possibly largely by his generosity. Lastly, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Philip Harling, for his incredible mentorship over the last seven years. Dr. Harling has made me a better writer,

teacher, scholar, and (hopefully, if any of his warm personality rubbed off on me) person. I knew when I started here that Dr. Harling would be an excellent advisor, but he has also become a real friend and mentor as well, and I will be forever grateful to him for his generosity and kind spirit.

I would also like to thank my friends in the history department. Team Britain – Jill Abney, Jon Coleman, and Lacey Sparks (and our sometimes honorary member, Stephen Pickering) - provided me with something I'd only dreamed about before grad school: a group of people as excited about England as I was. I am so thankful for your friendship. This work would also not be complete without the support of my writing group, particularly Jill Abney and Dana Johnson. While most writing days probably involved more eating and laughing than writing, those times will remain some of my very favorite memories and did essential work to buoy my spirit in grad school. I am so lucky to have found lifelong friends in you both.

My family and friends have also been an unending source of support and I cannot thank them enough. I know I asked a great deal of them over the years and I was not always able to adequately convey how deeply I have appreciated their help. I am so thankful to my close friends, Rachel May and Emily Boyle, for continuously encouraging me and helping me stay happy and healthy during the isolation of the dissertating process. My sister, Lexi Dodson, tried to keep me sane during moments of intense stress, and I am especially thankful that she overlooked how many weekends I promised and failed to visit because I was writing. My mother, Cyndi Dodson, has been my biggest fan

and did so much to ensure that the other parts of my life could run smoothly so I could focus on work. This dissertation would not have been possible without her daily help. I would also like to thank my father, Mark Dodson, for providing support throughout my time at UK. I also think I owe much of this work to him, because I am quite certain his love for the Beatles, Sherlock Holmes, and Monty Python has everything to do with why I chose to study British History. Thank you for inspiring me, encouraging me, and being my London bodyguard. No one's parents should still take that much care of them when they approach thirty, and I'm incredibly grateful that mine didn't bring that up as often as they could have. I love you. Lastly, I would like to thank Dary Picken. You proved that there was a future outside of grad school far brighter than the world I was stuck in, and you took away the fear I had about graduating and replaced it with an excitement that did more to make this dissertation possible than anything else. I love you, and I am so thankful to you for believing in me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
LIST OF FIGURES	VII
CHAPTER 1: Introduction: The Englishness of Escalators	1
I. The Underground and the Modern City	6
II. A Cultural History of the Underground	17
III. A Brief History of the London Underground	23
IV. Conclusion	28
CHAPTER TWO: Bodies in Motion	31
I. Spatial Studies	38
II. Understanding London's Urban Problems	43
III. The Logic Behind Urban Improvements	50
IV. Urban Improvements	56
V. The Opening of the Underground Railway	66
IV. Conclusion	78
CHAPTER THREE: Writing on the Wall: Ordering Underground Space	82
I. Modernity and Vision	87
II. Early Attempts at Ordering the Underground	95
III. The Limits of Order Underground	113
IV. Underground Aesthetics	127
V. Conclusion	147
CHAPTER FOUR: Underground: the Way for All?	148
I. Smoking	153
II. Knowledge of the Underground	160
III. The Underground and the Development of the West End	183
IV. The Underground in the Women's Movement	193
V. Conclusion	199
CHAPTER FIVE: Putting London on the Map	201
I. Mapping London's Social Geography	202
II. Suburban London	210
III. Selling London	219
IV. Mapping the City	231
V. The Underground at War	245
CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion: Carrying On	255
BIBLIOGRAPHY	276
VITA	301

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. “Please Stand on the Right”	17
Figure 2.1. “Opening of the Thames tunnel”	58
Figure 2.2. “Opening of the Metropolitan Railway”	74
Figure 3.1. King’s Cross Station Interior	97
Figure 3.2. “First-Class Underground Study”	104
Figure 3.3. “Station Indicators on the Underground”	107
Figure 3.4. “Of the Underground Railway Officials”	125
Figure 3.5. “How do I use the Tube?”	126
Figure 3.6. “Underground for Business or Pleasure”	130
Figure 3.7. “No Need to Ask a P’liceman”	139
Figure 3.8. “Only a Little Thing”	142
Figure 3.9. “Pass Right Down the Car, Please”	143
Figure 3.10. “The Pioneers: Supposed Origins of Underground Tactics”	145
Figure 4.1. “Will Ye Tak’ the Paper”	148
Figure 4.2. “Obstructionists in a Smoking Carriage”	157
Figure 4.3. “Studies in Express - The Lady in a Smoking Carriage”	162
Figure 4.4. “I Say, Missus”	166
Figure 4.5. “Shop Between 10 and 4”	190
Figure 4.6. Twopenny Tube Illustrated Comic Postcard	191
Figure 4.7. “Underground, the Way for All”	197
Figure 5.1. Booth’s Poverty Map of Bethnal Green, 1889	204
Figure 5.2. Booth’s Poverty Map of Bloomsbury, 1889.....	205
Figure 5.3. Golders Green Poster, 1908.....	213
Figure 5.4. “Leave this and Move to Edgware”	216
Figure 5.5. “Book to Perivale, Sadbury, or Harrow”	222
Figure 5.6. “Wooded Middlesex”	222
Figure 5.7. “Underground: In Search of Happiness”	224
Figure 5.8. District Map of Greater London, 1905	236
Figure 5.9. Pocket Underground Map, 1908.....	237
Figure 5.10. Henry Beck’s Original Underground Diagram Drawing	240
Figure 5.11. 2016 London Underground Map	241
Figure 5.12. “Let Your Eyes get Used to the Gloom”	253
Figure 6.1. “Keep Calm and Carry On”	264
Figure 6.2. “Travel Better London” Poster	271
Figure 6.3. “The British Character: Patience in Adversity”	275

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION: THE ENGLISHNESS OF ESCALATORS

“We might be bad at dancing and expressing our feelings, but say this for the British: when we settle on a convention of public order, we bloody well stick to it. We wait in line. We leave the last biscuit. And when we take the escalator, we stand on the right.”¹

When Archie Bland, journalist for *The Guardian*, wrote these words in January of 2016, he was describing a recent controversy at Holborn Tube station when Transport for London officials attempted to implement a new policy of standing on the right *and* the left of the escalator as passengers entered and exited the station. Britons’ peculiar habit of standing to the right and passing on the left of the escalator severely limits the flows of passengers in and out of stations (an increasingly urgent problem as the Tube now carries over four million passengers a day). A 2002 study of Underground escalator capacity proved that passengers’ dogged insistence on standing to the right actually halved the capacity of each escalator and created a massive bottleneck below. Consequently, replacing the one-sided standing policy with a new requirement that passengers stand next to each other on escalators seemed like an obvious solution. And yet, Bland’s point about British identity being somehow tied up in spatial practices could not have been more accurate, as outrage over the efforts to instate these changes at Holborn sparked international media attention. Indeed, Londoners have embraced these behaviors to such an extent that station workers actually feared for their physical safety when they attempted to implement these escalator changes.²

¹ Archie Bland, “The Tube at a Standstill: Why TfL Stopped People Walking up the Escalators,” *Guardian* (Saturday, January 16, 2016).

² Bland, “The Tube at a Standstill.”

While escalator behavior might seem like an insignificant quirk of a people already known for being quirky, this recent controversy demonstrates how spatial practices can become embedded in one's culture and identity in deeply significant ways. This relationship between identity and spatial practice began in the early days of Underground travel. The first escalators in Britain, installed at Earl's Court Underground station in 1911, were praised for their "freedom and rapidity of movement" compared to traditional lifts.³ This new and faster technology required new ways of behaving, and guards with megaphones shouted for customers to walk up the escalators (treating them as a moving staircase) soon after they were first installed. As standing became the norm by the interwar period, Underground officials perfected a system in which passengers who wished to stand would do so on the right and allow commuters who still wished to walk to pass on the left.⁴ Indeed, an announcement at Charing Cross station in 1921 routinely alerted passengers to "please keep moving, if you must stand – stand on the right" during rush hours.⁵ As urban historian Richard Hornsey explains, over time this "practiced repetition" became synonymous with larger notions of what it meant to be a Londoner. Londoners – like Britons more generally – might not be great at expressing emotions, but they were marvelous at forming queues.

And so it was not entirely surprising that one angry commuter at Holborn station - accustomed to running up the left of the escalator to quickly exit the station each day –

³ David Welsh, *Underground Writing: The London Tube from George Gissing to Virginia Woolf* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 145.

⁴ Richard Hornsey, "Training Up the Escalated Body," *Going Underground: Travel Beneath the Metropolis, 1863-2013, Organized by the Centre for Metropolitan History (IHR) in association with the London Transport Museum*, London, 17-18 January 2013.

⁵ Quoted in Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere: London's Underground Railway in the Life of the Capital* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Unlimited in association with London's Transport Museum, 2001) 87.

complained during the transition to standing on escalators, “Can’t you let us walk if we want to?....This isn’t Russia!”⁶ While his vehemence might seem a bit hyperbolic, the angry commuter who compared standing to the left of the escalator to living without democratic freedoms was not entirely off the mark; the Underground has long been associated with freedom of movement. This dissertation argues that the London Underground has acquired its iconic status as a fixture of London precisely because of the spatial practices and possibilities this technology enabled. The London Underground -- the first subway in the world -- provided new public spaces and forms of mobility that redefined how Londoners interacted in, moved through, and imagined the city.

Perhaps nothing embodies the Underground’s iconic status in London quite as completely as the phrase, “Mind the Gap.” This phrase, which originally referred to the gap between the train and the platform at Embankment station on the Northern line, has since become an enduringly popular symbol of London in the minds of travelers and visitors.⁷ London Underground’s roundel logo and the command to “Mind the Gap” brightly decorates hundreds of tourist items, from umbrellas to underwear, in shops throughout London. The fact that a behavioral command about how to move through Underground space has become synonymous with visiting London suggests the deep connections between spatial behaviors and identity in the modern city. People had to be taught how to “Mind the Gap” – and railway officials were never completely able to control the ways in which people used and imagined these spaces. Illuminating these tensions between railway technicians and ordinary passengers demonstrates how the

⁶ Archie Bland, “The Tube at a Standstill.”

⁷ Emily Kearns, *Mind the Gap: A London Underground Miscellany* (Chichester, West Sussex: Summersdale, 2013), 49.

Underground provided a new type of space in which men and women from different classes and backgrounds could assert claims to freedom of movement within the city.

Aside from the gap between station platforms and Underground trains, this cultural history of the Underground also reveals how Londoners negotiated and bridged other important gaps - between rich and poor, men and women, and concepts of what constituted being modern or backwards, progressive or dangerous - as they embraced this public space as a part of their everyday lives. Experiences of and in space have become an increasingly prominent lens through which to study society in recent academic scholarship, but much of this work has been limited to the fields of geography and literary studies.⁸ Indeed, as urban historian Eric Schatzberg explains, “when it comes to integrating the history of urban technology and urban culture... historians have made

⁸ Literary scholar David Welsh examines the literature involving the Tube and looks at the ways the Tube was represented as either utopian or hellish. David Welsh, *Underground Writing: The London Tube from George Gissing to Virginia Woolf* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010). David Pike explores the relationship between subterranean space and modernity by arguing that the vertical framework of the world above and below cannot sufficiently account for the contradictions of modern experience. He also applies Henri Lefebvre’s theories about space to the Underground to show how references to the past were used to make sense of this new urban space. David Pike, *Metropolis on the Styx: The Underworlds of Modern Urban Culture, 1800-2001* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007) and *Subterranean Cities: the World Beneath Paris and London, 1800-1945* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005). Michael Saler explores how the Tube in the interwar period acted as a platform to display modernist values in art and aesthetics. Michael Saler, *The Avant-Garde in Interwar England: Medieval Modernism and the London Underground* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). David Ashford explains how passengers’ writing about the Underground turned the conceived abstract space of the Tube into lived space. David Ashford, *London Underground: A Cultural Geography* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013). For general histories of the Underground network itself, see David Bennett, *Metro: The Story of the Underground Railway* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 2004); David Bownes, Oliver Green, and Sam Mullins, *Underground: How the Tube Shaped London* (London: Allen Lane, the Penguin Group, 2012); Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere: London’s Underground Railway in the Life of the Capital* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Unlimited in association with London’s Transport Museum, 2001); Andrew Martin, *Underground, Overground: A Passenger’s History of the Tube* (London: Profile Books, 2012); and Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway: How the London Underground was Built and how it Changed the City Forever* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004).

little progress.”⁹ Moreover, the studies that have attempted to provide a historical context for how space shapes identity and experience have often ignored transportation networks like the Underground. Literary scholar David Ashford agrees, noting, “The significance of the cultural history of the Tube network is largely overlooked” in most histories of London.¹⁰ Although it was owned and operated by a series of private companies throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Underground offered a relatively affordable means of traversing the capital for Londoners of all classes and backgrounds, and therefore the spaces of the Underground network (stations, platforms, and train cars) acted as public spaces where new ideas about democratic order in society were challenged and negotiated. My dissertation will bring a new perspective to studies of urban history by using interactions within the Tube to demonstrate how modernity was experienced and given meaning through particular spatial practices. I argue that the Underground helped challenge and redefine urban identities in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, particularly for women.

⁹ Eric Schatzberg, “Culture and Technology in the City: Opposition to Mechanized Street Transportation in Late-Nineteenth Century America,” in *Technology and History: Essays in Honor of Thomas Parke Hughes and Agatha Chipley Hughes*, ed. Gabrielle Hecht and Michael Allen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 60.

¹⁰ David Ashford, *London Underground: A Cultural Geography* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 3. Similarly, historians Colin Divall and Winstan Bond argue that, “historians of the city have widened their interests to include fields such as leisure and urban consumerism [but] they have not always been as attentive as they might be to the role played by transport.” Colin Divall and Winstan Bond, “Introductions: Technology, (Sub)urban Development, and the Social Construction of Urban Transport,” in *Suburbanizing the Masses: Public Transport and Urban Development in Historical Perspective*, ed. Colin Divall and Winstan Bond (London: Ashgate, 2003), 18.

I. *The Underground and the Modern City*

As Peter Gay notes, the passenger railway, which was first introduced in 1830, “became a potent metaphor for the bewildering, anxiety-making speed of the nineteenth century.”¹¹ While aboveground railways were not exactly novel by the year the first Underground line opened in 1863, the very existence of a subterranean railway opened up new possibilities for moving through the capital that created “an unprecedented form of modern urban space.”¹² The Underground was also marketed as a technology available to all classes of Londoners because it provided more affordable options than existing forms of transport. The freedom of movement this technology provided seemed to some contemporaries like a sign of the admirable progress of the modern city. In contrast, others saw this freedom as a frightening catalyst for eroding “the social structures that impeded open circulation, no matter how vital these [structures] might be to the establishment.”¹³

In order to explain the relationship between transport and modernity, I need to navigate the somewhat complicated field of urban history to explain what I mean by “modernity” in the first place. Urban historians have long sought to explore and understand how the Victorian city developed into the cities we live in now. By the 1850s, Victorian Britain had become the world’s first urbanized society and London had emerged as arguably the most influential city in the world with a booming industrial and service economy and a bigger population than any city in history at that time. In fact, one

¹¹ Peter Gay, *Education of the Senses: The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud* Vol. 1 (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984), 63.

¹² Ashford, *London Underground: A Cultural Geography*, 13.

¹³ Ashford, *London Underground: A Cultural Geography*, 18.

in every twelve persons in England called London home by 1850.¹⁴ London was also rapidly expanding, as the population soared from 2.2 million in 1850 to 4.7 million in 1900. This metropolis was also the center of an empire that spanned a fourth of the globe by 1900. London's rapid growth created a host of urban problems (in sanitation, housing, healthcare, municipal government, and transportation, among other things), all of which had never been encountered on such a vast scale before. Massive filth accompanied massive growth, as overcrowding complicated issues of sewerage, sanitation, and health.¹⁵

Consequently, Victorians were acutely aware – “either with fear or with pride – that they were living through a period of change.”¹⁶ Historians have generally used the term “modern” to refer to the cultural, economic, and political changes brought about by these processes of industrialization, urbanism, and imperialism between the 1870s and 1930s.¹⁷ Urban scholars are quick to point out, however, that the term “modernity” has

¹⁴ Eric E. Lampard, “The Urbanizing World,” in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*. Volume I, ed. H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 4.

¹⁵ Lee Jackson, *Dirty Old London: The Victorian Fight Against Filth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 4.

¹⁶ Asa Briggs, “The Human Aggregate,” in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*. Volume I, ed. H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 84. For more on contemporary anxieties about the “age of express trains,” see Peter Gay, *Education of the Senses*, 63-65.

¹⁷ Martin Daunt and Bernhard Rieger, ed. *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 1. Daunt and Rieger argue that people living during the Victorian period began to use the term modern to define their experience more and more after the 1870s. At this point, “modern” went from mostly describing industrialization to designating a wide range of social, political, and economic factors. Daunt and Rieger attribute these changes to several large-scale processes occurring during this period, such as the rise of scientific elites, the extension of the franchise and growth of mass political parties, a general rise in wages that encouraged middle-class growth (and stimulated new forms of leisure), a more popular imperialist attitude at home, and changing gender dynamics.

become so overused that much of the actual meaning of the term is lost.¹⁸ Indeed, scholars Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger insist that “there is no generally accepted theoretical definition of modernity among scholars.”¹⁹ Victorian Britons, like their European counterparts, used the term “modern” to describe these huge transformations that contained both exciting opportunities and potentially threatening consequences.²⁰ However, some scholars have criticized the utility of the word “modernity,” arguing that the sense of alienation or experience of living in a unique time implicit in the word is not historically specific and/or predates the nineteenth century.²¹

While I do see some continuities that endure during this period, I will borrow Richard Dennis’ definition of “modernity” as “a historical shorthand” that does not deny continuities with the past while at the same time acknowledging that the “nineteenth century witnessed urban growth, immigration, cultural diversity, and technology change on an unprecedented scale.”²² However, I also want to pay particular attention to how space - particularly movement through this space - and individual identity became embedded in these concepts of being modern. I argue that learning how to navigate new forms of public space and how to harness the cultural capital that accompanied this

¹⁸ Simon Gunn and James Vernon, “Introduction: What was Liberal Modernity and Why was it Peculiar To Imperial Britain?” in *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain*, ed. Simon Gunn and James Vernon (Berkeley, California: The Global, Area, and International Archive, University of California Press, 2011), xii.

¹⁹ Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger, ed. *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 4.

²⁰ Daunton and Rieger, ed. *Meanings of Modernity*, 3.

²¹ Nigel Thrift argues that the language of modernity is reductive and ahistorical. For more on this issue, see Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff also discuss the ambiguities over what about modernity was a rupture and what remained the same in *The Victorian City, Images and Realities* Vol. I (London and Boston, Routledge & Kegan, 1973).

²² Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 3.

greater mobility created a form of “spatial citizenship” that has remained an enduring aspect of London (and perhaps even British) identity.²³

The potential implications of greater and faster mobility brought the Underground into larger discussions at the time about modernity, particularly because of the sense of unease this freedom created. Historian Marshall Berman argues that the defining characteristic of modernity is the paradoxical belief that one is living in both a time of great promise and great danger. Berman defines modernity as “a mode of vital experience... of space and time, of the self and others, of life’s possibilities and perils – that is shared by men and women all over the world today.”²⁴ Berman stipulates that this experience is a “unity of disunity,” filled with contradiction and complication.²⁵ The Tube’s possibilities for freedom represented a distinctly modern and democratic space, even as it became part of the everyday lives of its passengers.

²³ I am borrowing the concept of “spatial citizenship” from Richard Hornsey’s discussion of guiding environments, like the Tube, in post-war London. For more on this concept, see Richard Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect: Unruly Life in Postwar London* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 57.

²⁴ Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 15.

²⁵ Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air*, 16-19. Berman focuses on the works of Marx and Nietzsche to demonstrate how modernization began to embody a sense of contradiction as a period both pregnant with possibility and devoid of value. He concludes that twentieth-century modernity lost this sense of contradiction and became polarized towards viewing the processes of modernization as either positive or negative. Berman argues that Foucault has spoken the most about modernity, but that “what he has to say is an endless, excruciating series of variations on the Weberian themes of the iron cage and the human nullities whose souls are shaped to fit the bars. Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger explain that Britain’s experience of modernity was perceived more as a gradual process than a sharp rupture with the past compared to the rest of Europe. *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 11. Jose Harris adds to this notion of modernity by arguing that this period witnessed the first real mass political culture in British history as the landed elite had started to lose their grasp on public life, enfranchisement widened the electorate, local government institutions sprang up in various ways (Public Health Act of 1875, Education act of 1870, etc.), and more social clubs emerged to provide a unifying force for middle- and working-class people. *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain, 1870-1914* (London: Penguin, 1994) 193-4.

Negotiating how to move through and interact in these new public spaces also required Londoners to re-conceptualize themselves as individuals, and this changing concept of modern subjectivity is another crucial component of how I see modernity functioning in this period. As individual Londoners learned to make meaning of themselves as urbanites, they also learned to embrace certain aspects of the city as a part of their identity. Writ large, these changes in identity could also shape notions of national character, as we have seen with the close association between English identity and a predilection for queuing on escalators. Historian Peter Mandler explains that the “elaboration of an English ‘national character’ was one of the principal, enduring means by which the cultivated elites in England came to express a consciousness of their own modernity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”²⁶ He adds that English national character was largely conceived of by liberals who wanted England’s values of self-government, liberty, and adaptability to serve as a model for all nations.

As Mandler makes clear, the concept of English character is also intimately tied to notions of freedom and liberty. In order to explore the development of these ideas more fully, it is first necessary to unpack the concept of British liberalism more broadly. Although I do not ultimately find the term “liberalism” particularly useful in defining what I am trying to capture in the spaces of the Tube, I am concerned with the liberal concept of ruling through freedom and the types of behaviors and spatial practices that would enable this freedom. In other words, I am using the spaces of the Tube to show how certain behaviors become normalized and meaningful as they were incorporated into

²⁶ Peter Mandler, “The Consciousness of Modernity? Liberalism and the English National Character, 1870-1940” (119-144). In *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II*, ed. Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 119.

the everyday lives of Londoners and how these behaviors in turn shaped understandings of the spaces of the city more broadly. So, while the term “disciplinary individualism” might be a more useful description of what I will discuss in this work, I think it is still important to briefly define how the relationship between liberalism and freedom/behavior functioned.

Like modernity, liberalism is difficult to define because the ideology encompassed so many other ideologies and because scholars have widely overused the term.²⁷ Liberalism is both a political agenda and a philosophy that emerged in the 1850s, though the political party will not be discussed at length here. The concept of liberalism evolved from the Enlightenment, and generally focused on promoting individual liberty, free trade and economic independence, and solutions to urban problems that would improve general welfare without undue interference from the state.²⁸ To have a small but functional government, individuals needed to possess the intelligence and moral qualities necessary to be trusted to manage themselves, and this notion of “liberal subjectivity” is at the heart of my exploration of behaviors in the Tube.²⁹

Liberalism posited the idea that individuals should be capable of self-improvement, rational thought, and independence. However, this seemingly universal ideal liberal subject was always ultimately conceived of as “the white, male body of

²⁷ Elaine Hadley, *Living Liberalism: Practical Citizenship in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 2. The Liberal party was officially founded in 1859 by a group of Whigs, Peelites, and radicals. Many scholars believe that the focus on gradual reform inherent in liberalism sought to slow and direct the country’s progress towards democracy.

²⁸ Judith Neiswander, *The Cosmopolitan Interior: Liberalism and the British Home, 1870-1914* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 8.

²⁹ Hadley, *Living Liberalism*, 7. As Hadley explains, “to be an individual capable of self-government, visible as a citizen in the public sphere, one must have character, and character consists of certain mental capacities.”

property and high social standing.”³⁰ As a result, while the British state was supposed to provide the framework in which society could largely govern and develop itself, the mid-Victorian state increasingly widened its scope to help those considered unable to become proper liberal subjects on their own, such as women, imperial subjects, or the working classes. The idea that the state might need to guide individuals into developing the good character necessary to rule themselves led to franchise extensions, sanitary reform, and a variety of other urban improvements.³¹ As Patrick Joyce explains, freedom is not just “something that the government is ruled for but something that is ruled through,” and the means of creating this free environment were often technological.³²

During the Victorian period, individual comportment became a key component in the operation of state power. Although I prefer to refer to this relationship between citizens and the state as ruling through freedom, the changing relationship between the state and its disciplinary techniques is often termed governmentality. Michel Foucault defined governmentality broadly as the techniques by which a government disciplines its population in order to produce citizens best suited to enact its policies.³³ Since Victorian liberalism stressed both the importance of freedom from government and also the value

³⁰ Hadley, *Living Liberalism*, 13.

³¹ Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain, 1870-1914* (London: Penguin, 1994), 181.

³² Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London and New York: Verso, 2003), xiii.

³³ Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, ed. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). For more on techniques of rule in modern society, see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977). Patrick Joyce argues that Foucault sees governmentality emerge when governments became distinct and separate from the person of the sovereign. Governments needed to facilitate access to and growth of resources that would increase the wealth, subsistence, and power of the state. Foucault sees governmentality emerging before liberalism. Where governmentality seeks to control and survey a population, liberalism places faith in the liberal subject instead of an expansive government. For more on the relationship between governmentality and liberalism, see Patrick Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, 3-4.

of self-government, the modern state adapted to these ideals by helping to facilitate cleaner, more respectable citizens that could be trusted to govern themselves (a process often termed liberal governmentality). Consequently, improvements in housing, sanitation, transportation, and lighting all facilitated orderliness more effectively than overt authority figures like the police. Patrick Joyce argues that these improvements functioned as “technosocial solutions to political questions” about order in society.³⁴ A sense of self-imposed order remains an enduring legacy of these public works projects, as the earlier example of standing to the right of the Tube escalator demonstrates.

While the Tube is now simply taken for granted as part of the routine experience of London life, the process of making this technology ordinary and unobtrusive took an incredible amount of planning and negotiation.³⁵ Indeed, Chris Otter argues that liberal society needed to be built and maintained; wider streets, better lighting, slum demolition, and other urban improvements were also attempts to create spaces where ruling through freedom could be possible and visible.³⁶ Otter adds that Victorian liberals demonstrated a belief in the agency of material objects when they assumed that “if one built houses, networks, and other structures in particular ways, one could encourage, promote, or stimulate forms of being or conduct (health, independence, sobriety) that can be referred to in terms of ‘liberal subjectivity.’”³⁷ These modern technologies of improvement, however, required government oversight. As people became accustomed to these technologies, they inadvertently allowed the state to ingratiate itself more deeply into the

³⁴ Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, 7.

³⁵ Chris Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2008), 250.

³⁶ Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 114.

³⁷ Otter, *The Victorian Eye*, 17.

everyday lives of its citizens. Therefore, while obvious state power is sometimes difficult to observe in these depictions of London society, it was and is clearly operating or being challenged in significant and measurable ways (as the futile attempts to enforce standing to the left and the right of the escalator make clear).

Foucault argued that governmentality better enabled the state to control and oppress its population through spaces like prisons and hospitals, where knowledge acquisition and surveillance provided more comprehensive control of a state's population. However, scholars like Marshall Berman have criticized Foucault's totalizing view of state discipline because it denies the possibility for freedom and agency on the part of individual citizens. Berman retorts that "there is no freedom in Foucault's world" and "the mystery is why so many of today's intellectuals seem to want to choke in there with him."³⁸ Examining the interactions among passengers and between passengers and Underground officials illuminates the complex interplay of freedom and order in a democratic society. While the spaces of the Underground were theoretically places of passage, these were also "opportunities for challenge, where new behavior conflicted with old and where legitimate activity crossed with transgression."³⁹ Transport technologies like the Underground were uniquely suited to realizing the dreams of liberal reformers because they provided novel ways of reaching into the everyday lives of citizens.

Demonstrating proper behavior in public became a key way of proving that one possessed the virtues necessary to be a liberal citizen. People needed to internalize the proper behaviors necessary to maintain stability and civility in the face of an increasingly

³⁸ Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air*, 34-35.

³⁹ Lisa Keller, *Triumph of Order: Democracy and Public Space in New York and London* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 39.

mobile and diverse population. Foucault argued that these individuals paradoxically expressed their freedom as citizens by voluntarily complying with certain laws, a process he called “disciplinary individualism.”⁴⁰ In theory, the laws that people voluntarily submitted to were easy to follow because they were predictable and therefore could “incite conformity through tutelage and example rather than coercing obedience by punishment or fear.”⁴¹ In order to help guide this disciplinary individualism, government agencies and liberal reformers (such as the engineers and urban planners responsible for designing the Underground) needed to create spaces that would encourage civilized behavior without impeding movement or speed. The Underground became an important aspect of governing through freedom because it eliminated some of the barriers that stood in the way of the free circulation of individuals in society. However, the very openness of these spaces and technologies required ways of guiding individuals to become more moral and ordered.⁴²

Marshall Berman stressed that there was a liberating potential in understanding and internalizing how to move through urban space; “a man who knows how to move in and around and through the traffic can go anywhere, down any of the endless urban corridors where traffic itself is free to go.”⁴³ The intersection between modernity, disciplinary individualism, and national identity is evident in the example of

⁴⁰ I find Mary Poovey’s analysis of disciplinary individualism particularly useful. She argues that government administration combined charisma with bureaucracy to teach people to internalize routine behaviors as normalized ones. For more on disciplinary individualism, see Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁴¹ Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 103.

⁴² Morality came under the scope of liberalism because philosophers like Adam Smith argued that an individual watching himself in public would be more virtuous as a result of internalizing the sense of how he appeared to others. Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 33.

⁴³ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 126.

Underground escalator behavior mentioned previously. Indeed, British periodicals in the late-Victorian period mocked pedestrians who did not follow these unspoken conventions in Underground space with a series of descriptions of “country grandmothers” in London for holiday. The women, oblivious to the unspoken rules about where to stand in the spaces of the Underground, proved by their very behaviors in the Tube that they were insufficiently “escalator-minded” and thus thoroughly at odds with the pace and rhythm of modern life.⁴⁴

This notion that all Londoners inherently understood the unspoken conventions of the Tube existed among Underground staff as well. An operating manager’s letter to staff in June of 1930 noted that there had been twenty-two non-serious accidents on escalators that month (thirteen female and nine male). The vast majority of these accidents occurred at Waterloo station, “the inference being that the passengers concerned were visitors to London and strange to escalators.”⁴⁵ One Underground poster in 1944 humorously teased those passengers who failed to recognize the social cues to stand to the right on escalators, though the fact that the poster had to be designed at all suggests that everyone did not naturally follow these unspoken conventions:

⁴⁴ Hornsey, “Training Up the Escalated Body.”

⁴⁵ Operating Manager’s Letter no. 9, 25 June 1930. LMA: ACC/1297/UER/04/077



Figure 1.1 “Please Stand on the Right of the Escalator.”

II. A Cultural History of the Underground

These conventions did have to be taught before they could be ingrained as a routine part of urban behavior, and the next chapter investigates the press coverage of the opening ceremonies of the various Underground lines - as well as several other urban improvement technologies, such as the Thames Embankment and the Main Drainage sewer work - to show how mid-Victorian reformers used celebrations to demonstrate the proper ways of behaving in and making meaning of new urban spaces. The process of designing, funding, and governing these technologies sparked heated debates that “cut to

⁴⁶ Fougasse, “Please Stand on the right of the escalator,” Cartoon, London Transport Museum Online. Ref number: 1987/98. www.ltmcollection.org/posters

the quick of Victorian conceptions of civic identity and even British history itself.”⁴⁷ To combat the fears about the dangerous potential of traveling under the ground, railway officials crafted elaborate parades and formal ceremonies intended to establish the respectability of these spaces and link them to wider concepts of civic and national identity. These first opening ceremonies featured local government officials, but later line openings quickly blossomed into widely publicized affairs that were officiated by members of the royal family. Parades and opening celebrations like these reinforced the types of civilized comportment Tube officials hoped passengers would display by manifesting bodily self-discipline and rational movement through the processional itself.⁴⁸

On June 10th, 1863, ordinary Londoners crowded through the station doors for their first taste of a subway ride. Some of the celebratory aspects from the opening ceremonies remained, and as each train drew into the station “the City band played, the men shouted, the women screamed, and the uproar was such that cab horses took fright and bolted.”⁴⁹ A journalist at the public opening remarked that, “it can be compared to nothing else than the crush at the doors of a theatre on the first night of a pantomime.”⁵⁰ Pantomime is a useful word here, because the actual integration of underground space into the everyday lives of Londoners required new ways of acting and behaving in public as well. Chapter Three explores the complex negotiations between passengers and

⁴⁷ Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (London: Orion, 2010), 262.

⁴⁸ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 163.

⁴⁹ W.J. Passingham, *Romance of London's Underground* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., 1931), 16. Passingham notes that over 30,000 passengers were carried that day.

⁵⁰ Peter Ackroyd, *London Under* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2011), 117.

Underground officials that transpired once the exciting Underground had actually become a mundane part of London life.

This chapter examines station designs, posters and other forms of Underground signage, and passengers' reactions to these Underground aesthetics, in order to demonstrate how Tube officials attempted to guide behaviors in this space. This chapter also reveals how things as simple as the font chosen for all Underground communications or the roundel logo splashed across Tube advertising materials reflected specific notions of civic authority, modernity, and freedom. Ultimately, station design became a means of attempting to provide an identity for modern London while also lessening the potentially unstable consequences of cross-class and gender interaction.

Chapter Three also explores the relationship between public and private space on the Tube and the consequences this had for norms of behavior. The Underground increasingly became a part of one's commute to and from work, and the familiarity of this space and time between work and home could potentially be seen as an extension of one's home or personal space. And yet, the potential instability of this space – where an unruly stranger or overcrowded train could at any moment disrupt one's peaceful commute – always kept this space from becoming too private or comfortable. I argue that officials responded to this instability by designing train cars that encouraged a sort of mental interiority while riding and passengers helped facilitate this evolution through their own complaints. People focused on their own thoughts instead of reaching out to others on their daily commute, and this process of adapting to public space inspired new norms for behaving in Tube carriages - such as reading or looking down at the ground - that remain integral parts of appropriate Underground comportment today.

Because they represented elements of both private and public space, Underground carriages also presented unique opportunities for women to challenge or transgress traditional notions of what constituted acceptable gendered behavior. The opportunities the Underground provided for women to claim access to urban space is the subject of the third chapter. By examining the everyday experiences of female passengers and discourses about appropriate forms of Underground mobility for men and women, I argue in Chapter Four that the London Underground formed a significant and largely overlooked space in the struggle for social control of who could move freely through London. Moreover, I argue that women's own experiences in and writings about the Underground helped shape this new space by challenging and restructuring notions of appropriate gendered behavior.

Chapter Four also highlights the implementation of ladies-only carriages and male-only smoking carriages in the mid-Victorian period to illustrate how Tube officials re-inscribed gender hierarchies belowground. At the same time they were trying to replicate gender boundaries in the Underground, Tube officials also celebrated women's presence in the city with their advertisements for the "Twopenny Tube" (which provided a direct route to sites of leisure and shopping in the West End) in 1900. This chapter also explores women's own writings about and use of railways to reveal the strong connections between mobility and power in modern society. While the shops, restaurants, and other leisure sites in the West End welcomed women's presence as a sign of modernity, women's access to this space was still limited to specific places and times of day if they wanted to maintain the appearance of respectability, and these notions of what

constituted respectable gendered comportment were shaken by the freedom of movement the Underground provided.⁵¹

The rapid expansion of the Tube also eroded Londoners' confidence in their ability to make sense of the vastness of the city. The Tube's role in the literal growth of London and its influence in shaping Londoners' imagined maps of the city is the focus of Chapter Five. This chapter begins by exploring how writers about London felt they no longer understood the city as a whole. In response, Underground officials simultaneously packaged London as a unified metropolis to visitors and celebrated the distinct attractions and unique features of the various boroughs and regions of the city. This chapter also shows how Tube advertisements – especially posters crafted before World War I – attempted to resell the city to Londoners as an incomprehensibly varied megalopolis only navigable through the Underground.

Chapter Five also addresses the concept of mapping the city, both above and below-ground, and the iconic Tube map is central to this discussion. Henry Beck, an electrical draftsman working for the Underground, created a map of the Underground in 1933 based on a circuit board. By abstracting the various Tube lines from any real geographical markers (other than the Thames River) Beck's map made London seem manageable and unified but also far too large to be walkable, and thus further encouraged a dependence on modern transport.⁵² By obscuring the distance between outer and inner London, Beck also prioritized “the middle class-ness of London” and made London's

⁵¹ Erika D. Rappaport, “Travelling in the Lady Guides' London: Consumption, Modernity, and the Fin-de-Siècle Metropolis,” in *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II*. ed., Martin Daunt and Bernhard Rieger, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 34.

⁵² Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 60.

suburbs seem like a unified part of Greater London.⁵³ Ultimately, Beck's map managed to become the primary way most Londoners imagined their city.

While the Underground map might have shaped peoples' mental maps of London, the Tube became the literal map for London during the Blitz. As German bombs rained destruction onto London, the city below ground was often the only recognizable constant in a rapidly changing physical landscape. The Tube provided a (seemingly) safe, clean, and well-lit environment to escape the chaos of wartime London, and Londoners responded by flocking to stations (at first against government orders) during bombing raids. Chapter Five examines these incidents of Tube sheltering and writings about it to demonstrate how the wartime Tube achieved its iconic status as a symbol of the resilience of the city. By remaining open during this period, the Underground helped to cement the connections between a "keep calm and carry on" mentality of orderliness and British culture.⁵⁴

This chapter also revisits class and gender issues in the Underground that resurfaced during wartime. Keeping the Tube functioning during the Blitz required a huge increase in the number of female Underground employees. Working-class Londoners, who ignored government orders not to use Tube stations as bomb shelters, used their occupation of urban space to force the government to acknowledge the need to protect its citizens. In this way, examining the wartime Underground network weaves together many of the themes of this work: orderliness, national character, and the tensions between men and women of all classes over their right to urban space.

⁵³ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 60.

⁵⁴ These same associations would resurface again during periods of unease in Britain, particularly after the July 7 London bombings in 2007.

III. *A Brief History of the London Underground*

These chapters will loosely follow a chronology from the opening of the Underground through World War II, but I am more concerned with investigating the cultural history of the Underground by teasing out the broader issues over mapping, imagining, navigating, and remembering the city that Londoners faced throughout this period. However, a brief chronology of the Underground will help to provide the context for these interactions in the Tube.

The creation of an underground train system was a practical necessity as well as part of a larger project aimed at modernizing London in the mid-nineteenth century. The boroughs and alleys that made up the metropolis had been constructed in a piecemeal fashion that lacked the wide avenues or clear city planning necessary to accommodate London's rapidly swelling population. Indeed, traffic problems were so bad that Parliament established a select committee on Metropolitan Communications to investigate the city's traffic concerns. In the committee's 1854-55 report to the House of Commons, it warned that, "the requirements of the existing traffic of the metropolis far exceed the present facilities provided for it."⁵⁵ Although many of the city's workers commuted into the city from surrounding suburbs on an extensive train network by the 1860s, these trains terminated at stations along the outskirts of town, dumping passengers into the crowded alleys, bridges, and streets of London.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Parliamentary Papers, 1854-55, vol. 1 (415), iii. iv.

⁵⁶ Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere: London's Underground Railway in the Life of the Capital* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Unlimited in association with London's Transport Museum, 2001), 2.

In 1853, John Fowler, a railway engineer who had worked on several aboveground trains in London, obtained Parliamentary permission to build a two-mile section of subterranean railway from Edgware Road to King's Cross with a capital of £300,000.⁵⁷ The Metropolitan line was the world's first underground railway, and it was constructed through a "cut-and-cover" method, in which deep trenches were dug down the middle of the road and arched over with brickwork, and the trench was re-covered with earth.⁵⁸ This work was hugely destructive and often threatened to compromise other urban improvements crowding the subterranean environment, such as sewer and gas lines.

Despite the wishes of the rail companies, Parliament also mandated that if the lines were to destroy any working-class property, the company had to provide cheap workmen's trains or reduced fees at morning and evening hours to allow displaced Londoners to commute into London from their new housing, usually outside of town.⁵⁹ This left the rail companies in a precarious position – needing to abide by Parliamentary regulations but also seeking to attract upper- and middle-class patrons who had the expendable income and leisure time to use the train. The Metropolitan line circumvented these issues by creating first-, second-, and third-class carriages and tickets with different

⁵⁷ Parliamentary Papers, 1854-55, vol. 1 (415), p. iv; Mike Chrimes, "Fowler, Sir John, first baronet (1817–1898)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004; Jan 2008). <http://www.oxforddnb.com>. For more on funding, see Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway: How the London Underground was Built and How it Changed the City Forever* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), 31.

⁵⁸ David Bennett, *Metro: The Story of the Underground Railway* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 2004), 32.

⁵⁹ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 29. Parliament's concerns were not unfounded; while the line's construction was less damaging to surrounding property than typical aboveground trains, it passed through poor areas of town where residents were easier to displace, and destroyed as many as 1,000 homes.

prices: sixpence, fourpence and threepence for single journeys, respectively.⁶⁰ The Metropolitan line formally opened on January 10, 1863 and within the first year of operation, over 9.5 million passengers had made journeys on the line.⁶¹ The line offered “workmen’s tickets” by 1864, which allowed a threepenny return fare (about half the normal rate) on journeys made in the morning at 5:30 and 5:40 am, with returns any time after mid-day.⁶² By the end of 1865, between 1,800 and 2,000 workmen were using these trains every weekday.⁶³

Encouraged by this success, the Metropolitan began extensions to its line and other companies began to construct similar railways, such as the Metropolitan District Company, which began a line through more expensive property in South Kensington and Westminster.⁶⁴ Despite fierce competition, the two rival companies worked jointly to construct an “inner circle,” which connected the two lines, by 1884.⁶⁵ While these lines were steam-operated, technology had progressed enough by 1890 to facilitate the world’s first electric line, which was also the first line to run deep under the surface of the earth. This line, the City & South London, used tunneling technology to dig forty to fifty feet belowground. These tunnels created large tubes within the earth and inspired the name “Tube” for these deep-level lines (I use the terms Tube and Underground interchangeably to reflect popular usage of these labels, but I do want to note that they technically refer to

⁶⁰ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 20.

⁶¹ Christian Wolmar, *Down the Tube: The Battle for London’s Underground* (London: Aurum, 2002), 21.

⁶² Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere: London’s Underground Railway in the Life of the Capital* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Unlimited in association with London’s Transport Museum, 2001), 24.

⁶³ T.C. Barker and Michael Robbins, *A History of London Transport: The Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge 2006), 173.

⁶⁴ Barker and Robbins, *A History of London Transport*, 71.

⁶⁵ Michael Harrison, *London Beneath the Pavement* (London: P. Davies, 1971), 147.

different things).⁶⁶ This train was also the first to have one class of carriage, which was viewed fearfully by some contemporaries. Indeed, *the Railway Times* complained during its opening that “lords and ladies would now be traveling with Billingsgate fishwives and Smithfield porters!”⁶⁷

Six more deep-level tube lines opened at the turn of the century: the Waterloo & City (1898), the Central London (1900), the Great Northern & City (1904), the Bakerloo (1906), the Piccadilly (1906) and the Hampstead Tube (1907).⁶⁸ Among these, the Central London line was the first to offer a standard fare for all tube rides, earning it the name “the Twopenny Tube.”⁶⁹ This uniform rate proved immensely popular, and over 41 million passengers used the line in its first year of operation.⁷⁰ By the turn of the century, over 550 trains were passing beneath the surface of London every day.⁷¹

The beginning of the twentieth century brought forth important changes in the way the Underground companies viewed their relationship with each other and with London. The individual companies that comprised the Underground remained separate and competitive throughout the nineteenth century, despite complaints from passengers that a unified system would better serve London’s transport needs.⁷² In 1913, facing difficulty making profits on the various lines, all the Underground operators decided to

⁶⁶ Sheila Taylor and Oliver Green, *The Moving Metropolis: The History of London’s Transport since 1800* (London: Laurence King in association with London’s Transport Museum, 2001), 16.

⁶⁷ Ackroyd, *London Under*, 122-3.

⁶⁸ Sheila Taylor and Oliver Green, *The Moving Metropolis*, 16.

⁶⁹ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 114.

⁷⁰ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 114.

⁷¹ Ackroyd, *London Under*, 123.

⁷² Wolmar, *Down the Tube*, 27. In 1906, an American stockbroker, Charles Tyson Yerkes, purchased the District line, Piccadilly, Bakerloo, and Hampstead tubes, and created a new company called the Underground Electric Railways of London. Under one of Yerkes’ successors, Albert Stanley, the Company acquired the City and East London and Central Lines as well, and then became known as the Combine.

form a joint committee. While the various companies would retain autonomy, they agreed to work together to form a common name, “the Underground,” for promotional purposes, as well as a common typeface, logo, and map which would feature all the underground lines at each station, with each line featured in a separate color.⁷³ In addition, the Underground Group added improvements to lines such as common booking stands so that passengers no longer had to buy separate tickets if a journey required traveling on trains owned by competing underground companies.⁷⁴

These efforts at unification were so successful that the various Underground companies formed a single corporate entity under the London Passenger Transport Board in 1933. This was also a golden age for the Underground. The then Vice Chairman, Frank Pick, sought to capitalize on the rise in incomes and free time to encourage more people to use the Underground for leisure activities through posters designed to persuade them to “make journeys it had not occurred to them to make.”⁷⁵ This period also saw the invention of Henry Beck’s iconic Tube map.⁷⁶

After World War II, the Underground was nationalized along with the rest of Britain’s railways under the British Transport Commission.⁷⁷ This move instigated a series of battles that plagued the Underground through the latter twentieth century over whether it should be publicly or privately controlled. After a period of declining revenues and increasing competition with automobiles, the Underground has recently experienced a resurgence in popularity thanks to increased congestion costs for aboveground

⁷³ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 85

⁷⁴ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 199.

⁷⁵ Christian Barman, *The Man Who Built London Transport: A Biography of Frank Pick* (London: David & Charles, 1979), 31.

⁷⁶ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 143.

⁷⁷ Antony Clayton, *Subterranean City: Beneath the Streets of London* (London: Historical Publications, 2000), 96.

transportation in the city.⁷⁸ Indeed, the system now carries over 600 million passengers each year on thirteen network lines that comprise over 1,120 kilometers of track, and has become a world-famous tourist attraction in its own right.⁷⁹

IV. Conclusion

In many ways, the current Underground has not shed its Victorian past. Indeed, a journey on the inner circle line took seventy minutes to complete in 1900 and is only twenty minutes faster over 100 years later.⁸⁰ Just as the original Underground was developed to solve London's massive urban growth, London's population is once again burgeoning (currently at a faster rate than any other European city), thus necessitating further improvements to the transport infrastructure. The city's current population is expected to soar from 8.6 to 10 million by 2030. This increase is likely to result in even more pressure on a Tube system that is already severely strained. Tube journeys have increased by 30% since 2007 and nearly 4 million trips are made on the system each day. At the same time, a 52% increase in the number of overseas tourists to London since 2004 has also caused a significant spike in off-peak travel numbers.⁸¹ To put it simply, "London's Underground system is heaving."⁸²

⁷⁸ Wolmar, *Down the Tube: The Battle for London's Underground* (London: Aurum, 2002), 47.

⁷⁹ Bennett, *Metro*, 34.

⁸⁰ Ackroyd, *London Under*, 126.

⁸¹ The e-ticket Oyster cards now employed on the Tube have increased the number of trips passengers make by allowing customers to pay as they go and making the payment process easier. "Squeezing in: What the London Underground Reveals about Work in the Capital," *The Economist* (23 May 2015).

⁸² "Squeezing in," *The Economist*.

To make matters worse, in crowded Tube stations with escalators, Britons' peculiar habit of standing to the right and passing to the left on the escalator is severely limiting flows of passengers in and out of stations. To handle this issue, Transport for London officials will need to make massive repairs and additions to the existing system, but they will also have to come up with new ways to move people more efficiently through the Underground.⁸³ In his study of the escalator changes at Holborn station, Archie Bland explains, "The best model for the movement of a crowd through a warren of tunnels is the movement of a torrent of water through pipes." To get passengers to behave like water through pipes, Tube staff have forbidden individuals from walking up the escalators at Holborn (where the escalators' steep gradient is just steep enough to discourage most people from walking up them) and have instead experimented with various tactics aimed to get people to stand beside each other while riding the escalator. The initial results have been dramatic: when TfL officials made escalator 7 at Holborn station standing only, the escalator that normally carried 12,745 customers between rush hour at 8:30 to 9:30am now carried 16,220.⁸⁴

As London's current transport problems demonstrate, transport technology can tell us much about a city's identity. Indeed, despite the practical necessity of altering escalator behavior, the TfL workers Bland interviewed remarked somewhat exasperatedly that they were having a surprisingly difficult time getting Londoners to comply with these new requirements. These workers initially tried enforcing the standing on the left policy by having uniformed TfL workers stand on the left so that people could not walk past them. However, TfL dropped the plan after workers expressed concerns about

⁸³ Bland, "The Tube at a Standstill."

⁸⁴ Bland, "The Tube at a Standstill."

possible assaults from passengers. Instead, staff stood at the bottom of the escalators with megaphones and cheerfully asked passengers if they would please stand on both sides. Even with the friendlier approach, the negative reaction from the public suggests that the British will not go gently onto that escalator. One angry commuter retorted, “I know how to use a bloody escalator!” *The Guardian* reported that the majority of those opposed have maintained “a great deal of non-verbal communication in the form of head-shaking.” The next escalator experiment will see if painting the escalator stairs with footprints or using a hologram of an official asking people to stand on both sides will prove more effective.⁸⁵

The current difficulties facing TfL employees at Holborn demonstrates the ways that ingrained behaviors meant to maintain orderliness in the Underground also reflect larger statements about British society. The development of urban behaviors and the deep connections between spatial practice and identity have been embedded into the ways Londoners incorporated the Tube into their everyday lives from the earliest days of Underground travel. While Londoners today may behave like escalator queuing is a part of their DNA, the following chapter demonstrates that passengers had to be taught to assimilate in Underground space, and formal opening ceremonies for new lines served both celebratory and tutelary functions intended to instill the kind of respect for and understanding of Underground space needed to ensure that the Underground functioned as a safe, efficient transport system.

⁸⁵ Bland, “The Tube at a Standstill.”

CHAPTER TWO: BODIES IN MOTION

For anyone who hoped that the London Underground would help bring order to London's streets, watching putrid filth pour from the bowels of the earth into the railway construction site and mix with disintegrating bodies from a nearby crypt was not a particularly reassuring image. And yet, this was the gruesome spectacle that greeted passersby near Farringdon Road, the site of the world's first underground railway, in June of 1862. Mid-Victorian Londoners were used to filth in the streets. In fact, the subway was the latest effort to erase the city's literal and social filth by relieving Londoners from the dirty, crowded streets of the metropolis and eradicating Farringdon's unpleasant associations with the notorious Fleet Prison and a dismal slum. However, on June 18th, the Underground construction unexpectedly brought a new kind of filth flooding violently back into the area: the Fleet sewer.

The sewer, which diverted the most powerful of London's rivers underground, had been fully covered as part of London's Main Drainage sewer system the decade before.⁸⁶ Consequently, the space beneath Farringdon Road was the most crowded it had ever been by the 1860s, and the Metropolitan Underground Railway contractors struggled to design a subway line that bypassed existing sewer, gas, and water pipes from these recent improvement schemes.⁸⁷ On this particular day, Metropolitan Railway workers

⁸⁶Peter Ackroyd, *London Under: The Secret History Beneath the Streets* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2011), 52.

⁸⁷ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 40. While I do not go into more detail about the individual contractors here, Charles Pearson (City of London solicitor) created the original scheme for the railway and hired his friend, John Hargreaves Stevens, as surveyor. Charles Fowler was head engineer and John Parson was in charge of building operations. Construction contracts for the original Metropolitan line were shared between the companies of John Jay and

tunneling near the Fleet sewer accidentally loosened the dirt around the pipe.⁸⁸ Suddenly, the timber supports that held up the railway works began to “creak in a most ominous and alarming manner.”⁸⁹ The workers, who all managed to escape before the embankment fell in, watched helplessly as rushing water broke the 8-foot-thick brick wall supporting the underground tunnel into fragments that scattered into the road.⁹⁰ The *Daily News* reported that the surrounding roadway, “with the bent lamp-posts and the pavement, looks as if it had been sucked down by a whirlpool.”⁹¹ The rising water filled the tunnel with nearly ten feet of water, drawing a crowd of thousands to the spot.⁹²

According to several reports, an even more macabre and dramatic scene of subterranean horrors followed the initial accident. The falling timbers struck a nearby mausoleum, which had been built to house bodies from the paupers’ burial ground of St. Peter’s (the original site was displaced by the construction of Farringdon Road a decade before). The mausoleum walls shattered and sewer water rushed into the lower part of the building as “many of the bodies, or what remained of them, were washed out into the open excavation, presenting a most sickening sight.”⁹³ This gruesome scene might have simply been a rumor, but the *Daily News* noted that the incident incited the imagination of many Londoners, “as one murderer, if not more, is said to be buried there.”⁹⁴

Smith & Knight. David Bownes, Oliver Green, and Sam Mullins, *Underground: How the Tube Shaped London* (London: Allen Lane, the Penguin Group, 2012), 23.

⁸⁸ “Accident to the Underground Railway,” *Times* (London, England), Friday, 20 June 1862, 12.

⁸⁹ “Catastrophe at the Fleet Sewer, London,” *Liverpool Mercury* (Liverpool, England), Friday, 20 June 1862.

⁹⁰ “Accident on the Metropolitan Railway,” *Standard* (London, England), 19 June 1862, 2.

⁹¹ “The Underground Railway,” *Daily News* (London, England), Monday, 23 June 1862.

⁹² “The Underground Railway,” *Daily News* (London, England), Monday, 23 June 1862.

⁹³ “Catastrophe at the Fleet Sewer, London,” *Liverpool Mercury* (Liverpool, England), Friday, 20 June 1862.

⁹⁴ “The Underground Railway,” *Daily News* (London, England), Monday, 23 June 1862.

While the Metropolitan engineers worked to transform these connotations, subterranean spaces in this period were still most commonly associated with hell, death, and filth. As historian Peter Ackroyd notes, the underworld had been seen since ancient times as a place of hellfire and damnation, decay, and supernatural forces, and journeys through these spaces were often seen as dangerous and sublime experiences. The underground world – represented by sewers, caverns, crypts, and dungeons - was a place to consign filthy and degraded things and in which depraved people lurked.⁹⁵ By digging into these subterranean spaces, the new Underground could be associated with these destructive and frightening forces. Nothing embodied this fear better than the descriptions of the Farringdon Road accident, which sensationalized the event “as if it were an uncontrollable apocalyptic disaster.”⁹⁶ The *Standard* ominously observed that “the liberated sewer rushed in a black cascade... into the yawning mouth of the unfinished tunnel and disappeared once more into the very bowels of the earth.”⁹⁷ The *Daily Mail* warned that “the black hole of the Fleet Sewer, [looked] like a broken artery, pouring out a thick... stream.”⁹⁸ Such reports played upon the dark and portentous aspects of the disaster, as if to suggest that the construction accident was retribution for tunneling into the underworld. Indeed, the *Daily News* described the accident as “another one of the many inevitable evils springing from an attempt to tunnel half of London with railways.”⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Ackroyd, *London Under*, 11.

⁹⁶ Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 328.

⁹⁷ “Accident on the Metropolitan Railway,” *Standard* (London, England), Thursday, 19 June 1862, 2.

⁹⁸ The Underground Railway,” *Daily News* (London, England), Monday, 23 June 1862.

⁹⁹ The Underground Railway,” *Daily News* (London, England), Monday, 23 June 1862.

Given the somewhat horrific scene of events at Farringdon Street, it might seem likely that the Underground was doomed to fail. However, the incident failed to leave a lasting impact on enthusiastic proponents of this new form of transport.¹⁰⁰ Even shortly after the crisis, newspaper reports noted that no loss of life occurred and agreed that the company had done everything it could to repair the situation quickly.¹⁰¹ Witnesses were impressed when the “indefatigable” contractor, Mr. Jay, immediately arrived and helped alleviate the situation by opening a smaller sewer to allow the Fleet to drain into it.¹⁰² *The Times* noted that by nightfall on the 20th, “several hundred persons were gazing at the ruins and expressing their astonishment at the rapid progress being made.”¹⁰³

The next time so many people would gaze at the progress made on the Underground would be during the formal opening of the Metropolitan Railway on January 9, 1863 and the public opening the following day.¹⁰⁴ In the formal opening ceremony the day before, Sir Samuel Morton Peto, an MP who had previously been a mainline railway contractor, toasted the Metropolitan Railway Company and declared that “that greatest of dragons, the Fleet Ditch, had been subdued by the St. George of the

¹⁰⁰ The majority of the press coverage was reluctant to criticize the Metropolitan Railway for the accident, with the notable exception of a report in the *Daily News* that called the Metropolitan the “greatest wonder and nuisance of our day.” “The Underground Railway,” *Daily News* (London, England), Monday, 23 June 1862.

¹⁰¹ “The Accident to the Underground Railway,” *Times* (London, England), Friday 20 June 1862, 12. *The Times* also reported that Mr. Johnson, the engineer to the Chartered Gas Company, happened to be in the area during the accident and had the presence of mind to shut off the gas supply, thus preventing an explosion.

¹⁰² “The Accident to the Underground Railway,” *Times* (London, England), Friday 20 June 1862, 12.

¹⁰³ “The Accident to the Underground Railway,” *Times* (London, England), Friday 20 June 1862, 12.

¹⁰⁴ “Opening of the Metropolitan Railway,” *Daily News* (London, England) Monday, 5 January 1863.

company, Mr. Fowler.”¹⁰⁵ By comparing the head engineer to England’s patron saint and recasting the disaster as a challenge that the engineers valiantly defeated, Peto used this public ceremony to assert the authority and patriotism of the engineers. Robert Lowe, another MP at the ceremony, echoed Peto’s sentiments by calling the Fleet the “greatest of all obstacles, that modern dragon, which Mr. Fowler, the modern St. George, has... vanquished.”¹⁰⁶ Lowe went on to joke that Mr. Fowler should put his name in for Admiral of the Fleet. The public must have shared Lowe’s enthusiasm or been undeterred by the Fleet disaster, because over 30,000 visitors flooded the Underground during its official opening.¹⁰⁷

While a construction site accident might seem like an odd place to start a discussion of the London Underground, this incident reveals the extent to which the meanings of urban spaces were up for grabs during this period. Between the 1840s and the 1860s, subterranean space went from being associated with dark and hellish dangers to an emblematic symbol of urban modernity. Many historians of the Underground emphasize the initial reluctance of the press towards the Underground because of the enduring associations of underground space with evil. In reality, however, the Underground was almost immediately embraced and accepted as a routine part of London life by individual Londoners and within the vast majority of the press.

¹⁰⁵ M. H. Port, “Peto, Sir (Samuel) Morton, First Baronet (1809-1889),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online Ed. Jan. 2011. <http://www.oxforddnb.com>. (Accessed 23 May, 2011).

¹⁰⁶ “The Metropolitan Railway,” *Times* (London, England), Saturday, 10 January 1863, 10.

¹⁰⁷ Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere: London’s Underground Railway in the Life of the Capital* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Unlimited in association with London’s Transport Museum, 2001), 19.

As the publicity surrounding the Metropolitan Railway opening demonstrated, the rhetoric around urban improvements could greatly shape how people viewed these spaces. The Underground's creators sought to use press coverage and public ceremonies to cast this space as a safe, efficient, and affordable means of traversing the capital. These official openings served three functions. First, they celebrated and helped instill in Londoners an appreciation for the freedom of movement that the Underground represented. The Underground also increased independence by freeing people from overcrowding, disease, and the obstructions of the city above and instead providing a quick, convenient, and relatively affordable means of transport beneath London's streets. These freedoms liberated people from what anchored them in the past, and therefore feats of engineering seemed like worthy objects of celebration.

Consequently, these opening ceremonies also provided a tutelary function in which official processions through public works like the Underground helped Londoners viewing or reading about these ceremonies to understand how to move through and use these technologies. Mid-Victorian improvements like the Underground, the Thames Embankments, or the Main Drainage sewer system, evoked a type of disciplinary individualism in which urban planners sought to facilitate the flow of sewage, water, and people. However, once people learned to use these technologies and spaces, they would internalize this freedom for themselves. Ceremonies and press coverage of these events helped urban planners to ensure that people understood their ideal way by teaching them how to use these spaces. This tutelary function was particularly important in the Underground ceremonies, because people could not be as easily or logically managed as sewage or water.

Lastly, the officials responsible for these public works projects were responding to and helping to create a precedent among other engineers and civil officials for using public ceremonies to glorify metropolitan improvements and present these works as creations of national and international significance. As Ralph Harrington notes, the nineteenth century was “an age of British municipal self-assertion and self-confidence” in which “urban identity (the sense of identification with a particular urban locality) [became] linked to civic identity (the expression of that identity through institutional means).”¹⁰⁸ Railways were particularly bound to civic identity because they physically tied the component parts of the metropolis together and created new identities for communities within the city and for the city as a whole. Consequently, transport systems aided in the “creation of a sense of the wholeness of an urban society.”¹⁰⁹ Simultaneously, the linkage between the Underground and national railways also tied people more closely to the rest of Britain.

The role of celebrations in these public works have been mentioned by historians like R. A. Buchanan when discussing the professionalization of the engineering class, but I argue that these celebrations became ways of merging older notions of the city with newer ones, helping Londoners to make sense of the modern city and their role within it. Whether they were fighting over them, lamenting them, or celebrating them, contemporaries who witnessed and discussed London’s connected public works helped to link Londoners to each other in new ways by creating new urban spaces, new

¹⁰⁸ Ralph Harrington, “Civic Pride, Urban Identity and Public Transport in Britain, 1880-1980,” in *Suburbanizing the Masses: Public Transport and Urban Development in Historical Perspective*, ed. Colin Divall and Winstan Bond (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), 253.

¹⁰⁹ Harrington, “Civic Pride, Urban Identity, and Public Transport in Britain,” 252.

governmental bodies, and new ways of mapping that helped to constitute a (more) unified modern metropolis.

I. Spatial Studies

As mentioned in the introduction, contemporaries felt acutely aware during this period that they were living in a new and different time, and having to navigate new spaces could highlight this sense of change. To understand how space could be an active agent in creating a sense of social change, it is first necessary to define what I mean by “space.” Scholars differ over how they define space or how it relates to the concept of place, but most scholars generally argue that space indicates “a sense of movement, of history, of becoming” and that place implies a static location, like one’s home.¹¹⁰ In other words, space is one of many material forces that help to create culture. Space, then, is economic, social, political, and deeply individual.

Notions of space are also deeply tied to the issues of freedom and government that were first discussed in the introduction. Victorian Britons generally supported the notion of small central government that allowed people to manage themselves. However, society needed certain structures and technologies to allow individuals to develop the kinds of habits and behaviors necessary for people to rule themselves (such as sanitation, transportation, and lighting). Consequently, the construction and oversight of these technologies provided a type of authority that, while less obtrusive than the police, still

¹¹⁰ Andrew Thacker, *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 13. Thacker argues that Martin Heidegger was the first scholar to theorize this difference between space and place. Heidegger argued that dwelling is located in a particular place, but the experience of dwelling in a place makes up the true nature of a space.

helped to govern daily life. This way of thinking about rule, or governmentality as Michel Foucault defined it, was deeply dependent on “the spatial and strategic arrangements of things and humans and the ordered possibilities of their movement within a particular territory.”¹¹¹ If, as Patrick Joyce argues, “physical structures and technologies dictate certain human practices,” it naturally follows that human practices must similarly shape and influence spaces and technologies as well.

To understand how space and social relationships interact, I will rely on sociologist Henri Lefebvre’s ideas about the social production of space.¹¹² Lefebvre felt that spaces were not just empty sites where things happened; rather, space always embodied some kind of meaning (unique to that particular culture) based on the social practices that occurred within this space. He argued that spaces could be read like texts to determine how these social practices created meanings in a particular site.¹¹³ For instance, Lefebvre argued that the home and the street might seem completely differentiated from one another, but that gas, electric, and sewer lines permeated both spaces, ultimately connecting them to each other and to larger political and social issues.¹¹⁴ In this way, spaces can also serve multiple social and political uses at the same time.

Lefebvre classified three types of spaces. The first category - representations of space –refers to the ideal spaces created “by the powerful, telling us how spaces should and will be organized.”¹¹⁵ In other words, city planners, engineers, and urban reformers

¹¹¹ Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City*. London and New York: Verso, 2003), 3. Joyce paraphrases Foucault’s theories on space and governmentality.

¹¹² Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

¹¹³ Thacker, *Moving through Modernity*, 17.

¹¹⁴ Thacker, *Moving through Modernity*, 19.

¹¹⁵ Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2.

created these spaces through maps, blueprints, and documents intended to convey mastery and knowledge of these spaces. While the dissertation will explore aspects of all three categories, this chapter looks in particular at representations of space. Maps, plans, and other official planning documents created a “view from above” that privileged order above actual experiences of a place. These representations of space – made concrete in maps and blueprints – were also influenced by particular ideologies (in this case, liberalism) that dictated how these spaces would order movement.

While Lefebvre’s other two categories of space will be discussed at length in the later chapters, I will quickly elaborate on each of them here as well. The second kind of space Lefebvre defined - representational space – referred to the spaces of the imagination or subversion made by those who interact within these locations. Artists and writers create representational space when they try to capture a particular understanding of a space through their works. Their texts then contribute to creating meanings about a space. For instance, David Welsh argues that the Underground frequently featured in theater and music hall performances in the first decades of Underground travel. These depictions of the Underground on stage often played on the mysterious and anxiety-provoking aspects of subway travel. However, as they became more stock-in-trade, depictions of Underground travel on stage also helped middle-class Londoners grow more accustomed to the idea of subway travel before they were actually doing so in large numbers.¹¹⁶ Similarly, writers like George Gissing used fictional accounts of interactions in the spaces of the Underground to depict a type of “subway consciousness” that helped to describe interactions in the Tube and make sense of this space for readers.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 24.

¹¹⁷ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 42.

According to Lefebvre, representational space creates a dominant discourse through which to talk about a space, so that social interactions within that space are understandable only through this language.

The third aspect of space - spatial practice - defines what ordinary people actually do in these spaces as they move through them. Commutes to and from work, for instance, constitute a particular spatial practice that defines the space for its users in a way that is different from the representation of that space envisioned by city planners. The Tube was designed to order human movement in similar ways to matter like sewage or water, but when humans in the Tube acted like humans (i.e. unpredictable, sometimes irrational, and highly individual), their behaviors could threaten the Tube's efficiency or influence its overall meaning to Londoners. This notion of spatial practices correlates with Michel de Certeau's theory of space as "practiced place."¹¹⁸ De Certeau imbues space with human agency by arguing that people use tactics of subversion or appropriation to undermine systems of power ordering their everyday lives. This concept of spatial practice also complicates Michel Foucault's theory that modern society's reliance on non-military forms of control creates a panopticon in which society monitors itself out of fear of the all-seeing eye of the state. Foucault's notion of power relations in space illuminates political, economic, and social power operating in the spaces of the city, but it can also totalize the authorities' view of these spaces in ways that ignore how ordinary people appropriated spaces to their own uses.

¹¹⁸ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (London and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) 117. For more on how de Certeau fits into conversation with other scholars on space and place, see: Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 2.

Ultimately, the spaces of the Underground constitute what Foucault defined as “heterotopias,” or spaces that are simultaneously mental and physical, “represented, contested, and inverted.”¹¹⁹ These spaces – such as prisons, ships, and colonies - are places of resistance as well as power. Foucault argues that a train is “an extraordinary bundle of relations because it is something through which one goes, it is also something by means of which one can go from one point to another, and then it is also something that goes by.”¹²⁰ Foucault argues that these spaces can seem free and open but actually require visitors to succumb to certain exclusions. As Nora Pleßke argues, the Tube train in motion can also be considered a heterotopic space because it is a “threshold between being/becoming, presence/absence, inside/outside, past/future, ego/id, Self/Other, etc.”¹²¹ The Underground is paradoxically a place of “confinement, claustrophobia, and panopticonism but also security, openness, and coexistence.” Because the Underground represents so many of these tensions inherent in modern society, the Tube becomes a way of understanding the “uncertainty of contemporary metropolitan existence.”¹²² The Underground therefore acts as both specific site in its own right and also “a vehicle of enquiry into broader cultural ideas and experiences.”¹²³

¹¹⁹ Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity*, 25.

¹²⁰ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” in *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* (October 1984), 3. Foucault used the term heterotopia to directly contrast with utopias, because heterotopias reflect but also undermine/invert a particular space. He gives the example of the mirror as a heterotopia because it creates a joint experience in which the mirror itself is a utopian space (as a placeless place) that shows the viewer in this unreal space. However, the mirror is also a real place because it has a material existence, and that makes it a contradictory space.

¹²¹ Nora Pleßke, *The Intelligible Metropolis: Urban Mentality in Contemporary London Novels* (Verlag, Bielefeld, 2014), 238.

¹²² Pleßke, *The Intelligible Metropolis*, 238.

¹²³ Fiona Wilkie, *Performance, Transport, and Mobility: Making Passage* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillain, 2015), 122.

II. Understanding London's Urban Problems

Tensions between security and openness have existed since the earliest days of Underground travel as transport developers sought to simultaneously encourage greater access and freedom to urban mobility and provide order and stability to these public spaces. Developments in urban transport created new spaces and brought the various regions of the city in closer conversation with one another. Greater freedom of movement also hugely impacted economic patterns, concepts of work and leisure, and understandings of how various parts of the city related to one another.¹²⁴ Underground officials used celebrations and structured tours to develop ideal ways of moving through and understanding subway space that they hoped would help instill the kind of disciplinary individualism in ordinary users needed to elevate this space to a valued part of everyday life. In addition, these ceremonies also tied the Underground officials to other engineers and civic authorities who were using public celebrations to elevate the overall status of urban planning. These celebrations taught Londoners how to use and make meaning of these technologies, and they also tried to sell these improvements as key reflections of local and national identity. In order to understand the significance of these opening ceremonies, however, it is first necessary to understand the massive problems facing London in the mid-Victorian period that required such drastic improvements in urban life.

As Mid-Victorian London grew in size, it also grew in importance as the center of a global economy, a rich industrial powerhouse, and the seat of national and imperial government. To make sense of London's increasing significance, contemporaries

¹²⁴ Ralph Harrington, "Civic Pride, Urban Identity and Public Transport in Britain, 1880-1980," 266.

increasingly compared the body of the nation to the human body. Just like a human body, the nation needed good circulation to function properly, and it was this issue of blocked circulation that worried Victorian observers most when they looked at London. Richard Dennis argues that most mid-Victorian commentators believed that “the city constituted a natural system or could at least be better understood by drawing parallels with nature or the human body.”¹²⁵

Likening London to a body also helped to make sense of the various regions, government bodies, and private companies who made up the city by depicting them as one larger system.¹²⁶ As James Winter explains, many Victorians defined the city as a circulatory system, rather than a fixed place, as a way to make sense of the connectedness and immense scope of London’s urban reform.¹²⁷ During the Fleet disaster, a reporter from the *Daily News* explained that the Metropolitan Railway engineers were forced to steer the railway tunnel “with the delicacy of a surgical operation,” because cutting into one of these previous works would have been “almost as serious a matter as to cut a leading artery of a human body.”¹²⁸ As journalist John Hollingshead warned in 1862, “The bed of a London thoroughfare may be compared to the human body – for it is full of veins and arteries [sewers, gas mains, and telegraph wires], which it is death to cut.”¹²⁹ This bodily imagery became a popular and comprehensible way to discuss the enormous problems facing London, particularly in terms of what massive overcrowding and minimal government oversight were doing to the health of London.

¹²⁵ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 37.

¹²⁶ Winter, *London’s Teeming Streets*, 4.

¹²⁷ Winter, *London’s Teeming Streets*, 5.

¹²⁸ “The Underground Railway.” *Daily News* (London, England), Monday, June 23, 1862.

¹²⁹ John Hollingshead, *Underground London* (London: Groombridge & Sons, 1862), 208.

London's population had soared from 959,000 in 1801 to nearly 2 million in 1837, but the city still lacked any viable local government.¹³⁰ Consequently, there was not a corresponding increase in new technologies and infrastructure to accommodate these masses. London really only existed as such in the City, a small self-governing area hardly bigger than a square mile. The rest of London was a hodgepodge of different villages, ruled by over 200 vestries and parishes that were often uncoordinated and inefficient. Some functions like the police were under the control of the central government, while services like street maintenance and construction, road markers, and sewers were in the hands of largely autonomous vestries.¹³¹ A number of different water, sewage removal, and gas companies also competed for control of various resources. Overcrowding also exacerbated problems with sewage disposal, the availability of clean water, the safety of streets, and the congestion of the Thames. Consequently, "the old city was a place of blocked mobility, of congestion and obstacle."¹³²

Street overcrowding seemed to best embody this sense of blocked mobility. When the first railway to London, the London and Greenwich Railway Company, made inroads to London in 1836, it ushered in an age of even greater growth and expansion.¹³³ Railways made it easier to get people and goods to London, but only worsened the traffic problem because local laws forbade railway stations from infringing on central London. Thus, passengers were expelled in huge masses on the outskirts of town and still forced to walk or take horse-drawn omnibuses or carriages across town. By 1850, 7,000 omnibuses

¹³⁰ Stephen Halliday, *Making the Metropolis: Creators of Victoria's London* (Great Britain: The Breedon Books Publishing Company, Ltd., 2003), 70.

¹³¹ Lisa Keller, *Triumph of Order: Democracy and Public Space in New York and London* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), xiii.

¹³² Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 13.

¹³³ Keller, *Triumph of Order*, 36.

went through the city daily.¹³⁴ As Geoffrey Tyack notes, this uncontrolled urban growth appeared to threaten British society, “not least by imposing severe strain on the central streets which were as essential to the healthy functioning of the city as veins and arteries are to that of the human body.”¹³⁵

Aside from concerns about the great pockets of poverty located in London’s growing slums, nearly all of London’s streets were dangerously dirty and crowded. Pedestrians competed for space with horse-drawn carriages, cabs, omnibuses, and even cattle being driven to market.¹³⁶ Most working-class people lived within walking distance of work, and even those who came in by train still often had to walk from the station to their place of employment. Horses, humans, garbage, and excrement all flooded the same narrow roads (many of which had not been widened since medieval times) each day, creating dangerous conditions. Human waste, blood from slaughterhouses, and animal dung mixed with grit from the road to create a sticky film so strong it could pull up stones from the road or cause horses to slip and fall.¹³⁷ Indeed, the General Board of Health estimated that 20,000 tons of animal waste polluted London’s streets each year.¹³⁸ While an underground railway might initially have seemed like a somewhat harebrained scheme, improving London’s arteries by digging deeper into the ground would also help to sanitize individual Londoners’ experience of the city by removing them from some of the dangerous and filthy aspects of the city aboveground.

¹³⁴ Keller, *Triumph of Order*, 37

¹³⁵ Geoffrey Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne and the Making of Victorian London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 43.

¹³⁶ James H. Winter, *London’s Teeming Streets, 1830-1914* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 120.

¹³⁷ Winter, *London’s Teeming Streets*, 120.

¹³⁸ Anthony Wohl, *Endangered Lives: Public Health in Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 81.

London also faced massive issues with blocked mobility of its sewers and rivers. The city had a basic sewer system for collecting rainwater and emptying it into the Thames under the direction of eight district sewer commissions, but new technology and overcrowding caused this system to break down in the mid-Victorian period. Previously, cesspools collected sewage from homes throughout London and nightsoilmen regularly emptied these cesspools and sold the human waste as fertilizer to farmers on the outskirts of the city.¹³⁹ London's population explosion and the rise of mass-produced toilets in middle-class homes (over 200,000 had been installed in London by 1847), created a crisis for the cesspits. Each toilet dumped 10-20 times more water than before into domestic cesspools, causing cesspits to overflow and drain into the surrounding soil, cellars, and water pipes. In response, authorities removed the prohibition on connecting house drains to public sewers in 1847, so that from this point on, sewage now went directly into the Thames, where it mixed into what was also the drinking water for most of London.¹⁴⁰

Although cholera has ancient origins, no known case of the disease has been recorded in England before 1831. However, as a result of both water pollution and overcrowding, major cholera epidemics ravaged the city four times during Victoria's reign.¹⁴¹ Between 1831 and 1858, over 30,000 Londoners had died from cholera, likely

¹³⁹ Dale H. Porter, *The Thames Embankment: Environment, Technology, and Society in Victorian London* (Akron, Ohio: The University of Akron Press, 1998), 49.

¹⁴⁰ Stephen Halliday, *Making the Metropolis*. As London's population exploded, farmland was quickly converted into housing and more and more people shared cesspools. As a result, nightsoilmen had to travel farther to sell their waste and there was much more waste to be had.

¹⁴¹ These epidemics occurred in 1831-2, 1848-9, 1943-4, and 1866. For more on these epidemics, see Bill Luckin, *Pollution and Control: A Social History of the Thames in the Nineteenth Century* (Bristol and Boston: Adam Hilger, 1986) and Steven Johnson, *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic and how it Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World* (London: Riverbed Books, 2006).

due to drinking polluted Thames water.¹⁴² Cholera seemed to strike without warning, hitting rich and poor alike, and ravaged victims quickly.¹⁴³ Scientists disagreed over what actually caused the disease, with many still clinging to the miasmatic theory that atmospheric conditions caused disease and that human and animal waste could be made clean in water.¹⁴⁴ Though physician John Snow traced an 1854 cholera outbreak to a polluted water supply in Soho, this discovery was slow in catching on. Because of its terrible and apparently uncontrollable symptoms and progression, cholera seemed “both to reflect and threaten the fragile stability of early- and mid-Victorian society.”¹⁴⁵

Even with fears about disease, the government was slow to respond to calls for reform. Private water companies controlled the water supply with little direct accountability to the public they served.¹⁴⁶ As Jonathan Schneer explains, even when reformers like Edwin Chadwick asserted that London’s workers would be more productive if their sanitary conditions improved, the government balked at taking responsibility for solving the crisis and interfering with the maintenance of the private sewage and water companies. This staunch refusal to widen the government’s scope to include sanitary reform was reflected in the *Times* comment that “we prefer to take our chance on cholera and the rest than be bullied into health” (a stance not altogether

¹⁴² Halliday, *Making the Metropolis*, 129.

¹⁴³ Anthony Wohl argues that cholera had a fatality rate of 40-60% and could kill victims within hours. For more on Victorian responses to cholera, see Anthony Wohl, *Endangered Lives: Public Health in Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983) and Steven Johnson, *The Ghost Map: The Story of London’s Most Terrifying Epidemic and how it Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World* (London: Riverbed Books, 2006).

¹⁴⁴ Dale Porter, *The Thames Embankment*, 55.

¹⁴⁵ Bill Luckin, *Pollution and Control*, 96.

¹⁴⁶ Keller, *Triumph of Order*, 52.

different from the example of modern Tube passengers' reluctance to stand on the left of the escalator mentioned previously).¹⁴⁷

To make matters worse, the Thames became increasingly deadly as its water quality and circulation efficiency declined throughout this period. Slaughterhouses and tanneries dumped carbon dioxide and ammonia into the rivers that fed into the Thames and mixed with the waste of over a million humans, 100,000 horses, and 10,000 cattle.¹⁴⁸ Twice a day, the waters flowed back up stream and stood still for twenty minutes, mixing with the mud of the river into "black putrescence" that gave off a "ruinous smell." When exposed to sunlight, this sewage also emitted hydrogen sulfide, called the "Thames mist," that was rumored to be fatal.¹⁴⁹ This would eventually culminate in the "Great Stink of 1858," in which a dry spell and a heat wave combined to create an intolerable stench along the banks of the Thames. The stench was so bad that Parliament closed session and hung sheets of lime around the windows to counteract the stench.¹⁵⁰ The Great Stink resulted from and contributed to a real breakdown in civilization as the waste and stagnation of the city reached a critical mass.¹⁵¹ The *Morning Chronicle* reprinted an ode to the Thames from *Punch* entitled "Piff Piff" that lamented, "Piff, piff! Who'll deliver/ Piff! London from pest/ and –piff! – loathsome River/ Piff! Cleanse thy foul breast?"¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in Jonathan Schneer, *The Thames* (New York and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 147.

¹⁴⁸ Schneer, *The Thames*, 146.

¹⁴⁹ Porter, *The Thames Embankment*, 56-57.

¹⁵⁰ David S. Barnes, "Confronting Sensory Crisis in the Great Stinks of London and Paris" in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. William Cohen and Ryan Johnson (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 106.

¹⁵¹ Barnes, "Confronting Sensory Crisis in the Great Stinks of London and Paris," 106, 120.

¹⁵² "Piff-Piff! An Ode to the Thames," *Morning Chronicle* (London, England), Thursday, June 24, 1858.

Overall, existing urban resources were strained nearly to the breaking point in mid-Victorian London. However, this sense of loss of control, as historian James Winter explains, gave rise to an urge to control and treat urban illness.¹⁵³ To regain its health, London needed to restore its circulation in terms of people, water, and waste. Urban reformers responded with a rhetoric of improvement that aimed to rationalize London's mobility and incite private companies and government bodies to act quickly. The planners and reformers of Victorian London strove to dispel the obstructions of the old city and to "facilitate the movement of people, goods, money, water, and even air."¹⁵⁴ Therefore, many of the city's improvements dealt with the movement of bodies or their waste: the Main Drainage sewer system rationalized Londoners' refuse, the Embankment ordered the movement of goods through the city, and the Thames Tunnel and the Underground facilitated the movement of human bodies within the city. Discussing London's urban problems also became a way of understanding what modernity actually meant on a material level to those who experienced it.

III. The Logic Behind Urban Improvements

If the problems facing the city stemmed from blocked circulation, urban solutions would require improved "sanitation, ventilation, and the opening up of new spaces and new routes."¹⁵⁵ Dennis argues that, in this age of consumption, concerns for clean air and free circulation permeated all aspects of society. Unclogging the congested arteries of London's streets, river, and sewers was essential to this project. Londoners needed to be

¹⁵³ Winter, *London's Teeming Streets*, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 13.

¹⁵⁵ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 39.

able to reach stores, work, and home, and transport needed to facilitate this; as Lisa Keller argues, “streets weren’t paved of gold, but they were the pathways to it.”¹⁵⁶ Thus, efficient transportation became key to a more well-ordered city. However, this was not only about the mobility of people, but also of their goods, and waste. To create a city in which things could move freely, urban planners first had to remove all hindrances to freedom of movement, and early urban improvements focused on the kind of urgent government action needed to instate these improvements.

Urban reforms would require a much more intrusive government body, or at least government permission for private companies to buy the land necessary to enact these public works projects, so social reformers used these problems to help compel the government to act. Historians have written a great deal about the changing relationship between the local and national government during this period. This relationship is not the primary focus of my work, but I do want to stress that much of this reform was done with the ethos that “the action of the state and its agents ought to be residuary and that the initiative should be thrown on the individual.”¹⁵⁷ Therefore, reformers cast their projects as aids in the process of improving the freedom of the city, even when these projects often came with private bodies and/or government agencies that actually increased interference in the lives of citizens.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Keller, *Triumph of Order*, 39.

¹⁵⁷ William Laurence Burn, *The Age of Equipoise: A Study of the Mid-Victorian Generation* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1968), 128.

¹⁵⁸ Simon Gunn and James Vernon, “Introduction: What was Liberal Modernity and Why was it Peculiar in Imperial Britain?” in *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain*, ed. Gunn, Simon and James Vernon, (Berkeley, California: The Global, Area, and International Archive, University of California Press, 2011), 9.

As mentioned earlier, reformers expanded the scope of governmental action by arguing that, in order for society to achieve its natural state, governments needed to “remove restrictive legislation and inculcate habits of self-government in individuals.”¹⁵⁹ However, not all Londoners were equally capable of self-discipline, so reformers used discussions of London’s problems to widen the scope of the sorts of intrusions they would need to make in order to teach everyone to move properly in this freer society.¹⁶⁰ As Mary Poovey explains, Edwin Chadwick’s government-sponsored “Sanitary Report of 1842” and other statistical information gathered about London’s appalling conditions during this period helped to create an imagined community of Londoners by extending the social body to include workers and the poor.¹⁶¹ Chadwick’s survey relied upon sensational language and statistics to reveal the previously unknown scope of urban poverty and crime, and this knowledge helped to inspire government intervention by suggesting that the poor were unable to prosper as self-governing individuals as a result of their environment. Therefore, since they could not govern themselves in order to improve, improvement must be made through governing them from above.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Mary Poovey *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) 32.

¹⁶⁰ Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 4. She argues a linguistic change from “the body politic” to the “social body” occurred during this period that helped to create the notion of an English culture. The “body politic” had originally referred to the second body of the king (the English subjects). The poor were not usually considered members of the body politic. By the 1770s people like Adam Smith popularized a competing phrase, the “body of the people” or the “social body” which referred to the poor in isolation to English society as a whole. This allowed people to talk about the problems of one part of the population and the interests that “theoretically” united the social whole. She adds, “the phrase ‘social body’ therefore promised full membership in a whole (and held out the image of that whole) to a part identified as needing both discipline and care.”

¹⁶¹ Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 22.

¹⁶² Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 34.

This changing notion of who constituted the social body helped to define reform as sanitary improvement. Filth and overcrowding were no longer seen as normal consequences of urban life but were instead viewed as attacks on the kind of rational, self-disciplined ideal subject depicted in middle-class notions of liberalism. In this view, “health and modernity came to be identified with a careful mapping and containment of the city’s (and city dwellers’) guts.”¹⁶³

An unhealthy national body could also have dire implications for the health of the empire, and the need for new public works was also tied to the concept of London as a model imperial city. This crisis in imperial identity was particularly apparent in the Great Stink of 1858. As historian Dale Porter explains in his history of the Thames Embankment, the Great Stink marked a crisis not only in sanitation, but also in the disparity between London’s image as a bustling imperial city and the reality of London’s deplorable riverfront.¹⁶⁴ According to Bill Luckin and Jules Law, it was the imperial context of the Thames that did the most to spur improvement.¹⁶⁵ London’s rapid growth and its increasing importance in the empire and with world trade made its inhabitants more acutely aware of the “world status” of the city and, at the same time, the “shabby, provincial appearance” of the city’s streets, waterfront, and buildings.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, embanking the Thames “represented not so much scientific as symbolic control over the unruliness of urban life in the metropolis.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Pamela K. Gilbert, “Medical Mapping: The Thames, the Body, and *Our Mutual Friend*” in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. William Cohen and Ryan Johnson (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 79.

¹⁶⁴ Dale Porter, *The Thames Embankment*, 129.

¹⁶⁵ Luckin, *Pollution and Control*, and Jules Law, *The Social Life of Fluids: Blood, Milk, and Water in the Victorian Novel* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2010), 51.

¹⁶⁶ Porter, *The Thames Embankment*, 129.

¹⁶⁷ Law, *The Social Life of Fluids*, 50-51.

Contemporaries began to discuss the need for an urban environment that would match London's national and imperial importance and serve as a source of identity for Britons like Paris did for the French. During Baron Haussmann's project of massive public improvements to Paris (including the creation of new parks, boulevards, and palaces) under Napoleon III, Paris transformed from an overcrowded medieval city into the most beautiful modern city in Europe. Britons –not a people to take second to France - used the grand new image of Paris as a contrast to the piecemeal improvements occurring in London in order to inspire further improvement and reinforce connections between urban environment and national identity. Indeed, *The Times* asked its readers in 1851, “Do Parisians care more about Paris than Londoners about London?”¹⁶⁸

Contemporaries viewed the improvements in Paris with a mixture of envy and disgust at the beautiful changes that were possible when a government largely ignored individual property rights. Paris's beautiful palaces and ornate churches had long appeared to Londoners as symbols of the “despotism” and absence of liberty that had become ubiquitous in French society.¹⁶⁹ However, as *The Times* explained, mid-Victorian Londoners looked at London as a place to make their money and then escape from, while “Parisians look on Paris as a home.”¹⁷⁰ While some British observers noted that Haussmann had been given “almost arbitrary rule” to map out Paris as he pleased, this exercise of authority was not entirely without its benefits. As the *Morning Post* lamented, “We admit, and perhaps with some feeling of envy in our hearts, that no such changes as those brought to pass by the Prefect of the Seine could ever have been carried out under a

¹⁶⁸ “The Adornment and Expenses of Paris,” *Times* (London, England), August 21, 1857.

¹⁶⁹ Jonathan Conlin, *Tales of Two Cities: Paris, London, and the Birth of the Modern City* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2013), 21.

¹⁷⁰ “The Adornment and Expenses of Paris”

Constitutional Government; and we almost wish that for some ten years a Dictator were placed at the head of our [local government].”¹⁷¹

In response to the increasing calls to rectify the serious problems facing the nation and empire as a result of London’s poor health, London received its first “superstructure” to govern everyday life in 1855 in the form of the Metropolitan Board of Works. The MBW was the first metropolitan government with authority to execute construction projects in the city. The MBW had oversight of sewers and street improvements and would eventually be responsible for creating the Thames Embankment as well.¹⁷² The MBW was not a directly elected body. Instead, London’s various local government bodies would appoint the board’s forty-five members. Service on the board was also unpaid, with the exception of the position of chairman, which came with a salary of between £1,500 and £2,000 per year.¹⁷³ Thus, while the Metropolitan Board of Works was far from perfect, it “clarified, for a period, the view that London could re-create itself; that it was entering a new era of improvement and modernization.”¹⁷⁴ Indeed, Lynda Nead argues that the language of improvement promoted by the MBW provided the terms through which modernity was given meaning in London during this period.¹⁷⁵ In order to understand how civic authorities made meaning of the modern city through

¹⁷¹ “London, Friday, January 7, 1870,” *Morning Post* (London, England), Friday, January 07, 1870, pg. 4.

¹⁷² Keller, *Triumph of Order*, 37-38. Similarly, in 1888, the London County Council was created to replace the temporary boards in charge of paving, lighting, and maintaining parts of the city.

¹⁷³ London’s 6 largest vestries would appoint one member each; the remaining 55 vestries would be grouped into 14 district boards, each of which would appoint one member, and the City Corporation appointed three members. For more on this issue, see: Benjamin Weinstein, *Liberalism and Local Government in Early Victorian London* (Suffolk: The Royal Historical Society: The Boydell Press, 2011).

¹⁷⁴ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 5.

¹⁷⁵ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 5.

this language of improvement, I will explore the opening ceremonies for the Thames Tunnel, the Main Drainage and Thames Embankment, and the Underground railways.

IV. Urban Improvements

The Thames Tunnel became the first of many mid-Victorian works projects that aimed to rationalize and improve London's transport of both goods and people. As the first tunnel under any river in the world, the project garnered significant attention and enthusiasm in the press when construction started in 1821. When the tunnel was finally completed over two decades later, officials designed an opening ceremony that reflected how these works were examples of English ingenuity and national character and spaces to celebrate the accomplishments of local government and national prestige.

It is difficult to imagine a time when any Londoner could predict that the Thames Tunnel, a now largely forgotten engineering work that is part of the London Overground (an extension of the Tube), would surpass St. Paul's in importance and grandeur. However, such was the enthusiasm for the opening of the world's first tunnel under a river that newspaper reporters resorted to a bit of hyperbole in their coverage of the work: "It will be the monument of Sir Isambard Brunel, as St. Paul's is of Sir Christopher Wren, and...to those who ponder upon its real nature, the Thames Tunnel will appear the more vast and marvelous structure of the two."¹⁷⁶ This passage also demonstrates the interesting combination of praise for an individual engineer and pride in a national endeavor that accompanied the reports of mid-Victorian public works projects.

¹⁷⁶ "Opening of the Thames Tunnel," *Morning Chronicle* (London, England). Monday, March 27, 1843.

With pedestrian and carriage pathways, beautiful arches, and gas lighting throughout, the Thames Tunnel was predicted to be “a free, and...important, communication between the counties of Middlesex, Essex, Kent, and Surrey, and the several national and commercial establishments on either shore.”¹⁷⁷ The initial project was made possible by new tunneling shield technology developed by Marc Isambard Brunel. The Company raised money for the project from investors like the Duke of Wellington and began drilling in 1821, but the project was plagued with problems from the start.¹⁷⁸ This was grueling work, and Marc Brunel himself became so ill from overwork that he had to appoint his son, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, to replace him in 1826. Three of the younger Brunel’s assistants fell ill or died and the project suffered several serious setbacks, including a major flood in 1828 that killed six workers. Eventually, after a lengthy pause to gather more funds, the Thames Tunnel was completed in 1843 and opened as a walkway and tourist attraction. In that year, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert publicly visited the Thames Tunnel and were so impressed with the project that Queen Victoria knighted its creator, Marc Brunel.¹⁷⁹

The Tunnel Company held a grand public opening to demonstrate the importance of the work and explain its many uses to Londoners. The ceremony began on a Saturday morning in March, and a crowd of several thousand gathered around the tunnel openings and surrounding streets. Reports of the event noted, “everything wore quite a holiday appearance.” Guests with tickets were given viewing spots on a marquee erected near the entrance and within the tunnel. British flags flew from nearby church steeples, wharfs, and boats along the river, and all the bells in the parish “rung a merry peal.” Notable

¹⁷⁷ “The Thames Tunnel,” *Morning Post* (London, England). Wednesday, July 13, 1825.

¹⁷⁸ Martin, *Underground, Overground*, 86.

¹⁷⁹ Antony Clayton, *Subterranean City*, 89.

guests included the Lord Mayor, Lord Dudley Stuart, Sir Edward Codrington, Sir Robert Inglis, several important MPs and scientists, and the members of the Tunnel Company. A royal salute was fired from the company's wharf and "a march was struck up by the very efficient band in attendance." Next, the officers of the Company led a formal procession down the spiral staircase leading to the Tunnel. The scene at this moment was described as "grand and exciting," and as the party entered the tunnel, loud cheers rang out from those inside and outside of the tunnel. The party made a circuit of the tunnel before ending the celebrations.¹⁸⁰

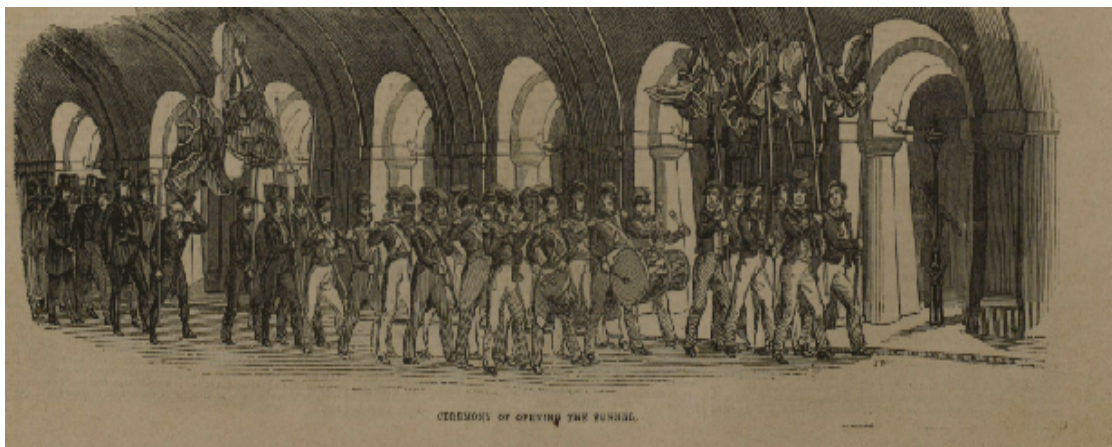


Figure 2. 1. "Opening of the Thames Tunnel."

The above drawing (Figure 2.2.) demonstrates the pageantry with which the procession proceeded through the newly completed Thames Tunnel.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ "Opening of the Thames Tunnel," *Morning Chronicle* (London, England). Monday, March 27, 1843.

¹⁸¹ "The Company's Medallion of Sir Brunel, Supported by One of the Tunnel Excavators," *Illustrated London News* (London, England), Saturday April 01, 1843, pg. 226; Issue 40.

While the formal opening was only really accessible to a mostly local crowd, the event gained extensive coverage in local and national papers, thus helping to advertise the national significance of this space to a larger audience. The *Morning Chronicle* asserted that “another wonder has been added to the many of which London can boast; another triumph [has] been achieved by British enterprise, genius, and perseverance.” The paper admitted that the construction had been slow, but placed the blame on the wild Thames and not any fault on the part of the engineers. Now, however, the Company had triumphed over the Thames and “thousands will probably daily pass under the Thames and its clustered shipping, in as great security and with as great confidence as if naught intervened between their heads and the blue sky.” The press coverage of the event also praised the enhanced mobility provided by this new means of traversing the capital. The *Morning Chronicle* argued that all the beautiful bridges of the river “must yield in point of grandeur of conception to the idea of a means of communication beneath the stream which should not interfere with the busy world floating upon its surface.”¹⁸² While the Tunnel eventually lost its novelty, this initial enthusiasm in the press cemented the tunnel as a popular London tourist attraction. Indeed, two million people visited the Tunnel in the year after its opening.¹⁸³

The next major metropolitan improvement also involved ordering the Thames, this time in the form of its waste. The Board of Works’ first major project in 1855 was to oversee the construction of the Main Drainage sewer system, which would replace the ineffective cesspits around London and hopefully cleanse the Thames of its filthy

¹⁸² “Opening of the Thames Tunnel,” *Morning Chronicle* (London, England). Monday, March 27, 1843.

¹⁸³ “Thames Tunnel,” *Illustrated London News* (London, England), Saturday, March 09, 1844, pg. 149.

reputation. The MBW appointed Joseph Bazalgette as chief engineer. Bazalgette, who joined the Institution of Civil Engineers and started his own practice in 1842, “built more of London than anyone else before or since.”¹⁸⁴ He would ultimately be responsible for several large streets, three embankments along the Thames riverside, three bridges across the Thames, and a number of other parks and open spaces around the city. Within five months, Bazalgette had submitted a plan of sewer lines that would run along both sides of the Thames and carry sewage to treatment works at Barking in the north and Crossness in the south, where a pumping station would then lift sewage into the treatment works.¹⁸⁵ The Main Drainage began in 1858 and took seventeen years to finish.¹⁸⁶ The project was understandably a massive undertaking that involved huge sums of money, prolonged construction throughout London’s streets, and a number of struggles with Parliament and skeptical observers. However, the MBW officials used the formal opening of the Main Drainage works and the press coverage of this event to erase any potential doubt about the value of this project and to depict the sewer system as a symbol of London’s embrace of modernity. This press coverage reminded readers that, before these improvements, “The Thames, in fact, was a great open sewer, running through the center of the metropolis and poisoning the atmosphere with its noisome exhalations.” Now, thanks to the Metropolitan Board of Works, these days were firmly a thing of the past.

When the entire project was completed, the MBW, “looking into the nature of these important works, were of the opinion that their opening should be marked by some proceeding of a special and public character,” and they approached Parliament to request

¹⁸⁴ Halliday, *Making the Metropolis*, 125

¹⁸⁵ Joseph William Bazalgette, *On the Main Drainage of London, and the Interception of the Sewage from the River Thames*. 1865.

¹⁸⁶ Halliday, *Making the Metropolis*, 137.

a formal opening.¹⁸⁷ The Prince of Wales accepted the invitation and arrived with Prince Alfred and the Duke of Cambridge in a river steamer to meet the MBW officials at the pumping station at Crossness. Seven hundred people were invited and notable guests included the Prussian Ambassador, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and a number of local dignitaries. Mr. Thwaites, the first Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and other MBW officials led the procession through a meticulous inspection of the works. The merging of older traditional symbols of state authority in the form of the Royal Family and the MBW officials demonstrates the success these urban reformers achieved in asserting the respectability and national pride of these spaces.

The formal procession also included a lengthy examination of each aspect of the sewage process, and the press reprinted these descriptions in intricate detail to a national audience. The inspection was so meticulous, in fact, that a sewer reservoir had been left open for examination and “a very few minutes sufficed to bring all the party back with their handkerchiefs over their noses.”¹⁸⁸ Along with smelling sewage, the Prince of Wales and other guests listened to Bazalgette give a short report on the engineering of the works. *The Penny Illustrated Paper* recorded that the beauty of the station struck observers as well:

Contrary to the general rule, which makes an engine-house a disfigurement to the surrounding country, this at Crossness Point is a perfect shrine of machinery. The exterior is sufficiently relieved in color and heightened by bold architectural features to make it anywhere conspicuously handsome as a mere building. Of the decorations of the interior, however, it is difficult to speak too highly.

¹⁸⁷ *Report of the MBW Pursuant to the Act of Parliament of 18th and 19th Victoria*, c. 120 s. 200. 1864-5. London: Ford and Tilt, 1866.

¹⁸⁸ “Opening of the London Main Drainage Works by the Prince of Wales,” *Liverpool Mercury* (Liverpool: England), Wednesday, April 5, 1865.

When the Prince entered the room, the engines were turned on and the first sounds were greeted with “loud cheers.” This was followed with a banquet, in which the Prince of Wales toasted Bazalegette and the MBW. He noted, “This work will be of material use to London, not so much now, perhaps, as in the future, when I hope London will become one of the healthiest cities in Europe. I now propose the toast, ‘Success to the great national undertaking, the completion of which we have witnessed today.’”¹⁸⁹

Publicly celebrating the technology that enabled people to use the bathroom in private might seem like an odd juxtaposition of values. However, this public inspection helped to justify what was ultimately a greater state access to the private spaces of individual citizens by giving the illusion that the MBW had successfully conquered and completed the sanitization of Londoners’ refuse. As Patrick Joyce explains, technology carried a capacity for action that created certain kinds of agency. In this case, sewers created the “conditions of possibility” for objects – and even people – to move in relative freedom through the capital.¹⁹⁰ The ability to provide running water in a home created more opportunities for more Londoners to use the restroom in private.¹⁹¹ Joyce maintains that the “hygenization of the city was accompanied by processes making for the individuation of the self, ones which, if distinct from governance, nonetheless were often linked to it.”¹⁹² In other words, sewers were worth celebrating as signs of freedom and symbols of British identity because “hygiene involved creating spaces around and

¹⁸⁹ “Mr. J.W. Bazalgette, the Originator of the Main-Drainage System,” *The Penny Illustrated Paper* (London, England). Saturday, April 15, 1865. Pg. 230, issue 185 (928 words).

¹⁹⁰ Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, 10.

¹⁹¹ Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, 12. Joyce rightly notes that “one should not underestimate this landmark in what has been called the history of shit.”

¹⁹² Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, 73.

between bodies, protecting them from others' contact and smells, and it thereby brought people into a new encounter with themselves."¹⁹³

In this way, this opening procession helped to establish a sense that the MBW had achieved "a city where people and things could circulate freely."¹⁹⁴ While the city still had a long way to go before it achieved the kind of grandeur of Paris, London had begun the first major step in a process of navigating modernization in a way that still maintained the freedom of British citizens. *The Times* argued that the ceremony, while just a formality, "was really one of such municipal importance as the dwellers in London are rarely called to attend, for...there is not city in the empire which has been so much mismanaged as this metropolis."¹⁹⁵

It is difficult to talk about the popular celebrations of the Main Drainage without also mentioning the more visible and equally significant changes to the Thames riverside. Joseph Bazalgette also built the Thames Embankment, which was created to house a low-level intercepting sewer underground and help the flow of the Thames. Comprised of three Embankments (the Victoria, Albert, and Chelsea Embankments), the brick and concrete walls stretched from Chelsea to Blackfriar's Bridge (near St. Paul's). Like the Thames Tunnel and Main Drainage, this project was also beset with struggles over acquiring access to land and money for construction. Acquiring rights to the private property along the shoreline was a long and arduous process, but Bazalgette met the most frustrating opposition to his plan when he attempted to create a grand set of garden terraces from the Strand down to the Embankment near the mansion of the Marquis of Salisbury. The beautiful and ambitious plan would have encroached into the Marquis's

¹⁹³ Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, 73.

¹⁹⁴ Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, 11.

¹⁹⁵ "Opening of the Main Drainage," *Times* (London, England), Wednesday, April 05, 1865; pg.5.

property, and Salisbury refused to alter his plans. Ultimately, Bazalgette was forced to abandon his grand design.¹⁹⁶

The Embankment also had to overcome negative reports from accidents and disasters during construction. In one particularly gruesome incident in 1866, an iron caisson collapsed, slicing a workman in half.¹⁹⁷ While I will not dwell on these struggles here, Dale Porter argues in his history of the Embankment that “the daily work of constructing a new landscape, visible to everyone, was forging a common identity for London’s patchwork of parishes.”¹⁹⁸ This common identity also helped create a sense of public interest in and ownership of the Embankment.

The Embankment also gained attention for Bazalgette’s efforts to create a practical space that would simultaneously reflect the grandeur of London as an imperial city. The Thames was crucial to London’s seat as the center of a global empire, and the MBW wanted a riverfront that reflected this significance. Consequently, the Embankment boulevard, open to the public, looked radically different from the nearby crowded streets of the Fleet or the Strand. Gas lampposts designed by Bazalgette to look like dolphins lined the walkways and lion’s head mooring rings also decorated the sides of the walls.¹⁹⁹ The walkways were lined with benches and flowers that created a new sort of leisure space in the center of the city. Bazalgette and his supporters saw the Embankment “as a symbol of London’s imperial grandeur, a promenade upon which to greet the world as it approached the capital.”²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Porter, *The Thames Embankment*, 207.

¹⁹⁷ Porter, *The Thames Embankment*, 201.

¹⁹⁸ Porter, *The Thames Embankment*, 209.

¹⁹⁹ Dale H. Porter, *The Thames Embankment: Environment, Technology, and Society in Victorian London* (Akron, Ohio: The University of Akron Press, 1998), 195.

²⁰⁰ Dale Porter, *The Thames Embankment*, 129.

To cement the national significance of this construction project, the MBW invited Queen Victoria to open the Embankment named in her honor. Though she fell ill and had to ask the Prince of Wales and Princess Louise to oversee the opening instead, the Embankment was formally opened on July 13, 1870.²⁰¹ Notable MPs and dignitaries watched the opening from viewing platforms in front of the government offices at Whitehall. The Embankment was littered with “decorations, banners, wreaths, flowers, red cloth, and monograms.” Five carriages – headed by the MBW officials and followed by the royal family and other notable dignitaries – were escorted by the Royal Horse Guard through the Embankment from Whitehall to Westminster Bridge and through to Blackfriar’s Bridge. Since the Tudor period, members of the Royal Family had processed along the Thames with banners and other symbols of heraldry during important national celebrations, and this procession re-instated the long association of the Thames as a symbol of national prestige and sought to eliminate its other ties to ideas of filth, decay, and backwardness.²⁰²

As Dale Porter explains, “the Embankment changed Londoners’ perception of the river and, by making it a focal point for the metropolis, changed their perception of London itself.”²⁰³ In his speech on the occasion, the Prince of Wales evoked this ideal, arguing that “in no public work of this vast capital have the liberal and enterprising spirit of its citizens and the genius and resources of our civil engineers been more signally displayed.” Indeed, Bazalgette’s work beautifying London and rationalizing its waste and

²⁰¹ “Opening of the Thames Embankment,” *Pall Mall Gazette* (London, England), Wednesday, July 13, 1870.

²⁰² Peter Ackroyd, *Thames: The Biography* (Anchor Books: New York, 2007), 101.

²⁰³ .Porter, *The Thames Embankment*, 249-250.

water would earn him a knighthood in 1874.²⁰⁴ As a testimony to the strength of this liberal ideal, a memorial to Joseph Bazalgette was erected on the Victoria Embankment after his death. The statue features a Latin inscription that reads “he placed chains upon the river.”²⁰⁵ This epitaph seems like a fitting summary of the kind of rationalizing project these urban reformers hoped to achieve and promote through their public works projects.

V. *The Opening of the Underground Railway*

It is in this context of civic displays of technological progress that we now turn back to the Metropolitan Railway, the first line of what would become the Underground Railway. Underground officials orchestrated similar ceremonies and formal processions through subterranean space to provide ideal ways of using this technology and to demonstrate the liberating potential this subway could provide for London. However, the Underground officials faced in some ways a more exciting and also more troubling issue than their engineering compatriots, in that their technologies were attempting to rationalize and order the movement of actual human beings (instead of their waste) in an entirely new way.

London’s streets were a dangerous and disgusting place in the mid-Victorian period. *The Times* reported in frustration that the lack of inner-city railways was wreaking havoc on the metropolis, as “the great thoroughfares have become so crowded as to be often impassable, so noisy that there is no living near them, and so dirty, that in spite of

²⁰⁴ Halliday, *Making the Metropolis*

²⁰⁵ Peter Ackroyd, *Thames*, 208.

street orderlies and other sanitary militia, they fill the air with ammoniacal vapour or dust.”²⁰⁶ To make matters worse, despite decades of industrial development, there was still a large and unsettling population of casual laborers living in London that further complicated issues of danger and overcrowding on London’s city streets. Several decades of economic growth caused many observers to view poverty not as an inevitable feature of human life but as something that could and should be destroyed by progress.

As London’s middle and upper-class residents began moving farther away from the city center, the social divisions in London’s society now appeared to be mirrored in London’s geography. The inhabitants of rookeries like the one near Farringdon Street symbolized an increasingly prevalent view of the poor as morally corrupt. These densely-populated slums, often depicted as the locus of ‘Outcast London,’ were a source of enormous anxiety for mid-Victorian Londoners. They were portrayed as worlds of darkness, filth, and vice that police were powerless to penetrate: “crammed together in filthy, airless, and noisy one-room tenements, it was inevitable that the poor would be brutalized and sexually immoral.”²⁰⁷ As the capital of the world’s leading industrial nation and a global empire, London came to symbolize “the problem of the ‘residuum.’”²⁰⁸ Moreover, it was also possible that these corrupt areas could, in terms of both literal and metaphorical filth, contaminate the rest of the city. Thus, street improvements were imbued with “an almost magical efficacy.”²⁰⁹ Contemporaries hoped that “the criminal culture might disintegrate if ‘the great streams of public intercourse

²⁰⁶ “Mr. Charles Pearson’s Plan for a Central City,” *Times* (London England), Tuesday, Nov. 2, 1852. P. 4.

²⁰⁷ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society* (London: Penguin, 1984), 286.

²⁰⁸ Jones, *Outcast London*, 12.

²⁰⁹ Jones, *Outcast London*, 180.

could be made to pass through the district in question.”²¹⁰ Indeed, the *London Review* hailed the Underground Railway as a “deliverer” of London by eradicating the crowded neighborhood where “black slimy arches were sometimes used as a tomb for murdered infants.”²¹¹

It was into this environment that City Solicitor Charles Pearson suggested a plan for a railway in 1845 that would run from the Fleet to Farringdon and be surrounded by a glass dome to protect it from pedestrian traffic and the elements.²¹² While his initial scheme failed, Pearson did succeed in helping to finance what would become the Metropolitan Railway, and the line would closely follow Pearson’s intended path. In 1853, railway engineer John Fowler obtained permission from Parliament to build a two-mile-long subway from Edgeware Road to King’s Cross.²¹³ This Metropolitan Railway scheme had two major factors in its favor. First, by traveling underground, it would help sanitize the experience of the city for passengers by helping them travel safely and quickly from their homes to their workplaces without the dangers and distractions of the streets above. Second, the location would also help sanitize the city itself by eliminating one of the more notorious London slums. As *The Times* noted before construction began, “except, indeed, in the Arctic Circle or the interior of Africa, nowhere is there so much

²¹⁰ Jones, *Outcast London*, 180.

²¹¹ “The Underground Railway,” *London Review of Politics, Society, Literature, Art, and Science*, ed. Charles Mackay (London: January 17, 1863), 64-65.

²¹² Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 8.

²¹³ Parliamentary Papers, 1854-55, vol. 1 (415), p. iv; Mike Chrimes, “Fowler, Sir John, first baronet (1817–1898),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004; Jan 2008). <http://www.oxforddnb.com>. For more on funding, see Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway: How the London Underground was Built and How it Changed the City Forever* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), 31. He argues that funding was acquired through an early type of public-private partnership with the Great Western Railway. The London Corporation (which sold the land to the railway at bargain costs and subscribed £200,000 in shares that were later sold for profit) and private investors contributed the rest of the needed financial backing.

good space thrown away as in the area called Farringdon-Street.”²¹⁴ Clearing poor areas like the Saffron Hill rookery near Farringdon Street was therefore also part of a larger attempt to improve working-class housing and eliminate the fears about London’s poor.

The Metropolitan Railway was also an immediate symbol of the ambiguous nature of modernity, as contemporaries could cite it as either a sign of progress or a dangerous intrusion into underground space. The line’s “cut-and-cover” construction was a deeply destructive and unsettling process for Londoners.²¹⁵ As David Ashford notes, the excavation of the Metropolitan and subsequent District lines “confronted Londoners with visual spectacles of industrial modernity that were without precedent in the history of the capital.”²¹⁶ Contemporaries likewise feared that the construction was an affront to English reverence for private property. An angry Londoner’s rant against the Metropolitan line in the *Daily Mail* best sums up the feelings of anxiety and frustration experienced by some contemporaries:

Shored up houses upon a spongy road, a few blighted shops...stand to show the destructive line which the underground monster has taken. For weeks and months whole streets were rendered almost impassable by forests of timber stretching in thick, tangled masses from side to side, holding up houses that had not been deserted by the frightened occupants....The workhouse relief book of Clerkenwell contains many records of the cost of making underground railways not considered in the parliamentary scheme of compensation....The losers will be sacrificed for what may or may not be public convenience.

²¹⁴ “Mr. Charles Pearson’s Plan for a Central City.” *Times* (London England), Tuesday, Nov. 02, 1852. P. 4.

²¹⁵ David Bennett, *Metro: The Story of the Underground Railway* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 2004), 32.

²¹⁶ David Ashford, *London Underground: A Cultural Geography* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 16.

Clearly, Metropolitan railway officials faced a bit of an uphill battle trying to win over the public with their new transportation scheme. This skepticism forced Underground officials to realize early on the benefits of allowing reporters to view the works and record their experiences for the press. This kind of consistent coverage generated an enthusiasm for the Underground that culminated in the official opening ceremony.

Unlike the other public works projects mentioned in this chapter, the Underground was largely a private enterprise. Consequently, the success of the Underground, like any privately funded form of transportation, was dependent on public approval (an approval which would much more likely be given if the Underground could be seen as another of the many municipal improvements which were celebrated in the previous decades). The opening ceremonies devised by the Underground professionals followed the clear precedent established by other civic authorities during the mid-Victorian era.

In keeping with this tradition of celebrating public improvements, the Metropolitan railway officials devised ceremonies to tie the Underground to the other liberal improvements occurring in London in hopes of increasing the railway's popularity and perceived national importance. They began this endeavor by holding a banquet for the rail workmen themselves. In 1862, once the portion of the Metropolitan line from Paddington Station to Gower Street Station was finished, the contractors gave a dinner to 600 men engaged in the railway construction.²¹⁷ They built a platform from one side of the station to the other for the dinner and made "loyal and patriotic toasts" to the workers,

²¹⁷ "Dinner to the Workmen of the Metropolitan Underground Railway," *The Penny Illustrated Paper* 45 (London), Saturday, 16 August 1862, 117.

asserting their hopes that the line would be considered “what it really was – one of the best undertakings in the world.” The press coverage of the event echoed this notion, asserting that “these trains will be real boons to poor people, laborers and others, who have now to walk many miles to their work by six in the morning.” Celebrations like these, and – more important - the press coverage of them, helped to create a vision of a patriotic, ambitious and safe space in London that would improve the mobility of all classes. In addition, they also used this ceremony to highlight the importance of Underground professionals in designing a technology that would be so beneficial to London.

The formal opening of the railway line enhanced this sense of national importance. The opening festivities included a formal celebration for 700 invited guests on January 9th, 1863, and a public opening the following day. Although the Royal Family and Prime Minister Palmerston were invited, neither attended. Indeed, the elderly Lord Palmerston, who would pass away within two years, is said to have asserted that he “hoped to remain above ground a little longer.”²¹⁸ Without the national recognition from more traditional authorities, the formal ceremony was largely a local affair whose dignified guests included members of the Court of Aldermen, the Common Council, several members of Parliament, representatives from various railway boards, and the shareholders.²¹⁹ Local police also wanted to attend the banquet, and were invited to perform “a selection of light and cheerful music... in the character of musicians.”²²⁰ The press seemed encouraged by the ceremonies, and the coverage of the event cast the Underground as a praiseworthy achievement, asserting that “those who from this day

²¹⁸ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 17.

²¹⁹ “Opening of the Metropolitan Railway,” *Daily News* (London), Monday, 5 January 1863.

²²⁰ “Opening of the Metropolitan Railway,” *Daily News*

forward may use the line will never be able to appreciate, from what they see, the vast labor and the stupendous resources which were exerted in this part of the undertaking.”

The report intentionally played with the reader’s imaginations about what kinds of wonders could be below the ground as well:

The ‘Wise-Man’ may still be right in saying that ‘there is nothing new under the sun,’ but there is surely something new in travelling where the sun does not penetrate, when the light that shines is not ‘light from heaven,’ but light from gas made in the very engine that is whirling you along. Perhaps one day he may be circulating amidst the mastodons... of the primeval world.²²¹

The actual opening ceremony began with an inspection of the line, in which railway engineers directed the gaze of passengers to specific technical innovations at each of the stops from Bishop’s Road Station to Farringdon. Reports of the procession informed readers about what made the Underground both safe and novel. In doing so, these reports helped to serve a tutelary function for readers by helping them to understand how to travel through and make sense of these new technologies.

It might seem hard to imagine that readers needed to be educated about how to move through a railway station, particularly after railway technology had been in existence for some time at this point. However, the need to teach people how to understand and move around modern transport technology was made tragically evident in the opening for the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, the world’s first passenger railway. Spectators and passengers in attendance at the opening celebration in 1830 were in awe of the spectacle of a train that “raced over the fields” at twenty-five miles an hour. The initial joy of the event was quickly marred by tragedy when former cabinet minister William Huskisson stepped down onto the track. Huskisson had been in one of trains making an initial run on the line that day, and he hopped down from his train in order to

²²¹ “Opening of the Metropolitan Railway.”

watch another train on the line pass by. “Startled and confused,” Huskisson attempted to jump back into his train but was hit by the oncoming train – known as “the Rocket” - before he could do so.²²² While the tragedy in Manchester did little to deter the popularity of railway technology, it did instill in contemporaries a healthy appreciation for the need to understand how to use transport technology, and opening ceremonies became a popular means of establishing these lessons.

Once at Farringdon, the 700 guests at the opening of the Metropolitan line assembled in a large room adjoining the station. The roof and the sides of the banquet hall were draped in scarlet and white cloth and banners and flags hung from the ceiling. The more distinguished guests viewed the proceedings from a raised platform, while the rest of the guests sat at three long tables.²²³ The use of banners, flags, and patriotic music suggests that while the organizers did not represent national authorities, they clearly tried to portray themselves to guests as key figures in a nationally significant event. The chairman of the rail company and a series of other local politicians made speeches that compared the engineers to modern-day English saints. Indeed, the clear theme of the evening’s speeches was the immense debt the people of London owed to the visionary train authorities and the local politicians who supported them.²²⁴ M.P. Robert Lowe insisted that, “such an enterprise is an honor to the country, and a solid advance worthy of civilization.”²²⁵ The representative from the House of Lords, Lord Harris, remarked that

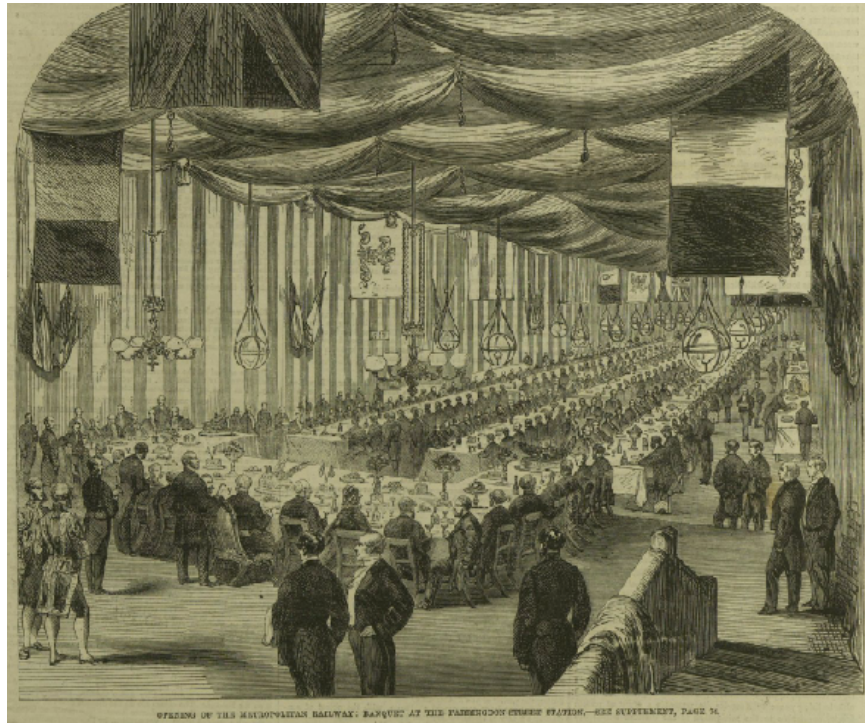
²²² Helen Cross Knight, *The Rocket*, (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1868), 101-103. For more on Huskisson, see Charles Ryle Fay, *Huskisson and His Age* (London: Longmans, Green, 1851).

²²³ “Opening of the Underground Railway,” *Jackson’s Oxford Journal* (Oxford, England) Saturday, January 17, 1863.

²²⁴ “Opening of the Metropolitan Railway,” *Daily News* (London, England), January 10, 1863.

²²⁵ “The Metropolitan Railway,” *Times* (London, England), Saturday, January 10, 1863, 10.

“there was no body of men to whom the country was more indebted, to whom they could look with more pride, than the civil engineers.”



226

Figure 2.2. “Opening of the Metropolitan Railway.”

By celebrating the endeavors of all those involved in the line’s construction, from the workers to the engineers, these railway experts clearly desired to control perceptions of how London would view the recent civic project as well as those involved with its construction. Draping the new station in both the symbols of the British nation and those of the Metropolitan Railway Company helped to transform a transport celebration into “an embodiment of the idea of civic community.”²²⁷ The heraldic symbolism of the

²²⁶ “Opening of the Metropolitan Railway.” *Illustrated London News* (London, England), Saturday, January 17, 1863, 74.

²²⁷ Ralph Harrington, “Civic Pride, Urban Identity, and Public Transport in Britain, 1880-1980,” 258.

celebration –as well as the replication of this space in the press coverage of the opening - provided a highly visible means “though which historic continuity, civil values and ideals, and a communal sense of identity could be embodied.”²²⁸

These celebrations encouraged a belief that the Underground was beneficial to London; it would increase individual freedom by providing greater opportunities to traverse the capital without hindrance. Moreover, the opening ceremonies revealed that Londoners owed this newfound freedom to the railway professionals. The description of the engineers directing passengers to specific technological marvels along the route demonstrated their knowledge of this technology and their competency managing it.

Like many of the other urban improvement projects before them, the Underground ultimately acquired royal patronage. In November 1890, the Prince of Wales oversaw the official opening of the world’s first electric underground line, the City and South London Railway. His participation reflects the cultural and national significance the Underground had achieved in the years since 1863. The press coverage of the event remarked upon the uniqueness of this railway, explaining that its opening was likely “more important” than that of the Metropolitan Railway in 1863. The reporter explained that the while the Metropolitan was designed similarly to traditional trains, the City and South London rail was “an entirely new departure,” in which the cars were operated electrically and the tunnels were dug 50-60 feet below ground. Further, these trains would also feature only one class of carriage and one rate of ticket – twopence per ride.²²⁹

²²⁸ Ralph Harrington, “Civic Pride, Urban Identity, and Public Transport in Britain, 1880-1980,” 255.

²²⁹ “The City and South London Railway,” *Times* 33160 (London), Tuesday, 4 November 1890), col. A.

A guard of honor from the mounted infantry troop of the 4th West Surrey Regiment as well as contingents from the Lambeth Cadet Corps accompanied the Prince. During the official opening ceremony, the chairman of the rail company, Mr. C.G. Mott, greeted the Prince and his son, the Duke of Clarence, at Monument Station and led the party to the station platform on the first Underground lift. The lift was one of the few technological points on which the Prince spoke; upon experiencing the sensation of the lift descending, the Prince asked “if he was going down or was the world going up?”²³⁰ The station platform was covered in red baize, with special seating for spectators to watch Mr. Mott present the Prince of Wales with “an elaborately chased gold key, with which his Royal Highness turned on the electric current which supplied the waiting train.” The party then entered the carriages and only stopped at one station, where the Prince “inspected the station” before finishing the journey. In this train procession, the Prince, rather than the railway engineers, was given the distinct honor of inspecting the train workings and directing the gaze of the passengers.

Likely in order to maximize publicity for the event, the Prince rode above ground from the terminal station to the banquet at Stockwell depot, followed by train engineers in coaches. The banquet, this time for only 250 invited guests, was held in an elaborately decorated marquee that displayed a number of exotic Indian fabrics. The Prince gave a speech in which he declared his pleasure at opening the rail line, which would lack the smoke and steam of the Metropolitan line. The Prince also praised the line for allowing “all classes of the community” to travel in the same cars for the same fare.²³¹ The hard

²³⁰ “Opening of the Electric Railway,” *Daily News* 13911 (London), Wednesday, 5 November 1890.

²³¹ “The City and South London Railway,” *Times* 33161 (London), Wednesday, 5 November 1890, col. A.

work of the railway engineers was mentioned, but less attention was paid to British technological prowess in this opening than the first. This was likely because Germany and America already widely used electric trains aboveground. Indeed, one of the few MPs who spoke at the opening argued that “in this undertaking, England has shown to Germans and Americans, who were our competitors in electrical matters, that we were moving forwards.”²³²

This use of the Prince to open railway lines continued into the twentieth century and became a public spectacle that increased publicity for the railway. It appears that even some celebrities wanted to catch a glimpse of these events, evident in Mark Twain’s attendance at the 1900 Central London Railway formal opening.²³³ Other traditional authorities also began participating in these ceremonies. Gladstone, who first experienced the Underground as an MP at the formal opening of the Metropolitan line, attended the celebration for an extension to the District line in 1871.²³⁴ The Duke of Cambridge opened the second tube line, the Waterloo & City line, in 1898.²³⁵ David Lloyd George opened both the Piccadilly and Hampstead Tubes, though he encountered embarrassing setbacks in both openings when the key to start the Piccadilly line would not fit and the driver of the Hampstead line accidentally stopped the train in the middle of the tunnel, causing some delay.²³⁶

²³² “Opening of the Electric Railway,” *Daily News* 13911 (London), Wednesday, 5 November 1890.

²³³ “Central London Railway: Opening Ceremony, The Prince of Wales Journey.” *Daily News* 16930, (London), 28 June 1900.

²³⁴ W. J. Passingham, *The Romance of London’s Underground* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd., 1930), 35.

²³⁵ Passingham, *The Romance of London’s Underground*, 52

²³⁶ Passingham, *The Romance of London’s Underground*, 110-111.

These opening ceremonies also helped link the Underground more closely with notions of London's identity. If the Underground Railway now enabled all roads to lead to London, as George Sims exclaimed in 1901, "the railways themselves, with one voice and heart, acclaim London as their capital."²³⁷ The Underground would also become a literal vehicle for later symbolic processions through the city as well. Indeed, William Gladstone's coffin was transported to his state funeral at Westminster Abbey via Underground in 1898.²³⁸ Similarly, the Olympic torch traveled via Underground's District line from Wimbledon to Wimbledon Park in July 2012.²³⁹

VI. Conclusion

The Metropolitan Railway is, indeed, a mighty underground undertaking.... This, however, although a very gigantic work, is but a fraction, so to speak, of the intricate and almost inexplicable labyrinth of arteries and sinews that go to make up the great body of "Underground London.".... Let us reflect for a moment upon what this system accomplishes. Do we want water in our houses? We turn a small instrument, and the limpid stream from the springs of Hertfordshire, or of Hampstead Heath, or from the river Thames, comes flowing, as it were by magic, into our vessels. Do we wish to get rid of it when no longer serviceable? The trouble is no greater; in an instant it is on its way through the silent depths. Do we wish for an artificial day? Through that same mysterious channel comes steaming up into every corner of our chambers, counting-houses, or shops, the subtle air which waits but our bidding to become—light! The tales which amuse our childhood have no greater marvels than these.²⁴⁰

This passage, from Edward Walford's 1878 work *Underground London: Its Railways, Subways, and Sewers*, exposes both the feelings of pride and the sense of

²³⁷ George R. Sims, *Living London: Its Work and its Play, Its humor and its Pathos, its Sights and its Scenes* (London: Cassel and Company, Limited, 1901).

²³⁸ Emily Kearns, *Mind the Gap: A London Underground Miscellany* (Chichester, West Sussex: Summersdale, 2013), 112.

²³⁹ Kearns, *Mind the Gap*, 112.

²⁴⁰ Edward Walford, "Chapter XVIII: Underground London: Its Railways, Subways, and Sewers." Vol 5 of *In Old and New London* (London, Paris and New York: Cassell & Company, Ltd, 1878). *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>

progress and amazement felt by contemporary Londoners when reflecting on the advancements of the past twenty years. These local professionals had met the problems of an ever-expanding industrial capital and conquered them by tunneling into the depths of the earth. As a result, sewer systems, gas works, and subsurface trains were all affecting a revolution in the ways city dwellers experienced their city.

As Donald Olsen notes, Victorian cities like London “were deliberate artistic creations intended...to contain ideas, inculcate values, and serve as tangible expressions of systems of thought and morality.”²⁴¹ The engineers and reformers responsible for these civic improvements deliberately planned celebrations of these works to help Londoners make sense of these new spaces and technologies and see them as useful and important extensions of their normal daily routines. And yet, the kind of massive interventions these projects required also forced urban reformers to sell these works as symbols of British freedom and power that Londoners and Britons more generally could be proud of. It is therefore unsurprising that Marc Brunel, Joseph Bazalgette, and John Fowler would all receive knighthoods as a sign of thanks for their service to the nation. Indeed, R.A. Buchanan argues that engineers became gentlemen in the course of the social transformation caused by the Industrial Revolution.²⁴²

These technologies and the celebrations that created examples for how to understand and use these spaces also helped to solidify a larger notion of what it meant to be a Londoner. Mary Poovey explains that the notion of a single British culture became more plausible in the 1860s because of the appearance of technologies like the census,

²⁴¹ Donald Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 4.

²⁴² R.A. Buchanan, “Gentlemen Engineers: The Making of a Profession.” *Victorian Studies*, vol. 26, no. 4 (Summer, 1983), 427.

affordable transportation, and national museums, “brought groups that had rarely mixed into physical proximity with each other and represented them as belonging to the same, increasingly undifferentiated whole.”²⁴³ Celebrations of public works projects acted as opportunities to redefine and reshape local and national identity by tying traditional symbols of the nation to these new symbols of modernity. Moreover, the press coverage of these technologies and celebrations contributed to a larger discourse about the meanings of these works in London that did help to refine a particular type of British identity; an identity that was particularly loyal to notions of freedom.

The frequency with which these ceremonies were held and the increasing celebrity they attracted suggests that the officials responsible for creating and expanding the Underground succeeded in casting their technology as one of the many improvements to London. These ceremonies, with their orderly processions, guided tours, and explanatory speeches, created models for viewing and proceeding through the spaces of the Underground.

While the ceremonies highlighted the Underground’s benefits to Londoners, the freedom of movement this technology provided only worked if there were defined limits to how the Underground was used and viewed. Since the Underground professionals had promoted the space as one that would increase individual freedom by removing many of the traditional constraints to movement through the city, their efforts at controlling this space also needed to reflect this independence. Thus, they developed various methods of directing passengers and influencing their behavior through posters, signs, and signals. Passengers also developed their own methods of navigating the Underground, and these sometimes conflicted with those of the officials. As the next chapter will make clear, the

²⁴³ Poovey, *The Social Body*, 4.

tension between the ideal representational space and the actual spatial practices of the Underground enhanced the importance of the space and helped passengers incorporate the system into their daily lives.

CHAPTER THREE:
WRITING ON THE WALL: ORDERING UNDERGROUND SPACE

Looking at a full train, you sometimes think: how on earth do people manage to do that? How do they talk themselves into believing that this degree of crush, of proximity, is something normal? Research into our sense of personal space suggests that the normal radius for personal distance is between arm's length and about four feet away. Closer contact than that is an intrusion into 'intimate space,' which is reserved for close family members and lovers. On the Underground, though, when it's busy, that intimate space is also reserved for the sweaty man with his arm on the strap over your head...and a worried and unhappy-looking middle-aged woman trying to brace herself against the compartment wall whose head is directly under your armpit. Even without being jolted along in the dark tunnel... this is a profoundly unnatural condition for human beings. We react to it by going somewhere else in our heads.

-John Lanchester, "John Lanchester rides the London Underground," *The Guardian* Friday, 1 March 2013.

The unnatural intrusion of faces into armpits on the Tube that British journalist John Lanchester describes seems worse today than ever before. Londoners now make four million trips per day on grossly ill-equipped Underground trains, often resulting in these uncomfortable intrusions into intimate space.²⁴⁴ However, these problems are certainly not modern issues; or rather, they are very characteristic of modernity but not modern in the sense of being recent. Indeed, a similar flurry of complaints about overcrowding erupted after the Colonial Exhibition put pressure on an already-crowded Underground system in 1886. One passenger complained to the *Morning Post* that "if a railway company allowed animals to be packed so tight the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would take the matter up, and why should humans be subjected to it any more than beasts?"²⁴⁵ A female passenger added that there were twenty passengers in

²⁴⁴ "Squeezing In: What the London Underground Reveals about Work in the Capital," *Economist*, May 23, 2015.

²⁴⁵ C.R.O., "Overcrowding on the Underground Railway," *Morning Post* (London, England) September 30, 1886, 6. The passenger was riding on the District Line for business and

a single first-class carriage riding from King's Cross to Sloane Square, "five on each side, with three children sitting on different people's knees, and seven standing up." She feared that such overcrowding was particularly uncomfortable for female passengers traveling alone.²⁴⁶ Concerns about overcrowding seemed to peak in the press about every ten years. *The Times* witnessed another flurry of complaints in 1906, in which one amused passenger remarked that riding an overcrowded Tube was simply a part of life for ordinary Londoners. He quipped, "'strap-handing' in the new electric trains provides magnificent exercise for the muscles of the arm, and is quite exhilarating as a change from sedentary pursuits."²⁴⁷

Lanchester's astonishment that people willingly submit themselves to such uncomfortable intrusions into personal space each day reveals the ways in which transport has radically changed notions of modern subjectivity. As Andrew Thacker argues, "Tube travel could create mental distance as you tried to separate yourself from the masses around you."²⁴⁸ The Tube also forced passengers to rethink their relationship to London by depriving travelers of any sense of the landscape beyond the glass. The lack of landscape reinforced a sense of interiority in the Underground; without outside distractions, passengers were forced to look inside – at each other, or, more commonly, at things that would distract them from gazing uncomfortably at each other (like advertisements or newspapers). For large parts of the journey - especially as trains were dug deeper into the ground throughout the twentieth century - Underground trains lacked

complained that the already crowded trains were made even more so by the Colonial Exhibition near South Kensington Station.

²⁴⁶ E.M.A., "Overcrowding," *Morning Post* (London, England), October 13, 1886.

²⁴⁷ Amused, "Overcrowding on the District Railway," *Times* (London, England), January 1, 1906, 16.

²⁴⁸ Andrew Thacker, *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 95.

almost any sense of outside scenery. Indeed, when the City & South London Railway was opened in 1890 (the first deep-level “Tube” railway in the world) the carriages were entirely windowless. The railway was so deep below the surface that engineers saw no need for the pretense of windows, and simply padded the walls instead. The carriages were nicely illuminated with electric light, but passengers quickly dubbed the line the “padded cell” or the “sardine box railway” and small, long windows were eventually added to ease passengers’ anxieties.²⁴⁹ Thacker argues that the lack of outside distractions and the organization of the space within the train actually increased anxieties about urban modernity.

While the Tube opening ceremonies presented a rationalized and ordered movement through Underground space, actual Tube interactions exposed a more complicated picture of how the Underground would fit into the everyday lives of passengers. The spaces of the Underground needed to remain free of obstruction and open to the majority of Londoners to function efficiently, but this freedom needed to be balanced with order as well as stability.

The conflict between openness and order was immediately apparent once the Underground opened publicly. Unlike the formal opening celebrations, public openings were crowded and chaotic. When the Metropolitan line was opened to the public on January 10, 1863, the trains began overcrowding by 9AM. Many passengers bought tickets simply to enjoy the novelty of a subterranean train and consequently stayed on until the line ended instead of alighting at an intermediary station. Trains became so packed that people bought tickets in the opposite direction just to secure a seat on the return journey. Eventually, shouts of “no room!” rang out from station guards as each

²⁴⁹ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 136.

train pulled into a platform. To make matters worse, crowds on the platforms became so thick that “classification was altogether ignored” and people with third-class tickets rode in the first class compartments and vice versa.²⁵⁰ Eventually, workers at King’s Cross stopped issuing tickets altogether for several hours. All in all, 38,000 people traveled on the line in its first day and 33,000 the following day.²⁵¹

Nor did the chaos dissipate after the first public opening. The public opening of the Central London line in 1900 quickly deteriorated after the ticket collection device malfunctioned. When railway workers refused to issue refunds, passengers called the police, who were “powerless” in the face of a technology with which they were wholly unfamiliar.²⁵² The volume of new technology and machinery in the Underground created a multitude of possibilities for malfunction, and only the Underground engineers and technicians could remedy these problems or restore order to the system. Thus, these officials needed to establish their authority in order to uphold the efficiency of the Underground and thus increase its profits and maintain its services for London.

Underground officials also needed to determine how Londoners could be converted into civil citizens who used their freedom rationally.²⁵³ This chapter will show that creating safe and efficient underground spaces was a “consensus process, in which ‘rules’ were not imposed from the outside but were the result of a negotiated process

²⁵⁰ “Opening of the Metropolitan Railway to the Public,” *Morning Post* (London, England), Monday, January 12, 1863, pg. 2.

²⁵¹ “The Metropolitan Railway,” *Daily News* (London, England), January 12, 1863.

²⁵² “Central London Railway: Opening Day, A Passenger’s Experiences,” *Daily News* (London, England), July 31, 1900.

²⁵³ Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 114.

between resident and government.”²⁵⁴ This chapter will investigate the tension between passengers and officials to demonstrate the ways in which this space required new modes of moving through and behaving in the city. Underground stations were public and uniquely modern spaces where people could perform their identities as modern citizens. However, people had to be taught how to perform these identities, and not everyone followed these spoken and unspoken rules. Tube planners used a variety of aesthetics – posters, station design, and advertisements – to order and regulate the spaces of the Underground and create the kinds of environments that would cultivate liberal citizens who were inspired to behave responsibly. However, passengers developed their own forms of self-regulating behaviors in the Underground that sometimes clashed with the intentions of Underground officials.

While urban planners had envisioned ideal ways of moving through Underground space, the daily view of Underground space could sometimes look quite different from this idealized view. Lynda Nead argues that “the detours and deviations of individual journeys represent a form of resistance to the disciplinary power symbolized in the aerial, panoptic view.”²⁵⁵ To investigate the ways ordinary passengers resisted and adapted disciplinary efforts in their usage of the Underground, I will borrow Michel de Certeau’s notion of space as “practiced place.” De Certeau argued that architects, painters, map-makers, and city planners created totalizing views of spaces in maps and plans. However, in reality, city dwellers lived “down below” and gave space meaning through their

²⁵⁴ Lisa Keller, *Triumph of Order: Democracy and Public Space in New York and London* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), xv.

²⁵⁵ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 75.

myriad interactions in and uses of spaces they encountered.²⁵⁶ De Certeau defined lived space as the everyday practices, the “tricky and stubborn procedures that elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised.”²⁵⁷ For de Certeau, an act as simple as walking through a space is a “spatial acting out of the place” that explains and demonstrates how a space should be used and understood.²⁵⁸ These everyday experiences might escape the totalizing view of the map, but they are just as critical in creating how people understand and make meaning of that location. Therefore, while opening ceremonies might have established ideal models for moving through and understanding the Underground, actual everyday experiences in the Tube created new understandings of the space and new challenges for ordering public space.

I. Modernity and Vision

The spaces of the Underground were too crowded and fast-paced to police in traditional ways. Instead, a system emerged in which people largely governed themselves in these spaces, and authorities guided their behaviors in (typically) unobtrusive ways. The ability to see and be seen was a crucial component of this process. As Chris Otter explains in *The Victorian Eye*, Victorian contemporaries primarily depicted their experiences of modernity in terms of what they could or could not see. Of course, vision has always been an important tool through which we depict experiences, but Otter argues that the Victorian period coincided with an increase in illuminated spaces through

²⁵⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, tran. Steven Randall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 93.

²⁵⁷ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 96.

²⁵⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 98.

technologies like gaslight and electricity, as well as more visual information to process, such as advertisements and directional signs. Therefore, vision assumed a new importance in its capacity to change social relations. Otter adds that vision also had a crucial liberal function because “the liberal subject was supposed to be able to see through society and be aware of himself as an object available for inspection by others.”²⁵⁹

With the expansion of light technologies, governments and the technicians responsible for providing illumination were able to increase their ability to survey populations. Now, the state could illuminate spaces that had previously been harder to penetrate with candlelight. Artificial lighting also enabled places to remain open into the evening and therefore increased the times of day that certain spaces could be surveyed. These changes in illumination and visibility created new challenges in how people understood themselves and interacted with others. Otter maintains that historians typically represent the changes in identity and social relationships brought about by an increase in visibility through the dual notions of the panopticon and the flâneur.

The panopticon - Jeremy Bentham’s idea for a circular prison with cells radiating out from a central guard tower - represented a way to control people more efficiently by depriving prisoners of the ability to tell whether they were being watched. Without any proof of privacy, prisoners internalized a sense that they were being permanently watched by an authority they could not see. In theory, prisoners would grow so accustomed to the idea of being watched that the guard need not be present at all and the state would have succeeded in infiltrating the minds of prisoners by forcing them to watch themselves.

²⁵⁹ Chris Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2008), 46-49.

Foucault argued that modern surveillance technology borrows heavily from this philosophical impulse to make people discipline themselves by increasing the opportunities people had to see and be seen.²⁶⁰

Like the guard in the watchtower, the flâneur occupied a detached and privileged position in relation to the rest of society. The flâneur was a privileged, male “looker” who emerged in writings about Paris and London at the turn of the century.²⁶¹ The flâneur used his privileged position to blend into the crowd and observe his fellow urbanites unawares.²⁶² As he remained indifferent to and above the scene around him, the flâneur focused solely on observing and recording his observations about daily life in the city. While modern urban identities were unstable and constantly fluctuating, the flâneur provided an ultimately unrealistic but nonetheless stabilizing notion that certain people could make meaning of the chaotic modern city. Although scholars have criticized the utility of the concept of the flâneur, this idea suggests the significant ways that “the social relations of looking” were transformed in this period.²⁶³

However, Otter counters that the tropes of the panopticon and the flâneur are over-used to the point of being largely unhelpful in explaining relations between power and vision in this period. Instead, he argues that the history of light/vision in this era “is

²⁶⁰ Tom Crook, “Secrecy and Liberal Modernity,” in *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain*, ed. Simon Gunn and James Vernon (Berkeley, California: The Global, Area, and International Archive, University of California Press, 2011), 75. Crook argues that the panopticon is deeply flawed as a model of a totalizing gaze because the notion of secrecy (in this case, in the form of the unknown guard) is built into the very structure of this mechanism built on complete transparency.

²⁶¹ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 67-68.

²⁶² Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

²⁶³ Dana Arnold, *Re-Presenting the Metropolis: Architecture, Urban Experience, and Social Life in London, 1800-1840* (England: Ashgate, 2000), 4.

best analyzed as part of the history of freedom.”²⁶⁴ Otter adds that urban spaces like the streets or the Underground stations could be considered “oligoptic” instead of panoptic because they lacked one single vantage point (like the panopticon’s central tower), and therefore everyone *could* watch everyone and *was* watched by everyone. Oligoptic space also allowed for the possibility of privacy, because people had the ability to withdraw from the public spaces of the streets into private spaces (unlike the panopticon). The sense that one was always seeing and being seen put a primacy on the importance of performing visual cues and behaviors that suggested one’s respectability. As Patrick Joyce explains, “reputation only meant something if it was possessed and enjoyed in public,” so Londoners found a new importance in performing liberalism.²⁶⁵ The influence of being watched and watching created a “calculated administration of shame” in which urbanites moved through spaces in particular ways and employed certain types of comportment in order to fit into society.²⁶⁶

The expansion of illumination accompanied the other urban improvements detailed in the last chapter, such as the widening of streets, the construction of the Main Drainage, and the invention of the London Underground. Taken together, all of these improvements created a freer, more mobile urban environment that also changed how people perceived and interacted with each other. The Victorian metropolis became a site of pleasure and danger as “men and women could assume identities and explore new possibilities” in these increasingly open public spaces. English novelist Ford Madox Ford summed up the social experience of modernity when he quipped, “We know no one very

²⁶⁴ Otter, *The Victorian Eye*, 1.

²⁶⁵ Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London and New York: Verso, 2003), 120.

²⁶⁶ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 148.

well, but we come into contact with an infinite number of people; we stay nowhere very long, but we see many, many places.”²⁶⁷ In order to make sense of this cosmopolitan society, people needed to be just as educated in reading the social cues of those they encountered as they were of the ones they gave off (in the form of dress or comportment). Therefore, the Victorian period uniquely witnessed attempts to “create public spaces where society was free to observe itself.”²⁶⁸

While they were theoretically open to all, London’s mid-Victorian streets were actually “contested terrain” with distinct cultures and complicated social hierarchies.²⁶⁹ For instance, a respectably dressed woman could shop on Regent’s Street in relative safety during the day, but the same woman passing through Regent Street at night could experience harassment or the loss of respectability.²⁷⁰ Class associations also marked aboveground transport options. The hansom cab, a staple of Victorian transportation, was developed in the 1840s and was typically the preferred form of transport for wealthier Londoners. Omnibuses, which were introduced to London from Paris in 1829, were cheaper than stagecoaches but still too expensive for many working-class Londoners.²⁷¹ These forms of transport could also be gendered in certain ways; until the 1890s, young women who traveled alone in a hansom cab or on the top of an omnibus were considered “fast.”²⁷² Most poor Londoners were forced to walk the streets, and those walking also

²⁶⁷ Ford Madox Ford, *The Critical Attitude* (1911), quoted in Andrew Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 80.

²⁶⁸ Otter, *The Victorian Eye*, 77, 96.

²⁶⁹ James Winter, *London’s Teeming Streets, 1830-1914* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 179.

²⁷⁰ Winter, *London’s Teeming Streets*, 11.

²⁷¹ Gavin Weightman and Steve Humphries, *The Making of Modern London: 1815-1914* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1983), 103-110.

²⁷² Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 156.

faced obstacles and inconveniences in the form of urban waste (blood, urine, and excrement) along the borders of the street.²⁷³

In contrast, the Underground served as a new type of space that could allow for potential intermingling of people from different backgrounds. Initially, the Underground had been designed as a “social leveler” that accepted and encouraged male and female passengers from all classes of British society to use the service.²⁷⁴ When City Solicitor Charles Pearson first advocated for an underground subway in the 1840s, he had hoped the trains would serve as a remunerative force for working-class Londoners by providing cheap and safe transportation between improved housing on the outskirts of the metropolis and work in the city. Seventy percent of the tickets sold in the Metropolitan Railway’s first week of business were third-class, but the 3 pence price for a single fare was still too expensive for most manual laborers.²⁷⁵ After the introduction of workmen’s trains in 1883, nearly 2,000 workers were using the Metropolitan Railway each day. However, many Underground officials feared that working-class passengers would drive away the wealthier patrons from using the service and consequently sought to replicate social hierarchies belowground that lessened the possibility for cross-class interaction.

Though transport “promised to transform social, economic, and environmental conditions in London for the better, it also possessed an alarming capacity to eliminate the social structures that impeded its flow, no matter how vital these might be to the

²⁷³ Winter, *London’s Teeming Streets*, 101-103.

²⁷⁴ Haewon Hwang, *London’s Underground Spaces: Representing the Victorian City, 1840-1915* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 83.

²⁷⁵ Simon Abernethy, “Class and Commuting on the Underground, 1863-1939” (paper presented at the Going Underground: Travel Beneath the Metropolis, 1863-2013 Conference at the Institute of Historical Research, London, England, January 18, 2013).

establishment.”²⁷⁶ In this way, the Underground became implicated in larger fears of urban contamination as the clear thresholds between classes, genders, and spaces began to blur. As Haewon Hwang explains in her literary study of underground spaces in Victorian London, “by “allowing for more freedoms of movement in the city, the Underground also challenged the notion of social distance in the city, as carriages and platforms became a heterogeneous space of class interactions.”²⁷⁷

Consequently, the Metropolitan Railway officials faced a singularly modern challenge: how was the Underground going to be fast, efficient, and available to all while also remaining safe and respectable enough to attract every class of passenger? In attempting to solve this problem, Underground officials began to rely heavily on different forms of advertising aesthetics to guide and order passengers’ behaviors in ways that maintained the freedom of the Underground but also kept these spaces safe, efficient, and respectable.

The sentiment reflected in a 1921 Underground poster that “We are equals in tube and bus, but not equally popular,” hinted at the anxieties about social openness that greatly informed how people regulated their conduct underground.²⁷⁸ The Underground negotiated an uneasy balance of catering to middle-and upper-class passengers whilst simultaneously celebrating its role as a democratizing force in the city. From the mid-Victorian period through World War II, a number of social and political factors contributed to the sense that Britain was becoming, for the first time, a true democracy.

²⁷⁶ David Ashford, *London Underground: A Cultural Geography* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 18.

²⁷⁷ Hwang, *London’s Underground Spaces*, 84.

²⁷⁸ William Kerridge Haselden, *We are equals in tube and bus, but not equally popular*, poster 1983/4/884, 1920, Underground Electric Railways Company, London Transport Museum Online, <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

Emerging social and technological innovations like daily papers, the cinema, shopping centers, and mass transit, as well as political developments such as the Second and Third Reform Acts in 1867 and 1884 and the expansion of the franchise in 1918 and 1928, created what could finally be termed a “democratic” state with a mass, commercial culture.²⁷⁹

In one sense, this growing democracy absorbed liberal ideals of freedom and independence. Yet this new democracy also threatened these values by revealing the negative consequences of having fewer restraints and regulations ordering social and political life. Many late-nineteenth-century liberals began to question whether this unregulated mass was actually improving society.²⁸⁰ The culture created for and embraced by this democratic ethos seemed responsible for many of the more negative aspects of modernity - urbanization, secularization, class-based politics, and a commercialized, lowbrow popular press - that seemed to erode established precepts of English national character.²⁸¹ In response, a number of critics warned that the new technologies and cultural practices of the modern democratic state were cultivating baser instincts and threatening British identity.²⁸² These detractors argued that this modern society lost the sense of “rootedness, spatial order, [and] belonging” that had previously controlled and ordered English society.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ D. L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 99 and Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 59.

²⁸⁰ LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 139.

²⁸¹ Mandler, *The English National Character*, 106.

²⁸² LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 3.

²⁸³ Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 26.

The forms of entertainment, technology and media that profited from this mass culture were those that understood the importance of speed, efficiency, and simplicity. The modern man walked, talked, ate and traveled quickly and needed media and technology that reflected this pace. This modern man also embraced newspapers like the *Daily Mail*, which gave increasing attention to visual advertisements and used concise, simple prose to capture the reader's attention and convey messages quickly.²⁸⁴ While some critics argued that these new techniques degraded English culture and proved that "aesthetic and cultural values could not be democratized," other professionals, like those of the Underground, argued that the tastes of the masses could actually be elevated through these methods.

II. Early Attempts at Ordering the Underground

In order to elevate the masses, Underground officials needed to instill the Underground with a sense of morality and order, and this started with one's first steps into a station. As historian David Pike argues, thresholds between the underground and aboveground worlds were extremely important for linking these two worlds and making sense of each.²⁸⁵ Stations, therefore, functioned as these threshold spaces. London had witnessed something of a revolution in architecture during the mid-Victorian period, and large, open spaces like city halls were believed to exalt both the visitor and the building itself.²⁸⁶ In keeping with this notion, aboveground railway stations often resembled other

²⁸⁴ LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 27.

²⁸⁵ David Pike, *Subterranean Cities: the World Beneath Paris and London, 1800-1945* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 16.

²⁸⁶ Patrick Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, 161.

important civic structures. Many Victorian railway stations were designed in gothic or neo-classical styles.²⁸⁷ The first stations on the Metropolitan line were largely similar to aboveground railway stations and most featured Italianate designs.²⁸⁸ The grandest station was King's Cross because it also formed a junction with the Great Northern and Midland mainline railways. Passengers entering King's Cross would purchase their tickets at booking offices decorated with bronzed lattice girders and descend grand stairways to the railway platforms that were flanked with large, ornamental pillars. A magnificent iron and glass roof stretched above the station. The station was also well supplied with globular lamps (which were also used in the other stations on the line) that would become a hallmark of Underground station design during the period.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ "Euston Station and Railway Works," in *Survey of London: Volume 21, the Parish of St Pancras Part 3: Tottenham Court Road and Neighbourhood*, ed. J R Howard Roberts and Walter H Godfrey (London: London County Council, 1949), 107-114. *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol21/pt3/pp107-114>.

²⁸⁸ Andrew Martin, *Underground, Overground: A Passenger's History of the Tube* (London: Profile Books, 2012) 38.

²⁸⁹ "The Underground Railway and its Stations," *Times* (London, England), Monday, November 03, 1862, pg. 5



Figure 3.1. King's Cross Station Interior

Drawings of these well-lit and spacious Underground stations, which ran in several widely-read papers like the *Illustrated London News*, suggested to readers that the Underground was a rational, modern space and helped to counter earlier associations of subterranean space with mystery or danger. Glass ceilings and gas lighting helped to construct the Underground as “a visible and visually comprehensible space” that enabled free and open circulation for all of London society.²⁹¹

In general, however, these early stations struggled to establish themselves as unique architectural markers in the city. Early stations lacked the sort of distinctive design elements that would later characterize Underground stations and make them easier

²⁹⁰ “The Metropolitan Underground Railway,” *Illustrated London News* (London, England), Saturday, December 27, 1862; pg. 692.

²⁹¹ Hwang, *London's Underground Spaces*, 83.

for passengers in a hurry to find. The issues with station design were perfectly reflected in a passenger's comments on Metropolitan stations in 1863:

They are queer little buildings...for the most part they resemble isolated police stations, or half an establishment for baths and wash-houses gone astray. There is something, too, of the telegraph office about them, and the casual passerby would be divided in his opinion as to whether or not the little crowd of humanity which pours in and out of their portals had gone thither to obtain a summons to [Timbuktu] or wash itself.²⁹²

This passenger also found the station interior somewhat gloomy. He felt that descending into the depths of the earth, even in a well-lit station, created an awareness of a "certain chill, which creeps upon me like the change one experiences in entering a cathedral on a summer's day."²⁹³

The earliest carriages on the Metropolitan Railway were outfitted with gas lights that were "calculated to dispel any unpleasant feelings which passengers, especially ladies, might entertain against riding for so long a distance through a tunnel." In reality, however, contemporaries found that the draft passing through the lamps once the train was fully in motion caused the lamps to flicker so intensely that it was often quite difficult to see well enough to read.²⁹⁴

Representing the Underground as an airy, ordered space in advertisements and press coverage also helped to assuage fears about the potential risks of traveling in a steam-powered locomotive underground. Another passenger, who recorded his first descent into the Underground in the *Morning Post*, argued that, with "the very first step downwards, he encounters an atmosphere of hot sulphurous vapor, which parches his

²⁹² C.L.E., *London Society* vol. 3, (London), January-June, 1863; pg. 407.

²⁹³ C.L.E., *London Society*, 409.

²⁹⁴ "Opening of the Metropolitan Railway to the Public," *Morning Post* (London, England), Monday, January 12, 1863, pg. 2.

tongue and lips, and impedes his breathing.”²⁹⁵ One London chemist concocted a “Metropolitan Mixture” he used to treat patients complaining of health problems associated with the air quality of the Underground.²⁹⁶ Passengers became even more distrustful of the Underground’s atmosphere after a 29-year-old woman named Elizabeth Stainsby died mysteriously from what appeared to be asphyxiation in the Underground in 1867. After Stainsby collapsed unexpectedly and died in the Underground, the Middlesex coroner, Dr. Lankester, oversaw a coroner’s inquest to determine whether the Metropolitan Railway was responsible for silently killing passengers with toxic air. The press followed the events of the inquest closely, reflecting larger societal concerns about the risks of traveling underground. During the inquest, two groups of scientists issued reports about the quality of the air in the tunnels and trains and both were unable to prove that the tunnels possessed an atmosphere that could harm passengers.²⁹⁷ Their findings, along with evidence that the victim had suffered from a previous heart condition and complained of faintness before entering the Underground, was enough to convince the coroner’s jury to reach a verdict of death from natural causes.²⁹⁸ Ultimately, this particular issue revealed more about contemporary anxieties over the freedom, mobility, and technology of the modern city than any real danger present in the Tube.

While complaints of the air quality in the Underground remained common until electric trains replaced older steam versions in the early twentieth century, these were also countered with numerous claims of the pleasure and comfort available by traveling

²⁹⁵ “Underground Perils,” *Morning Post* (London), Saturday, August 31, 1867, pg. 3.

²⁹⁶ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 46.

²⁹⁷ “The Atmosphere of the Underground Railway.” *Glasgow Herald* (Glasgow, Scotland), Monday, 2 September 1867.

²⁹⁸ “The Atmosphere of the Metropolitan Railway.” *Daily News* (London), Thursday, 31 October 1867.

underground. The Metropolitan Railway worked hard throughout the nineteenth century to convince passengers that the atmosphere of the trains could actually be beneficial to health. Company representatives argued that the steam “provided a sort of health resort for people who suffered from asthma, for which the sulphurous and other fumes were supposed to be beneficial.”²⁹⁹

While the station’s atmosphere might have seemed unappealing to some, one wealthy passenger found comfort in the “steady light” and cushioned seat of a first-class carriage that he dubbed “the most comfortable railway carriage in England.”³⁰⁰ The first- and second-class carriages were described as exceedingly comfortable, with leather seats and spacious compartments.³⁰¹ Although the Underground did have a reputation as “a people’s line” that encouraged the open circulation of all Londoners, Underground officials attempted to lessen the more threatening aspects of possible cross-class interactions by replicating the social divisions aboveground into the spaces of the Underground.³⁰² Class differences were clearly reflected in the quality of the different carriages. *Appleton’s Journey of Literature, Science, and Art* noted that third-class carriages had “well-built, airy cars, which if not cushioned and carpeted like the first-class cars, have at least clean wooden seats, wide windows, and plenty of room.”³⁰³

Aside from having first-, second-, and third-class carriages, Metropolitan officials also outfitted the platforms with signs that ordered passengers to “wait here for

²⁹⁹ E. L. Ahrons, quoted in O.S. Nock, *Underground Railways of the World*, A. & C. Black, 1973, p. 113, quoted in Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, p. 45.

³⁰⁰ C.L.E., *London Society*, 409.

³⁰¹ “Opening of the Metropolitan Railway to the Public,” pg. 2.

³⁰² “The London Underground Railway,” *Appleton’s Journey of Literature, Science, and Art*. v. 4 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, July 2-December 31, 1870), 140 and Andrew Thacker, *Moving through Modernity*, 86.

³⁰³ “The London Underground Railway,” *Appleton’s Journey of Literature, Science, and Art*, 141.

first/second/third class” carriages in order to lessen the possibility for cross-class interaction on the platforms.³⁰⁴ However, Underground officials struggled to maintain these sharp divisions as working-class passengers heavily outnumbered other patrons (returns in the early years of the Underground suggest that 70% of passengers traveled by third-class, 20% by second, and 10% by first).³⁰⁵

Underground officials placed a premium on the efficiency of their transport system, and while poorer passengers were often hurried out and accused of loitering, wealthier patrons had more exclusive access to leisure spaces within stations. Felix Spiers and Christopher Pond, who had previously opened restaurants and bars (named Spiers & Pond) in aboveground stations, opened a new restaurant and bar at the Mansion House Station of the Metropolitan line in 1872.³⁰⁶ The restaurant catered to the “man of business” by offering him a clean, tasty, and friendly place to eat a meal in the city. In addition to excellent food, the restaurant boasted comfortable lavatories, dining rooms for private parties – as well as one “for the exclusive use of ladies” – and an excellent view of London from upper-level smoking rooms.³⁰⁷ While there had been refreshment stands at stations before this, the quality and comfort of these restaurants was such that contemporaries argued the restaurants had “completely revolutionized our eating and drinking away from home.”³⁰⁸ Spiers & Pond was also celebrated for freeing passengers

³⁰⁴ Martin, *Underground, Overground*, 38.

³⁰⁵ David Bownes Oliver Green, and Sam Mullins. *Underground: How the Tube Shaped London* (London: Allen Lane, the Penguin Group, 2012), 33

³⁰⁶ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 21.

³⁰⁷ “Messrs. Spiers and Pond’s New Restaurant,” *The Era* (London, England), Sunday, May 12, 1872.

³⁰⁸ “Messrs. Spiers and Pond.” *The Era* (London, England), Sunday, May 25, 1873. In addition to the comforts of a hot meal served by beautiful women, these Underground restaurants also attracted visitors interested in taking advantage of after hours drinking. Indeed, after World War I restrictions limited pub hours above-ground, many of the Underground buffets remained open for

in the stations from the hurried demands of station guards. An article in *The Era* on the opening of the restaurant celebrated the fact that these restaurants made men “independent of the impatient guards, who condense ‘ten minutes for refreshment’ into two.” These leisure spaces provided resistance for passengers unwilling to be hurried through stations, though this freedom was largely limited to upper-class (and often male) passengers.³⁰⁹

Class-based differences in travel times also helped Underground officials offer some degree of social segregation. Working men and women tended to take the workmen’s trains earliest in the morning (around or before 6:30AM). Clerical workers often purchased third-class tickets and traveled between 8:30 and 9AM. Businessmen and wealthier city workers generally took trains into London shortly afterwards. Middle-class women tended to travel in the off-peak hours, and the segregation of travel times more or less continued in similar fashion for the afternoon/evening return. However, by the end of the 1860s, working-class men began to generally start work a little later (around 7 or 7:30 AM), potentially putting them in trains with clerical workers. In addition, working-class women often traveled into the city for domestic service jobs that started around 9AM. These women and their children often crowded the station platforms until they could get to work, and sometimes special waiting rooms were set up to handle the overflow. Consequently, truly segregating these spaces by class remained an elusive goal.

As overcrowding in the Underground worsened throughout the turn of the century, lower-class passengers increasingly ignored class rules and squeezed into

drinking. For more on drinking in the Underground, see: Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 88.

³⁰⁹ “Spiers & Pond at Work,” *North Wales Chronicle* (Bangor, Wales). Saturday June 15, 1872.

available spots in any carriage they could find.³¹⁰ This possibility for lower-class passengers to mingle with wealthier passengers contributed to a sense of anxiety about Underground travel, as working-class passengers were often stereotyped as inferior and filthy. A female editorialist in *The Queen* complained that overcrowding had forced “ladies living in the country to travel with men in soiled garments, covered with clay or brick or rubbish, or reeking with odors of stale fish.”³¹¹ In general, passengers found themselves largely helpless to do anything about this cross-class mingling. A humorous sketch from *Punch* in 1886 (Figure 3.2) reflected the futility in trying to maintain sharp class divisions within the Underground. In the drawing, a first-class carriage between South Kensington and Addison Road is taken over by lower-class passengers, who cloud the carriage with pipe smoke, hang from the luggage racks, and even sit in wealthier passengers’ laps.

³¹⁰Abernethy, “Class and Commuting on the Underground, 1863-1939.” By 1883, the Metropolitan line ran 12 workmen’s trains and the District ran 5. In 1882, the Metropolitan line sold 1,400,000 workmen’s tickets and 7,300,000 tickets in 1889.

³¹¹Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London’s West End* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 124.

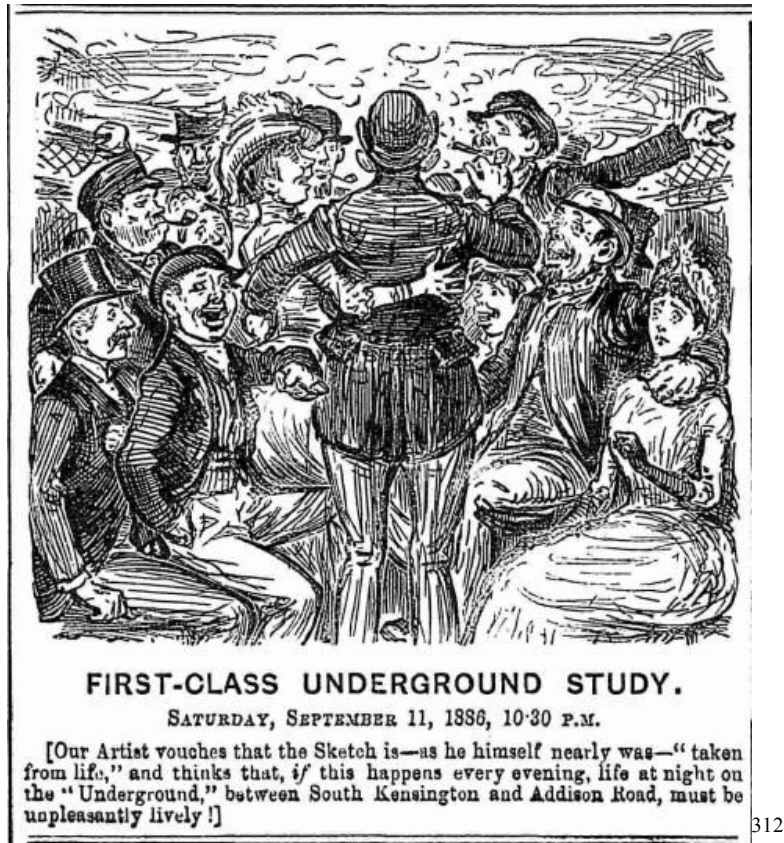


Figure 3.2. “First-Class Underground Study”

However, not all depictions of working-class passengers portrayed the poor so negatively. Contemporary enthusiasts of Tube travel viewed the Underground as a tool through which they could morally and economically improve even the lowest segments of society.³¹³ In his 1878 work “Underground London: Its Railways, Subways, and Sewers,” Edward Walford personally investigated claims that the Underground benefitted society by hopping into a third-class carriage and interviewing its inhabitants about their perceptions of the Underground. Walford concluded that the majority of these passengers

³¹² “First-Class Underground Study,” *Punch* (London, England), Saturday, September 25, 1886, pg. 148.

³¹³ Edward Walford, “Underground London: Its Railways, Subways, and Sewers,” Vol 5 of *In Old and New London* (London, Paris and New York: Cassell & Company, Ltd, 1878).

were industrious, respectful, and appreciative for this opportunity to traverse the capital in a safe, cheap, and efficient manner.³¹⁴

In addition to saving money and time on transportation, these men were also able to move into cheaper lodgings outside of town and thus benefitted from additional savings on rent. Indeed, a plasterer in the carriage insisted that “it was impossible to reckon up how much workmen gained by what is called the Workmen's Trains, especially if you took into account the saving in shoe-leather, the gain in health and strength, and the advantage it was for men to go to their work fresh and not fatigued by a long walk at the commencement of the day.” Walford also noted that the workmen were aware of the “moral effects” of the trains, such as the greater independence the men received by being able to rent homes with separate rooms for themselves and their children. Another workman commented on the change in moral outlook these trains provided:

If a man gets home tired after his day's labor, he is inclined to be quarrelsome with his missus and the children, and this leads to all kinds of noises, and ends in his going off to the public for a little bit of quiet; while if he gets a ride home, and has a good rest after he has knocked off for the day, I can tell you he is as pleasant a fellow again over his supper.³¹⁵

Regardless of their social standing, ordinary Londoners had to be taught to use the spaces of the Tube in the way its creators envisioned. As historian Christian Wolmar notes, the first Underground customers were accustomed to aboveground trains, where there was plenty of time to board and alight.³¹⁶ Travelers had to learn that Underground trains came into the station much more frequently than mainline trains, and it was safer and more efficient to wait for a later train than to try to shove oneself into a crowded

³¹⁴ Walford, “Underground London.”

³¹⁵ Walford, “Underground London.”

³¹⁶ Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway: How the London Underground was Built and how it Changed the City Forever* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), 189.

car.³¹⁷ Initially, Underground officials provided an abundance of staff to combat confusion and hurry passengers into and out of cars. Guards were posted at the front of the train between the first and second cars and gatemen stood on the platforms between each car. Train staff often shouted commands to passengers and would even occasionally push or shove customers into or out of cars to maintain the rigid timetable of Underground trains.

Gatemen were also expected to shout out station names when trains approached a stop in order to warn passengers when to alight in case they were unable to see the station signs. However, the noise of the trains and the accents of these men often made it difficult to ascertain what they shouted.³¹⁸ *Punch* added of the Metropolitan Railway that the porters “shout ‘oosh! Oosh!’ for Shepard’s Bush and ‘Nil! Nil!’ for Notting Hill, never articulating the name of any station. As you can seldom hear, so can you hardly ever see... the name of the station at which your train has stopped.”³¹⁹ One passenger wrote to *The Times* to complain that train attendants spoke “in so low a voice that it is impossible to hear the name” of upcoming stops and suggested that attendants hold up large signs with station names posted on them instead.³²⁰ In 1895, officials responded to these concerns by installing new machine-operated station indicators on Metropolitan Railway trains. These indicators were fitted to the ceiling of the compartment and contained cards with the names of the station in a glass case that would change to indicate

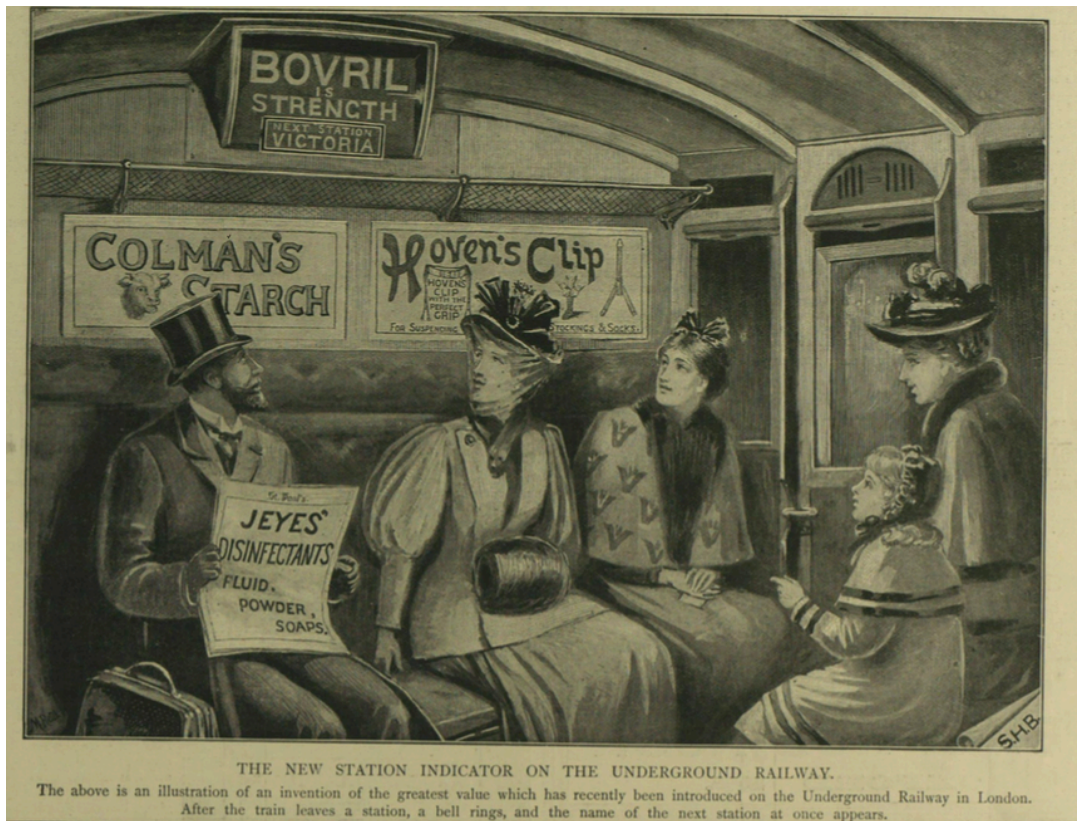
³¹⁷ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 189.

³¹⁸ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 190.

³¹⁹ “The Metropolitan Railway Monitor,” *Punch* vol. 55 (October 2, 1868), quoted in David Ashford, *London Underground*, 23.

³²⁰ E.S.R., “The Tube Railways,” *Times*, (London, England), Wednesday, February 03, 1909, pg. 14.

the next station when a lever beneath the carriage was activated by a notice in the next station.³²¹



322

Figure 3.3. “Station Indicators on the Underground.”

The above illustration (Figure 3.3.) demonstrates that these new station indicators also quickly became a popular location for advertisements. Because the spatial arrangement of carriages made it nearly impossible for passengers to look at anything but each other, advertisers had the perfect captive audiences. As Andrew Thacker explains, “at least now one could gaze at images without incurring the potential social

³²¹ “Station Indicators on the Underground,” *Times* (London, England), Thursday, August 15, 1895, pg. 4.

³²² “The New Station Indicator on the Underground Railway,” *Illustrated London News* (London, England), Saturday, April 25, 1896, pg. 539.

embarrassment of exchanged glances with other passengers.”³²³ Indeed, advertisements became so popular in the Tube that they could actually cause passengers to experience sensory overload. The American columnist, Elizabeth Robins Pennell, who traveled widely throughout Europe and lived in London with her husband in the 1880s, was a regular traveler on the Underground and she expressed a great fondness for the advertisements that crowded station walls and train-cars.³²⁴ However, she admitted feeling overwhelmed on her first Underground ride when she looked for a station sign and instead found her eyes bombarded with “flamboyant notices of soap and mustard, with the cast of the newest play, and the sensation of the latest special.”³²⁵ She concluded that among the brilliantly colored advertisements plastered on the walls of platforms and carriages, “the station’s name sinks modestly into the background until you learn that it repeats itself more conspicuously on lamps and seats.”³²⁶ As Pennell demonstrated, learning to see and follow certain cues was key to travelling the Underground successfully. Although the Underground companies had provided guards and signs denoting stations, these subtle clues were not enough to teach people how to use this new technology efficiently.

The fact that these trains and stations were operated by a number of competing railway companies only increased confusion and undermined any sense of order. Passengers who sought assistance finding the best train routes from railway employees were often given misguided information to keep them on one company’s line, rather than

³²³ Thacker, *Moving through Modernity*, 91.

³²⁴ Elizabeth Robins Pennell, “London’s Underground Railways,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 92, Issue 548, January 1896, 278-288, *19th Century Masterfile*. Cornell Digital Library. <http://digital.library.cornell.edu>. p. 278

³²⁵ Pennell, “London’s Underground Railways,” 278.

³²⁶ Pennell, “London’s Underground Railways,” 286.

direct them to a quicker route on another railway. In addition, different companies had distinct advertising schemes, policies, and prices that made journeys across multiple lines potentially problematic. A Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire upon the Means of Locomotion and Transport in London that was presented to Parliament in 1905 complained that “each [Underground] line has been laid out, in the individual interests of the competing companies without much regard to the interests and needs of the railway system of London taken as a whole.” While Parliament had initially recommended that underground railway communication should be under one management, the companies had failed to comply.³²⁷ Pennell perhaps best summarized the ordinary passenger’s experience of the Underground as one entity when she argued that “I doubt if more than one Londoner in a thousand, if indeed that many, could tell you where the Metropolitan Railway begins and the Metropolitan District railway ends.” She concluded that “The average traveler has no reason to ask in whose train he travels so long as it takes him where he wants to go.”³²⁸

As Londoners incorporated the Tube into their daily lives, the behaviors they cultivated to weaken the potential for anxiety-ridden rides solidified into unspoken rules that help to govern subterranean interactions. These behaviors, though sometimes in conflict with the wishes of Underground authorities, were part of the same liberal ethos that motivated the railway professionals to construct the Underground in the first place. As Patrick Joyce explains, liberalism “depended...upon cultivating persons who could,

³²⁷ Volume I. Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon the Means of Locomotion and Transport in London. Presented to both houses of Parliament by command of His Majesty. (London: Wyman and Sons, 1905), 63.

³²⁸ Pennell, “London’s Underground Railways,” 282.

and can, practice freedom by constantly questioning its limits.”³²⁹ In some cases, questioning the limits of this freedom helped to influence how the Underground authorities viewed these spaces as well. Passengers displayed their knowledge of the Underground as a badge of honor in becoming modern.³³⁰

Perhaps the most novel aspect of Underground travel passengers had to learn to adjust to was the way in which the Tube lacked any real sense of outside landscape to orient passengers. The absence of outside distractions profoundly altered passenger behaviors within the Tube and increased travelers’ senses of themselves as modern individuals. In his monograph, *The Railway Journey*, German scholar Wolfgang Schivelbusch explores the subjective changes that passengers experienced when they first began making aboveground railway journeys. Though he never talks about Underground railway travel specifically, Schivelbusch is useful in explaining how the railroad dramatically altered contemporaries’ perceptions of travel.³³¹ Railways moved much faster than any previous forms of transport (the average railroad moved twenty to thirty miles per hour, which was roughly three times faster than a typical stagecoach).³³² Consequently, passengers initially experienced sensory disorientation as they lost the ability to smell and hear the places they traveled through, and this was even more acutely felt in the Underground. Railway passengers’ sense of sight was also profoundly altered

³²⁹ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 4.

³³⁰ David Bownes, Oliver Green, and Sam Mullins. *Underground: How the Tube Shaped London*. London: Allen Lane, the Penguin Group, 2012, 48.

³³¹ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Space and Time in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 55.

³³² Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 36.

by the railway's speed, which made it nearly impossible to look ahead out the window or make clear sense of objects in the passing landscape.³³³

Many railway travelers experienced stress and eye fatigue as they sought in vain to adapt old forms of observing the landscape to this new mode of travel. Therefore, railway travel ushered in a new practice during travel: reading. Schivelbusch argues that the railway freed the passenger from looking at the landscape and thus enabled a passenger to “move into an imaginary surrogate landscape, that of his book.”³³⁴ Indeed, reading became an established pastime on railways from the moment they were invented, and booksellers set up shop throughout stations to accommodate passengers' needs. As Schivelbusch explains, “travelers in the train compartment did not know what to do with each other, and reading became a surrogate for the communication that no longer took place.”³³⁵ Railway handbooks also advised passengers to avoid striking up conversations with strangers and suggested bringing reading material instead. One traveler's handbook went so far as to suggest that the quiet train cars provided an “exhaustless fund of recreation” for those who enjoyed reading.³³⁶

Whether they read or not, passengers of all classes on the Underground experienced the loss of outside visual distractions even more acutely than passengers on mainline trains had. The complete lack of outside distractions led to behaviors like

³³³ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 57.

³³⁴ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 64. Reading on aboveground trains was largely a middle- and upper-class activity, however, because first and second-class carriages were much larger (discouraging the kind of communication that might come from being stuck close to another passenger) and the passengers more able to afford reading material. In contrast, working-class passengers were crowded into much less spacious carriages and were more likely to talk to each other instead.

³³⁵ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 67

³³⁶ Jack Simmons, ed., *The Railway Traveler's Book of Hints, Suggestions, and Advice*, 1862 (Reprint, Bath: Adams and Dart, 1971), 65.

reading and a particular vision of interiority and identity among travelers. In other words, subway travel created “a new form of selfhood no longer dependent on an outside form of reference.”³³⁷ Marko Jobst argues that this interiority only drew more attention to the instability of binaries between public and private, upper- and lower-class, men and women, etc. With nothing to look at outside, passengers became that much more aware of themselves and those around them in the carriage.

Silence, or at least minding one’s own business, was one such mannerism intended to avoid unpleasant interactions in the Tube and maintain respectability. While passengers might have quiet simply to avoid conversations with strangers, silence was also in many ways a necessity. As one writer to the *Times* explained, early trains were so loud that the sounds “imposed a certain measure of silence upon its passengers, so that it is small exaggeration to rank the Underground train with libraries in West End clubs and the British Museum Reading Room as one of the few places where a newspaper may be read in comparative peace.”³³⁸ Reading therefore provided a mental escape from the unpleasant realities of traveling so closely with strangers; one passenger remarked that a man could read the paper on the train “and forget for the time being where he is.”³³⁹ David Ashford argues that behaviors like reading or looking down created a self-induced isolation that helped to rationalize modern space and was so successful that it is still practiced in the Tube today.³⁴⁰ Indeed, Tony Blair demonstrated his ignorance of these unspoken rules in a 1999 public relations gaffe when he attempted to strike up a

³³⁷ Marko Jobst, “Movement, Vision, Underground” (paper presented at the Going Underground: Travel Beneath the Metropolis, 1863-2013 Conference at the Institute of Historical Research, London, England, January 18, 2013).

³³⁸ “Silence in the Tube,” *Times* (London, England), February 08, 1938, 15.

³³⁹ F. Henry Howson, *London’s Underground* (London: Ian Allan Ltd. 1951), 3.

³⁴⁰ Ashford, *London Underground*, 15.

conversation with a British woman in a Jubilee line carriage on his way to work. The stunt, intending to demonstrate Blair's common-man qualities, backfired when the woman completely ignored him and listened to her Walkman instead.³⁴¹

III. The Limits of Order Underground

Handbooks about London also included street etiquette tips designed to help minimize contingencies and create a sense of order in these public spaces. These tips cautioned readers about how to avoid unpleasant interactions, but they also stressed the importance of closely scrutinizing the behaviors of others in order to avoid more serious issues than the possibility of an awkward conversation in a train carriage. For instance, George Sims' 1901 guidebook, *Living London*, warned readers about the dangers of the London railway terminus as a favorite haunt of thieves because of its "ceaseless bustle."³⁴² He noted in particular that "respectably attired" female pickpockets haunted the Metropolitan Railway lines. Lynda Nead argues that pickpocketing (a crime committed by both sexes and against both sexes) emerged during this period as a particularly modern and urban danger. The Underground became embedded in larger concerns about modernity and movement in the city, particularly as public transport was

³⁴¹ The woman actually said she knew it was Blair but felt that 9am was a bit too early to be overwhelmed with such news. She remarked that "I'm always the same in the mornings, I put my Walkman on and turn off." Blair eventually invited her to talk with him at Downing Street in an attempt to smooth over the PR faux pas. For more on this, see: John Davison, "How to Get Invited to No. 10: Ignore Blair on Tube," *Independent* (London: England), Tuesday, December 21, 1999.

³⁴² Sims, *Living London*, 15

closely connected to changes in social and gender relations (though the gender dynamics of these incidents will be discussed further in the following chapter).³⁴³

Reports of crime and accidents in the Underground emerged from two fears about these spaces: the inability to trust people based solely on appearances and the tensions between public and private space in the Tube. As Nead notes, the issues of “assumed identities and social deception” emerged in these stories because thefts often highlighted the new possibilities for devious behavior in a society based on appearance rather than personal knowledge.³⁴⁴ Passengers frequently expressed frustration at their inability to accurately judge others’ appearances. One man wrote to the *Times* to warn others about an unaccompanied nine-year-old boy who got into a first-class Underground carriage during the afternoon rush hour. The boy –who was well dressed, well mannered, and seemed familiar with the Underground – solicited the compartment “with a coolness worthy of a practiced hand” for money to give poor orphans. The passenger worried that the child could have been an imposter and warned readers to be vigilant against similar schemes.³⁴⁵

Passengers frequently took to the press to warn others about the dangers of not constantly paying attention to one’s surroundings. One such passenger wrote to the *Times* to explain how a well-dressed young man at the crowded Westminster Bridge station platform had robbed him. He noticed the young man press up against him and he felt a tug on his watch. When he looked down, the watch was gone. He turned and accused the “most respectably-dressed man who was standing next to me of being the thief.” The man dashed off, but dropped the watch. The passenger recommended that “I think it would be

³⁴³ Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 123.

³⁴⁴ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 71-72.

³⁴⁵ Rusticus, “A New Departure in Begging,” *Times* (London), Thursday, Dec. 25, 1890, pg. 2.

well if the notice, ‘Beware of Pickpockets’ were more generally posted up than it is at the London Railway platforms’ and that, in more crowded stations, “a detective police officer would find himself well employed at the hours of most pressing traffic and after dark.”³⁴⁶ In fact, plain-clothed station officials were posted throughout the Underground in greater numbers during this period. By 1900, the very first Metropolitan Police officer began making a regular beat on the passages of the Underground railway.³⁴⁷

In some cases, passengers could not even trust the very authorities they sought to solve these problems. In April of 1898, the Central Criminal Court tried a case in which several men had conspired to steal from patrons of the Metropolitan District Railway. However, this case garnered a great deal of attention in the press because the accused conspirator was living “two lives, diametrically opposed to one another,” in which he was both a detective for the District line and actively conspiring to steal from passengers.³⁴⁸ Officer Ostime was such a successful detective that he had frequently been awarded money for helping to stop thieves.³⁴⁹ Further investigation proved, however, that Ostime had been in constant communication with “professional thieves” who regularly worked the District.³⁵⁰ The detective assisted two men in stealing the purse of a Mrs. Bolton traveling home from Addison Road to Victoria Station.³⁵¹ In addition, Ostime would tell his two companions which stations would be easiest to change trains on without

³⁴⁶ A Clergyman, “Railway Platform Thieves,” *Times* (London, England), Friday January 19, 1877, pg. 7.

³⁴⁷ “An Underground Policeman,” *Leicester Chronicle and the Leicestershire Mercury* (Leicester, England), Saturday, August 25, 1900, pg.2.

³⁴⁸ “The Railway Detective’s Case,” *Morning Post* (London: England), Thursday, 05 May 1898. Pg. 4.

³⁴⁹ Trial of Frank Ostime. *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org), T18980425-334

³⁵⁰ “Detective and Pickpockets,” *Morning Post* (London: England), Friday, 06 May 1898. Pg. 7.

³⁵¹ “The Railway Detective’s Case,” *Morning Post* (London: England), Thursday, 05 May 1898. Pg. 4.

challenge. At the end of their adventure, Ostime would join the men in a compartment to split the profits.³⁵² Highly publicized reports of theft and criminal activity in the Underground warned readers not to place too much trust in appearances and to understand that the Underground was always a “potentially duplicitous space.”³⁵³

These crimes reflected the underground underbelly of Victorian London. While London at the turn of the century was still the capital of the greatest empire in history, it also witnessed a rise in criminal activity. As Drew Gray notes, “there was a sense that the...police were no longer winning the war on crime.”³⁵⁴ The British public became fascinated with reports of criminal activity and magazines like the *Pall Mall Gazette* attempted to appeal to middle- and working-class readers by offering news stories that resembled penny dreadfuls. This sensational reporting often featured serialized accounts of crimes and gruesome depictions of crime scenes.³⁵⁵ This sensationalized reporting reached an increasingly wide and literate audience in London as well; by the 1880s, London had thirteen morning and nine evening papers.³⁵⁶

This public fascination with urban vice is particularly evident in the press coverage of a “terribly mutilated” young woman found dead at the Portland Road station of the Metropolitan Railway in September of 1864, less than a year after the opening of the line.³⁵⁷ The report was filled with gruesome detail about the condition of this mysterious woman: “her right arm was taken from its socket, one of the legs broken in

³⁵² “The Charge Against a Detective,” *Morning Post*, Saturday, 07 May 1898. Pg. 5.

³⁵³ Pike, *Subterranean City*, 40.

³⁵⁴ Drew Gray, *London’s Shadows: The Dark Side of the Victorian City* (London: A&C Black, 2010), 231.

³⁵⁵ Drew Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 115.

³⁵⁶ Drew Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 96.

³⁵⁷ “The Mysterious Death on the Metropolitan Railway,” *Glasgow Herald* (Glasgow, Scotland), Thursday, 15 September 1864.

two places, the pelvis completely divided, and the entrails protruding.” The woman was described as “remarkably good looking,” but poorly dressed in old stockings, a petticoat made out of curtains, and a man’s shirt instead of a chemise.³⁵⁸ The inquest proved that the victim, Emma Jane Gallop, had “unfortunately formed a connection” with an organ pipe maker named Henry or Francis Powell who worked near Euston Road.³⁵⁹ The victim’s husband, Henry Gallop, claimed that he had been drinking with his wife earlier that evening and as they separated afterwards, he saw her with Powell and got on the train at Gower Street station to follow them. He was in the train as it passed through Portland Road station and he saw his wife on the platform, though he denied seeing her fall. When Powell was summoned, he claimed that after she left the pub with her husband, she asked him to get drinks with her and then to see her home. When they arrived on the Underground platform, he turned to watch the train come in just as Mrs. Gallop (who he suggested had been intoxicated) fell upon her hands and knees. He asserted that the crowd at the station prevented him from seeing her fall below the train and he insisted that he decided to run away only out of fear that her drunken behavior would get them into trouble. Unable to produce any evidence to the contrary, the coroner’s jury ultimately proclaimed the death an accident. However, when witnesses revealed that there were only two porters on duty that night instead of the recommended three, the jury asked that the Metropolitan Railway Company pay greater attention to

³⁵⁸ “The Mysterious Death on the Metropolitan Railway.”

³⁵⁹ “The Mysterious Death of a Female on the Metropolitan Railway,” *Standard* (London), Thursday, 15 September 1864.

passenger safety in the future, cautioning that had there been more porters on duty or had the trains stopped for longer, such an accident may have been prevented.³⁶⁰

While this was simply one death among thousands of perfectly safe Underground journeys made in 1864, the conditions of the case and the attention it garnered reveal some of the larger anxieties inherent in Underground travel. The fact that Mrs. Gallop had been working-class, drinking heavily, and travelling with a man other than her husband at the time of her death suggests that the Underground could become a place for subversion, sin, and danger as well as order and respectability. In addition, the crowded platform prevented witnesses from clearly seeing exactly how Mrs. Gallop reached her death. Thus, the crowds that gave freedom and pleasure to some could bring death and danger to others. This sense of anonymity could be as isolating as it was freeing – no one seemed to be able to stop Mrs. Gallop from being sucked under the train, and there were no authorities able to stop her companion from escaping afterwards. The lack of clear authority made it difficult to monitor crowds, and enabled accidents (or murders) like this to occur. In this way, unusual deaths played upon larger fears about the isolating effects of the modern industrial city and the dangers of cross-class mixing in largely unregulated public spaces.

These events also confirmed the dangerous reality that in the public spaces of mass society, the well-dressed individual across from you on the railway carriage could actually be a criminal, or even a cold-blooded killer. While stations might have seemed like highly public spaces, carriages could often feel uncomfortably intimate. Unlike the single long car found in American train carriages, British trains were divided into a series

³⁶⁰ “The Mysterious Death on the Metropolitan Railway,” *Daily News* (London), Tuesday, 4 October 1864.

of semi-private compartments. These compartments offered some degree of privacy in the city that could seem comforting to some passengers, especially women. However, total strangers often had to share these intimate spaces and the layout of these compartments made it difficult for those outside to discern what was happening inside a compartment. This sense of isolation only increased fear and anxiety about the possibilities of urban mobility, as passengers could not fully control what might happen to them in the relative privacy of a railway carriage.

Press reports of crime in the Underground played off of these fears. In one particularly well-publicized incident that came to be known as the “Underground Outrage,” a young man named Henry Perry, who had recently been fired from his job, attempted to rob and kill an employee of his former company on the Underground. Perry knew that the victim, Clarence Lewis, collected the money from their employer, so Perry followed him from work to Kensington Station to enact his plan. On the platform, Perry invited Lewis to join him in a first-class carriage of the Underground. Once they were alone in the carriage, Perry drugged Lewis, robbed him, beat him over the head, and attempted to throw him from the train. Lewis was able to climb under a seat and run out at the next station.³⁶¹ Lewis remarked during the trial that Perry kept looking into the next car to make sure they were not likely to be interrupted before he began attacking Lewis. While overcrowded carriages might be an annoyance, press coverage of incidents like this suggested the dangers of too much privacy on the Underground.

³⁶¹ “Attempted Murder on the Underground Railway,” *Liverpool Mercury* (Liverpool, England) August 24, 1880. Perry was found guilty and sentenced to twenty years’ penal servitude. For more on this, see “Henry Perry’s Punishment,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* (London, England), September 19, 1880.

These crimes also reveal how difficult it was for Underground officials to truly order and patrol these public spaces. This inability was most evident in a series of Irish republican terrorist attacks at the turn of the century. Fenians attacked the Underground several times in the 1880s and 1890s: first at Praed Street Station and between Westminster Bridge and Charing Cross in 1883, then at Victoria Station in 1884, then between Gower Street and King's Cross in 1885, and finally at Aldersgate in 1897.³⁶² Passengers on the train during the first Fenian attack at Praed Street reported hearing a loud, sudden sound like a cannon firing before being plunged into total darkness as the gaslights throughout the train were extinguished by the impact. Sixty-two people were injured but there were no fatalities.³⁶³ The inspectors on the scene noted that the explosion detonated from inside the tunnel nearest to the third-class carriage. A considerable amount of glass blew out at the station and along the train and the explosion left a small crater in the tunnel.³⁶⁴ At almost the same time, another explosion occurred on the Underground between Charing Cross and Westminster station.³⁶⁵ Fortunately, no train was passing through the station, so the blast simply broke some glass in trains at the nearest station.

The inspectors decided the dynamite had been placed in the tunnels by carrying them in and dropping them from trains already in motion, which was made easier because

³⁶² David Bownes, Oliver Green, and Sam Mullins, *Underground*, 45. David Welsh, *Underground Writing: The London Tube from George Gissing to Virginia Woolf* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 46-47.

³⁶³ Colonial V.D. Majendie, Report to the Right Hon. The Secretary of State for the Home Department on the Circumstances attending to Two Explosions which occurred on the Underground Railway, London, on the 30th October, 1883. LMA:ACC/1297/MET/10/038/001

³⁶⁴ Majendie, Report to the Right Hon. The Secretary of State for the Home Department on the Circumstances attending to Two Explosions which occurred on the Underground Railway, London, on the 30th October, 1883. LMA:ACC/1297/MET/10/038/001

³⁶⁵ "London Startled," *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco, California), Wednesday, October 31, 1883, pg. 4.

“it would not be hard to find an empty compartment.” The attacks at Victoria station in 1884 were actually the work of two Irish Americans who arrived in London with nearly sixty pounds of dynamite.³⁶⁶ The pair planned to terrorize London by coordinating attacks on high-profile locations around the city in order to push the government to deal with Irish nationalism.³⁶⁷ However, in each case, authorities responded swiftly to restore order and the Underground was never closed entirely.

This sense that the Underground contained spaces that were unknowable and mysterious mirrored larger fears about knowing and regulating the increasingly mobile society aboveground. This anxiety is perhaps best represented in the ultimate tale of danger and crime in Victorian London, the Jack the Ripper murders. Just as the stories about suicides and murders in the Tube reflected larger worries about the instability of these spaces, the press coverage of the Ripper crimes elicited a variety of perceptions about men and women in London that “shaped the Ripper murders into a story of class conflict and exploitation and into a cautionary tale for women.”³⁶⁸ Indeed, even the Ripper murders themselves could be transformed into a cautionary tale about the costs of increased mobility. The Victorian journalist and playwright George Sims played on these fears about exactly what lurked in the unknown darkness:

The series of diabolical crimes in the East End which appalled the world were committed by a horrible maniac who led the ordinary life of a free citizen.... He traveled to Whitechapel by Underground Railway, often late at night. Probably on several occasions he had but one fellow-passenger in the compartment with him, and that may have been a woman. Imagine what the feelings of those travelers would have been had they known they were alone in the dark tunnels of the Underground with Jack the Ripper!³⁶⁹

³⁶⁶ Drew Gray, *London's Shadows*, 215.

³⁶⁷ Drew Gray, *London's Shadows*, 214.

³⁶⁸ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 3.

³⁶⁹ Sims, *Mysteries*, 11., Quoted in David Pike, *Subterranean Cities: the World Beneath Paris and London, 1800-1945* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 40.

Clearly, Jack the Ripper's presence on the Underground was purely speculation on Sims' part. However, Sims was able to bring the Underground into the darkness of the Ripper murders because they both stirred public fears about what lurked in the anonymity of the ominous flickering gaslights of the city's spaces. This was particularly the case when those spaces were difficult to map or regulate, like the East End slums or the Underground tunnels.

Tube dangers also made their way into popular fictional accounts of urban life. David Ashford notes that Baroness Orczy's "The Mysterious Death on the Underground Railway" (1901) depicted a husband killing his wife on an Underground carriage by putting a ring covered in hydrocyanic acid on her finger.³⁷⁰ None of the other passengers paid enough attention to their surroundings to notice the murder occurring right beside them. Similarly, John Oxenham wrote a serialized (and fictional) news story for *To-Day Magazine* about a serial killer/former District Railway employee who rode the train and murdered passengers at random with a "spidery implement, with a curved horse-shoe clutch and the pronged lever [or with] the deadly death-tube" each Tuesday night. The report seemed so similar to actual reports of Underground crimes circulating in the period that the story actually caused a measurable drop in numbers of Tube passengers on Tuesday nights.³⁷¹

However, the presence of these incidents in fiction reveals how the dangers of the Tube – even when they were as serious as death or murder – could be re-imagined as a type of pleasure, or at least a mixture of danger and pleasure that attracted reading audiences. For instance, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle used the Underground as the backdrop

³⁷⁰ Ashford, *London Underground: A Cultural Geography*, 11.

³⁷¹ Ashford, *London Underground: A Cultural Geography*, 14.

for one of his Sherlock Holmes stories in “The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans.”³⁷² While Holmes is rarely portrayed taking the Tube, this particular story suggests his character was well acquainted with it. In the story, Holmes is asked to solve the mystery of how a man, found dead on tracks near Aldgate Station one morning, could have met his death without anyone noticing. The victim was found with his head badly crushed, but no one felt or heard him fall and there was no train ticket in his pocket. Since no station guards reported seeing anyone else drag his body into the car, it only seemed possible that he had fallen off the train car. Holmes, through his knowledge of the Underground, remembered a steam hole near the West End when he travelled along the line himself. Eventually he discovers that the murderer, who stole classified submarine documents from the victim to sell to an international agent, murdered the victim aboveground and then dropped his body onto the top of the train as it passed under the steam hole.³⁷³

These sensational stories played upon real anxieties about the freedom, anonymity, and social instability of the Underground. Yet, these stories re-imagined these anxieties in ways that made them enjoyable even while they were frightening. In this way, fiction about the Underground represents the contradictory nature of Tube experiences in general; they could be ordinary, respectable, anxiety-provoking, dangerous, or a combination of all of these elements, depending on the individual person’s experiences.

Ultimately, all of this literature about unpleasant interactions in the Underground did expose the ways that passengers could appropriate the spaces of the Tube for their

³⁷² Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans,” in *His Last Bow*, ed. Leslie Klinger (London and New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2005), 1300-1334.

³⁷³ Doyle, “The Adventures of the Bruce-Partington Plans,” 1304-31.

own (sometimes nefarious) purposes. This literature also helped to create a collective body of knowledge about the signs to watch for and behaviors to follow in order to minimize the possibilities of danger or inconvenience in the Underground. In particular, the literature created by passengers themselves represented an “attempt to codify public respectability and to define behavior and opinion in the period.”³⁷⁴

Passengers and Underground officials also attempted to acclimate each other to these unspoken rules through more entertaining methods. Many theatrical productions in the 1860s that featured underground travel helped to assimilate the middle classes to the notion and experience of this form of travel before huge numbers of these people were actually riding the Underground.³⁷⁵ A board game called “How to Get There” (1909) also helped acclimate Londoners to Underground travel. The box cover promised players that they would “Learn the quickest way to get about London!” The game itself involved 2-4 players drawing tickets for particular stations, turning a wheel to find out how far one can go, and then determining the quickest route to reach a particular destination. The spinning wheel also included common setbacks travelers might have to account for, such as “ticket lost, take another and start again.”³⁷⁶ Humorous periodicals like *Judy* also highlighted the need to learn the unspoken rules of the Underground, particularly in terms of adjusting to the efficiency of Underground trains:³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 72.

³⁷⁵ David Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 24.

³⁷⁶ “How to Get there” Board game, 1909. British Library

³⁷⁷ “Of the Underground Railway Officials,” *Judy* (London, England), Wednesday, December 29, 1886; pg. 10



Figure 3.4. “Of the Underground Railway Officials.”

Similarly, Underground advertisements like a poster for the (single-fare, and therefore single-class) Central London Railway attempted to demonstrate how passengers should move through the spaces of the Underground to avoid unpleasant interactions they might experience in the streets above. This poster, titled “Take the Two Penny Tube and Avoid All Anxiety,” illustrated a wealthy couple properly navigating the process of buying a ticket and riding the Tube.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁸ “How do I use the Tube?” poster London Transport Museum 1983/355, 1905.

Posters like these often also tried to encourage middle-class patrons by depicting only nicely dressed, wealthy looking passengers. These images represented the Underground as an orderly, well-regulated and democratic space.³⁷⁹

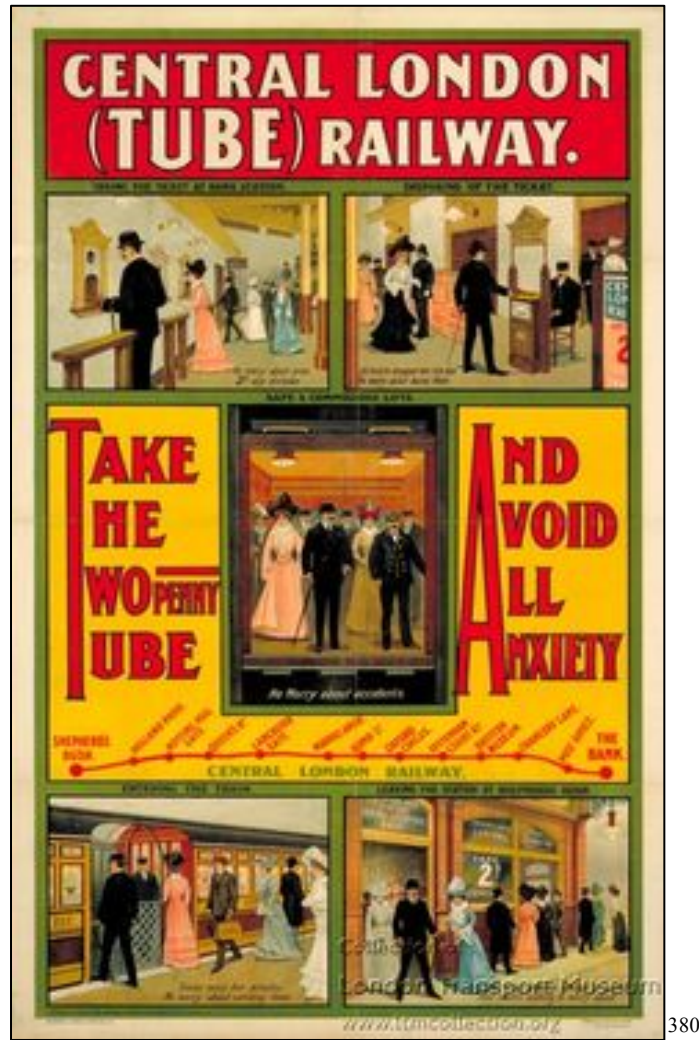


Figure 3.5. “How do I use the Tube?”

³⁷⁹ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 337.

³⁸⁰ “How do I use the Tube?” poster London Transport Museum 1983/355, 1905.

IV. Underground Aesthetics

In response to the freedoms that passengers exercised, railway officials came up with more creative ways to influence behaviors in the Underground. Train authorities created specific mechanisms through which to regulate this chaotic new space in keeping with their own interpretation of how it should be used. Along with uniformed guards, railway professionals introduced new corporate design elements, distinct posters, and signs directing passengers where to go and how to act on the Underground in order to “discourage anti-social behavior and promote courtesy and good travel manners.”³⁸¹ These Underground aesthetics attempted to impose a sense of authority and order onto this unorganized space. The Underground’s posters and symbols used visuals and concise messages to portray ideal types of mobility that lessened the threat of the large, urban mass of modern society. Yet these guidelines, while more obvious than the subtle station names present in the earliest Underground lines, were still dependent on passenger cooperation, and ordinary passengers had a large degree of control in implementing these initiatives.

Underground officials were much better able to control behaviors and conduct underground when they acted together instead of as separate, competing companies. At the turn of the century, an American businessman named Charles Tyson Yerkes bought up a number of existing railways (primarily the District line), began electrifying the existing lines, and starting constructing new Tube lines (these Tube lines would become the Bakerloo, Northern, and Piccadilly lines) under a single company known as the Underground Electric Railways Company of London. The UERL employed architect

³⁸¹ “London’s Transport System: Underground Etiquette.” *London Transport Museum Online Collection*. <http://www.ltmcollection.org>

Leslie Green to design new stations that were more uniform than preexisting ones. Green designed each station to stand out from surrounding buildings by covering the building with red glazed terracotta bricks and semi-circular windows. Green, who designed nearly fifty Underground stations, also decided to make the station names part of the tile decoration on Underground platforms as well, so that people could better see which station they were approaching when the train pulled into the platform.³⁸²

After financial troubles and Yerkes' death, another American, Albert Stanley (later Lord Ashford), became General Manager of the UERL. Stanley felt that the Underground needed to become a more unifying and modernizing force in the city. Consequently, in 1913 he met with the other existing railway companies (the Metropolitan Railway, Central London Railway, City and South London Railway, and Great Northern and City Railway) and adopted the common name "Underground" to better coordinate services across the network.³⁸³ Despite remaining separate companies, they designed a common logo, typeface, and advertising scheme to educate and direct passengers within the Underground. This move offered each member more leverage in controlling passengers by pooling each company's efforts and resources. The move was also partially motivated by passengers themselves, who frequently complained about the problems inherent in having one system run by so many competing interests.

Under the guidance of Albert Stanley, the organization adopted the roundel design (which featured the word "Underground" written in white against a blue bar and red circular background that would appear on stations, posters, notices, and tickets by

³⁸² David Lawrence, *A Logo for London: The London Transport Bar and Circle* (London: Laurence King Publishing in association with the London Transport Museum, 2013), 19-20.

³⁸³ Lawrence, *A Logo for London*, 23.

1918.³⁸⁴ Officials hoped the unusual shape would assist passengers in more easily finding station names amidst advertising on station walls. In addition, the Underground Group also held a contest to determine a new slogan for the Underground, and settled on the saying “Underground to Anywhere: Quickest Way, Cheapest Fare.”³⁸⁵

Stanley’s plans to coordinate the appearance of the Underground were aided greatly by his development officer and later commercial manager, Frank Pick. Pick was initially put in charge of all Underground publicity, and he decided that fewer advertisements with better displays would actually bring in more revenue than the chaotic and overwhelming mass of advertisements then littering station walls.³⁸⁶ Pick set out to “make the Underground a clean, orderly, and harmonious environment for its travelers.”³⁸⁷ Pick also felt that posters could inspire passengers of all classes to incorporate the Tube into their daily activities.

³⁸⁴ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 85.

³⁸⁵ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 85.

³⁸⁶ Lawrence, *A Logo for London*, 23.

³⁸⁷ “Pick and Portal.” *The Architect’s Journal*. March 26, 1942 (225). “Pick’s Legacy: The Underground Style.” (228) APH/29/9/3:

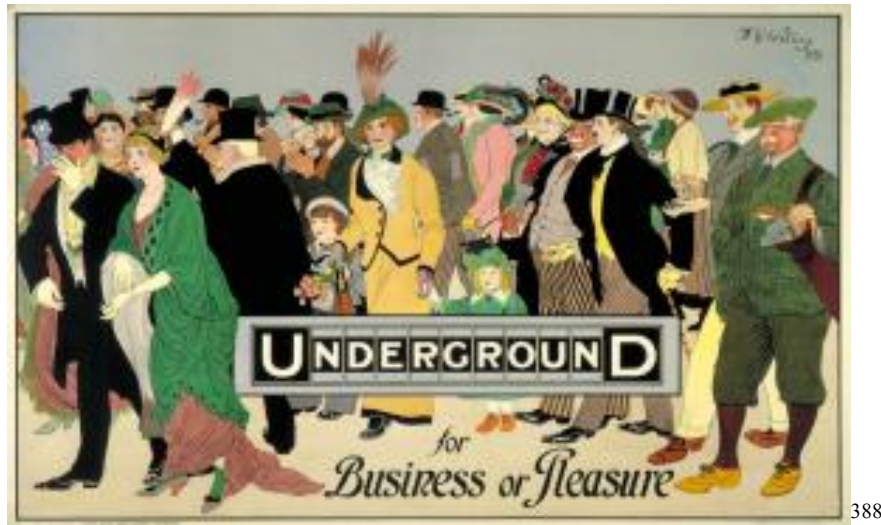


Figure 3.6. “Underground for Business or Pleasure.”

Eventually, Pick became Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the London Passenger Transport Board in 1933, and he intensified his desire to promote the Underground through posters and advertising throughout this period.³⁸⁹ Pick strongly believed that transport, and those responsible for it, could regulate society in profound ways.³⁹⁰ He argued that the city was a living organism that lacked direction and that transport provided the unity and direction needed to control this vast creature.³⁹¹ Pick sought to order passengers through a variety of Underground aesthetics, from station design, to posters, bulletins, and other visual cues.

³⁸⁸ F. E. Witney, “Underground for Business or Pleasure,” Poster 1983/4/302, Underground Electric Railway Company, Ltd. 1913.

³⁸⁹ John Elliot, “Pick, Frank (1878–1941),” rev. Michael Robbins, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35522, accessed 5 May 2011]

³⁹⁰ Frank Pick, *The Fixing of a Fare: Lecture Delivered by the Author at the London School of Economics*, (London, Thursday, Nov. 18, 1920), 7. Frank Pick Collection, London Transport Museum Archives.

³⁹¹ Frank Pick, “The Growth of Cities: Inaugural Address Delivered Before the Institute of Transport,” in *The Journal of the Institute of Transport*, (London, 1931), 7-8. Frank Pick Collection, London Transport Museum Archives,

Pick was particularly successful at using these visual cues – from posters, colors, symbols, and phrases – to influence how people behaved Underground. These new visuals still maintained the earlier focus on freedom in this space, but gave passengers signals about how best to manage themselves in order to increase efficiency. Pick realized that Underground stations needed to facilitate and encourage rapid movement and be immediately recognizable and distinct from other buildings, like theaters or department stores.³⁹² With these goals in mind, Pick commissioned architect Charles Holden to design several station fronts undergoing reconstruction at the time, starting with Mansion House and Bond Street.³⁹³

Holden concentrated his efforts on making the stations appear more modern. He designed simpler station fronts and insisted that the station only needed the roundel logo as its outside decoration.³⁹⁴ These stations were outfitted in Portland stone and each entrance was covered with a canopy emblazoned with the Underground's roundel logo and station name. The Portland stone powders away over time, helping to shed dirt from the building and keep it white and bright.³⁹⁵ The canopy was lit from both sides to direct

³⁹² JP Thomas, *Handling London's Underground Traffic* (London: London Underground, 1928), 176.

³⁹³ Holden's background in Arts and Crafts design was a great fit for the modernist aesthetic Pick desired. Holden became a partner in the firm Adams, Holden, Pearson and, aside from Underground stations, the firm also designed hospitals and schools. For more on Holden's professional career, see David Lawrence, *Bright Underground: the Railway Stations of Charles Holden*. Middlesex: Capitol Transport Publishing, 2008.

³⁹⁴ 13. The world's first railway escalator, which was installed at Earl's Court station in October of 1911, maintained this tradition of drawing crowds out of curiosity as well as efficiency. Station visitors at the opening marveled at the novelty of this new invention. One patron in particular, a one-legged man named Bumper Harris, traveled up and down the escalator multiple times on its first day of use, which "may not have encouraged more nervous travelers to use it." Possible trepidations about leg loss must have been easily overcome, however, because the "stair lift," attracted 20,000 people on its first day opened to the public. For more on early escalators, see Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 87.

³⁹⁵ David Lawrence, *Bright Underground: the Railway Stations of Charles Holden* (Middlesex: Capitol Transport Publishing, 2008), 22.

passersby to the station name. Holden also intentionally placed numerous lamps and floodlighting around the station entrance so that the stations would give off a yellow glow in the night, a hue he believed would give a “psychologically welcoming” feeling to approaching passengers.³⁹⁶ The stations had broad surfaces, clean lines, posters at eye level, and a “general air of efficiency.”³⁹⁷ *The Architect* praised Holden’s design as “a great advance” in transport design. The stations’ design was nothing less than “a quiet revolution in street architecture that crept almost unobserved into the London scene.”³⁹⁸

Holden continued evolving this design concept in the 1920s with the stations on the Morden line extension of the Northern line. Overall, these stations sought to be immediately and clearly recognizable from any approach.³⁹⁹ His designs became so closely tied to Underground travel that they were increasingly seen as “the emblem of modernity.”⁴⁰⁰ Holden remarked in 1933 of these stations that the architect needed to put himself in the mind of a passenger unfamiliar to London:

He finds the station because there is a very clear sign and the entrance somehow looks like a station and cannot be mistaken for a cinema. The first thing he sees is a map (brightly illuminated at night) which shows the whole system in relation to the principle points of interest. The map faces both up and down the streets and there is enough space for him to study it and find the name of the nearest station to his destination.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁶ Lawrence, *Bright Underground*, 22 40. Lawrence notes that “the naturally inviting effect of this so-called night architecture was useful in restating the Underground’s message that the system was safe, secure, and comfortable.”

³⁹⁷ “Mansion House Underground Station,” *The Architect*, Feb. 1929 RIBA Archives

³⁹⁸ D.F. Anstis, “Charles Holden – the Enigma,” 1963, RIBA Archives

³⁹⁹ “Text of a Speech given by Holden at RIBA on receiving London Architecture Bronze Medal,” 1929. Notes on Designs for 55 Broadway and Underground Stations. Adams, Holden, Pick Papers at RIBA Archives

⁴⁰⁰ Julian Holder and Steven Parissen, ed. “The Architecture of British Transport in the Twentieth Century.” *Studies in British Art*, vol. 13 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 12.

⁴⁰¹ APH/29/12. Charles Holden, “Designing a Passenger Station,” *Design for Today* (August 1933), 135.

Holden deigned the inside of stations so that passengers would be “virtually carried from the pavement to the trains by moving stairways.”⁴⁰² The primacy of escalators over lifts also regulated the speed with which passengers traveled into the platforms, but it also forced passengers to “match up to the ideal movements programmed into the layout, regardless of their own physical capabilities, competencies, or dispositions.”⁴⁰³

As English scholar David Trotter argues, escalators performed an important disciplinary function within Underground space by creating a more efficient flow of passengers from the surface to the trains and by providing a (brief) captive audience for advertisements along escalator walls. It might seem like a stretch to suggest that escalators perform more of a disciplinary function than stairs, but as Trotter argues, passengers generally allow the pace of the escalator’s movement to determine their speed, and the escalator’s pace is typically more efficient than that of people using stairs. Trotter argues that this pre-determined movement can make passengers more passive, particularly when travelling up escalators. He adds that these up escalators, because they don’t offer the promise of a waiting train to catch, “induce a state of trance-like acquiescence.”⁴⁰⁴ It would appear that even British contemporaries understood some of the disciplinary function of these escalators, as *The Times* remarked of the first escalator (installed at Earl’s Court station in 1911) that “there is no possibility of [a passenger]

⁴⁰² JP Thomas, *Handling London’s Underground Traffic*, 177.

⁴⁰³ Richard Hornsey, “Training Up the Escalated Body,” *Going Underground: Travel Beneath the Metropolis, 1863-2013, Organized by the Centre for Metropolitan History (IHR) in association with the London Transport Museum*, London, 17-18 January 2013. <http://events.history.ac.uk/event/show/7023>

⁴⁰⁴ David Trotter, “Savage Rush.” *London Review of Books*. Vol. 32. No. 20. 21 October 2010.

remaining too long on the moving platform, for at a certain point a travelling belt on a level with his feet quietly and safely edges him off.”⁴⁰⁵

As I mentioned in the introduction, escalator technology forced passengers to develop new ways of circulating through Underground stations. Guards instructed passengers to walk up the escalators (treating them as a moving staircase) when they were first introduced. However, Underground employees gradually adopted a system in which passengers who wished to stand would do so on the right and those who still wished to walk would do so by passing on the left.⁴⁰⁶ As Richard Hornsey explains, escalators helped to remove moments of stasis in stations and therefore helped ease overcrowding.

While paying more attention to the layout and design of stations certainly aided efficiency, officials were never completely able to regulate these spaces. Indeed, an operating manager’s report in 1931 noted that there had been twenty-two escalator accidents in one month, likely from visitors to London who were “strange to escalators.”⁴⁰⁷ However, the inability to regulate Underground comportment is perhaps best illustrated in the issue of Underground suicides. Suicides on the Underground took the ethos of personal freedom and self-regulation to dangerous levels. The individuals who engaged in these disturbing behaviors upset the orderly and respectable conduct promoted by train officials as well as by the majority of train passengers.

⁴⁰⁵ “Stair-Lift on the Underground.” *Times*. (London, England), Wednesday, Oct. 04, 1911. Pg. 3.

⁴⁰⁶ Richard Hornsey, “Training Up the Escalated Body,” *Going Underground: Travel Beneath the Metropolis, 1863-2013, Organized by the Centre for Metropolitan History (IHR) in association with the London Transport Museum*, London, 17-18 January 2013.

<http://events.history.ac.uk/event/show/7023>

⁴⁰⁷ Metropolitan District Railway Company, London Electric Railway Company, City and South London Railway Company, Central London Railway Company, Department of the Operating Manager. 30th March, 1931.

Subway suicides, though certainly unusual, were becoming less so by the early twentieth century thanks to increased press attention on the Tube as a tool of death. Indeed, by 1926, a Westminster coroner questioned about the recent addition of “suicide pits” in the Underground hinted that “there is something about the roar and rush of the Tube train which was terribly fascinating to a person if he were alone on the platform.”⁴⁰⁸ These suicide pits involved raising the rails and providing extra space underneath the tracks.⁴⁰⁹ These trenches were installed under the deep-level Tube railways and were sixteen inches deep. They likely did not actually help save lives so much as make it easier for officials to remove a dead body from under the train.⁴¹⁰ In an address to the Institute of Public Administration in 1935, Frank Pick remarked, “A taste for leaving this world by Underground develops and the epidemic of suicides frequently deranges the services, so quite large sums are spent upon constructing inverts to platform tracks in the stations to deter the depressed or to facilitate the undertaker.”⁴¹¹

In an odd way, railway suicides followed a perverted type of social etiquette that undermined the social rules established for normal interactions in these spaces. As Olive Anderson explains, “the existence of suicide facilities is relevant only when there is widespread awareness that this is what they are.”⁴¹² By the twentieth century, publicized incidents of suicide began to coalesce around certain stereotypes that encouraged others to follow similar patterns. Thus, a set of codes about more “acceptable” forms of suicide

⁴⁰⁸ Mecca Ibrahim, *One Stop Short of Barking: Uncovering the London Underground* (New Holland Publishers, 2004), 12.

⁴⁰⁹ Mecca Ibrahim, *One Stop Short of Barking*, 10.

⁴¹⁰ Martin, *Underground, Overground*, 181.

⁴¹¹ Frank Pick, “Some Reflections on the Administration of a Public Utility Undertaking,” *Public Administration: The Journal of the Institute of Public Administration* XIII, no. 2 (April 1935): 136. Frank Pick Collection, London Transport Museum Archives.

⁴¹² Olive Anderson, *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 372.

emerged based on the victim's geographic location and social position: drowning for young, working-class women; death by revolver for middle-class men with romantic or financial problems; poison for middle-aged women; and death by train for older businessmen in financial or personal trouble. These became more common in the 1900s because each was a convenient method for the type of person associated with that form of suicide and because these stereotypes had been popularized by previous cases in the press. Consequently, these methods of suicide became more thinkable and emotionally acceptable because the people who contemplated them "were most likely to be conscious of... an etiquette of suicide, a 'proper' way of committing suicide for a particular life situation."⁴¹³

The literature that developed around these suicides created a set of conventions about the types of people most likely to commit suicide, the methods employed in killing oneself underground, and the hideous outcome. In one such report, a man was killed on the Tube in 1911 by falling or jumping in front of an oncoming Bakerloo line train at Westminster Bridge Road Station. The report added that "the body became jammed beneath the bogie of the first carriage, and it took the officials over half an hour to remove the remains."⁴¹⁴ These reports likely increased the popularity of this form of suicide, but they also warned would-be victims of the gruesome fate that awaited one after jumping. Even while those who killed themselves in the Tube did so by transgressing established underground norms and taking ultimate advantage of the freedom of these spaces, their deaths still followed an established set of social cues about how to kill oneself. Those who did so did not draw attention to themselves in the

⁴¹³ Anderson, *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England*, 373- 374.

⁴¹⁴ "Man Killed on the Tube Railway," *Times* 39471(London), Monday, 02 January 1911, p. 8; col. E.

Underground stations or platforms until they actually jumped. Thus, most victims maintained quiet and orderly behavior, even when it conflicted with the orderliness intended by most train patrons and officials.

Yet, the odd thing about railway suicides was not their frequency but how slow Londoners were to use this technology as a form of death. In fact, railway trains were rarely used to aid suicides until 1868, in which 20 men threw themselves under trains and this suddenly became a “fashionable” choice of self-destruction. In 1909, 156 men and 27 women nationwide threw themselves under trains. Even at the height of its popularity at the beginning of the twentieth century, however, total railway suicides accounted for only 5 percent of male suicides and 2 percent of female suicides.⁴¹⁵ However, the reports of these incidents did seem to suggest a general upward trend in suicides on the Underground. A Metropolitan Railway report in the 1920s noted that three men jumped in front of trains over a single month in 1923.⁴¹⁶ Similarly, three women jumped in front of trains in the West End between February and March 1924. In addition, in 1929, there were only 19 fatal accidents on the Metropolitan line but 12 were suicides and the rest were “suggestive of suicide or of such a nature as to be beyond the control of the Company or its staff.”⁴¹⁷ Underground officials could never really control suicides so much as just make it easier to remove people after suicides occurred. Of course, Underground suicides represent an extreme example of passengers’ abilities to appropriate these spaces for their own uses. The vast majority of Underground rides

⁴¹⁵ Anderson, *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England*, 371-372.

⁴¹⁶ “Metropolitan Railway: Accidents and Special Occurrences,” LMA: ACC/1297/MET/04/003.

⁴¹⁷ Metropolitan District Railway Company, London Electric Railway Company, City and South London Railway Company, Central London Railway Company, Department of the Operating Manager. 30th March, 1931.

would never feature such gruesome incidents, but these examples do highlight the need for greater control of these spaces.

To handle routine disciplinary issues, officials did increase the ways they sought to guide and discipline their customers throughout the early twentieth century, particularly through posters. Frank Pick used these posters and symbols to improve perceptions of the Underground and its patrons by designing an image “of tasteful modernity.”⁴¹⁸ The Underground aesthetics, by attaching moral values to efficient behaviors, demonstrated to critics that “modern technology need not sacrifice cherished cultural traditions.”⁴¹⁹ Underground officials encouraged the actions that best allowed them to govern the space efficiently and safely by advertising these behaviors as part of the natural code of conduct followed by a respectable person. They used posters to show how people who failed to regulate themselves in appropriate ways should be chastised by others and/or ashamed of themselves. By placing the responsibility for following and enforcing these behaviors on the passengers, the Underground officials furthered their efforts to use freedom as a technique of rule; acting correctly was one’s individual responsibility to enforce.⁴²⁰

These Underground aesthetics enhanced individuals’ self-empowerment in the Tube but also increased the authority and importance of the professionals responsible for the visual signs. The first poster Frank Pick commissioned for the Underground featured an older, middle-class woman looking at a policeman. The policeman, smiling, pointed to an Underground map framed behind him on the station wall. The poster’s message, “no need to ask a p’liceman,” implied that following the posters and printed messages of the

⁴¹⁸ LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 165.

⁴¹⁹ LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 189.

⁴²⁰ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 1.

Underground would enable visitors to navigate these spaces without assistance from other authorities.⁴²¹ Thus, Pick suggested that by following the maps and other printed materials provided by the Underground officials, the individual person could actually travel with more independence than if he/she relied on traditional authorities.



Figure 3.7. “No Need to Ask a P’liceman.”

Pick asserted that, for anyone new to London, “uncertain of the way, uncertain of the time it would take to get there, the posters were there to say ‘walk this way, the Underground will take care of you.’”⁴²³ Pick recognized that the Underground officials governed most effectively through visual clues. Unlike earlier professionals, however, Pick understood that these signs needed to be striking and immediately recognizable. To give their messages prominence, Pick and the Underground Group eliminated the mess of advertisements that crowded every surface and obscured station names. In place of the

⁴²¹ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 1.

⁴²² John Hassall, *No Need to Ask a P’liceman*, poster, 1908, University of California, San Diego. Artstor. <http://library.artstor.org/ezproxy.uky.edu>

⁴²³ Christian Barman, *The Man Who Built London Transport*, 27.

confusing array of ads, the Underground Group established designated spaces at station entrances for maps and travel aids and confined outside advertisements to platforms and passages. In addition, they divided the station walls into poster units 30 inches high by 20 inches wide and displayed the roundel logo at measured intervals along the walls.⁴²⁴ Station walls were even designed with the primacy of the poster in mind. Holden's designs for Underground stations in the 1930s often featured unadorned or neutral tiles so that the posters stood out more vividly against the station walls.⁴²⁵ The Group also advertised maps and information in a specific font, the Johnston typeface, designed to differentiate important Underground information from other kinds of advertisements.

Underground staff praised this typeface with an enthusiasm that seems rather difficult to fathom today. In a staff meeting session of the Underground in 1937, publicity officer Christian Barman called the Underground Group's cohesive font, uniforms, logo and advertising campaign a "revolution" and insisted that this font in particular was "designed for transport."⁴²⁶ The font was designed by Edward Johnston, who was inspired by a combination of the writing on Trajan's column in Rome and medieval calligraphy. Johnston became obsessed with finding a font that would be easily readable from a distance and at speed.⁴²⁷ The bold, clean lines of the lettering made Johnston's font "the perfect safety letter" because, as Barman noted, "With Johnston letters, the act of reading is slowed down... a station name in Johnston letters is unlikely to be misread because it cannot be read carelessly." He maintained that "there is more character in a

⁴²⁴ Halliday, *Underground to Anywhere*, 128.

⁴²⁵ Lawrence, *Bright Underground*, 49.

⁴²⁶ Christian Barman, "The Writing on the Wall," In *Staff Meetings Session 1937-38*, (Westminster: L.T., 1938), 58. London Transport Museum Archives.

⁴²⁷ Catherine Nixey, "The Retiring Type," *Intelligent Life* (London, England), May/June 2015.

line of Johnson type than in half an acre of street corner hoardings; it is the perfect type for the writing on the wall.”⁴²⁸

This typeface, used only on signs conveying important passenger information, Underground etiquette, or maps, was set apart from other Underground advertisements aimed at encouraging leisure travel. While the fuss over a font may seem overly enthusiastic, these professionals were convinced of its power to influence passengers subtly. This font would become associated with the Underground in passengers’ minds so that anything written in it would command authority. Thus, experts like Barman realized the potential of such an understated tool for ordering the Underground:

When [the Board of the Underground] starts to remind people of the pictures of the countryside, of the amusements of the West End, of the excitements of Christmas shopping, the Board becomes more human; its accents are more flexible and its tones are colored by the character of the subject. But at any moment the official note may be required, and so the disciplined firmness of Johnson [typeface] is never far away. That is our uniform, the best and clearest symbol we have of the unity and direction that binds all the activities of the Board into a common whole.⁴²⁹

These informative posters focused particularly on the proper social conduct passengers should observe in order to achieve the most efficient and comfortable journey possible. These posters advertised how not to enter a crowded car, how to get off a car, how to stand while in the car, what to do with belongings or trash, where to stand on the escalator, how to wait for a lift, and where to stand on platforms. One poster, designed by George Marrow in 1918, used illustrations of people waiting in a train car to demonstrate how to let passengers off the car first before entering. The bottom half of the poster showed an illustration of people passing down the platform, so as to avoid

⁴²⁸ Christian Barman, “The Writing on the Wall,” In *Staff Meetings Session 1937-38*, (Westminster: L.T., 1938), 58. London Transport Museum Archives.46, 61.

⁴²⁹ Barman, “The Writing on the Wall,” 75.

overcrowding at the entrance.⁴³⁰ These posters also tried to frame instructions in moral codes. For instance, another 1918 poster argued for passengers to move down the cars once inside because “everyone cannot get a seat at the busy hours but more could get a strap or standing room if the doors were left free from the crush. Think of others. A door obstructor is a selfish person.”⁴³¹ Numerous variations of the “pass down the car” poster were published in differing colors, designs, and sizes, suggesting that patrons found following this order difficult. Some posters, like those in a series entitled “Tidiness Aids Efficiency,” aimed to illuminate how each individual’s orderliness contributed to the greater project of efficiency that both passengers and authorities desired. As a result, posters such as this (Figure 3.8) recast the goal of efficiency as the responsibility of every individual passenger:



Figure 3.8. “Only a Little Thing.”

⁴³⁰ George Morrow, *Passengers off the Car First, Please*, Poster 1983/4/809, 1918, Underground Electric Railway Company Ltd. Printed by Waterlow & Sons Ltd. London Transport Museum Online, <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

⁴³¹ George Morrow, *Pass Right Down the Car, Please*, Poster 1983/4/815, 1918, Underground Electric Railway Company Ltd. Printed by Waterlow & Sons Ltd. London Transport Museum Online, <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

⁴³² Frank H. Dowden, *Only a Little Thing: Tidiness Aids Efficiency*, poster 1983/4/6885, 1926, Underground Electric Railways Company, London Transport Museum Online, <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

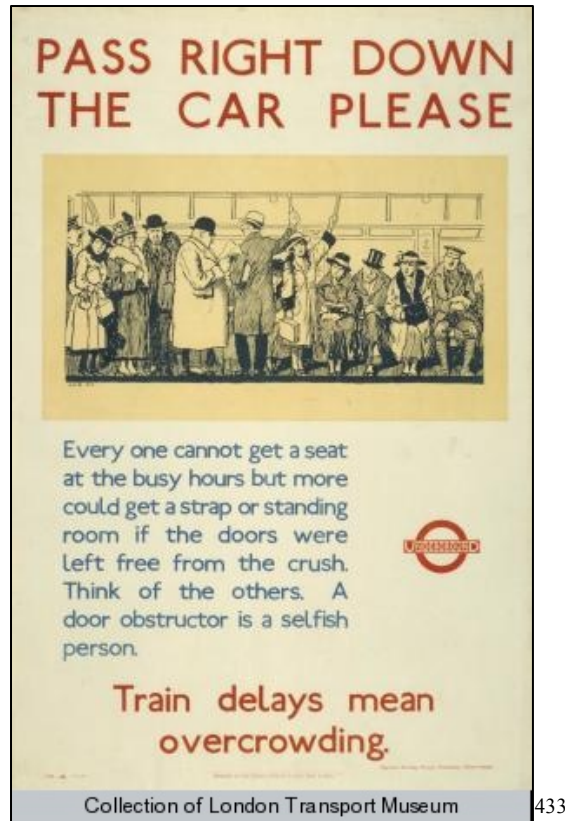


Figure 3.9. “Pass Right Down the Car, Please.”

While these posters did much to guide behaviors in the Tube, they were never fully able to order Underground space. Indeed, when new air-controlled District cars were put into operation, the end doors were supposed to be used entering and the middle door for exiting. The idea proved immediately unworkable because passengers refused to follow these orders, even when posters explained the correct steps. As the Underground superintendent explained, “passengers would not obey the regulation and it would have taken an army of officials to have enforced it.”⁴³⁴

⁴³³ George Marrow, *Pass Right Down the Car, Please*.

⁴³⁴ W. E. Blake, “The Traffic Problem of the Underground,” paper presented at the *Underground General Associated: Efficiency Meeting*, Tuesday, 15th January, 1918.

As the stations and train lines grew throughout the twentieth century, so did the numbers of behavioral commands plastered on station walls and carriages. An Underground publication from 1927 featured a list of the habits of orderly passengers, with the heading “A Fair Average Conduct Helps the Service:”

I entered the Tube Station and took my place in the queue, I had the exact fare ready, I passed across the lift, I stood clear of the gates, I beware of pick-pockets, I passed down to the other end of the platform, I let them off the car first, I stepped on quickly, I passed right down inside, I passed out quickly, I stood on the right of the escalator, I allowed others to pass, I stepped off with the right foot, I had my ticket ready, I emerged by the “Exit Only,” I walked smartly to the office. Why? Because I do it everyday. Why? Because I’m, unfortunately, that sort of chap.”⁴³⁵

The association between polite, efficient conduct and morality also reinforced and reinvented notions of national character by stressing the continued independence of the British people. In the interwar period, increasing effort was made to distance the mass society of England from those in Germany and Russia, and these aesthetics helped to prove that English people used free will and free choice, along with kindness and self-restraint, to work together and achieve social cohesion.⁴³⁶ In sports as well as social interactions, this sense of “playing by the rules” combined inward individualism with social solidarity.⁴³⁷ Thus, Tube passengers who passed down the car, waited patiently for the next train, or stood on the right of the escalator were exercising both individualism and self-restraint by choosing to engage in behaviors that would improve the efficiency of this space for all.

⁴³⁵ Lunt Roberts, *A Fair Average Conduct Helps the Service: Ideal Passage*, poster 1983/4/2317, 1927. London Transport Museum Online, <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

⁴³⁶ Mandler, *The English National Character*, 173.

⁴³⁷ Mandler, *The English National Character*, 174.

The Tube officials who promoted these social rules presented them as the natural behaviors of respectable British people. In doing so, they promoted a sort of ordered liberalism that reflected both their fears about the unruly potential of these democratic spaces as well as their desire to set themselves as the unquestioned authority in these spaces. *Punch* highlighted the ties between character and the Underground in a humorous sketch in 1920 (Figure 3.10):

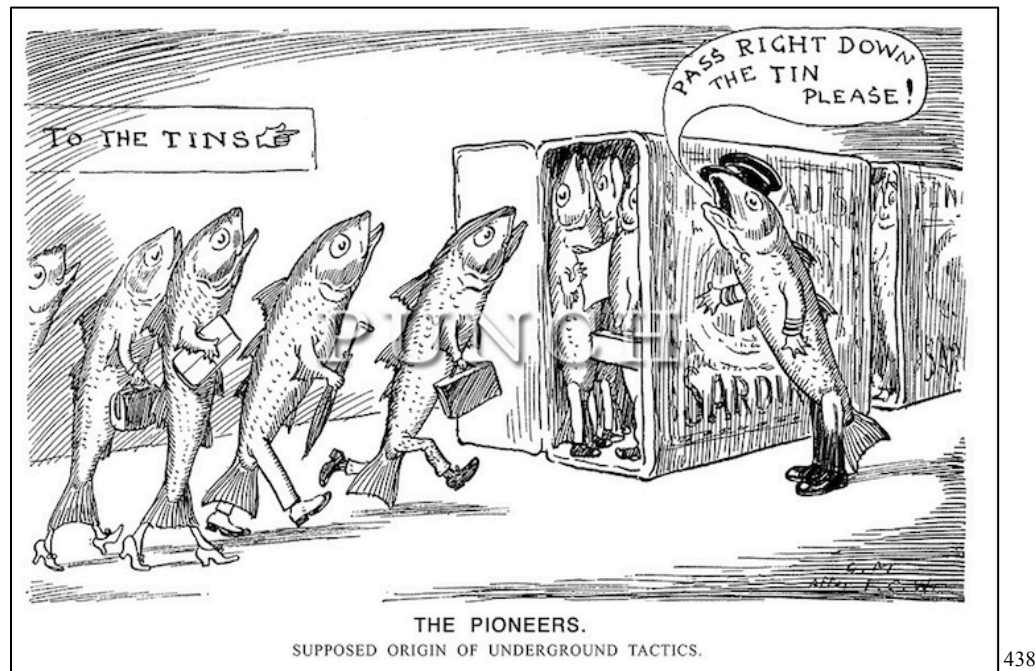


Figure 3.10. “The Pioneers: Supposed Origins of Underground Tactics.”

However, the frequency with which these posters were issued demonstrates that, even by casting these behaviors as the natural response of respectable Britons, officials still had difficulty controlling and ordering these spaces. Their continued anxiety about regulating democratic public space is directly evidenced by a train car poster which complained “many a time and oft, we have rated you about not passing down the car, and

⁴³⁸ George Marrow, “The Pioneers,” *Punch*, April 21, 1920.

yet you will not do so.”⁴³⁹ Unlike the ideal panopticon-like space envisioned by railway planners, the actual lived experience of Underground travel proved far more difficult to order. This tension between passengers and officials reveals how the railway professionals were never fully able to order society underground.

This tension was especially apparent during and after World War I. A post-war shortening of work hours helped to create massive rush hour peaks that initiated many changes to Tube trains, including the elimination of class carriages on most (though not all) lines.⁴⁴⁰ The increased traffic also undermined the orderliness Underground officials had worked over the previous decades to enforce. The war brought people from all over England (and America) to London, and train authorities complained that traffic was even worse than normal because of the large number of soldiers and women who were unfamiliar with Underground norms. The Underground superintendent remarked that “Although females may travel regularly, they are certainly not so quick in entering or alighting, and it is remarkable how they will stand in the doorways, necessitating passengers who wish to enter or alight pushing by them, instead of getting out of the way.”⁴⁴¹ The Underground responded with a series of posters for new visitors that were aimed to stress the importance of hurrying through stations, passing down the car, and allowing others to exit before entering a car. However, Underground officials remarked that the posters did not always have an impact on passengers.

⁴³⁹ *Many a Time and Oft*, poster 1983/4/9283, 1932, Underground Electric Railways Company, London Transport Museum Online, <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

⁴⁴⁰ Simon Abernethy, “Class and Commuting on the Underground, 1863-1939” (paper presented at the Going Underground: Travel Beneath the Metropolis, 1863-2013 Conference at the Institute of Historical Research, London, England, January 18, 2013).

⁴⁴¹ W.E. Blake, “The Traffic Problem of the Underground.”

V. Conclusion

Although their efforts were never entirely complete, Underground officials continuously explored new ways to order and guide passengers' behaviors in ways that would still keep the Tube safe, efficient, and modern. This back-and-forth process between passengers and officials created a type of "spatial citizenship," in which certain behaviors became associated with "normal" and desirable English behavior.⁴⁴² Underground accidents and crimes, however, demonstrated the reality that public space was always open to appropriation and challenge. This tension between freedom and order was especially apparent in discussions of women and urban mobility. As the superintendent's comment about women not understanding how to properly move through Underground space suggests, women's occupation of urban space could be a highly contested issue. The following chapter will explore the tensions over gender and urban mobility by showing how middle-class women in particular asserted their right to use the Tube as they pleased through actions like sitting in male-only smoking compartments.

⁴⁴² Richard Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect: Unruly Life in Postwar London* (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 151.

CHAPTER FOUR:
UNDERGROUND: THE WAY FOR ALL?

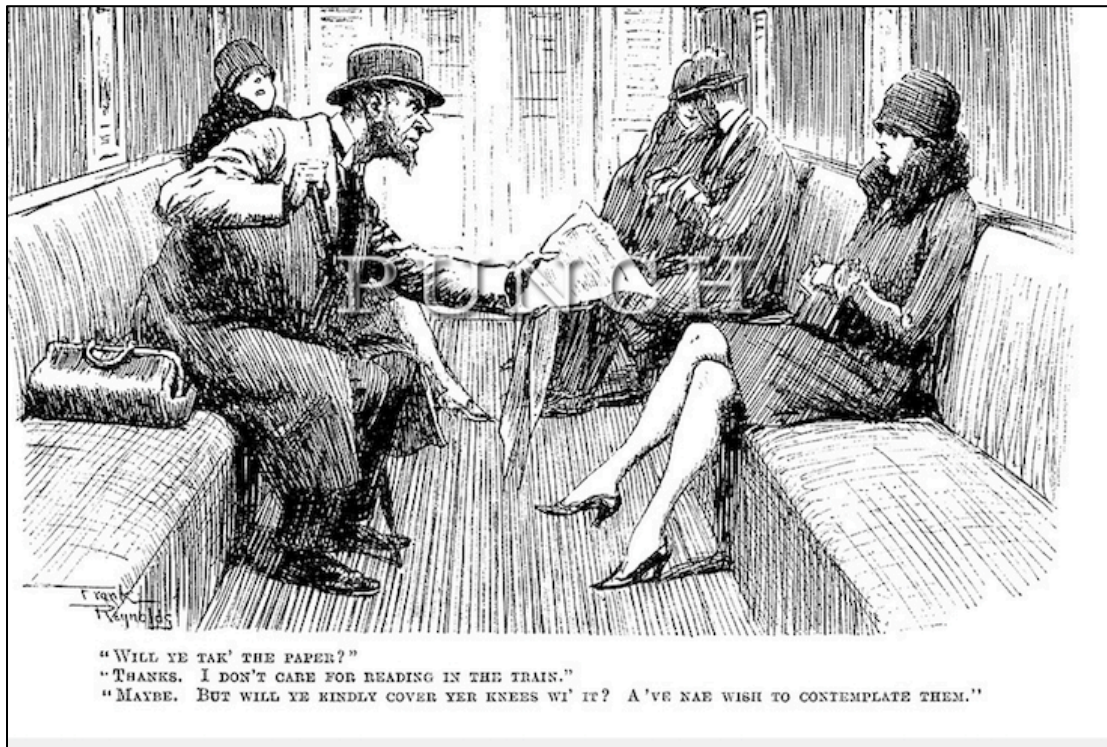


Figure 4.1. “Will Ye Tak’ the Paper.”

As the previous chapter has shown, though early trains were similar to mainline railways, the speed of Underground trains and isolation of the carriages in dark tunnels created new social spaces that forced passengers to redefine and reevaluate behavior during travel. Most Underground trains had windows, but they served as little more than decoration as trains sped through the dark tunnels. Denied an outside distraction, passengers had to look inwards – into their own minds or at advertisements or other passengers within the carriage. *Punch* magazine highlighted the gendered implications of this inward focus when it featured the above illustration of a prudish physician and a

⁴⁴³ “Will Ye Tak’ the Paper.” *Punch*, 1927.

young, middle-class woman in the same Tube carriage. The illustration depicts the Scottish doctor leaning across the aisle and thrusting a paper towards the fashionably dressed young woman. The caption below reads:

“Will ya tak’ the paper?’
‘Thanks, I don’t care for reading in the train.’
‘Maybe. But will ye kindly cover yer knees wit’ it? A’ve nae wish to contemplate them.”

This particular interaction was only really possible after the introduction of classless carriages in 1900 and likely revealed as much about changing women’s fashions in the 1920s as the dangers of Tube travel. However, this image reflects concerns present from the opening of the first Underground train in 1863 about the dangers and opportunities for men and women traveling together. Underground trains acted as an ambiguous urban space that was at times public and private, respectable and dangerous, and these ambiguities had significant potential to destabilize gender norms.

The Underground was clearly not the only form of transportation available to Londoners: omnibuses, aboveground railways, carriages, and trams were subject to many of the same gender conflicts in this period. However, the lack of outside distractions and the speed of underground travel exacerbated preexisting anxieties about men and women traveling together. Though the Tube was one of many forces contributing to new discussions and concerns about gender in this period, the speed, anonymity, and immensity of the Underground network challenged established notions of proper gender behavior. By examining the everyday experiences of female passengers and writings about appropriate forms of Underground mobility for men and women, this chapter shows how the London Underground acted as a tool of both physical and social mobility for certain groups of women.

For both men and women, Underground rides were fast-paced, potentially uncomfortable, anonymous, and unpredictable. Consequently, the Underground represented a quintessentially modern experience. Underground trains handled a much larger volume of traffic at a much faster rate than mainline railways. Indeed, an average of 33,000 people a day traveled by Underground in its first year of operation.⁴⁴⁴ The greater volume meant more people were cramming into trains that ran on much shorter intervals than their aboveground counterparts. As the previous chapter illustrated, the speed with which passengers were expected to alight from trains and the lack of personal space afforded to so many travelers could lead to potentially risqué or unwelcome encounters between passengers. While train compartment sizes and layouts varied widely during this period, most trains contained individual compartments within each carriage (initially mimicking aboveground trains). In theory, these semi-enclosed compartments could make the Underground feel like an extension of one's home (an image Tube advertisers quickly employed to attract women) or at least like a relatively private space amid the chaos of the city. However, passengers often had to cram into these compartments with strangers, and this unnatural intimacy could force passengers to confront - sometimes rather awkwardly - the realities of London's massive growth.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁴ The Metropolitan line created first, second and third class carriages and tickets with different prices of sixpence, fourpence and threepence for single journeys, respectively. For more on the different class carriages, see Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway* (London: Atlantic Books), 2004.

⁴⁴⁵ According to historian Christian Wolmar, the first Underground trains on the Metropolitan line had six compartments in first class (and each could accommodate sixty people total) and eight compartments in the second- and third-class sections of the train. The District line trains had eight total carriages (two first, two second, and four third) with four compartments in each first-class carriage and five in the second- and third-class carriages. The first deep-level Tube (The City & South London line) opened in 1890 had three carriages but one single fare for them all. Each carriage contained benches that stretched the entire length of the carriage and could seat thirty-two passengers. However, these carriages had no windows, which made it impossible to see what was happening inside the car from the platform. The Central line, which opened in 1900, featured

Therefore, because they represented elements of both private and public space, Underground carriages presented unique opportunities for women to challenge or transgress traditional notions of acceptable behavior. This chapter uses Underground advertisements and women's own writings about the Tube, as well as press accounts of subterranean crime and discussions of proper underground behaviors for men and women, to demonstrate that these discourses provided ways of discussing the benefits and dangers of modernity. Women's own experiences in and writings about the Underground helped shape this new space by challenging and restructuring notions of respectable feminine behavior.

This literature created a set of somewhat contradictory views of the Underground that mirrored larger anxieties about gender and class in the Victorian city. On the one hand, ladies' magazines, Underground advertisements and department store ads associated the Underground with a safe way (especially for women) to explore the freedoms of the modern city. Conversely, several published travel accounts, criminal reports, and satirical works about women's ability to properly use the Tube created another set of associations that linked the Underground with larger fears about the dangers of unsupervised men and women interacting in these subterranean spaces. Ultimately, the Underground authorities were complicit in this contradictory response to women's mobility by simultaneously celebrating women's usage of the Underground as modern and democratic even as they attempted to reassert traditional class and gender norms in Underground space.

six or seven cars with forty-eight seats each. Each car had forty-eight seats along the sides and jutting out at right angles and, with standing passengers included, could accommodate over 400 people at rush hour. Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway: How the London Underground was Built and how it Changed the City Forever* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), 56, 79, 137 151.

This discourse surrounding proper gender performance in public space illustrates literary scholar David Ashford's argument that "the cultural history of the London Underground occupies an integral position, hitherto unrecognized, in the formulation of modern space."⁴⁴⁶ Ashford argues that the Underground created a radically new vision of subterranean space as thoroughly modern instead of a place of danger and decay.⁴⁴⁷ By allowing men and women from different classes to access the same transport system, the Underground forced Londoners to visually confront a reality that had already been occurring on an abstract level: it was no longer possible to segregate the city into rich and poor, east and west, or public and private. While some Victorians praised the progress that enabled this change, others feared it would threaten the notion that society was neatly divided into a separate female domestic sphere and masculine public sphere.⁴⁴⁸ As women claimed access to public space, they sparked debates about the "'problem' of unstable gender hierarchies."⁴⁴⁹

Ultimately, by examining the Underground's role in shaping gendered behaviors in urban spaces, I argue that modernity involved not only the knowledge of being in a different time, but also new ways of representing and understanding space and its influence on individual identities. Indeed, as geographer Richard Dennis argues in *Cities in Modernity*, space is not just the container where modern life is played out; space also

⁴⁴⁶ David Ashford, *London Underground: A Cultural Geography* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 3.

⁴⁴⁷ Ashford, *London Underground*, 13

⁴⁴⁸ Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 5-6

⁴⁴⁹ Martin Daunton and Bernard Rieger, ed. *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 3.

shapes new identities.⁴⁵⁰ When government officials and private companies worked to order London's movement through new streets, parks, transport systems, and other metropolitan improvements, they created new spaces that stimulated new forms of performing and looking. These places provided new or greater possibilities for cross-class and gender interactions and required new ways of thinking about private and public space.⁴⁵¹

I. Smoking

One of the first issues that reflected the complex gender conflicts in this social space revolved around the issue of smoking on Underground trains. Smoking was initially forbidden on the first Underground line (the Metropolitan Railway), likely because its steam-powered trains emitted more than enough smoke for these cramped subterranean spaces. Yet many men accustomed to smoking aboveground began to push for the same right to smoke underground, where the lack of other distractions and the relative privacy of the carriages could recreate the pleasurable smoking experience of the

⁴⁵⁰ Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1. Lefebvre argued that space was divided into 'representations of space,' which were the conceptions made by planners and politicians; representational space, which were the imagined spaces of resistance made by people experiencing or writing about these spaces; and spatial practices, which combined the two other forms of space into looking at how people actually interact and function in these spaces. This third form of space is the focus of Michel de Certeau's notion of space as practiced place, in which he contrasts the view from above (the view of city planners) with the street view of ordinary citizens who cannot see beyond their immediate surroundings. In this notion of space, space is constantly changing. Foucault explored the ways in which power and visibility functioned in these spaces and governmental agencies and private corporations sought greater control over the disciplining and rationalizing of behaviors in these spaces. He argues that people came to internalize the disciplinary gaze of the governmental power by assuming that the gaze was constantly on them. Thus, greater visibility has become a key component of spatial studies. Dennis argues that most scholars analyzing cities explore the tension between structured spaces and the opportunities people had to transgress the boundaries between these spaces, such as Patrick Joyce's work on governmentality and performance (3).

⁴⁵¹ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 2.

men's club or smoking room. Therefore, new railway companies that constructed lines over the next several years all allowed smoking on their subway lines.⁴⁵² The law that every Underground train (save the Metropolitan) should have a smoking carriage was passed in the Railway Regulation Bill of 1868.⁴⁵³ However, once smoking had been allowed in one train, the officials were unable or unwilling to police it on the Metropolitan Railway and the company relented and allowed smoking carriages by 1870.⁴⁵⁴ Each railway line that carried more than one carriage per class was required to have a smoking compartment for each class and, depending on the railway company operating the line, these smoking carriages were often reserved exclusively for men.⁴⁵⁵

Proponents of Underground smoking compartments also argued that smoking aggravated women's health and was therefore an un-gentlemanly habit to pursue in female company.⁴⁵⁶ One etiquette guidebook insisted that respectable men who wished to

⁴⁵² The bill stated, "All Railway companies, except the Metropolitan Railway Company, shall, from and after the first day of October next, in every passenger train where there are more carriages than one of each class, provide smoking compartments for each class of passengers, unless exempted by the Board of Trade." Regulation of Railways Act 1868. Chapter 119 31 and 32 Vict. 31st July 1868. An Act to amend the Law relating to railways. p. 1165. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/31-32/119/introduction>.

Smoking was not banned on the Underground completely until 1985 after a fire at Oxford Circus in 1984. However, smokers often continued to flout the ban and lit up on the way out of the station, which ultimately culminated in the tragic King's Cross fire of 1987. For more on the smoking ban, see: Andrew Martin, *Underground, Overground: A Passenger's History of the Tube* (London: Profile Books, 2012), 40-42.

⁴⁵³ Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere London's Underground Railway in the Life of the Capital* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Unlimited in association with London's Transport Museum, 2001), 195.

⁴⁵⁴ John Bull, "The Metropolitan Railway: To the Editor of *the Times*," *Times* (London, England), Friday, 16 October 1868. In the letter, "John Bull" complained about the Metropolitan line's resistance, asserting that smoking "is now openly practiced in every train and on every platform."

⁴⁵⁵ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 53-54.

⁴⁵⁶ Henry B. Sheridan, "The Metropolitan Railway and Smoking Carriages: To the Editor of *the Times*," *Times* (London), Sunday, 17 October 1868.

smoke in carriages should never do so in the presence of ladies.⁴⁵⁷ This suggestion reflected similar practices on aboveground trains and also hinted at how smoking during the period was increasingly becoming a means through which men performed masculinity. Indeed, as a passenger wrote to the Editor of *the Times* in 1874, “to women [the smoke] is simply unbearable.”⁴⁵⁸

While some women also smoked during this period, literature about smoking typically portrayed women as sensitive to or harmed by the smell of tobacco smoke. This fear about women’s ability to physically handle tobacco smoke built off earlier fears about their ability to handle the atmosphere of the Underground. Using this gendered logic, smoking advocates successfully pushed for smoking spaces reserved exclusively for men in the Underground. By highlighting women’s distaste for smoking, men preserved their own masculinity in this space and simultaneously hoped to protect a particular imagining of a more traditional femininity as well. As Matthew Hilton argues in his book on the history of smoking, mid-Victorian smoking practices were intimately tied to notions of British masculinity.⁴⁵⁹ Smoking advocates constructed an identity of the smoker as “a cultured and leisured gentleman who...had his favorite pipe, his special tobacco, and his own idiosyncratic smoking habit.”⁴⁶⁰ Mid-Victorian gentlemen (and, as

⁴⁵⁷ “Etiquette for Gentlemen,” in *Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen* (London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1876), 108.

⁴⁵⁸ At Present an Underground Traveller and Smoker, “Smokers and Non-Smokers: To the Editor of *the Times*,” *Times* (London), Friday, Sept. 11, 1874.

⁴⁵⁹ To demonstrate the gendered dynamics of tobacco smoking in this Underground, I am applying Matthew Hilton’s argument - that smoking rose to prominence among mid-Victorian men because it reflected liberal notions of selfhood - to the spaces of the Underground. Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture 1800-2000: Perfect Pleasures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1.

⁴⁶⁰ Matthew Hilton, “Advertising the Modernist Aesthetic of the Marketplace? The Cultural Relationship between the Tobacco Manufacturer and the ‘Mass’ of Consumers in Britain, 1870-1940,” in *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II*, ed. by Martin Daunton and Bernard Rieger (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 50. Hilton

tobacco became cheaper and more widely advertised, middle- and lower-class men) believed that each man's unique smoking habits reflected his individualism. Literature about smoking solidified a connection between masculinity and smoking by praising the pleasure of male-only smoking spaces, like a smoking room in one's home or London club. Smoking would allow time for one's mind to wander, and the downtime provided by a railway commute was the perfect opportunity to enjoy this activity alone or in the company of like-minded men.

However, women often challenged this attempt to apply more traditional gender behaviors to the new space of the Underground. As women journeyed on the Underground, some of them intentionally boarded smoking carriages alone or in the company of male companions who wished to smoke. Indeed, one angry passenger wrote into *The Times* to suggest that, since so many women were filling these carriages and forcing smokers onto otherwise non-smoking carriages, the train authorities should set aside specific compartments marked "For Ladies."⁴⁶¹ The Underground companies quickly responded by creating "Ladies Only" carriages, which they marketed as a safe space for women to avoid the dangers of tobacco smoke and travel without any male interference. The Underground officials attempted to appease both men and women by enforcing idealized notions of separate gendered spaces but introducing them as opportunities for both men and women to travel more pleasurably and more comfortably. While it is difficult to find women's own opinions on the issue, complaints from frustrated male passengers suggest that women pushed for the right to enjoy the same freedom of mobility as their male counterparts by simply ignoring these attempts at

differentiates between pipe smokers of the bourgeoisie and working-class cigar smokers. However, in both cases, smoking remained an increasingly important marker of masculinity.

⁴⁶¹ Sheridan, "The Metropolitan Railway and Smoking Carriages"

segregation, even when they were made purportedly for the benefit and comfort of women (as evidenced by the illustration from *Punch* pictured below).



Figure 4.2. “Obstructionists in a Smoking Carriage.”

The confusing presence of women in male-only smoking areas created a flurry of commentary in the press on the proper underground behaviors of men and women. Contemporary reports of the “Ladies Only” carriages frequently remarked that women’s carriages were nearly always empty. One male passenger who disliked smoking complained that he routinely missed trains because the only open compartments were for smokers or ladies, but he had never actually observed any ladies in the lady compartments.⁴⁶³ He argued that these rude women did not “appear to appreciate the delicate provision made for them.” Indeed, *The Times* reported that another frustrated

⁴⁶² “Obstructionists in a Smoking Carriage,” *Punch* (London: England), Saturday, 01 September 1888, 97.

⁴⁶³ “An Underground Traveller,” “Class Distinctions: to the Editor of *the Times*,” *Times* (London), Saturday, 24 Oct. 1875.

male passenger even attempted to have a guard remove a woman from a smoking carriage. The guard refused, remarking that, “ladies will not ride in the ladies’ carriage, and we cannot compel them.”⁴⁶⁴ In response, a woman designated as “a Young Lady” countered that men’s carriages were preferable to all-female carriages because men provided better conversation, helped women to open train doors or alight onto the platforms, and often gave better assistance with determining directions. She concluded that “men and women are meant to go through life together; to separate them is a poor way of getting over any difficulties there may be.”⁴⁶⁵ Consequently, smoking on trains became an issue through which women asserted agency in the city, challenged previously held notions of proper feminine behavior, and attempted (even if they were not always successful) to reshape relationships in urban space.

Some of this commentary even suggested that women were using smoking compartments to smoke. The growing number of women smokers inspired discussions in the *Railway and Travel Monthly* as well as in a number of satirical publications.⁴⁶⁶ A West Yorkshire paper from 1894 reprinted the humorous report of a male smoker who entered a first-class smoking carriage on the Underground railway that was empty except for a single female passenger. The smoker asked the woman if she minded him smoking and she replied that she did not. Finding his matchbox empty, the man resigned himself

⁴⁶⁴ A Traveling M.P., “Ladies Carriages: To the Editor of *the Times*,” *Times* (London), Monday 28 June 1875.

⁴⁶⁵ A Young Lady, “Ladies’ Carriages: To the Editor of *the Times*,” *Times* (London), Friday, 02 July 1875.

⁴⁶⁶ Andrew Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 98.

to a smokeless journey when, to his astonishment, the woman handed him a dainty silver case stocked with cigarettes and matches of her own.⁴⁶⁷

The weekly comic paper, *Judy*, also poked fun at the controversy in a satirical piece entitled “Human Nature Underground,” in which a shy Londoner named John had avoided the Underground because he feared having to talk to strange women. When he discovered that the Underground created “Smoking” and “Ladies Only” carriages, John eagerly embarked on his first ride at Westminster Station by entering a smoking compartment. Just as he congratulated himself on finding a compartment free of “temptation,” a lady entered the carriage. When John frantically explained that this was a smoking carriage, she replied “I rather flatter myself one is aware of that fact, sir” and proceeded to sit directly opposite from John, pull out a wooden pipe, and ask for a light. John complained to a porter and received the sound advice that, “if you don’t want [persecution] from the ladies...ride in one of our carriages for ‘Ladies Only!’”⁴⁶⁸ John followed the porter’s advice and found that the carriage was empty, and “there wasn’t one lady entered during all the journey to Queen’s Road.”⁴⁶⁹ Though humorous, John’s fictional story revealed the reality that women largely ignored smoking carriage restrictions and rode alongside men, sometimes even engaging in smoking practices themselves.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁷ “The Lady to the Rescue,” *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, (West Yorkshire, England), Thursday, 31 Aug. 1894, pg. 4.

⁴⁶⁸ “Human Nature Underground,” *Judy* (London, England), Wednesday, 2 December 1874, 61.

⁴⁶⁹ “Human Nature Underground,” 61.

⁴⁷⁰ Matthew Hilton suggests that, as the twentieth century progressed, women began to use smoking as a way to symbolically liberate themselves from suppression: Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture*, 2.

The issue of smoking carriages illustrates the ambiguous relationship the Underground had with women's mobility. Underground officials had hoped to market the ladies' only carriages as a pleasurable alternative to riding in smoky, stuffy carriages alongside men. However, the establishment of gender specific carriages also reveals the extent to which the Underground officials attempted to replicate traditional gender and class relations in the spaces of the Underground. The fears about women's ability to withstand smoke and the frustrations over women flouting the rules about gender segregation in smoking carriages also raised the question of whether women could ever learn how to "properly" use the Tube. Indeed, in the first few decades of the Underground's opening, women struggled to realize the Underground's promise to provide transportation for all. As it gained popularity over the late nineteenth century, the Tube thus became a crucial battleground where men and women fought for control over how this space would function in their everyday lives.

II. Knowledge of the Underground

Women were frequently portrayed in the press and underground travel accounts as slow, inefficient, and unable to correctly use the Underground. Several satirical publications like *Punch* and *Moonshine* poked fun at women's lack of underground knowledge by depicting their behaviors as annoying examples of why women did not fit into the Underground. Sometimes these women were simply characterized as a nuisance that interrupted the urban flow. Other travel accounts and criminal reports about unwanted advances or thefts against women warned that women's ignorance of the

Underground could have serious consequences. All of this discourse that questioned women's knowledge of underground behavior also highlighted an issue that *fin-de-siècle* women struggled to overcome: the belief that the streets and public spaces of the metropolis were off limits to respectable women.

Even in the previous discussions about women in smoking carriages, the satirical stories and firsthand accounts of women often tried to reassert masculine mastery over the situations by suggesting that women would not have entered these carriages if they had simply known what these carriages were. Therefore, these stories about women reveal an attempt to mock women's ability to truly understand and successfully navigate subterranean space. According to such logic, women were not challenging traditional notions of gendered behavior but simply misreading the complicated social cues of a public sphere clearly not meant for them.



471

Figure 4.3. “Studies in Express – the Lady in a Smoking Carriage.”

⁴⁷¹ “Studies in Express – the Lady in a Smoking Carriage,” *Moonshine* (London, England), Saturday, 29 January 1898, 51.

In 1891, *Moonshine*, a late-Victorian illustrated weekly comic paper, ran a sarcastic critique of women entering smoking carriages that also revealed the deeper issue of whether women had or could ever learn ‘proper’ Underground etiquette (Figure 4.3.). The article, entitled “What You Ought to Do (If A lady – on the Underground),” facetiously suggested that a woman traveling via Underground should reach the ticket window from the wrong direction, forget her destination when she went to buy a ticket, and misplace her purse when she needed to pay. Once she reached the platform, she was to completely disregard the appropriate class carriage and enter a ‘smoker.’ She was not to discover that fact until the train was in motion, and “then cough and choke in an alarming manner” until she forced everyone to stop smoking just in time for her to alight at the next station.⁴⁷² A number of similar satirical weeklies published in the first few decades of the Underground’s opening portrayed women as thoroughly un-modern; they moved too slowly, they complained too loudly, and they failed to understand or appreciate the social cues of the Underground. Although anyone new to the Underground could have difficulty adjusting to the experience, literature about underground travel

⁴⁷² “What you Ought to Do (If a Lady—on the Underground),” *Moonshine* (London, England), Saturday, 12 September 1891, 129. Another edition of *Moonshine* on 4 August 1883 offered “Hints” for “Elderly and Unprotected ladies” on the Underground. It sarcastically suggests, “never be quite sure of the station you wish to go to. Ask for a ticket at Notting Hill Gate when you mean Notting Hill, or Aldgate instead of Aldersgate,... Always pay in the largest sum you have in your purse, and do not move from the window till you have counted your change twice over carefully,.. never mind if you keep fifty people waiting behind you, who will all miss their trains.... On going through the gate where your ticket is snipped, stop and hold a conversation with the porter; you will then be enabled to delay many people reaching the platform... Never get into an empty carriage, but pick the fullest ‘smoker’ you can find; if it is quite full so much the better, probably some gentleman will feel it his duty to rise and give up his seat to you – you will have the satisfaction of knowing you have caused inconvenience. [Once] the train has started, commence coughing... [from] the dreadful smoke.” For more on satirical weeklies like *Moonshine* and *Fun*, see Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, ed., *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* (Gent: Academia Press, 2009).

often characterized these obstructions in the orderly urban flow as problems that applied exclusively to women.

The steady influx of new and faster train technology forced passengers to adapt to new ways of moving through the Underground and did require a number of unofficial rules and regulations. Until 1900, all underground lines maintained separate class carriages for first-, second-, and third-class passengers. Platform signs indicated where passengers should wait for the appropriate class carriage, but it was difficult to guarantee everyone would notice or follow these clues, especially during busy periods.⁴⁷³ Station walls were also crowded with so many advertisements that it was difficult for the untrained eye to spot important travel information like station names. Underground trains also traveled at more frequent intervals than mainline railways, providing far less time for passengers to enter and exit carriages. Often, as one astounded passenger remarked after an Underground journey in 1863, “The guard had no sooner shut our door than the train was off.”⁴⁷⁴

One’s ability to master the speedy, efficient behaviors needed to navigate the spaces of this technology marked the person as urban and modern. As Andrew Thacker argues, contemporaries began to define the experience of modern life as one of incessant movement through urban space, and technology played a crucial role in this sense of change.⁴⁷⁵ Steadily increasing ticket sales throughout the late nineteenth century indicate that men and women were learning to incorporate the Underground into their everyday journeys to and from work or for pleasurable shopping and leisure trips. And yet,

⁴⁷³ Andrew Martin, *Underground, Overground: A Passenger’s History of the Tube* (London: Profile Books, 2012), 38

⁴⁷⁴ C.L.E., *London Society* vol. 3, (London), January-June, 1863; p. 413.

⁴⁷⁵ Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity*, 80.

literature about Tube travel often highlighted women's presence - particularly middle-class women - as a nuisance or even a danger. These women were often characterized as unable to keep up with the behavior needed to be truly urban.

In 1866, *Fun*, a weekly satirical paper similar to *Punch*, featured the story of a Mrs. Brown that mocked the typical problems of women in the Underground. Mrs. Brown ventured into the Underground station to take a train to Marylebone but encountered a series of mishaps from the first moments of her journey. First, she was shoved onto a train before she meant to enter. Once inside, she did not know how to switch trains and rode the train until nearly the end. When she asked a guard to stop the train so she could exit, he replied, "if they was to look out for all the places as old women wants to stop at, as never knows where they're a-goin, they'd never go on." After more wrong turns, she fell asleep and awoke at the end of the line and was even accused by a policeman of being a thief because she appeared to be loitering. He cautioned, "Take care as you're not taken up on suspicion of being one of the lot as goes back'ards and for'ards by the trains a-pickin' of pockets. For...they're females for the most part."⁴⁷⁶ The policeman's comment suggests that women were depicted as symbols of derision or danger in the Underground, but they were rarely portrayed as purposefully and accurately using Underground space.

Ultimately, because the crowds found on streets and subway platforms produced "new types of subjectivity, new ways of behaving and of relating to others," men and women had to negotiate new ways of interacting in these spaces.⁴⁷⁷ Satirical publications

⁴⁷⁶ "Mrs. Brown on the Underground Railway," *Fun* (London, England), Saturday, 12 May 1866, 87.

⁴⁷⁷ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 67.

also provided a humorous outlet to critique how Tube trains complicated traditionally accepted gender codes of behavior. For instance, men were traditionally expected to offer their seats to women entering the train and hold onto a straphanger instead. In one postcard published shortly after the opening of the Central Line, a man seated on a Tube seat glares up at a woman and complains, “I say, Missus, if you’re anything of a lady, you’ll stop standing on my feet!” She stares back down at him and replies, “Well, if you’re anything of a gentleman, you’ll start standing yourself!”⁴⁷⁸



Figure 4.4. “I Say, Missus.”

⁴⁷⁸ “I Say, Missus,” Postcard, Online Museum, London Transport Museum. Reference number: 2006/7688

In light of possibilities that underground travel enabled, making fun of female passengers also allowed men to reinforce traditional notions of the proper spaces of male and female activity and cast the Underground as a public and, therefore, masculine space. Though these fictional stories about female behaviors underground often portrayed these situations humorously, other accounts of subterranean travel suggested that women's lack of knowledge about the Underground could result in uncomfortable situations or even criminal assaults. In many of these situations, women became the objects of unwanted male attention because they did not know how to properly inhabit public space. As historian Lynda Nead explains, the conditions created by urbanization "tested and expanded contemporary definitions of femininity and respectability."⁴⁷⁹ The speed and anonymity of subway travel provided opportunities for unpleasant, criminal, or scandalous incidents that often destabilized gendered dynamics. This anxiety was particularly true for middle-class women, whose trips on the Underground were typically seen as leisure activities that lacked the same sense of purposeful movement as men's daily trips to work. Women, particularly those of the middle- and upper-classes, found new opportunities in the city for work and play through charitable organizations, social clubs, tea shops, and department stores, but they still struggled to overcome a sense that their presence was somehow a spectacle in urban space.⁴⁸⁰

Since they offered few outside distractions and created potentially private spaces within the city, Tube trains enhanced the sense that women could be spectacles in urban space. A male passenger who simply went by the name C.L.E. wrote in an edition of the *London Society* shortly after the opening of the first Underground line that he found the

⁴⁷⁹ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 67.

⁴⁸⁰ Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation and the City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 48.

Metropolitan line to be an excellent opportunity for contemplating one's neighbor, particularly if that neighbor was "a timid, pretty girl of sixteen taking her first subterranean ride in London, under her father's care."⁴⁸¹ He spent the entirety of his train ride observing this particular young woman:

I saw the delicate and unglowed hand creep gradually towards his whenever the signal-whistle was louder than usual, or when the train swayed slightly to and fro at its highest speed. Papa was absorbed in the *Times*, and I don't think paid that attention to his pretty daughter which – well, which somebody else might have bestowed in his place. Ah, fair unknown – sweet stranger, in the seal-skin jacket, mauve rib-boned bonnet, and infinitesimal boots! Who shut the carriage window when you complained of a draught? And who opened it again the instant you hinted at a headache? ... Who jumped out before the trains stopped (in direct opposition to the advice of the Company), in order to assist you in alighting? You will read his initials at the conclusion of this article; and if, perchance, you should regret that, during your transit from Paddington to Newgate, you (very properly) did not reward his attentions with a single glance, remember that the slightest acknowledgement, conveyed (with papa's permission), to C.L.E., through the Editor of 'London Society,' will be still received with the deepest gratitude.

C.L.E.'s account sounds harmless enough; the woman he describes was not endangered by his interest in her. However, C.L.E. realized that there was at least some impropriety in his gaze and his attentions, because he noted that the young lady acted correctly in avoiding his gaze. This comment reveals the point made by Nead in *Victorian Babylon* that scholars have often conceived of modernity through the figure of the flâneur, a man "who was at home in the public spaces of the city."⁴⁸² The flâneur emerged in the writings of Charles Baudelaire and appeared in subsequent studies of modernity as a white male who, by virtue of his sex and race, could blend into the crowd (which was conceived as a masculine space) and act as an observer. His masculinity gave the flâneur power to engage in the public sphere and observe interactions without being compromised or harmed by them.

⁴⁸¹ C.L.E., *London Society*. 407-414

⁴⁸² Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 67.

Feminist scholars have questioned whether this figure could include women or whether the flâneur even exists at all. For example, Elizabeth Wilson posits that the flâneur was actually a fiction of confident urban masculinity born out of an anxious response to the presence of women in the city. In this line of thinking, the masculinity embodied in the flâneur's mastery of urban space was really a defense against the destabilizing effects of modernity, where the only solution to these gender anxieties was to represent women in the city as fixed sexual objects.⁴⁸³

Writings about underground space contributed to this larger discourse that sought to make sense of modernity by refracting these new experiences through the lens of traditional gender identities. In the case of C.L.E. and similar writers, women could maintain proper gendered behavior in public space only by resisting the gaze of men. Even etiquette guides for women encouraged ladies to look down to avoid male glances or to seem engaged in reading as an easy way to avoid unwanted social interactions. By following these rules, women could maintain more conservative models of femininity by refusing to engage in practices of visual exchange that seemed to mark male experiences of public space. Nead argues that “any sign that women are enjoying the city, that they are participating in its visual culture and ocular freedom, can be taken as an index of their lack of modesty.”⁴⁸⁴ Following this logic, women could engage in the public sphere safely but only if they dressed conservatively, walked with purpose, and avoided

⁴⁸³ Elizabeth Wilson, “The Invisible Flâneur,” *New Left Review* 191 (January-February 1992), 90-110, in Andrew Benjamin, ed. *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin* (London: Routledge, 1989), quoted in Andrew Thacker, *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 84. Andrew Thacker argues that the time-space compression of Tube transport accelerates this gender destabilization.

⁴⁸⁴ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 66.

unwanted gazes. As Nead concludes, “To deviate from this set of guidelines [was] to enter into the space of London’s ocular economy.”⁴⁸⁵

If women did not actively engage in observing their surroundings, they became even more vulnerable to incidents of theft and crime. Dozens of letters to London papers and criminal reports recorded stories of women being robbed by men who stood too close or seemed too friendly on the Underground. One concerned male passenger wrote to the *Morning Post* to warn ladies who travelled by Underground about a man in an Inverness cape with a wooden hand in a sling. The injured man would sit next to women on the train and pull his actual arm out from beneath the cape in order to rob women’s purses. The writer warned that this had happened to his own daughter and that female passengers should take note that the thief “sat unnecessarily close to her, and was very polite in opening the door.”⁴⁸⁶

Even more alarming, when women did notice these crimes, they were sometimes completely powerless to stop the situations from occurring. A lady returning by Underground from Gloucester Road to Baker Street one evening entered a first-class carriage when she was surrounded by four men who jostled her about and robbed her of her purse. She screamed and tried to get attention but no officials took notice of her until the train left the station. Even when an official saw one of the thieves escape into another carriage, he refused to stop the train because such incidents “were of too frequent occurrence.”⁴⁸⁷ As Nead explains, Londoners characterized these petty crimes as particularly modern urban experiences made possible by “the heterogeneous population

⁴⁸⁵ Nead, *Victorian Babylon* 66.

⁴⁸⁶ H.S.R., “Beware of Pickpockets,” *Morning Post* (London, England), Thursday, 18 Nov. 1886, 3.

⁴⁸⁷ Mr. J.B. Liberty, “Dangers of the Metropolitan Railway,” *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, (London, England), Saturday, 01 Jan. 1887, 14.

of the city streets and the uncertainties and ambiguities concerning behavior in public space.”⁴⁸⁸ These anxieties rested on the reality that identities in the city, which were based on appearance rather than actual acquaintance, were always uncertain.

However, men were not the only predators on the Underground; other women were just as likely to steal from train passengers. In a travel column in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, an American visitor to London warned future American tourists to look out for women when traveling by Underground. He cautioned that, even in first-class carriages, seemingly charming damsels could turn out to be “sharp train crooks” who used their beauty to distract men and rob them.⁴⁸⁹ Criminal reports that appeared in the London papers reflected this view that women frequently utilized the Underground to steal. One train patron, Mary Ann Webb, felt another woman, Amy Kerridge, meddling in her pocket as she sat in a train compartment headed to Wimbledon. Kerridge rushed out of the train at Mark Lane Station, but the victim followed after her and was able to win her purse back.⁴⁹⁰ A 1901 London guidebook even cautioned readers of the particularly acute dangers of female pickpockets:

Among typical representatives of Criminal London a place must be found for the female pickpocket. Respectably attired, she haunts the Metropolitan Railway and the suburban lines, or spends her days on omnibuses and tram-cars in quest of purses and other valuables, less liable to suspicion than are her masculine rivals – and therefore the more dangerous. Beneath the voluminous folds of her cape or cloak she is able to pursue unobserved investigations into the contents of her neighbors pockets. The perverted ingenuity of a notorious London thief of this class actually led her to invent the audacious artifice of a pair of dummy arms!⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁸ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 71.

⁴⁸⁹ “Underground London: Vice in its Varied Form in the Great Babylon of Crime,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, (St. Louis, Missouri), Tuesday, 24 July 1883, 3.

⁴⁹⁰ Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 6.0, 18 June 2011), May 1899, trial of Amy Kerridge (t18990508-339).

⁴⁹¹ George R. Sims, *Living London: Its Work and its Play, Its humor and its Pathos, its Sights and its Scenes* (London, Paris, New York, and Melbourne: Cassel and Company, Limited, 1901), 19.

Accounts of female thievery suggested that women could also have the wrong kind of knowledge of Underground space or that the Underground could have a bad influence on women's respectability.

Since the Underground eliminated traditional boundaries between East and West, it also facilitated opportunities for sexual practices that challenged traditional notions of respectable male or female behavior. The Underground could provide the opportunities for improper glances and interactions that would lead to urban vice. In an Old Bailey case from 1906, a twenty-year-old woman, Jeanette Le Gros, who had been living in London with her mother, was "seduced" by Henri Boulanger, a German from Alsace. The prosecutor explained that Miss Le Gros had been working as a domestic servant and was known as "a girl of perfectly proper character." In July, "going home by Tube, she was accosted by Boulanger and eventually "seduced" into living with him in a brothel and leading an immoral life.⁴⁹²

As Erika Rappaport and Judith Walkowitz have shown, *fin-de-siècle* London was still imagined as a city with very specific social and geographic boundaries where females traveling or shopping alone risked being associated with "fallen" women.⁴⁹³ Even in the West End – home to many of the institutions that welcomed women's presence in the city – women could easily find themselves victim to street harassment that ranged from being ogled at or approached by strange men to being mistaken for

⁴⁹² Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 6.0, 18 June 2011) 22 October 1906, trial of Henri Boulanger. T19061022-22

⁴⁹³ Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 23, 132. Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 24.

prostitutes. Many women developed strategies in guidebooks and magazines to deter unwanted advances in public, but the fact remained that women's presence in these spaces exacerbated tensions between men and women for access to urban space.⁴⁹⁴ The West End's reputation as a site of vice and debauchery once darkness fell each night also curtailed women's freedom of movement in the commercial center of the city. Londoners looking for a fun night out flocked to the West End theatres and dancehalls, but their large numbers in the West End streets after the shows and restaurants closed their doors for the night also attracted more illicit entertainment on the street corners. One witness wrote to the *Evening Standard* in 1889 that "the West End at night was in the hands of these [disorderly] women."⁴⁹⁵

Women appeared as subjects of concern in discussions of Underground travel because Victorian women were traditionally viewed as the repository of morality.⁴⁹⁶ Nead explains that regulating moral behavior during this period was part of a wider formation of class identity, nation, and empire.⁴⁹⁷ Within this context, fear of immorality centered in particular on prostitution.⁴⁹⁸ She argues that prostitution emerged as a serious public concern during this period because prostitutes symbolized the mixing of respectable and non-respectable classes and the breakdown of traditional social

⁴⁹⁴ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 50.

⁴⁹⁵ "The West End at Night," *Evening Standard*. (London, England), 14 March 1889. MEPO 2/209

⁴⁹⁶ Lynda Nead. *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1988), 92.

⁴⁹⁷ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 91.

⁴⁹⁸ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 93. Nead argues that "the term 'prostitute' is an historical construction which works to define and categorize a particular group of women in terms of sex and class" – it is a socially and economically specific group produced through economic, legal, religious, and medical discourses that helped to determine female behavior (94).

boundaries.⁴⁹⁹ Consequently, the definition of a prostitute fluctuated to accommodate any woman who deviated from respectable norms of feminine behavior and transgressed the bourgeois code of morality.

Much of the anxiety about prostitution focused on the anonymous and public aspects of the act. Two competing views of prostitutes emerged during this period that waxed and waned in popularity, but both worked to shape views of women who had sex for money: prostitutes were often characterized as permanently depraved and dangerous objects of contagion, or as “fallen women” who had once been respectable, like Le Gros, but had been seduced into vice.⁵⁰⁰ Before the Contagious Diseases Acts, prostitution was characterized as a public nuisance and regulated under the Vagrancy Act of 1824. The highly controversial CD Acts made prostitution a legal category by placing the blame on women as objects of contagion and disease.⁵⁰¹ Controversy over the CD Acts and changes in medical opinion that suggested prostitution could be a transient state coincided to make prostitutes objects of pity and philanthropy. In either case, prostitution emerged as a particularly acute public fear during this period because it represented the consequences of women’s increased access to public space and the possibilities that emerged as the modern city eroded traditional social mores. Indeed, women could not be taken into custody simply for being prostitutes; police typically arrested prostitutes for “loitering or being in any thoroughfare or public place for the purpose of prostitution or solicitation to the annoyance of the inhabitants or passengers.”⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁹ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 115.

⁵⁰⁰ Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets*, 84.

⁵⁰¹ Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets*, 48.

⁵⁰² “Brothels and Prostitutes: General Orders,” Home Office Papers, 1909. Mepo3/1764.

The Underground has rarely been explored as a site of prostitution in its own right. Yet even as early as 1866, the South Eastern Railway between Charing Cross and Cannon Street had been used for prostitution during the seven-minute run (although a new District Railway between Westminster and Blackfriars and an intermediate station at Waterloo ruined this trade).⁵⁰³ The frenzied, cosmopolitan nature of the modern city also created fear among contemporaries about the possibilities for women to be seduced into vice. The National Vigilance Association -established in the 1880s to publicize issues surrounding urban vice and enforce laws that repressed public immorality - wrote to the Underground in the 1930s to ask for the right to move freely in the Underground stations (as they already did in aboveground stations) in order to assist young girls arriving from the countryside or continental Europe on mainline railways to navigate their connecting Underground journeys. Many of these women came to London for domestic service jobs and were often in “need of advice and assistance from the moment they get out of the train in London.”⁵⁰⁴ According to the N.V.A., if these women were forced to navigate the train stations alone, they could often end up “falling into the hands of undesirable persons.”⁵⁰⁵ A letter from the N.V.A. to the General Manager of the London, Midland, and Scottish Railway in 1929 noted that the various governments of Europe had agreed to keep watch at railway stations for “persons engaged in conveying women or girls

⁵⁰³ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 55. Underground and mainline railway stations were also sites of sex trafficking. The National Vigilance Association placed female volunteers in the stations to assist the police in finding and protecting foreign women who came to England as part of a “white slave trade” in women. For more on the NVA’s efforts, see Home Office MEPO 3/1764.

⁵⁰⁴ “Station Work: Correspondence with Managements concerning passes for station workers on the Underground,” 1936.

⁵⁰⁵ F. Sempkins, “Letter to the General Manager of the London Passenger Transport Board,” 17 February 1936.

destined for prostitution.”⁵⁰⁶ One relieved parent wrote to thank the N.V.A. for protecting her daughter when she met with (and, with assistance from the N.V.A., avoided) a strange woman who tried to make her acquaintance outside a shop in Victoria station that was a known rendezvous for prostitutes.⁵⁰⁷

Underground stations could also be prime targets for prostitutes to find their next customers.⁵⁰⁸ While cases are difficult to find, female prostitutes in the Underground do occasionally appear in police records. In one case, a female named Ethel Courtien was accused of breaking the peace and wounding a constable at Tottenham Court Road Tube station by stabbing him with a hatpin. Though she was brought before the courts for injuring the constable, the trial revealed that Courtien ran with a group of women who frequently made use of female lavatories to engage in questionable behavior. The constable explained that he often saw Courtien during his rounds at Tottenham Court Road Tube station acting in a disorderly manner. He had been forced several times to remove Courtien and her friend, whom he simply called “Irish Girl,” from the lavatory for being drunk. On the night he was stabbed, the constable claimed that he heard the women talking loudly about what they had done to another man as they ran into the

⁵⁰⁶ F. Sempkins, “Letter to the General Manager of the London, Midland, and Scottish Railway, “4th June 1929.

⁵⁰⁷ Mr. F. Sempkins, “Letter to Mrs. Straghan,” 29 April 1937. The National Vigilance Association posted six workers at the station for six hours a day, six days a week. They were stationed mostly at Liverpool Street, Waterloo, Charing Cross, Victoria, Paddington, and King’s Cross Stations. The workers carried copies of “a Friendly Warning” to hand out to girls they helped. For more on the N.V.A.’s work in train stations, see the correspondence files in the records of the National Vigilance Association at the Women’s Library at the London School of Economics.

⁵⁰⁸ One letter to the National Vigilance Association in 1936 notes that prostitutes often waited at night in the ladies waiting room at Victoria Station. Prostitutes also used bus stops to pick up clients. A police report noted that women often stood in pairs at bus stops in Piccadilly and waited for men to approach them. If no one did, the women rode the bus to the other end of the street and waited at that stop. MEPO 2/10002 The area between Euston Road and King’s Cross Station also became a favorite haunt of “women of loose character” in the 1880s. For more on prostitution in Bloomsbury, see MEPO 2/293.

restroom “with their clothes raised in a disorderly manner.” Once he managed to pull her out, she retaliated by grabbing a pin from her hat and stabbing him in the stomach.⁵⁰⁹

Ultimately, the issue of women’s roles in urban space was intimately tied to broader shifts in the division between public and private during this period. As David Pike argues in *Subterranean Cities*, the Underground “could be simultaneously a space of propriety and one of transgression, by turn private and public.”⁵¹⁰ These trains were owned by private companies and marketed as a safe, comfortable extension of the private sphere. Subway carriages created moments of privacy not possible in the streets. Train platforms and subway carriages functioned as a sort of liminal space between the home and places of work or leisure. Therefore, the spaces of public transport formed “a special type of space in which it is possible to study the construction of gender differences.”⁵¹¹ Because these spaces are ambiguously public and private, they provide the type of location that Nead suggested historians need to explore in moving away from the flâneur/male-centered construction of modernity.

These public spaces also questioned the limits of acceptable male sexual behavior and provided sites for men to engage in same-sex practices as well. Richard Hornsey and Matt Houlbrook both describe how queer sexual practices were also shaped by the public spaces of the Underground in the 1940s and 1950s. Indeed, as Matt Houlbrook argues, “male sexual practices and identities do not just take place *in* the city; they are shaped

⁵⁰⁹ Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org), 12 December 1904, trial of Ethel Courtien (t19041212-83).

⁵¹⁰ David Pike, *Subterranean Cities: the World Beneath Paris and London, 1800-1945*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 46.

⁵¹¹ Divall, Colin and Winstan Bond, “Introductions: Technology, (sub)urban Development and the Social Construction of Urban Transport.” In *Suburbanizing the Masses: Public Transport and Urban Development in Historical Perspective*, edited by Colin Divall and Winstan Bond, 1-25. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.

and sustained *by* the physical and cultural forms of modern urban life just as they in turn shape that life.”⁵¹²

Both scholars argue that Underground station restrooms became particularly important semi-private public spaces in which men could engage in same-sex encounters. Indeed, Matt Houlbrook argues that in 1947 alone, eighteen percent of all incidents that resulted in proceedings for sexual offenses in London’s lower courts were detected just in the toilets at Victoria Station, though the station was both an Underground and railway station.⁵¹³ The inherent instability of spaces like the Tube station and the ease with which men could precipitate illicit queer encounters also exposed a fear that men engaging in same-sex practices could read an entirely different set of unspoken cues and glances in these public spaces.⁵¹⁴ For instance, in the trial of a prominent Lord who was caught illegally engaging in homosexual activities in the 1950s, the press became fascinated with how loitering in the Piccadilly Circus Tube station could quickly lead to an alleged sexual pickup. The *Daily Mirror*’s headline of the trial stated, “It All Started ‘When Two Men Met and Smiled.’”⁵¹⁵ Clearly, for both men and women, underground spaces provided a crucial site through which traditional gender identities and even proper notions of sexual practices were challenged and negotiated.

Despite the obvious dangers to women, Underground officials and female riders fought to present the presence of women in underground space as normal and necessary. Women wrote about their experiences on the Underground to claim ownership of these

⁵¹² Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 4

⁵¹³ Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 24.

⁵¹⁴ Richard Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect: Unruly Life in Postwar London* (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 103.

⁵¹⁵ Hornsey, *The Spiv and the Architect*, 103.

spaces and assert their right to move through London with the same freedoms as their male counterparts. As Judith Walkowitz argues, “an ability to get around and self-confidence in public places became the hallmarks of the modern woman.”⁵¹⁶ Elizabeth Robins Pennell, whose observations about early Underground advertisements were discussed earlier, became an active Underground traveler, particularly on the Inner Circle line.⁵¹⁷ Reflecting back on her first Underground journey, Pennell admitted that she had just needed to make a simple journey that would only involve one station change. However, she realized on that initial journey that she had been overly confident that every train would take her wherever she wanted to go. Ultimately, though, Pennell recalled the experience fondly, asserting that she remembered that first trip “with something of pride in my own ingenuity.” After eleven years of traveling via Underground, she could now make her journey “with as much indifference as I stop into the waiting ‘bus or hail the crawling hansom, and with less distrust.”

Pennell was one of thousands of women who incorporated the Underground into their everyday journeys across London during this period. Notable female contemporaries utilized the Underground, including Virginia Woolf, Karl Marx’s daughters, and Beatrice Webb.⁵¹⁸ Indeed, British socialite Mary Clarke Mohl (who was 82 at the time) wrote to her husband that she loved the location of her friend and noted philanthropist Julie Schwabe’s house on Clarges Street - just off Piccadilly - because it was so close to the

⁵¹⁶ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 68.

⁵¹⁷ "Pennell, Elizabeth Robins (1855–1936)," *Dictionary of Women Worldwide: 25,000 Women Through the Ages*, ed. Anne Commire and Deborah Klezmer. Vol. 2. (Detroit: Yorkin Publications, 2007), 1495. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*.

⁵¹⁸ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 73-74.

Tube station.⁵¹⁹ Lodging advertisements also suggested the very real ways that women connected access to transport with increased independence, as is evident in the advertisement for “first class board and residence” for a lady “a few minutes from Bond Street, near Tube and Underground stations.”⁵²⁰ A similar advertisement for the Sloane Gardens women’s hotel noted that the “’lone, ‘lorn’ woman need not have the humiliating experience of being rejected at one hotel and then another [because] there is an hotel for her especial convenience, situated near an Underground railway station.”⁵²¹

These women affirmed their independence and their right to inhabit certain spaces of London precisely because of their access to urban transport. Lady guides in publications like the *Lady* and the *Queen* attempted to create a female flaneuse by suggesting that women could and should learn to use public transport to move about the capital just like men.⁵²² These guides celebrated women’s increased access to public space, but they also frequently framed these freedoms as extensions of women’s traditional domestic routines by explaining how women should conduct themselves in public transport so as to avoid being considered “fast” or made into a spectacle.⁵²³

Women’s efforts to assert claims of knowledge and mobility in urban space culminated in the Lady Guide Association, which was formed by middle- and upper-class women in 1888 to train “well-born women” as travel agents, tour guides, chaperones, and shoppers. The women would guide visitors on their trips to London and the Association’s

⁵¹⁹ Mary Clarke Mohl, Letter to Julius Mohl, 22 August, 1875, in Mohl Papers, BL, Add. MSS 70,623, folio 72. Thanks to Dr. Albisetti for the reference!

⁵²⁰ “Board and Residence, Apartments, &c.,” *Times* (London, England), Monday, October 28, 1901, 15.

⁵²¹ “London has a Woman’s Hotel,” *Leavenworth Herald* (Leavenworth), Saturday, February 15, 1896.

⁵²² Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 155.

⁵²³ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 156.

offices would provide them a meeting or resting place in town. As Erika Rappaport argues, “In essence, this association of bourgeois women hoped to remake England’s capital city into a comfortable, intelligible, and pleasurable arena for themselves and others.”⁵²⁴ These women performed a crucial function of helping women maintain respectability while still engaging in urban life. Rappaport argues that the LGA demonstrates how women were more than objects of the male gaze; they had a role in actively shaping the city. However, as she also cautions, these women and other female observers who published their writings about the city (like Elizabeth Gaskell or Flora Tristan) were still constrained by the fact that they could not truly make themselves invisible or ignored in the city.⁵²⁵

For its part, the Underground encouraged women to use the Tube as a part of their daily routine by publishing posters that highlighted the ease of use for travelers. These officials targeted middle-and upper-class patrons to sell off-peak tickets and market the railway as a respectable extension of one’s daily routine. Thus, while the majority of underground travel on the Metropolitan in the late nineteenth century was working-class, illustrations showed a patronage that was almost entirely middle-class.⁵²⁶ Indeed, the first poster Frank Pick (then assistant managing director of the Underground Electric Railway Company of London) commissioned for the Underground in 1908 featured an

⁵²⁴ Erika D. Rappaport, “Travelling in the Lady Guides’ London: Consumption, Modernity, and the Fin-de-Siècle Metropolis,” in *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II*, ed. Martin Daunt and Bernard Rieger (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 25. For more information on how women’s clubs in European cities offered bourgeois women opportunities to inhabit and appropriate urban space, see Despina Stratigakos, *A Women’s Berlin: Building the Modern City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

⁵²⁵ Rappaport, Erika D. “Travelling in the Lady Guides’ London,” 27-28. For more on female travel writers, see Deborah Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation and the City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

⁵²⁶ Welsh, David. *Underground Writing: The London Tube from George Gissing to Virginia Woolf* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 48.

older, middle-class woman looking at a policeman. The poster – previously mentioned in the last chapter – is significant here because its message that there was “no need to ask a p’liceman” implied that following the printed messages of the Underground would enable female visitors to navigate these spaces without assistance.⁵²⁷ Thus, Pick suggested that by following the maps and other printed materials provided by the Underground officials, a woman on her own could actually travel with more independence than if she relied on traditional authorities.

This discourse about women’s ability to successfully understand interactions and follow proper behaviors in the Tube exposes some of the contradictions of the liberal ethos that guided many of London’s urban improvements during this period. Proponents of liberalism sought to restore what was seen as the “natural” condition of liberty by maximizing individual freedoms through political, economic, and social reforms. However, as Simon Gunn and James Vernon argue in *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity*, “liberalism was plagued by a tension between a universalizing impulse (which posited its principles as true and applicable across the globe) and a theorization of difference that marked out specific populations and territories as not quite ready for its freedoms.”⁵²⁸ Women’s actions in public spaces like those of the Underground could also highlight the limits of democracy by showing that liberalism’s existence “was based on the segregation and suppression of women, lower-class, and colonial subjects.”⁵²⁹

Women’s presence in these spaces and their attempts to assert rights to urban mobility

⁵²⁷ John Hassall, *No Need to Ask a P’liceman*, poster, 1908, University of California, San Diego. Artstor. <http://library.artstor.org/ezproxy.uky.edu>

⁵²⁸ Simon Gunn and James Vernon, “Introduction: What was Liberal Modernity?” in *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain*, ed. by Simon Gunn and James Vernon (Berkeley, California: The Global, Area, and International Archive, University of California Press, 2011), 9.

⁵²⁹ Gunn and Vernon, “What was Liberal Modernity?” 10.

challenged the limits of democratic space and the ethos of liberal modernity that guided the construction of these spaces.

III. The Underground and the Development of the West End

Women's underground experiences highlighted the limits of democracy quite literally in the case of the Central line, which opened June 27th, 1900.⁵³⁰ The Central line, dubbed the "Twopenny Tube" for the single fare charged to all passengers, was the first Underground line to eliminate class carriages. The line maintained male-only smoking carriages and corresponding ladies-only carriages for several years, demonstrating how gender norms continued to prevent the Tube from becoming a truly democratic space. By removing the perceived safety of separate class carriages, the Twopenny Tube provides another unique moment in which to study how Londoners reconfigured notions of acceptable gendered behaviors. The elimination of class carriages offered new kinds of challenges for women navigating subterranean space. However, the new line also provided new possibilities, particularly for middle-class women, to access the West End and influence its development. Moreover, just as in the smoking carriages issue, Tube officials celebrated women's increased freedom in the city even as they worked to confine that movement to fit established models of proper feminine behavior.

During this period, the West End grew from a wealthy residential area into a haven for the newly expanding middle classes that featured department stores, museums, and other leisure institutions designed to serve both men and women. The West End's

⁵³⁰ Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere: London's Underground Railway in the Life of the Capital* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Unlimited in association with London's Transport Museum, 2001), 56.

transformation into a site of leisure and consumption made this region more socially acceptable for women to visit. In a time with few educational or employment opportunities open to middle-class women, these ladies used their power as consumers to “occupy and construct urban space,” and the Underground was central to these changes.⁵³¹

The expansion of the West End enabled and was enabled by improvements in transportation, street lighting, and general safety in London’s urban spaces that made the city somewhat safer for women.⁵³² The Underground companies also encouraged the development of the West End in the most literal sense by providing increased transport opportunities.⁵³³ A number of private establishments – women’s clubs, ladies’ lavatories, tea shops, etc. – sprouted up to satisfy the demands of an increasing number of female visitors to the capital.⁵³⁴ These West End businesses formed a symbiotic relationship with the transport companies that aimed to encourage middle-class women’s increased presence in the West End. Many of the department stores opened along Tube routes and listed proximity to Tube stations in their advertisements.⁵³⁵ Thanks to the convenience of stations and the success of advertising schemes, the Twopenny Tube was immediately

⁵³¹ Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 222.

⁵³² Judith A. Neiswander, *The Cosmopolitan Interior: Liberalism and the British Home, 1870-1914* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 91. Neiswander argues that literature about home decorating encouraged women to see themselves as individuals who could be trusted to make decisions about the home. She adds that this view that women could express individual identity through home décor was also one manifestation of the growing women’s movement.

⁵³³ The Twopenny Tube passed through Shepherd’s Bush and Bank with intermediary stations at Holland Park, Notting Hill Gate, Queen’s Road, Lancaster Gate, Marble Arch, Bond Street, Oxford Circus, Tottenham Court Road, British Museum, Chancery Lane and Post Office stations. T. C. Barker and Michael Robbins, *A History of London Transport: Passenger Travel and the Development of the Metropolis*. Vol. I. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963.), 43.

⁵³⁴ Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 88.

⁵³⁵ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 56. Aside from department stores, other entertainment sites like the Queen’s Hall, Langham Place, and the Princesses Theatre also encouraged Central line travel.

popular, carrying 15 million people in its first year (1,500,000 of them in workmen's trains) and 41 million passengers its second year.⁵³⁶

Proponents of department stores, theatres, women's clubs, and other sites that welcomed women's involvement in metropolitan leisure activities associated the increasing mobility of women in London with signs of the progress of the modern city. The women also benefited from a growing belief after the mid-Victorian period that fashion and home furnishings were important ways for women to express individual and class identities.⁵³⁷ While shopping was still a somewhat domestic activity for women, it also functioned as a public pleasure.⁵³⁸ As Erica Rappaport argues in her work on shopping in Victorian Britain, "This view of the city as a realm of individual freedom reflected London's transformation into a site of consumption and the new ideals of ... male and female that accompanied this change."⁵³⁹ Women understood shopping in spatial terms as a trip into town that often involved a number of excursions in the spaces of the metropolis (lunch and tea at a restaurant, a visit to a theatre, museum, or club, etc.). Department stores sought to create an ambiance similar to an exclusive women's club where women could take tea, shop, and socialize with other women without the protection of a man.⁵⁴⁰ These stores also provided ladies' lavatories, a surprisingly rare feature in the urban landscape of late-Victorian London, that were a practical necessity for increasing women's presence in the city.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁶ Barker and Robbins, *A History of London Transport*, 47.

⁵³⁷ Neiswander, *The Cosmopolitan Interior*, 83.

⁵³⁸ Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 5.

⁵³⁹ Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 3.

⁵⁴⁰ Neiswander, *The Cosmopolitan Interior*, 91.

⁵⁴¹ The Underground actually had a somewhat ambiguous relationship with women's lavatories. The National Women Citizens' Association wrote to the Public Relations office of the Underground as late as 1936 asking for better lavatory accommodations in stations. The PR

These women and the institutions that profited from their increased mobility embraced these ideals about Underground travel and used them to their own advantage. Department stores were especially adept at capitalizing on women's increased mobility by advertising their close connections to urban transport. No one exploited this relationship better than Henry Gordon Selfridge, an American entrepreneur from Chicago who opened his eponymous store on Oxford Street in 1909. After extensively researching where Londoners traveled, lived, and shopped, Selfridge chose property on what was then the end of Oxford Street in order to benefit from the 100,000 people a day who traveled on the Central line between Shepherd's Bush and Bank.⁵⁴² Selfridge even (unsuccessfully) pushed the Tube officials to have the Bond Street station renamed "Selfridges" and connected via tunnel to his store.⁵⁴³ The Central line denied these requests but did install booking offices in the store that issued 5-shilling season tickets (redeemable on all lines) for female shoppers to access the annual January sales.⁵⁴⁴ Underground officials also agreed to issue the store blocks of six tickets to and from Bond Station at a ten percent discount.⁵⁴⁵

officer replied, "in view of the shortness of the journeys taken upon their railways, it is submitted that there is not the same need for special lavatory accommodation for passengers as might occur in the case of a main line railway. In view of the exceptional circumstances prevailing in the areas served by the Board, they cannot accept any general obligation to provide lavatory accommodation at their stations." E. Randon Smith, "Lavatory Accommodations on Underground Stations: Letter to the Town Clerk, Borough of Holborn," 19 October 1936. Ref. KA/456, Transport for London Archives.

⁵⁴² Lindy Woodhead, *Shopping, Seduction, and Mr. Selfridge* (London: Profile Books, 2007) 74

⁵⁴³ Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere: London's Underground Railway in the Life of the Capital* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Unlimited in association with London's Transport Museum, 2001), 56. Woodhead, *Shopping, Seduction, and Mr. Selfridge*, 74

⁵⁴⁴ Martin, *Underground, Overground*, 117-118.

⁵⁴⁵ General Manager's Conference, London Underground Railways. February 28, 1910.

Selfridge also mirrored the Underground's publicity schemes by bombarding the metropolitan media with hundreds of advertisements commissioned by commercial artists to publicize the grand opening of his store.⁵⁴⁶ His store provided elaborate window displays and exuded an air of glamour and entertainment that made Selfridges a tourist attraction in its own right and changed how Londoners shopped.⁵⁴⁷ 90,000 people came to admire the store on its opening day in March 1909, numbers likely not possible without convenient access to the Tube.⁵⁴⁸ The store became particularly influential as a social and cultural institution for women because Selfridge openly encouraged women's presence in the city.⁵⁴⁹ Selfridge's transformation of Oxford Street did not go unnoticed by Underground officials, either. At a luncheon honoring Selfridge in 1939, Lord Ashfield (the chairman of the London Passenger Transport Board), remarked that, "perhaps he should after all have agreed to name Bond Street Tube station 'Selfridges.'"⁵⁵⁰ Stores like Selfridges blurred the traditional boundaries of women's spaces in the city by providing places of work and leisure.⁵⁵¹

Underground officials also encouraged middle-class women shoppers to travel by Twopenny Tube by providing cheap "shopping tickets," only available to women, during peak shopping seasons.⁵⁵² Some Underground tickets featured department store advertisements on the backside.⁵⁵³ At a meeting in 1909, Underground officials agreed to

⁵⁴⁶ Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 157.

⁵⁴⁷ Woodhead, *Shopping, Seduction, and Mr. Selfridge*, 1.

⁵⁴⁸ Woodhead, *Shopping, Seduction, and Mr. Selfridge*, 87.

⁵⁴⁹ Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 157.

⁵⁵⁰ Woodhead, *Shopping, Seduction, and Mr. Selfridge*, 257.

⁵⁵¹ Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 320.

⁵⁵² London Transport Museum Ticket. London Transport Museum Online Collection.

⁵⁵³ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 56 and "Christmas Shopping 'Tube' Tickets," *Times* 40065 (London), Monday, November 25, 1912, col. F. The train would leave Holborn at 11:16

provide Liberty's, Harrods, Speiers and Pond, Whiteley's and Selfridges with Christmas cards advertising the benefits of traveling via Underground for holiday shopping.⁵⁵⁴ The Underground companies also published a series of posters highlighting the bond between urban transport and pleasurable female consumption.⁵⁵⁵ A decorative map published by the Underground for women to access the winter sales in 1927 featured prime West End shopping attractions, particularly Oxford Street, Bond Street, Regent Street, and Piccadilly, with Underground stations highlighted and enlarged.⁵⁵⁶ These posters emphasized the safety of Tube travel, particularly for women, and also depicted images of respectable Tube interactions that implied women should view the Underground as a reputable and efficient form of transport. Posters featured slogans like "There's an Underground Station for Every Big Store," and "Travel Underground into the Heart of the Shopping Centres and do your Xmas Shopping in Comfort."⁵⁵⁷ These illustrations included depictions of clean, bright, and nearly empty Tube carriages with just a few women and children scattered about the compartments. By taking middle-class women from their suburban homes and dropping them safely at West End storefronts, the Tube acted as a somewhat private and safe space in the middle of the city. Tube promoters

each night and stop only at King's Cross and Holoway before arriving at Finsbury Park at 11:26pm to catch suburban services to the Northern Line (and thus home).

⁵⁵⁴ General Manager's Conference, London Underground Railways. November 9, 1909. LMA:Acc/1297/UER/01/008

⁵⁵⁵ "There's an Underground Station for Every Big Store, Travel between 10 and 4 and shop in Comfort." London Transport Museum Advertisement, 1930, Ref. Number 1998/97844. Another poster from 1908 says "Avoid the Weather, Shop in Comfort," Reference number 1996/2046. London Transport Museum.

⁵⁵⁶ Reginald Percy Gossop, "The way to winter sales," Poster. 1927 Reference 2000/1559. London Transport Museum.

⁵⁵⁷ "There's an Underground Station for Every Big Store, Travel between 10 and 4 and shop in Comfort," Poster, 1930, Ref. Number 1998/97844. London Transport Museum. "Into the heart," Poster; Into the heart, artist unknown, 1909. Reference number: 1983/4/11. London Transport Museum.

advanced images of women traveling by Underground and thus seemed to support an increased presence of women in urban public space.

By promoting urban transport's role in providing passengers with leisure activities and entertainment, the Underground helped to establish models of mobility for middle-class women. The urban crowd depicted in these Underground advertisements was "colorful...and respectable, and middle-class women's comfort was depicted as a 'milestone of progress.'"⁵⁵⁸ However, by presenting these carriages as nearly empty and free of male or lower-class passengers, officials encouraged a particularly idealized view of Tube transport. While there were liberating dimensions to these images of female travel, they also reinforced notions of women as homemakers by trying to highlight the places women *should* be going.

Even as Tube officials promoted and celebrated women's increased urban mobility, they attempted to limit these journeys to specific times of day. Many advertisements came with warnings about the best times to shop, between 10am and 4pm, when trains would be less crowded. One Christmas season poster advised, "a word to the wise - the quiet hours will be best," as if suggesting that women needed more protection than men during rush hour.⁵⁵⁹ The tensions between celebrating and restricting women's mobility are particularly evident in a 1927 Underground poster that advised women to shop in the off-peak hours. In the poster, an image of a fashionable woman with two little girls walking comfortably towards a department store is imposed on top of a clock, showing that they have planned this leisure trip during the appropriate off-peak hours.

⁵⁵⁸ Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 126.

⁵⁵⁹ "Christmas Anticipations," poster 1922, Underground Electric Railway Company Ltd. 1983/4/8202, London Transport Museum Online Collection. <http://www.Ltmcollection.org/posters>

Another clock at the bottom of the poster shows the same family fighting against a chaotic rush-hour crowd. The woman and her children are separated and hunched over, and the youngest child almost seems to disappear into a crowd comprised almost entirely of shadowed masculine figures in bowler hats and caps. Several of the woman's packages have fallen to the ground in the chaos, and the poster closes with the caption "Shop Between 10 and 4 by Underground."⁵⁶⁰ As Rappaport argues, women's comfort in the Underground was "premised upon a separation from the lower classes and the world of labor they inhabited."⁵⁶¹



Figure 4.5. "Shop Between 10 and 4."

⁵⁶⁰ Fletcher, "Shop Between 10 and 4," Poster, 1927. Reference number: 1983/4/2323. London Transport Museum.

⁵⁶¹ Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure*, 124.

⁵⁶² Fletcher, "Shop Between 10 and 4"

These advertisements about the best shopping hours also sometimes featured pictures of nearly empty train cars with women sitting contentedly by themselves. This view of a safe and pleasurable Tube journey only worked if women were largely separated from poorer passengers and if their experiences were safe and ordinary. These images also ignored the reality that many women were making work trips into the city and that, in general, trains were becoming increasingly popular and crowded. The potential social instability of classless carriages could threaten a woman's reputation if trains were too crowded. A series of illustrated comic postcards designed by Phil May in 1904 poked fun at the social issues that could arise during these busy times in the Twopenny Tube. Most of these posters featured gender-related predicaments, as low-class women flirted with gentlemen or lovers met on station benches. In one such postcard of Tottenham Court Road station, a disreputable man is seen propositioning a woman:



Figure 4.6. Twopenny Tube Illustrated Comic Postcard.

⁵⁶³ Phil May, Postcard, 1904. Ref. number: 1984/51/870. London Transport Museum.

The viewer was meant to laugh at the fact that the man mistook the unsuspecting lady for a prostitute, but these images also provided an important social critique of the idealized transport interactions promoted by Tube advertisers.

Ultimately, many of these dangers about shopping times represented an attempt to maintain traditional notions of proper class and gender norms more than any real threat to women on the Tube. Even after the removal of class carriages, different classes tended to patronize the Underground at different times. During the later morning commute, clerical workers often jostled for space on platforms with working-class women, whose domestic service jobs tended to start around 9am. These moments could have provided potentially destabilizing interactions, but working-class women's respectability in public space was less of a target of concern for Underground officials because these women presumably had fewer affordable or efficient options for travel than wealthier women.⁵⁶⁴ Trains did become more consistently overcrowded by the interwar period, when slightly shorter workweeks caused the majority of workers from all classes to begin and end their workdays on more similar schedules.⁵⁶⁵ However, the early fears about middle-class women's presence during appropriate times on the Underground suggests that the Tube may have enhanced women's freedom to move through the city, but their respectability was still limited to certain spaces and times.

⁵⁶⁴ Simon Abernethy, "Class and Commuting on the Underground, 1863-1939." Paper presented at Going Underground: Travel Beneath the Metropolis, 1863-2013 – A Conference to Mark the 150th Anniversary of the London Underground, Institute of Historical Research, London, 17-18 January 2013.

⁵⁶⁵ Abernethy, "Class and Commuting on the Underground."

IV. The Underground in the Women's Movement

Ultimately, the Underground was one of several transport options available to Londoners during this period that all combined to make London a more accessible and democratic city. As this chapter has shown, those democratic promises had their limits, particularly for women. However, the Underground facilitated women's access to democratic freedoms in a much more literal sense by providing a crucial tool for women to access during several national campaigns for suffrage. Many of the suffrage groups based in London included the name of the nearest Tube station in their advertisements for meetings, lectures, and receptions.⁵⁶⁶ At the turn of the twentieth century, the Underground became a site of negotiation over voting rights campaigns and a tool by which women moved their bodies through urban space to demand changes.

There were sporadic petitions for women's enfranchisement in the 1830s, but the organized women's movement truly emerged in the 1850s and 1860s in response to discussions of a new reform bill and outrage over the CD Acts.⁵⁶⁷ The women's movement split along class, regional, and ideological lines during the later nineteenth century, but the various groups were able to stage a number of powerful demonstrations in London in the early 1900s. In each of these demonstrations, women consciously used

⁵⁶⁶ Indeed, the London Society for Women's Suffrage held a reception at the Elysee Galleries and noted that the location was "close to the Queen's Road Tube Station." Another advertisement for a lecture given by Mrs. Pankhurst during a Votes for Women meeting advertised its location at West Hampstead Town Hall, "close to West Hampstead Station." The papers of Jane Marie Strachey, 1860-1920, the Women's Library at the London School of Economics. London, England.

⁵⁶⁷ The movement in the 1850s centered on a group of women, led by Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes, who met at Langham Place, near Oxford Circus. These women established the Married Women's Property Committee in 1855, and it pressed successfully for legal reform to grant married women property rights. Several of these women were also involved in what became the London Society for Women's Suffrage (LSWS). For more on the organized movements, see: Harold L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866-1928*. 2nd ed. (Great Britain: Pearson Longman, 2007).

their visibility in and movement through the streets to draw national attention to their own presence in public spaces and centers of national and imperial power. David Welsh asserts that these various national marches from 1906 to 1911, which were led by the Women's Social and Political Union and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, "had an unprecedented effect on the visual environment of the capital."⁵⁶⁸ Many of these marches involved enormous numbers of women from all over the country. Such movements simply would not have been possible without the coordination of Underground lines with mainline railways. The Underground connected to regional mainline railways at several points around London and facilitated rapid transport to rallying sites across the city.

The first major march, known as the "mud march" because of horrid weather conditions that day, was organized in February 1907 by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and included nearly 3,000 women from 40 different non-militant organizations. The march, which moved from Hyde Park to Exeter Hall, was the largest open-air demonstration up to that point. Similarly, the Hyde Park Rally of 1908 used 64 trains to mobilize a quarter million people from all over the nation into London. The morning of the march, women came from mainline trains all over England and were met by women wearing red and white scarves. The women had lunch along the Strand and were taken to the Embankment by Tube to prepare to march.⁵⁶⁹ One poster advertising

⁵⁶⁸ David Welsh, *Underground Writing: The London Tube from George Gissing to Virginia Woolf* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 115.

⁵⁶⁹ Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907-14* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 81.

the march even featured a map of Hyde Park that looked like one of the newest Underground maps.⁵⁷⁰

Though the women's movement certainly involved many other factors besides transport, the literal movement of these women highlights how mobility could be harnessed to claim social and political equality as well. The Central, Bakerloo, and Piccadilly Tube lines were particularly useful access points for marchers precisely because they provided easy access to symbolic centers of government and empire.⁵⁷¹ In her history of the women's movement, Lisa Tickner argues that, during the 1908 procession, the women intentionally sought to capture national attention for their cause by creating a spectacle in the streets.

In contrast to the attention women often unwittingly experienced in urban public space, the women in these marches controlled the spectacle of their bodies by creating costumes and signs that displayed their political affiliations and gave meaning to their presence in the streets. Kate Frye, a member of the Central Society for Women's Suffrage, confirmed this sense of empowerment that came from visibility and mobility in her diary entry from the Mud March.⁵⁷² She noted that the bitter cold and rain discouraged her from joining the march at first, but she met up with several fellow suffragettes and "tore to Notting Hill Gate [Tube station]— meaning to go the quickest way." Upon reaching the procession, Frye noted how crowds of men emerged from

⁵⁷⁰ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 115.

⁵⁷¹ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 115.

⁵⁷² Kate Frye, "The Mud March," 9 February 1907, reprinted in *Campaigning for the Vote: Kate Parry Frye's Suffrage Diary*, ed. Elizabeth Crawford (London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2013). <http://womanandhersphere.com/2012/11/21/kate-fryes-suffrage-diary-the-mud-march-9-february-1907>. The procession attempted to represent women of all classes but contemporary press reports suggested that women of the middle and lower-middle classes probably made up the greatest number: "The Women's Suffrage Demonstration," *Times* (London, England), 19 June 1911, 33.

men's clubs and businesses to watch with interest as the women passed. She found the experience exhilarating and empowering, concluding, "We were an imposing spectacle." These women knew that the march would make an impact for the sheer novelty of the procession, but they also knew that the impropriety of so many respectable women marching in the streets would attract significant national attention.⁵⁷³ The connections between women's literal and figurative mobility were not lost on contemporaries; one illustration from *Punch* in 1906 featured a smirking policeman as he carried a suffragette - in the midst of a tantrum - in his arms. The caption below read, "safest and cheapest traveling in London: new method of transit invented by our hysterical friends the Suffragettes; cheaper, quicker, and more reliable than tubes or motor-buses."⁵⁷⁴

Aside from providing the means to reach centers of power, the Underground itself also became a highly visible public space in which people on both sides of the suffrage debate struggled to sway public opinion. For instance, organizers of the Women's Pilgrimage of 1913 began their efforts to draw attention to the upcoming event by placing posters on sixty motorbuses and the Hampstead, City of London, Bakerloo, Piccadilly, and Metropolitan Tube lines.⁵⁷⁵ In her book on the suffrage movement in Britain, Sophia A. van Wingerden notes a particularly witty retort recorded in the *Common Cause* (taken originally from the *Manchester Guardian*) between anti-and pro-voting rights advocates. The Saturday before a large suffragette march, a popular weekly journal advertised the question "Why do men despise women?" on a placard placed on the station walls. Just below it, an anti-suffragette placard read, "Women do not want the vote." Someone (presumably sympathetic to the suffragettes' cause) connected the two posters by writing

⁵⁷³ Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 21.

⁵⁷⁴ "Safest and Cheapest Travelling in London," *Punch*, 1906. Punch Online Archive.

⁵⁷⁵ Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 141.

“BECAUSE” in large letters, so that the placards now read “Why do men despise women? *Because* women do not want the vote.”⁵⁷⁶ Other suffragists waged a “silent battle” on similar anti-suffragist placards in the Tubes by removing the word “not” from signs that said women did not want the vote or putting up their own signs next to these posters that read “come to Trafalgar Square and see!”⁵⁷⁷

The Underground seemed to suggest some support for the suffragettes in a more direct manner as well. A 1911 advertisement, which inspired the title for this chapter, showed a woman wearing the purple suffragette colors and the green background. The woman points to a sign on a Tube station wall that reads, “the way for all:”



578

Figure 4.7. “Underground, The Way for All.”

⁵⁷⁶ Sophia A van Wingerden, *The Women’s Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 116.

⁵⁷⁷ Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, 286.

⁵⁷⁸ Alfred France, “Underground; the way for all,” Poster, 1911, Reference number: 1983/4/124.

This poster illustrates many of the issues at the heart of this chapter. The Underground clearly advanced images of women confidently and safely navigating subterranean space. By promoting women's increased presence in the metropolis, the Underground can be seen as a tool for challenging traditional notions of feminine identity. However, Tube officials often restricted women's mobility to certain spaces and times when the promises of a truly democratic transport service seemed too much at odds with maintaining a respectable and safe urban space.

This tension over women's place on the Underground continued to plague women during the world wars as well. War brought increased opportunities for women in the workplace, and forced the Underground to broaden the scope of patriotism to include women's work as well. As conditions abroad worsened and soldiers were conscripted, the Underground employed women for the first time.⁵⁷⁹ While the Underground officials promised that these positions would go back to men once they returned home from the war, women operated lifts and worked as gatewomen, guards, porters, and ticket clerks.⁵⁸⁰ In 1918 these women used their positions as Underground employees to strike in order to receive the war bonus given to men. Women's roles in the Underground during both wars as official employees, nurses, or mothers protecting a sheltering family provided another means through which women asserted their right to inhabit the public spaces of London.

Women were employed on the Underground during World War II and also used it to get to work, but they struggled to assert their right to the city even with greater wartime employment opportunities. One Londoner, Mrs. D. Farrall, took the Tube to get

⁵⁷⁹ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 157.

⁵⁸⁰ LMA: ACC/1297/MET/10/776: Employment of Female Staff for Railways, 1914-1916

to work in the Civil Service each day during World War II. She traveled by workman's train each morning and recalled being "packed like sardines" so tightly that the guards had to physically lean on people to push them into the cars in order to close the doors. In these crowded conditions, she noted that young girls were often subjected to harassment from men. She said they would defend themselves by standing together. Sometimes, "fatherly-looking" men would help protect them, yelling things like, "backs together, girls, push 'em!" She noted that trains often stopped in the tunnels during air raids and that she often felt "very vulnerable" waiting for the train to start again.⁵⁸¹ Consequently, even with greater access to the public spaces of the city, women continued to struggle for respect and recognition as they actually occupied these spaces.

V. Conclusion:

As this chapter has shown, divisions within society were replicated in the spatial structures of transport – whether through different class tickets, gender-segregated compartments, or guidelines about the best times for men and women to travel.⁵⁸² Ultimately, these conflicts over acceptable gendered behavior in the spaces of the Underground helped male and female passengers make sense of this new space and their own relationships to it, which had larger implications for constructing urban identities as well. Indeed, our lives are still marked by the everyday journeys we make for work or pleasure, and in this way, our everyday mobility helps to define our identities.⁵⁸³

⁵⁸¹ Mrs. D. Farrall: (Documents. 6480), 1-2

⁵⁸² Thacker, *Moving through Modernity*, 86.

⁵⁸³ Colin G. Pooley, Jean Turnbull and Mags Adams, *A Mobile Century?: Changes in Everyday Mobility in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2005), 1.

This debate about gender identity and urban transport also answers a problem Lynda Nead posed in *Victorian Babylon* when she asserted that most historians only insert women into the history of modernity by exploring domestic spaces or the history of shopping. She counters that women's presence in public spaces corroded the male and female distinctions in these public spaces.⁵⁸⁴ I argue that the Underground emerged as an essential public space in this larger debate. From the early conflicts over women's use of smoking carriages to larger fears about the mixing of men and women of different social classes, the Tube became a crucial site of negotiation between men and women in constructing the urban spaces of modernity. The spaces of the Underground are essential for understanding how public transport represented the benefits and dangers of the modern city. While their efforts were not always successful, women's agency on the Tube challenged and reformed the social makeup of the Underground and ultimately helped to legitimize their presence in urban space.

⁵⁸⁴ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 70.

CHAPTER FIVE: PUTTING LONDON ON THE MAP

On a Wednesday morning outside Brixton Tube station, writer Mark Mason tied up his Asics and began his own personal ambulatory adventure: to walk the entirety of the London Underground system aboveground. As a Londoner for over thirteen years, Mason was intimately familiar with many parts of the vast city and with much of its Tube network, but he wanted some concrete way to experience London's totality for himself. Mason decided that the Tube network made London a unified city, so he walked 403 miles of London's Underground on foot, loosely tracing the routes of each line in succession over a period of months. Mason's journey was an attempt – using the Tube Map and the overground A-Z map of London as guides – to “put himself on the map.”⁵⁸⁵ In other words, Mason felt that Londoners could still be very parochial in their everyday experiences of the city, and this prevented them from really getting a sense of what actually constituted London. Along the journey, Mason concluded:

London isn't real. It isn't a city; it's an idea. London has such magic simply because we believe it has magic. Take away that belief and it's just a collection of buildings and roads and parks and Tube stations linked by colorful lines that aren't really there.... And the real beauty is that even knowing this thing called London isn't real doesn't stop it feeling real.⁵⁸⁶

If a city as varied and immense as London seems like an idea, this chapter explores what kind of idea London is. More particularly, this chapter investigates the role the Tube played in mapping London, both physically and in the minds of Londoners. The Tube literally created modern London by enabling people to live further from the city and thus

⁵⁸⁵ Mark Mason, *Walk the Lines: The London Underground, Overground* (London: Arrow Books, 2011), 8.

⁵⁸⁶ Mason, *Walk the Lines*, 364.

expanding the borders of what had previously been known as London. However, the Tube also played a hugely significant and often overlooked role in unifying the city on a more abstract level. Tube officials used Underground aesthetics like the roundel logo to unify London, but they simultaneously stimulated tourism within the city through posters advertising the unique regions that made up the metropolis.

Even when Londoners were not always happy about their reliance on the Underground – such as during periods of overcrowding between the World Wars - Londoners still did come to rely on the Tube as a way to make sense of the world aboveground. Ultimately, the Tube’s unifying impulse would find its greatest test and legacy during World War II, when the Underground provided a shelter for Londoners escaping the Blitz and often functioned as the only recognizable symbol in an otherwise hellishly chaotic landscape. Through literal and imagined maps of the city, the Underground ingratiated itself into the everyday lives of Londoners in a way that became deeply connected to larger notions of British identity.

I. Mapping London’s Social Geography

Lynda Nead argues that “Mid-Victorian London was shaped by the forces of two urban principles: mapping and movement.”⁵⁸⁷ If, as Chapter Three has demonstrated, Victorian London was a place of blocked mobility, creating greater freedom to move required a better understanding of what the city looked like. Maps, like urban

⁵⁸⁷ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 13.

celebrations or visual cues for ordering behavior, had an ordering function that helped inspire and normalize government intervention into the everyday lives of Londoners.

Overcrowding, disease, poor sanitation, and heavy traffic led Victorian scientists and reformers on a fact-finding mission to determine the causes and solutions to London's problems. The knowledge these reformers accumulated served as an early means of socially mapping the metropolis. Publications like Edwin Chadwick's government-sponsored "Sanitary Report of 1842" illustrated the regions of the city most in need of improvement.⁵⁸⁸ Chadwick inspected thousands of poor Londoners' homes to create detailed descriptions of where poverty most affected the capital. The report suggested that poor lodging increased the chances of crime and disease and that sanitary improvement would save the government money by allowing the poor to live in healthier, safer, and more moral conditions.⁵⁸⁹

Similarly, Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1889) plotted London's poverty down to the individual street level. He coded streets in seven different colors to indicate that area's position on a scale of poverty. The poorest areas, whose people were described as "vicious, semi-criminal," were shaded in black and the wealthy regions in a golden yellow hue.⁵⁹⁰ By color-coding entire streets, Booth reinforced the notion that London was socially segregated between rich and poor.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁸ Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 12. For more on Edwin Chadwick and the public health movement, see Christopher Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain, 1800-1854*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

⁵⁸⁹ Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 21, 37.

⁵⁹⁰ Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 71.

⁵⁹¹ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 72.

These maps also helped inspire reform by demonstrating to viewers how disorganized and illogical some of the city's streets were.



592

Figure 5.1. Booth's Poverty Map of Bethnal Green, 1889

The above image of Bethnal Green from Booth's poverty map (where increasingly darker shades designated more extreme levels of poverty) seemed to support writer H.J. Mackay's warning in 1891 that "like one enormous black, motionless, giant kraken, the poverty of London lies [in the East End] in lurking silence and encircles with its mighty tentacles the life and wealth of the City."⁵⁹³ Mackay added that the wealthy living in the West End heard about this poverty but that "the East End is a world in itself,

⁵⁹² "Charles Booth Online Archive" *London School of Economics* <<http://www.booth.lse.ac.uk>>

⁵⁹³ J.H. Mackay, *The Anarchists: A Picture of Civilization at the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, (New York: Humboldt Publishing Co., 1891), 153.

separated from the West as the servant is separated from his master.”⁵⁹⁴ Many contemporaries described the impoverished East End as if the people were of an entirely different race that was completely isolated from and yet, paradoxically, a danger to the rest of London.⁵⁹⁵ Indeed, Booth likened the East End to Henry Morton Stanley’s description of “Darkest Africa” and implied that its inhabitants were as barbarous as those found in remote colonial outposts.⁵⁹⁶



Figure 5.2. Booth’s Poverty Map of Bloomsbury, 1889.

⁵⁹⁴ Mackay, *The Anarchists*, 153.

⁵⁹⁵ David Reeder, “H.J. Dyos and the Urban Process,” in *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History*, ed. David Cannadine and David Reeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), xviii.

⁵⁹⁶ Todd Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire: Suburbia and the Colonization of Britain, 1880 to the Present* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 13.

⁵⁹⁷ “Charles Booth Online Archive” *London School of Economics* <<http://www.booth.lse.ac.uk>>

However, as threatening as this urban jungle of poverty sounded, large swaths of the poverty map reveal that London's rich and poor were always mixing in the capital. In the map of Bloomsbury (Figure 5.2.) from Booth's survey, red and yellow blocks designated middle- and upper-class areas, and the mauve color denoted areas of mixed social class. Clearly, despite the warnings of urban planners, many Londoners were already living in close proximity to people from all social backgrounds. In fact, improvement may have exacerbated social segregation even more.

Mapping London's problems made them literally and imaginatively visible to Londoners in a way that simply describing the conditions had not. In response to maps like these, the government created the London County Council (1888), enacted ameliorative legislation like the Housing of the Working Classes Act (1890), and initiated a number of street improvements. However, because they were informed by the threat that these maps revealed, street improvements were as much about segregating classes as they were about improving the city. While I have already discussed how these improvements served as an answer to the massive overcrowding on London's streets, these changes also enabled slum clearance in the name of national progress.⁵⁹⁸ Indeed, many of these new streets - such as Regent Street, Farringdon Road, New Oxford Street, Holborn Viaduct, Shaftesbury Avenue, and Charing Cross Road - passed through slum housing.⁵⁹⁹

The Underground was also implicated in this process as a solution to the problems of poverty in the capital, as was mentioned in the discussion of that Farringdon slum in the first chapter. The earliest railway schemes were designed to alleviate London's

⁵⁹⁸ Poovey, *Making a Social Body*, 86.

⁵⁹⁹ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 116.

overcrowding and improve conditions for London's lower classes. Parliament bought into these schemes precisely because of their potential for improving the mobility, sanitation, and safety of the city. However, the Underground increasingly found itself trying to balance two opposing goals as it expanded across London and the surrounding villages throughout the twentieth century. On the one hand, Parliament had made it clear that Underground lines should work to relieve the city of its congested traffic. On the other hand, Underground officials needed a large middle-and upper-class ridership to pay for their initial investments, and this prospect appealed to wealthier patrons far more if those trains were free of lower-class passengers.

Consequently, the Underground dramatically altered the physical and social geography of London, but not necessarily in the ways that urban reformers had hoped. The London County Council, which was similar to the MBW but had more authority over housing, took on the problem of attempting to solve London's overcrowding when it acquired the power to compel the sale of land to provide working-class housing in the Working Classes Act of 1885. The LCC realized that building new homes in suburbs connected to London by train was a cheaper alternative to demolishing and then rebuilding housing in the city. As a result, they began to support petitions for working-class railways.⁶⁰⁰ As I have previously mentioned, the Cheap Trains Act of 1883 forced railway companies to provide workmen's fares in order to hopefully encourage an exodus of working-class Londoners to the suburbs.

⁶⁰⁰ Simon Abernethy, "Class and Commuting on the Underground, 1863-1939." Paper presented at Going Underground: Travel Beneath the Metropolis, 1863-2013 – A Conference to Mark the 150th Anniversary of the London Underground, Institute of Historical Research, London, 17-18 January 2013.

Along with providing workmen's trains once the lines were built, railway companies constructing new lines had to compensate landowners for any property that they destroyed or purchased to furnish lines. Underground engineers found the least resistance to construction in areas that were already poor and in need of massive improvement. While this construction could be spun as sanitary improvement, railway companies also built lines through slum housing to keep costs down. Many of the working-class inhabitants of these areas were renters and consequently had no real property rights in order to protect themselves from eviction. Urban reformers worried about the affects of railway speculation on working-class communities, so Parliament required railway companies to issue a demolition statement for each new line that detailed the number of people displaced by a particular scheme. However, the railways often had a landlord evict slum tenants well before the railway legally acquired the property so that the company was not legally liable for this displacement. In addition, the railways would often only count the head of each household, further driving down the numbers. Ultimately, in the sixty-one demolition statements completed between 1853 and 1900, the Underground claimed responsibility for displacing 72,000 people. In actuality, more than 120,000 people were displaced by railway development.⁶⁰¹

Consequently, the Underground likely worsened conditions for many of London's poorest inhabitants as rents in the remaining low-end neighborhoods skyrocketed from the increased demand. Even when lower-class passengers could afford to move out of the city, these changes often led to new contestations over urban space. For instance, as Andrew Thacker notes, residents of Hampstead in 1882 opposed the extension of a

⁶⁰¹ Stuart Hylton, *What the Railways did for Us? The Making of Modern Britain* (London: Amberley Publishing Ltd., 2014).

tramcar line - a popular working-class form of transport - to Hampstead because it would lower the middle-class tone of the area.⁶⁰²

In theory, if railway companies failed to provide workmen's trains, a petition could be made to the Board of Trade. By 1896, the Board of Trade discovered that railway companies had actually done very little in the way of provisions for the working classes.⁶⁰³ The National Association for the Extension of Workmen's Trains and Trams complained in 1902 that, despite a number of new proposals for Tube lines in London, these new lines were "absolutely inadequate" for conveying working-class passengers affordably.⁶⁰⁴ Moreover, as the Underground became increasingly popular with the middle classes, new railway proposals often bypassed poorer areas of London altogether. An MP concerned about the plight of "the toiling thousands in London" complained that these lines "exploit the cream of underground traffic in the West and Central as also in North London, but...they fail to give any relief to the vast industrial population east of Bishopsgate."⁶⁰⁵

As we have seen, the Underground's promise of greater mobility did raise concerns among contemporaries about gender relations, crime, and danger in the city. In reality, however, the Tube actually contributed to further class segregation as more middle-and upper-class passengers could now afford to move to suburbs outside of the city.⁶⁰⁶ Therefore, the Underground could destabilize perceptions of the social makeup of

⁶⁰² Andrew Thacker, *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 86.

⁶⁰³ "Workmen's Fares in South London, 1860-1914." (87-100)

⁶⁰⁴ Sam Woods, *National Association for the Extension of Workmen's Trains and Trams* (London), July 1, 1902.

⁶⁰⁵ Claude G. Hay, "The Tube Railway," *Times* (London, England), Tuesday, July 15, 1902.

⁶⁰⁶ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 119.

London, but London actually remained a somewhat socially segregated city, despite offering even greater access to public transport.

II. Suburban London

While they might have shunned providing working-class housing, the Tube companies actively sought to create new residential spaces for middle- and upper-class Londoners. The Metropolitan Railway, which acquired land around the northern outskirts of London, began to develop this land for leisure attractions and housing in the 1880s.⁶⁰⁷ The company's first suburban venture, near Willesden Green Station in the 1880s and 1890s, was aptly named Willesden Park Estate.⁶⁰⁸ Meanwhile, the company purchased Wembley Park Estate in 1890 with the intention of transforming it into a sports ground and pleasure park.⁶⁰⁹ These dual uses for railway lands – as housing estates or leisure sites – established two popular understandings of how London's suburbs served the metropolis.

The Metropolitan Railway Company published a guidebook known as *Metro-Land* in 1914 to encourage walkers and cyclists to make journeys via Underground to property owned by the railway.⁶¹⁰ Over the next decade, the annually published guidebook began to devote more space to using these areas for suburban residences. Underground officials hoped that housing developments would increase Tube revenue

⁶⁰⁷ Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere: London's Underground Railway in the Life of the Capital* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Unlimited in association with London's Transport Museum, 2001), 102.

⁶⁰⁸ Oliver Green, ed. *Metro-Land 1924* (London: Southbank, 2004), ix.

⁶⁰⁹ Alan Arthur Jackson, *Semi-Detached London: Suburban Development, Life and Transport, 1900-39* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973) 39.

⁶¹⁰ Jackson, *Semi-Detached London*, 202.

through the sale of season tickets, as well as capitalize on changing social and economic conditions that had created a greater demand for housing in the interwar period, particularly after the wartime housing freeze was lifted.⁶¹¹ In response, the Metropolitan Railway began advertising its suburban developments in the northwest regions of London, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, and Buckinghamshire that were served by the railway line.⁶¹²

The *Metro-Land* guidebooks, released yearly until 1932 (the last year the Metropolitan Railway Company existed as a separate entity from the rest of London's transport), popularized these estates to the extent that "Metro-Land" became synonymous with suburbia. Between 1919 and 1933, the Metropolitan Railway Estates Co. built houses along the railway line in Neasden, Wembley Park, Norwich Park, Eastcote, Rayners Lane, Ruislip, Hillingon, Pinner, Richmansworth, Chroleywood, and Amersham.⁶¹³ The company also sold the land to private companies who offered buyers a range of housing styles from which to choose.⁶¹⁴ These homes promised interested Londoners a house and garden of their very own in the peace of the English countryside, and all within a quick train ride to London.⁶¹⁵ Asa Briggs argues that Metro-Land was not "so much satisfying existing needs as creating new residential districts."⁶¹⁶ Statistics prove that the Metropolitan Railway was enormously successful in creating a demand for

⁶¹¹ Jackson, *Semi-Detached London*, 20290-92.

⁶¹² Green, *Metro-Land* 1924, v.

⁶¹³ Jackson, *Semi-Detached London*, 226. This housing was managed after 1919 by the Metropolitan Railway Country Estates Ltd. This was a separate company from the railway that used the company's name in return for the railway's right to nominate the chairman and two directors to the Estates board.

⁶¹⁴ Green, *Metro-Land* 1924, xii.

⁶¹⁵ Jackson, *Semi-Detached London*, 149.

⁶¹⁶ Asa Briggs, "The Human Aggregate." In *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*. Volume I, edited by H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, 83-104. London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 16.

more suburban living, as season ticket sales in the suburb of Ickenham increased from 59 in 1921 to 1,497 by 1928.⁶¹⁷

Similarly, many of the companies who owned deep-level Tube lines struggled to regain their high initial investment costs because passengers rode these trains for such short distances around the city. To offset these costs, these companies actively promoted new suburban communities that would then be linked to planned Tube extensions and create greater demand for transport. Indeed, the Charing Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Tube's (now part of the Northern Line) extension to Golders Green became an enormous force in extending the suburbs to these regions.⁶¹⁸ Poster advertisements in Underground stations and trains informed passengers about the delights that awaited them once they moved out to the countryside of Golders Green (Figure 5.3). While plots of land near the railway line before the Tube opened in 1907 sold for £5,500 an acre, they sold for £10,000 an acre just two years later.⁶¹⁹ By 1936, the Hampstead Line carried 24 million passengers a year.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁷ Green, *Metro-Land* 1924, xx.

⁶¹⁸ Jackson, *Semi-Detached London*, 31-32.

⁶¹⁹ Jackson, *Semi-Detached London*, 73.

⁶²⁰ Jackson, *Semi-Detached London*, 241.



621

Figure 5.3. Golders Green Poster, 1908.

Although London's inner city population declined in the interwar period, the population in the suburbs expanded by more than a million people between 1921 and 1931.⁶²² Consequently, more working-class passengers were also able to move out to the suburbs during the interwar period. These changes were illustrated in W.J. Passingham's assertion in 1931 that it was difficult to fathom "how far the responsibility for modern garden cities in Greater London lies with the Underground railways."⁶²³ He felt that the

⁶²¹ *Golders Green*, poster, 1983/4/45, 1908, Underground Electric Railways Company, Ltd. London Transport Museum Online Collection. <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

⁶²² Jackson, *Semi-Detached London*, 531.

⁶²³ W.J. Passingham, *Romance of London's Underground* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., 1930), 31

Underground had dramatically improved the lives of countless working-class Londoners by allowing them to move from the “gloom” of the city, “where there was no scope for freedom of thought or action,” to spacious garden homes in the suburbs that provided a “higher standard of life.”⁶²⁴

By enabling and promoting expansion into the suburbs, the Underground directly contributed to what would become a defining characteristic of Englishness. The semi-detached home (a pair of two homes under the same roof) was a staple of these suburban communities that became synonymous with larger ideas about what it meant to be English. As Todd Kuchta argues, the expansion of suburbia coincided with a “marked development of the idea of England as ‘home.’”⁶²⁵ Imperial expansion provided England with sources of raw materials outside of the English countryside by transforming colonized lands into industrial sites. Imperialism ultimately freed up London’s countryside – at least ideally - as a living space instead of a workspace. As part of this process, “the home and garden became a privileged national space.”⁶²⁶ London’s residential area doubled between the wars and suburbs were the predominant form of residence for most of England by the time green space legislation limited residential growth after World War II. Indeed, as *The Railway Magazine* noted in 1913, “the modern ideal is to work in the city and live out of it – to spend the day at the center and the night at the extremities.”⁶²⁷

Therefore, while parts of the imperial city might be increasingly becoming “Darkest London,” the suburban countryside provided a restorative bastion of

⁶²⁴ Passingham, *Romance of London’s Underground*, 31..

⁶²⁵ Todd Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, 4.

⁶²⁶ Todd Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire*, 8.

⁶²⁷ *The Railway Magazine* Vol. XXXII (London: Smith’s Printing Company, Ltd., 1913), 159.

Englishness for those who could afford to move. Indeed, some contemporaries even depicted suburban sprawl as a kind of reverse colonization in which urbanites reconquered the English countryside. The 1923 edition of *Metro-Land* explained that its suburbs offered “a good parcel of English soil in which to build a home and strike root,” and it described its inhabitants as “colonists” thriving in these new lands.⁶²⁸

Although the suburban ideal offered an alluring image of a quaint English countryside home, these regions struggled to maintain the attributes that initially attracted buyers as more and more Londoners moved to the suburbs. Suburban guidebooks and transport advertisements reacted by using vivid images and lively descriptions to give these communities new identities that were a synthesis of modern commercial centers and charming ancient villages. These images sought to visually distance the suburbs from the city by suggesting the country pleasures available to those who moved, as is evident in this poster contrasting the gray monotony of the city with the vibrant pleasures of the suburbs in Edgware (Figure 5.4.).

⁶²⁸ Green, *Metro-Land*, 1923, 38.



Figure 5.4. “Leave this and Move to Edgware.”

As Underground advertisements and guidebooks touted the distinctiveness of their suburban properties in order to entice visitors and residents, their developments actually homogenized these regions to the extent that they lost much of the local identity they once had. Guidebooks attempted to fashion the individual suburbs as attractions in their own right and create distinct images of these regions in order to tie them into

⁶²⁹ William A. Kermode, *Leave This and Move to Edgware*, poster, 1983/4/1779, 1924, Underground Electric Railway Company Ltd., London Transport Museum Online, <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

peoples' cognitive maps of their capital. One of these London guidebooks, *London and Suburbs: Old and New*, noted that the new suburbs of the twentieth century were all different from one another and each added unique features to the greater London area.⁶³⁰ The guidebook advised that it was most important to choose a home that was somewhat remote, "so that you can rest in the country."⁶³¹ Prospective buyers need not worry about transport, the guidebook argued, because "the difficulty of distance from the metropolis has been conquered" by the Underground, trams, and omnibuses.

The *Metro-Land* guidebooks revealed many of the contradictions between selling London's regions as distinct attractions and turning these same attractions into homogenized mini versions of London's city center. These booklets featured beautiful photographs with colored covers and plates that could even be ordered for framing.⁶³² The descriptions that accompanied these photos attempted to form ideal images in the reader's mind of the distinct pleasures available in this particular suburb. Indeed, the 1923 edition of *Metro-Land* asserted that suburbs such as those in Amersham, offered "neat, prim little towns which keep their old-world aspect."⁶³³ Even so, the guidebook admitted that "yet houses multiply and new townships arise," suggesting that the old world identity of the region will soon be lost forever.⁶³⁴

Yet guidebooks also praised how much modernization had improved these areas. In Rayners Lane, a suburb near Harrow Garden Village station, advertisers attempted to depict its rapid development as an attraction, which "repays a visit at short intervals to

⁶³⁰ Frank Green and Sidney Wolff, *London and Suburbs: Old and New: Useful Knowledge for Health and Home* (London: Souvenir Magazines, Ltd., 1930), 81.

⁶³¹ Green and Wolff, *London and Suburbs*, 82.

⁶³² Green, *Metro-Land*, 1924, xv.

⁶³³ Oliver Green, ed. *Metro-Land*, 1923. Reprint, (Harpenden: Oldcastle Books, Ltd., 1987) 38.

⁶³⁴ Green, ed. *Metro-Land*, 1923, 38.

see it grow.” They argued that if the “quiet and rustic beauty of Rayners Lane is now a memory of the past... the broad streets of the new suburb are being beautified by the planting of trees.”⁶³⁵ Now, instead of attracting urbanites interested in escaping the city, advertisers worked to establish these sites as worthy of visiting in order to watch the unstoppable progress of English civilization.

However, not all Londoners were amenable to this new kind of countryside colonization. Several residents of Hampstead, for instance, formed a committee to protest the Charing-Cross, Euston and Hampstead Railway Bill that would extend Underground services into the Hampstead area. These detractors argued that the Bill allowed for the railway to acquire several acres of land, including a mansion and garden in the center of the Heath, for erecting a station. They feared that this station would greatly increase traffic in the area and destroy the pristine landscape. These locals also feared that hotels, restaurants, and other “buildings of objectionable character” would crowd their once-secluded suburb.⁶³⁶

The Underground physically altered the shape of London by making parts of the countryside now firmly an extension of the city itself. As middle-class Londoners moved into the suburbs, the perceived functions of the city center changed as well. No longer a place of residence, the city center was re-imagined, at least for middle-and-upper-class residents, as a place of work and as a series of attractions easily accessible by urban transport. As a result, Tube officials also inherited the task of reshaping London’s image. Their efforts to re-advertise London turned the various regions of the metropolis into sites with distinct functions, many of which seemed to exist solely for the pleasure of

⁶³⁵ Green, *Metro-Land*, 1923, 51.

⁶³⁶ “Charing Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Rail,” *Times* 36396 (London), Thursday, 7 March 1907, p. 14.

Londoners. London's inhabitants could and should be travelers in their own city, exploring its attractions for themselves, and all by Underground.

III. Selling London

The Underground Group re-imagined the city as a series of unique attractions, each tied to a particular Underground station. Consequently, advertising schemes in local papers aimed to educate readers about these Tube stations, packaging the regions they served as part of the attraction of the station itself. Tube advertisements promoted new identities for central London and its suburbs that associated each area with specific attractions or services to make sense of the expanding metropolis. These images formed new identities, but these identities could work in multiple ways; the Underground simultaneously bound the city and “fragmented it into countless distinct destinations.”⁶³⁷ Underground advertisements reinforced or created regional distinctions by promoting the unique attractions of specific parts of London. At the same time, as Underground advertisers worked to establish how people understood the sites they found aboveground, the unifying attributes of the Tube created a “structure of uniformity and regularity beneath the disorderliness of the city.”⁶³⁸ Thus, while specific Tube stops may have held significance for passengers as a place of work, home, shopping, or entertainment, one only understood how these various parts of London were connected by traveling via the

⁶³⁷ Harrington, “Civic Pride, Urban Identity and Public Transport in Britain,” 252.

⁶³⁸ Harrington, “Civic Pride, Urban Identity and Public Transport in Britain,” 253.

Underground. As a result, the unifying factors of the Underground could act as a counterweight to any sense of fragmentation.⁶³⁹

While I have already discussed posters in relation to Underground aesthetics, I am interested here in illustrating how posters commissioned by the Underground helped to create and shape mental maps of the city. H.L. Spratt, an advertising expert, noted in 1918 that it was the Underground's goal to exhibit "pictorial posters of places of interest on the system to create a desire on the part of the public to travel to these places."⁶⁴⁰ Under Frank Pick's leadership, the Underground became known as the "people's picture gallery" because of the number of modern artists whose posters were displayed on the Tube.⁶⁴¹ Harold Willoughby wrote in the *American Magazine of Art* that "it is as difficult to get a poster hung on the boards of the Combine as to get a canvas hung in the Royal Academy."⁶⁴² Indeed, these posters became such works of art in their own right that a selection of posters was exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1949.⁶⁴³

Before they advertised living in the countryside, the Underground initially promoted the surrounding countryside as a place of outdoor leisure opportunities. Suburban residents could visit leisure sites in other suburbs, but they could act as a restorative outdoor playground for urbanites as well. Descriptions of outdoor attractions emphasized the health and pleasure that could be attained by taking the Underground to the countryside. Posters plastered in Underground stations featured breathtaking

⁶³⁹ Harrington, "Civic Pride, Urban Identity and Public Transport in Britain," 253.

⁶⁴⁰ H.L. Spratt, "Advertising – Old and New," Paper presented at the Underground General Associated. Efficiency Meeting. Tuesday, 23rd April, 1918.

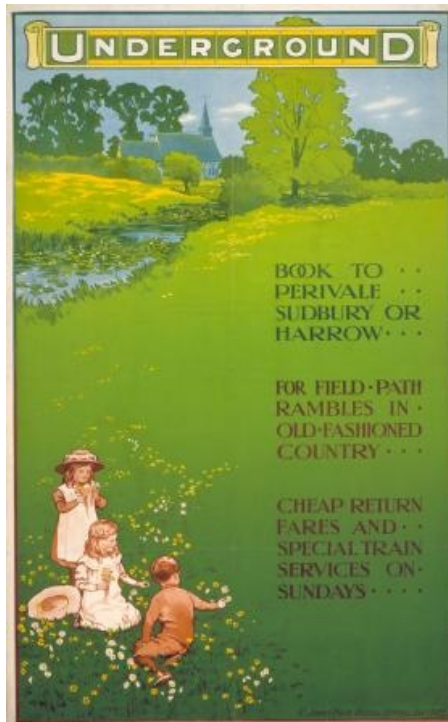
⁶⁴¹ Michael Saler, *The Avant-Garde in Interwar England: Medieval Modernism and the London Underground* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) ix.

⁶⁴² Saler, *The Avant-Garde in Interwar England*, 444.

⁶⁴³ Lord Latham, "Foreword," *Art for All: The Story of London Transport Posters*, James Laver, ed. London: Art and Technics Ltd., 1949.

landscapes, unspoiled by urban sprawl. Many of these posters were first commissioned by the Underground Electric Railways Company, a conglomeration of railway lines that had been acquired by the American entrepreneur Charles Tyson Yerkes in the first decade of the twentieth century. These posters, such as the two pictured below, used colorful images to create compelling attractions out of open countryside or unused space surrounding London. They encouraged traveling to the outskirts of town by Underground but also provided new images that linked London's surrounding countryside with pleasure and activity. This association could then be incorporated into individuals' cognitive maps of London in order to better comprehend the vast city. The *Railway Magazine* praised the Underground's poster designs in 1913, arguing that the posters "are directing attention to the charms of the countryside, which they seem to link together, and enable people to see how easily they may reach the leading shopping centers of London."⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴⁴ "Modern Posters on the Underground," *The Railway Magazine*. Vol. XXXII (London, England), Smith's Printing Company, Ltd., 1913, 420.



645 Collection of London Transport Museum



Collection of London Transport Museum

646

Figures 5.5. and 5.6. “Book to Perivale, Sudbury, or Harrow,” and “Wooded Middlesex.”

Under Pick’s guidance, the Underground Group commissioned advertisements that would become iconic symbols of London and its attractions. Pick argued that “the real value of a poster turns upon its imaginative qualities,” and he commissioned posters intended to spark the imaginations of passengers into wanting to see and do more in London, via Underground of course.⁶⁴⁷ These ideal images of the pleasures that could be consumed by procuring a railway ticket were available for purchase themselves. Indeed, copies of these artistic posters were sold for two or three shillings from the

⁶⁴⁵ Charles Sharland, *Book to Perivale, Sudbury or Harrow*, poster 1983/4/27, 1909, London: Underground Electric Railways Company Ltd., London Transport Museum Online Collection. <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

⁶⁴⁶ R. Stiles, *Wooded Middlesex*, poster, 1983/4/108, 1910, Underground Electric Railway Company Ltd., London Transport Museum Online Collection, <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

⁶⁴⁷ Frank Pick, “Posters,” 1933.

Underground's Publicity Office at St. James's Park.⁶⁴⁸ These posters were also part of a concerted effort on Pick's part to use the Underground to change the way people thought about London. Pick argued these posters could provide London with something it had been missing, writing that "London, for all its infinite variety and diversity, sometimes seems to be worn bare of meaning."⁶⁴⁹ By offering Londoners a choice of where and how to spend their time, these posters provided them with the illusion that they were freely moving through and consuming the spaces of London. The *Underground Staff Magazine* of 1922 echoed Pick's assertions, commenting that:

In advertising the Underground, London itself is advertised. Millions of people through the year now look to the Underground announcements to decide how they should travel and what place of amusement or country excursion they should choose. Londoners know their way about better and enjoy their London far more since the Underground began to address them through posters.⁶⁵⁰

The Underground Group also utilized print advertisements in London newspapers to entice urbanites out of the city center and into the countryside for their leisure activities. Several of these also incorporated pastoral drawings and images of untouched countryside. A series of advertisements in *The Times* focused on the beauty and pleasure of visiting many of England's trees in their natural habitats.⁶⁵¹ For the urbanites who had difficulty determining how to enjoy these green spaces, the Underground even promised to furnish all the necessary accessories. Indeed, an August 1923 advertisement for "Holiday Picnics by Underground" to Southend-On-Sea, Hampstead Heath, and Richmond/Kew Gardens, also offered these potential picnic-goers guidebooks with

⁶⁴⁸ Oliver Green and Alan Powers, *Away We Go!: Advertising London's Transport*, (London: The Mainstone Press, 2006), 7.

⁶⁴⁹ Pick, "Underground Posters," 3.

⁶⁵⁰ Quoted in Oliver Green and Alan Powers, *Away We Go!: Advertising London's Transport*, (London: The Mainstone Press, 2006), 8.

⁶⁵¹ "London's Underground," *Times* (London, England), Thursday, 13 June 1929, p.13.

suggestions about the best country walks, as well as picnic boxes featuring cold luncheon, a knife, fork and plate (for additional fees, of course).⁶⁵² Perhaps nothing embodies the desires these advertisements hoped to stimulate quite like this booklet published by the Underground in 1912, in which the Tube is directly linked to the pursuit of happiness:



Figure 5.7. “Underground: In Search of Happiness,”

⁶⁵² “London’s Underground,” *Times* (London, England), Saturday, 04 August 1923, 5.

⁶⁵³ “Underground: In Search of Happiness,” Booklet, 2005.16037, 1912, *London Transport Museum Online*.

However, as in the suburbs, the more that people incorporated these Underground excursions into their leisure time, the busier these countryside spots became. By the 1920s, these trips had become so popular that many of these “unspoiled” countryside attractions had been largely destroyed from foot traffic and pollution. Ultimately, advertisers resorted to warning travelers not to uproot wild flowers or alter the landscape at these sites.⁶⁵⁴ Thus, even when Underground officials succeeded in guiding certain understandings of how these parts of Greater London functioned, their own success undermined the images of unspoiled countryside they sought to promote.

In addition to describing the amenities in London’s suburbs, the 1924 *Metro-Land* guidebook included a section on urban London’s primary attractions, noting that:

A careful study of these key plans will show how readily accessible are London’s places of interest, and visitors who desire to see all the great national memorials, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul’s, the Tower, the Mint, the Houses of Parliament, the Inns of Court, and so on, will find a Metro or other railway station ready at hand to afford rapid transit, free from the confusion and congestion inseparable from the surface of London’s streets.⁶⁵⁵

While these advertisements often focused on older and more established tourist attractions in the city, like St. Paul’s Cathedral or Big Ben, others sought to re-imagine regions of central London as tourist destinations themselves. These advertisements purported to educate the reader about the many regions and attractions of London, but often did so in ways that favored urban transport. Indeed, an Underground advertisement for visiting London’s West End claimed to be informing readers about the region’s attractions, but also guided them towards viewing the West End as a product of the Underground. The advertisement began by asserting that “the great West End stores are a feature of modern London.” The advertisement included a short history of the West End,

⁶⁵⁴ Green and Powers, *Away We Go!*, 45.

⁶⁵⁵ Green, *Metro-Land*, 1924, 29.

noting how “once upon a time shopping in London was a hard day’s work to be undertaken only now and then as an occasion of importance.” Thanks to the Underground, however, the article suggested that modern shopping was reduced from “a hard day’s work” into a pleasurable afternoon activity that could be accomplished as leisurely or as efficiently as one wished. The article listed the top departments stores and concluded that these stores “belong to the Underground era: the era of cheap, quick travel from the outer ring of London to the centre.”⁶⁵⁶

A similar advertisement urging visitors to travel to Leicester Square to see the attractions of “Theatreland” insisted that the Underground was to thank for this thriving entertainment district. As evidence, the advertisement noted that in 1902 there were twenty theatres and no cinemas in the half-mile radius around Leicester square. After the introduction of several convenient Tube stations (and expanding networks that reached from the suburbs into the heart of Leicester Square), thirty-five theatres and eighteen cinemas entertained visitors by 1922. This was the most centralized and popular theatre district in the world, and “cheap and rapid transport facilities between the centre and the outer ring have made possible this growth in places of entertainment.”⁶⁵⁷ While these places may once have been fashionable for work or residence, they were now re-imagined as commercial attractions with distinct services that were meant to be consumed by tourists.

The Underground even experimented with creating its own West End attractions. In 1927, the Metropolitan Railway Company announced plans to build a seven-story building over their Baker Street Station that would house flats, a department store, shops,

⁶⁵⁶ “London’s Underground,” *Times* (London, England), Tuesday, 10 January, 1922, 6.

⁶⁵⁷ “London’s Underground,” *Times* (London, England) Tuesday, 13 June 1922, 5.

banks, a public hall, and restaurants. The press coverage of the project explained that “people who come to town to shop will be able to visit the new store at Baker Street without leaving the Station.”⁶⁵⁸ Underground advertisements also encouraged associations between transport and leisure entertainment with designs such as a 1912 poster that featured a thermometer with words like “theatre,” “music halls,” and “football” in place of temperature markings and the slogan “Whatever Degree of Pleasure You Seek May be Found by Underground.”⁶⁵⁹

These advertisements sought to win over the public’s trust of the Underground as the consummate authority on London. Indeed, one particularly amusing advertisement featured a “test” for Londoners about what they knew of their capital’s attractions. This test included questions like “Where is Nelson’s Pigtail?” (the answer was the Painted Hall at Greenwich Hospital). Along with the answer, the advertisement also included the best way to see this oddity (by Underground to Elephant and Castle, in this instance).⁶⁶⁰ Or, if the reader would rather see the nearest working windmill to London, he or she could take the District Railway to Upminster Station.⁶⁶¹ Even if one did not learn anything from the Underground, one could learn *by* Underground; the Underground advertised educational activities like foreign language classes, lectures, and craft schools and provided directions to the corresponding Underground stations.⁶⁶² The railways also ingrained themselves with London-wide exhibitions. Many of these stressed the

⁶⁵⁸ “A New Shopping Centre,” *Times* (London, England), Saturday, 05 March 1927.

⁶⁵⁹ *The Temperature of the Underground*, poster 1983/4/144, 1912, Underground Electric Railways Company, Ltd, (1983/4/144) London Transport Museum Online Collection. <http://www.Ltmcollection.org/posters>

⁶⁶⁰ “Underground,” *Times* (London, England), Tuesday, Jan. 20, 1925, 16.

⁶⁶¹ “Underground,” *Times* (London, England), Thursday, March 19, 1925, 10.

⁶⁶² “Underground,” *Times* (London, England), Friday, Oct. 21, 1927, 12.

importance of the Empire and “the various underground companies tapped into this notion of imperial power, with, for example, the District Railway publishing special Jubilee maps that featured images of the Empire.”⁶⁶³ The Metropolitan Railway even assembled a display at the British Empire Exhibition of 1923 that featured a full-size carriage.⁶⁶⁴

The Underground also tied themselves closely to nationally significant events, like royal celebrations. The Tube coordinated transport on these days, enabling visitors to watch important royal processions move through London for weddings, coronations, funerals, and jubilee celebrations. The Underground officials followed each of these national events by publishing booklets about the transport coordination that celebrated the Tube’s successes in enabling such a momentous occasion in the nation’s capital. The booklet from the 1937 Coronation of King George VI noted that the book should remind each member of staff “the part which he played in a Royal occasion.” To accommodate large crowds from all over the world that descended into London, the Underground ran trains continuously for forty-six hours and carried 5.5 million passengers.⁶⁶⁵

The Underground’s success in creating new identities for the regions of London was particularly evident in the case of sporting events. The increase of urban transport options allowed sports fans to form crowds that would have been unimaginable before. The effect of the railway or Underground station on modern football was so pronounced that many football clubs used railway stations as determining factors in deciding where

⁶⁶³ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 77.

⁶⁶⁴ “Letter from R.H. Selbie to T.S.W. Dewar,” (the Metropolitan Carriage, Wagon, and Finance Co., Ltd.) 6th July, 1923, LMA:ACC/1297/MET/10/196/004: British Empire Exhibition, 1924

⁶⁶⁵ *The Coronation 1937: A Record of Services on the Underground* (London Transport, 1937). LMA: ACC/1297/LPT/19/013

new grounds and clubs should be established. For instance, Tottenham Hotspur chose White Hart Lane as its location largely to benefit from a nearby station that enabled tens of thousands of fans to descend on the stadium in just a few hours.⁶⁶⁶ Chelsea's ground at Stamford Bridge was also intentionally constructed next to Fulham Broadway Underground station. Moreover, Stamford Bridge's owners established the transport links before the club itself, and the stadium was actually created from soil unearthed during Underground construction.⁶⁶⁷ The Underground returned the favor by advertising game schedules and proving directions about the best ways to reach stadiums by Tube. For a Tottenham Hotspur's soccer game, the advertisement directed passengers to take the Underground to Finsbury Park and then take a tram to "White Hart."⁶⁶⁸ The Underground also advertised for special game-day services, such as return tickets issued for important football matches on their system.⁶⁶⁹

The ease and low-cost nature of Underground and railway transport encouraged the growth of modern professional football by ushering in an era of stadium building among local clubs by the 1890s.⁶⁷⁰ These events profited from working-class patronage of the Tube and were widely advertised by Underground officials with weekly announcements about game times and Tube routes. The crowds that attended these football games, largely comprised of working-class and lower-middle-class citizens, used their attendance to demonstrate their interests in how London's spaces should be utilized.

⁶⁶⁶ David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Soccer* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008), 52.

⁶⁶⁷ Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, 53, and W.J. Passingham, *The Romance of London's Underground*, 21.

⁶⁶⁸ "Underground Electric Railways Ltd.," *Times* (London, England) Wednesday, Oct. 8, 1919, 5.

⁶⁶⁹ "Underground Electric Railways, Ltd.," *Times* (London, England), Wednesday, February 04, 1920, 5.

⁶⁷⁰ Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, 60

With such large numbers of potential spectators at stake, the lack of Underground stations near football stadiums could dramatically hinder their growth and popularity. Indeed, Arsenal's move to Highbury in north London from Woolwich in south London was motivated primarily by the availability of land next to a Piccadilly Line station in 1913. As a result, transport availability for sport facilities could trump older loyalties to specific neighborhoods or regions of London. Sports clubs also reinforced this connection, evident in Arsenal's team manager Herbert Chapman's decision to have Underground authorities rename Gillespie Road Tube station after Arsenal in the 1930s in order to increase attendance at games.⁶⁷¹ The connection to the Underground (as well as Tube advertisements about these sporting events) helped to establish new identities for the regions around these stations. Affinities for teams and their attractions provided new identities for these areas of London and further altered citizens' mental maps of their city.

The Tube clearly played an integral role in shaping the mental maps Londoners made of their city. Underground advertisements suggested to Londoners what sites they should see and what meanings they should take away about the important spaces in their city. However, the Underground's role in physically and mentally shaping the maps of Londoners was a complicated back-and-forth process between unifying the city and highlighting the distinctive regions of London. The Underground broke down distinctiveness and unified the city's component parts by connecting each region as part of greater London. However, the Tube simultaneously reinforced local distinctiveness by making unique regional sites of interest more broadly accessible (such as Charing Cross, Temple Bar, or Hampstead Heath).

⁶⁷¹ Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, 190

The Underground spaces also became a new way of relating to the city above. While transport transformed the capital into a series of destinations, it also created a new kind of place in one's mental map of London: transport space. Chris Otter argues that the Tube represented a "sanitization of sensory experience" in that passengers using the system no longer had to smell, hear, or see the unpleasant aspects of the city they traveled through.⁶⁷² David Ashford argues that the Tube may also have been one of the first examples of non-spaces (such as airports or highways) that people pass through too quickly to consider "real" places, but which are crucial for the functioning of modern society. These spaces often look alike but give few clues about the outside landscape and therefore must interpret that landscape for people passing through the space with signs and images.⁶⁷³ The Underground is a very real place with miles and miles of tunnel, but it is also a space of movement and transience, and it possesses few features that could alert passengers to the spaces above.

IV. Mapping the City

The confusion Londoners felt when trying to codify, understand, and regulate their ever-expanding capital was further complicated by the fact that the more people used the Underground, the less of their city they actually saw. As Wolfgang Schivelbusch explains, with the advent of railroads, "a given special distance, traditionally covered in a fixed amount of travel time, can suddenly be dealt with in a fraction of that time.... In

⁶⁷² Chris Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2008), 58.

⁶⁷³ Ashford, David. *London Underground: A Cultural Geography* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 2.

terms of transport economies, this means a shrinking of space.”⁶⁷⁴ Some passengers found this “annihilation of time and space” disconcerting because rail travel obscured the places encountered between departures and destinations, causing them to lose any sense of local identity. In this way, train rides – above ground and especially below – could be extremely jarring experiences for passengers. These journeys also created a new time in the day – the time of the commute. As London itself became too large to be easily mapped, the need for a new way to map the metropolis and make sense of its component parts took on increasing importance.

Both Londoners and tourists to London frequently remarked by the mid-Victorian period that the city was incomprehensibly large. As Oliver Wendell Holmes explained, “the great sight in London is... London. No man understands himself as infinitesimal until he has been a drop in that ocean.”⁶⁷⁵ Likewise, Henry James found London’s speed and immensity horrifyingly impersonal when he remarked that “the natural fate of an obscure stranger would be to be trampled to death in Piccadilly and have his carcass thrown into the Thames.”⁶⁷⁶ Karl Baedeker admitted in his popular London guidebook that “the most indefatigable sightseer will take at least three weeks to obtain even a superficial acquaintance with London and its objects of interest.”⁶⁷⁷ In a similar manner, Black’s 1922 *Descriptive Guide to London* asserted in his guide that “the metropolis is so

⁶⁷⁴ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: the Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1986), 41.

⁶⁷⁵ Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Our Hundred Days in Europe* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1887), 5-6.

⁶⁷⁶ Henry James, *Collected Travel Writings: Great Britain and America*, ed. Richard Howard (New York: Library Classics of the United States, 1993), 18.

⁶⁷⁷ Karl Baedeker, *London and its Environs, Handbook for Travellers* (Leipsic: Karl Baedeker, 1900), 107.

vast, its interests are so many and so intricate, that it may be doubted whether any man can truthfully say that he ‘knows London.’”⁶⁷⁸

Writings on London during this period often infused elements of the sublime into descriptions of the city’s immensity. Marveling at the immensity of the modern industrial city could be a pleasurable and anxiety-provoking experience at the same time. Indeed, British historian Goldwin Smith depicted this sublime experience in his travel account:

Hardly even from the top of St. Paul’s or of the Monument [to the Great Fire of London] can anything like a view of the city as a whole be obtained. It is indispensable, however, to make one or other of those ascents when a clear day can be found, not so much because the view is fine, as because you will get a sensation of vastness and multitude not easily forgotten.⁶⁷⁹

Richard Dennis notes that the desire to see the city from above created a taste for panoramas. These attractions, such as a permanent panorama at Leicester Square from 1793-1864, featured a central viewing platform with painted 360-degree views of the city.⁶⁸⁰ Hot-air balloon rides, popular from the 1790s, also allowed people access to birds’ eye views of the city that had previously only been imaginable.⁶⁸¹

In the 1900 edition of his London guidebook, Baedeker argued that “nothing is better calculated to afford the traveler some insight into the labyrinthine topography of London, to enable him to ascertain his bearings, and to dispel the first oppressive feeling of solitude and insignificance, than a drive through the principle quarters of town...outside of an omnibus.”⁶⁸² While an omnibus might have offered a mobile panorama of the city, London’s continued expansion and growth made it increasingly

⁶⁷⁸ *Black’s Guide to London and its Environs* ed. by A.R. Hope Moncrieff, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1922), 28.

⁶⁷⁹ Goldwin Smith, *A Trip to England* (New York and London: MacMillan and Company, 1892), 44.

⁶⁸⁰ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 54.

⁶⁸¹ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 54.

⁶⁸² Baedeker, *London and its Environs 1900*, 105.

difficult to comprehend the scope of the city or the ways in which its various regions and attractions functioned within the metropolis. The Underground contributed to urban growth as new lines and extensions shattered the old boundaries of the city, helping to double London's geographic area between 1919 and 1939. Anxious to preserve London's reputation as the center of the empire and a symbol of civilization, some citizens began to worry that all this unchecked expansion "might eventually destroy the meaning of London altogether."⁶⁸³

Yet even as the Underground contributed to the astronomical growth of London, the Tube also offered some respite from the anxieties associated with navigating this ever-expanding capital. By connecting all of these regions, the Underground acted as a constant amidst these changes and therefore served as a potential means of re-imagining the modern city.⁶⁸⁴ In this way, the aesthetic features of the Underground – the station names, the Johnson typeface, the Underground promotional posters and official announcements, and even the visual cues given by fellow passengers to regulate Underground society – all became part of how people made meaning of London, part of how "Londoners recognize and reflect on their city."⁶⁸⁵

Underground professionals utilized maps, advertisements, and travel literature to influence how people imagined Tube transport and its role in the capital. The focus on attractions, in particular, attempted to "sell" London to Londoners and make the capital more comprehensible. In effect, these images aimed to re-imagine the capital as a series of destinations that could be known, experienced, enjoyed, and understood... because of

⁶⁸³ Winter, *London's Teeming Streets*, 195.

⁶⁸⁴ Jeremy Melvin, "Imagery and Impression," in *New Connections: New Architecture, New Urban Environments and the London Jubilee Extension*, ed. by Richard MacCormac, Peter Murray and Mary Anne Stevens (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2001), 9.

⁶⁸⁵ Jeremy Melvin, "Imagery and Impression," 9.

their accessibility by Underground. Tube promoters used this accessibility to actively influence the types of attractions Londoners visited as well.

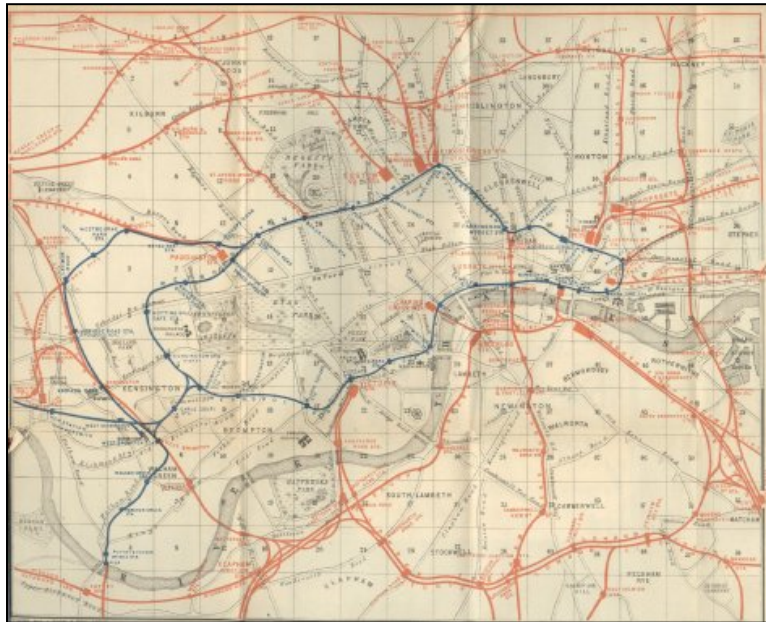
The ease of navigating Underground networks and the consistency of these visual signals helped individuals to feel more “secure, mobile, and autonomous” when navigating the city.⁶⁸⁶ These efforts to understand the capital inspired a number of Tube maps that could use the world under the surface of the city to make sense of the world above. Tube maps imposed a certain schematic order onto the chaos of the city, and verbal and visual images of attractions established how regions of the city served London. The Tube map and these images of attractions guided readers through the increasingly confusing maze of streets, railway lines, and regions that made up Greater London in ways that preserved the liberal project of the Underground’s founders. Ultimately, the most successful attempts to understand the capital through transport were compromises between railway officials and ordinary passengers in which both parties saw the benefits of using transport to make sense of the increasingly confusing capital.

The Underground provided Londoners with an alternative view of London that arranged the city into an orderly and unified whole, even when it was not. Mapping the city allowed the Underground to become “a backbone in peoples’ cognitive maps,” reshaping how they understood and experienced their city.⁶⁸⁷ Thus, these tools allowed Tube officials to shape behaviors and control perceptions of urban space outside of their own Underground stations and platforms.

⁶⁸⁶ Otter, *The Victorian Eye*, 54.

⁶⁸⁷ Zhan Guo, “Mind the Map! The Impact of Transit Maps on Path Choice in Public Transit,” *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 45, no. 7 (2011). <http://web.ebscohost.com>

Early efforts at Underground maps tended to omit other lines or obscure the distance between stations in order to encourage passengers to support certain lines.



688

Figure 5.8. District Map of Greater London, 1905.

One of the early maps for the District line in 1905 is pictured above. One can tell from the map that the underground line is shown in relation to some aboveground markers as well as the other District railway lines. The map clearly fails to provide an adequate understanding of how this line related to the other Underground lines or what lines to take in order to reach a certain location most efficiently. Indeed, most of the maps produced to help one navigate the Underground before the 1930s attempted to anchor the lines below to geographic realities above.

⁶⁸⁸ “The District Map of Greater London and its Environs.”
<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/clivebillson/tube/tube.html>

The first map designed to incorporate all the Underground lines in 1908 followed the same geographic realities, and was thus even more confusing:



Figure 5.9. Pocket Underground Map, 1908.

This map, designed by a joint group of railway companies before they formed the Underground Group in 1913, used colors to distinguish between each of the different lines. While this helped differentiate Tube railways, the mapmakers had difficulty determining how to display all of the lines together.⁶⁹⁰ Tube maps needed to be a manageable size to be useful to viewers. However, if they included the outlying suburban extensions of each line, the maps became too large to read quickly. Conversely, if they minimized the lines to fit onto a smaller map, the individual stations in central London were too small and too close together to be read properly. Covering such a large scale

⁶⁸⁹ London Underground Railways, map FOT3938, 1912, Fotolibra, <http://www.fotolibra.com/gallery>.

⁶⁹⁰ Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere*, 143.

also made it difficult to anchor the map to geographic points aboveground without hopelessly confusing the viewer in a vast array of railway lines, streets and landmarks.

While the Underground Group tried various maps on the public, a junior draughtsman in the signal engineer's department, Henry Beck, created the design for what would become the standard Tube map. Beck, inspired by the map for the London sewage system, decided to dismiss geographic reality in favor of a schematic map that would reduce London to only the necessary information needed to traverse the capital efficiently.⁶⁹¹ He used the Central Line as the horizontal axis for the map and maintained the colored lines for different railways found in earlier maps. In addition, Beck reduced the lines' actual routes into schematic representations that followed vertical, horizontal, or 45 degree paths. He also removed all geographic features aside from the Thames River and, by doing so, was able to include outlying extensions without enlarging the total size of the map. This disregard for geography allowed Beck to enlarge the distance between stations in central London so they would be easily viewed and make the stations in the outer suburbs appear closer to the city center than they actually were.⁶⁹² Manipulating the distance between stations was possible in this map because time and ease, rather than actual distance, were the central factors guiding viewers' travel choices.

Passengers, particularly those from the suburbs, found the new map more appealing than older versions because it made their routes into the city seem straightforward and efficient and it shrank the city back to a more manageable size.⁶⁹³ Moreover, the map succeeded in dismissing all of the traditional constraints on Underground mapping – rival companies, travel distance, and aboveground features –

⁶⁹¹ Zhan Guo, "Mind the Map!"

⁶⁹² Zhan Guo, "Mind the Map!"

⁶⁹³ Zhan Guo, "Mind the Map!"

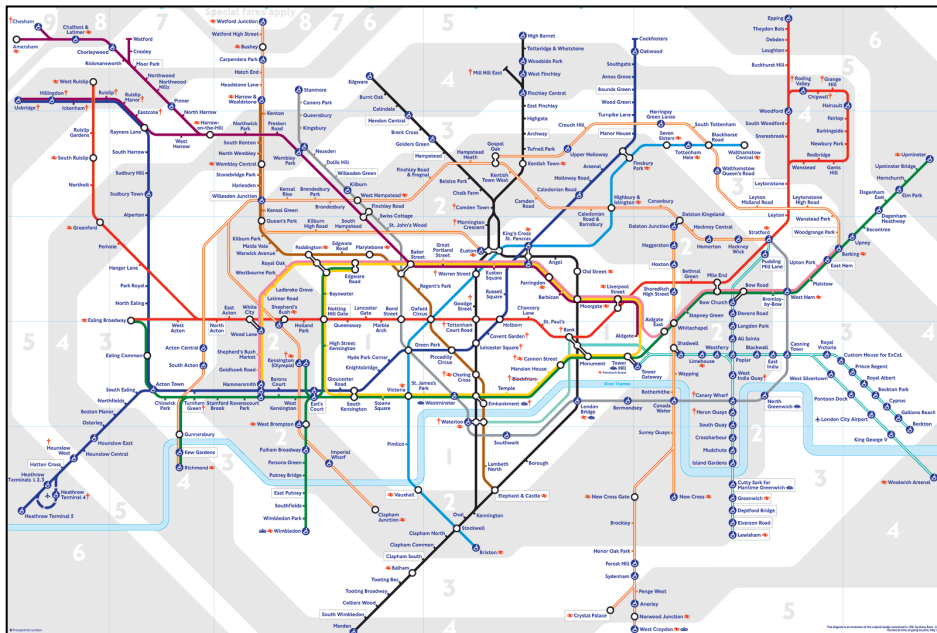
and replacing them with a simple view of London transport that enabled viewers to make better informed decisions about the most efficient routes to take. In this way, even the Underground's most overt measure to establish control and regulate perceptions of transport and the city was subject to the ultimate approval of passengers themselves.

These passengers were so quick to approve of the somewhat revolutionary map design because it spoke best to their actual experience of Underground travel. As Janin Hadlaw explains, maps are cultural artifacts that are creations of particular times and spaces, and in this way maps fall into Henri Lefebvre's category of "representation of space."⁶⁹⁴ Representations of space like the Tube map carry their own logic that shapes how the map's users understand and imagine social space. This particular representation of space worked so well for Londoners because it captured what no map before had been able to: distance and time were no longer related in the ways that they had been before. Londoners did not need another map of London; they needed a new way of understanding London that took into account the fact that, thanks to transport, aboveground features no longer really mattered. Thus, London came to be represented not by its actual physical shape, but rather by a specialized and abstract representation of the city for the purpose of travel.⁶⁹⁵ Beck's work, by remapping a rational and ordered transport network over the actual map of London, controlled the chaos of the city in a way traditional maps simply failed to achieve. Henry Beck's original drawing is pictured on the following page (Figure 5.10).

⁶⁹⁴ Janin Hadlaw, "The London Underground Map: Imagining Modern Time and Space." *Design Issues*. Vol. 19, no. 1 (Winter 2003), 27.

⁶⁹⁵ Alan Jackson and Desmond F. Croome. *Rails Through the Clay: A History of London's Tube Railways* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962), 533.

As one can tell from the 2016 Tube map pictured below, Beck's Tube map was so successful that its basic form remains unaltered to this day. Indeed, over ninety-five percent of Londoners claim to have a copy at home and 15 million pocket versions are printed each year.⁶⁹⁷ While lines have expanded and the new map features background shading representing different transport zones, the design principles of Beck's original map have been maintained for nearly eighty years.



698

Figure 5.11. 2016 London Underground Map

⁶⁹⁷ Hadlaw, Janin. "The London Underground Map: Imagining Modern Time and Space." *Design Issues*. Vol. 19, no. 1 (Winter 2003), p. 9, 11. <http://www.jstor.com>

⁶⁹⁸ Standard Tube Map, Transport for London Online, <http://www.tfl.gov.uk>.

This map was also highly successful in shaping the mental maps of the Londoners who made use of it. The Tube could reshape passengers' cognitive maps of urban space by depriving them of the ability to form the spatial understanding of these regions that they would have attained by walking from one place to another. Simultaneously, the Tube map (along with the uniformity of station signs, logos, and symbols) provided an "alternative assistance" that helped users to see and navigate through a simple, stable, and well-known urban structure.

Without a comparably understandable map of London, this Tube map became (and continues to be) the means through which many Londoners saw and experienced London as a unified entity. Indeed, as passengers grew used to both the Tube map and the Tube itself, they often found that the Tube transformed their imagined view of the city aboveground as well. Bill Bryson humorously explains the transformative power of the Underground on the city above in his tribute to England, *Notes From a Small Island*:

The best part of Underground travel is that you never actually see the places above you. You have to imagine them... In London... the names nearly always sound sylvan and beckoning: Stamford Brook, Turnham Green, Bromley-by-Bow.... That isn't a city up there; it's a Jane Austen novel. It's easy to imagine that you are shuttling about under a semi-mythic city from some golden pre-Industrial age. Swiss Cottage ceases to be a busy road junction and becomes instead a gingerbread dwelling in the midst of a great oak forest known as St. John's wood.... Blackfriars is full of cowled and chanting monks. Oxford Circus has its big top.... The problem with losing yourself in these little reveries is that when you surface things are apt to be disappointing. I came up now at Tower Hill, and there wasn't a tower and there wasn't a hill.⁶⁹⁹

Bryson's witty quip demonstrates the imaginative power something as innocuous as station names could have on experiences of the world above.

⁶⁹⁹ Bill Bryson, *Notes From A Small Island* (New York: Perennial/HarperCollins, 1995), p. 41-42.

In a similar way, Beck's map held – and continues to hold – a transformative power over how people view the metropolis. The Beck Tube map further encouraged Tube transportation by making stations in Central London appear farther apart than they actually were. In order to allow enough room to clearly discern stations in central London, Beck had to enlarge the perceived distance between these points. Consequently, stations like Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square appear relatively far from one another, when in fact there is only about six minutes' walking distance between them.⁷⁰⁰ This manipulation of the space of the city also helped emphasize the middle-classness of London, by making the suburbs appear closer than they actually were. Conversely, areas not included on the Tube map were perceived as unknowable or isolated because of their lack of connection to the transport network. Indeed, Janet Vertesi argues that “the Tube Map defines what is and what isn't London.”⁷⁰¹ Poor neighborhoods that do not appear on the map, such as those in many parts of southeastern London, are therefore continually left out both routes for both physical and often social mobility.

Ultimately, these perceptions could even influence the decisions travelers made about how best to move through their city. These routes and Beck's map have become one of the most powerful influences on the way people understand and imagine London. This new space was therefore best able to revolutionize the ways people understood their city. While none of these efforts to control, regulate, and order the meanings of London was ever complete, the Underground officials clearly sought to use their technology as a tool for creating a new identity for London and the various regions that comprised this great city. The Underground officials put this sentiment best in an advertisement entitled

⁷⁰⁰ Zhan Guo, “Mind the Map!”

⁷⁰¹ Janet Vertesi, “Mind the Gap: The London Underground Map and Users' Representations of Urban Space,” *Social Studies of Science* 38 No. 1 (February 2008), 13.

“why does the Underground advertise?” Its response demonstrated a great deal about the impulse behind the Underground’s expansion of London and their desires over how people should view the Tube’s role in the modern city:

Because Londoners cannot see their Underground except in detached bits – a bus here, a station there, a train here, a tram there. Without advertisement they can never realize what the whole is. Only by maps and posters and messages of all sorts are they helped to grasp what London’s Underground is and what it does for them. And surely London likes its Underground advertisements. Others copy. But the main reason for the Underground advertising is because it pays. It literally pays in increased traffics. It pays in giving the passengers pleasure. The picture posters are posters. They tell a short story far better than words. They are also pictures. 300 are sold to chance inquirers every month. It pays in keeping the public well informed. The Underground must live in the open, in spite of its name. London would be less bright if the Underground ceased to advertise. It pays by making the public the friends of the Underground. The Underground is a person, but it can only greet you through its advertisements. They are its voice, its conversation, and its manners.⁷⁰²

Advertisements, travel literature, and Beck’s iconic map worked together to re-create and reinforce the identities of the constituent parts of London and explain how they comprised one unified community. While their efforts to control these identities were never complete, these images and the map that united them demonstrated that modernity did not have to be experienced as “disorienting speed, movement, and change.”⁷⁰³ There could be a structure to this movement, and the continued success of the Tube map speaks to the success of this idea.

The issue of mapping brings us back to Mark Mason’s notion to walk the Underground on the streets above in order to better understand London. His mission might sound unusual, but is not terribly different from the relationship many Londoners have with the city above and belowground. Indeed, modern research has found that

⁷⁰² “London’s Underground,” *Times* (London) Tuesday, March 14, 1922, p. 18.

⁷⁰³ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 3.

passengers often rely on the Tube map over their own knowledge or experience of London in order to plan routes, even when the route presented by the Tube map is actually less convenient than walking or taking another Tube route. In fact, these studies prove that Londoners generally trust the Tube map twice as much as their own travel experience or knowledge of London. In other words, even regular passengers (mis)trust the Tube map over their own experiences of moving through London.⁷⁰⁴

V. The Underground at War

As the Underground sold London to Londoners, it ingratiated itself into the mental maps of its citizens. However, nothing cemented the relationship between London and Englishness quite like wartime Underground. The government began recruiting soldiers and volunteers for the war effort in World War I by placing advertisements in Underground stations and on public transport vehicles. However, the Underground Group refused to post the government's recruiting designs in their stations and trains because they were too "crude and inartistic." Instead, the Underground issued its own series of patriotic posters designed by Frank Brangwyn and Spencer Pryse.

The Underground officials also used posters to cement the Tube's (and, by extension, London's) relationship to Englishness during World War I. During the Christmas season of 1916, the Underground Group sent Christmas posters to the men in

⁷⁰⁴ Hadlaw, "The London Underground Map," 27. For example, regular passengers may choose to change stations at Victoria Station during the afternoon because the map depicts a clear and easy transition between lines at this point. However, actual experience transferring lines at the site, which are often operating above capacity and involve confusing exchanges, would seem to make this choice less desirable than another connection point. However, the easy connection coded on the station by a simple dot makes this appear like the most direct route for transferring lines.

the trenches. They released four designs that “reflected the Englishman’s love of quiet family life.” These images were delicate, beautiful, and a far cry from the typical poster promoting service to Hampstead or Wembley. Charles Sims created the most evocative poster in the series, which featured an illustration of “the Land of Nod” with a group of happy children standing in pajamas “Ready to fly away to dreamland.” The top of each poster simply read, “The Underground Railways of London, knowing how many of their passengers are now engaged on important business in France and other parts of the world, send out this reminder of home.”⁷⁰⁵ Underground officials also sent over gifts to railway employees stationed at the front. The gifts included a letter from the General Manager, expressing his hope that these gifts would remind the men that “you are not forgotten at this time by your old employers and workmates.”⁷⁰⁶

The Underground attempted to cement a relationship between the home front and the front lines throughout the war. The General Manager sent a letter to all employees of the Metropolitan Railway company in 1914, promising men who remained home to work that continuing to keep London running was as essential to the war effort as fighting on the frontlines of battle:

All honor to those railway men who at the call of their King and Country have left their homes and their work, and have gone to active service...but no less honor is due to those who restrain their inclination to volunteer, feeling that they can serve their country equally well by remaining at their posts and assisting in the necessary work of transporting our troops and stores and of carrying on the general business of the nation which is so dependent upon our railway systems. It is a very weak kind of patriotism that shows itself by... waving a flag: the sounder and stronger kind does not reveal itself by an outward demonstration, but in the conduct and manner of life of the individual.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁵ Martin Hardie, *War Posters Issued By Belligerent and Neutral Nations, 1914-1919*. London: A & C. Black Ltd., 1920. *HathiTrust Digital Library*. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2>.

⁷⁰⁶ LMA: ACC/1297/MET/10/787: Christmas Gift to men at the Front

⁷⁰⁷ Letter from RH Selbie to all employees of the Metropolitan Railway company, 7/8/1914: LMA:ACC/1297/MET/04/013: Metropolitan Railway

Underground officials responded to worsening wartime conditions by publishing patriotic posters intended to boost morale and convince passengers of the importance of urban transport in the smooth running of the capital.⁷⁰⁸ In addition to publishing pro-government propaganda, the Underground advertisers urged ordinary citizens to do their part to keep London and its transport safe, with posters reminding suburban passengers “during the present crisis, passengers are requested to keep the blinds drawn at night east of Bow Road and west of Gloucester Road.”⁷⁰⁹ Wartime posters featured the same admonitions to “mind the gap” and “move down the car” found in ordinary posters, but now tied these behaviors into the war effort itself. The posters suggested that if the community of riders worked together to engage in efficient behaviors, the Tube could better serve the wartime needs of the nation. Tube posters also included visual images of countryside attractions and quintessentially English landscapes to remind viewers of the importance of fighting to protect England. Some of these posters also promoted Tube travel, including one cheeky advertisement that featured children playing in the countryside with the question, “Why bother about the German’s invading the country? Invade it yourself.”⁷¹⁰

By 1915, Underground traffic was booming from troop movements, leave travel, and the withdrawal of many vehicles for war purposes.⁷¹¹ Indeed, Tube traffic increased by sixty-seven percent from 1914 to 1918 and the Tube was responsible for more than

⁷⁰⁸ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 162.

⁷⁰⁹ *Passengers are Requested to Keep the Blinds Drawn at Night*, poster 2003/24294, 1915, London Electric Railway Company, 1915. London Transport Museum Online Collection, <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>.

⁷¹⁰ The Brothers Warbis, *Why Bother about the Germans Invading the Country*, poster 1983/4/601, 1915. London Transport Museum Online Collection, <http://www.ltmcollection.org/posters>

⁷¹¹ Passingham, *The Romance of London’s Underground*, 155.

half of the overall passenger traffic of London by the war's end.⁷¹² "Dim-outs" enforced as a precaution against nighttime zeppelin attacks further persuaded people to travel in the well-lit Tube cars instead of through the darkened streets. Although Tube sheltering is typically associated with World War II, several stations were used as shelters against zeppelin raids between Sept. 4th and 27th, 1917. Over 100,000 Londoners took refuge in these shelters, which became so crowded that Underground officials had to restrict access to passengers unless air-raid sirens had sounded.⁷¹³

Underground advertisers further strengthened this connection between the home front and the front lines when control of the Underground passed into government hands on September 1, 1939. During the early stages of World War II, the Railway Executive Committee, now in charge of the Underground, used Tubes to evacuate children to the countryside.⁷¹⁴ Further, unused platforms in several Tube stations were converted for various uses, including headquarters for the wartime Railway Executive Committee and later the War Cabinet at Downing Street station.⁷¹⁵ London's Anti-Aircraft command established operations rooms in Brompton Road Station, and the Tubes were also used as underground factories to make Plessey aircraft components.⁷¹⁶ Even the Elgin marbles (the sculptures from the Parthenon) and other artifacts from the British Museum were temporarily housed in the tunnels of Aldwych station.⁷¹⁷

⁷¹² Barker and Robbins, *A History of London Transport*, 195.

⁷¹³ Passingham, *The Romance of London's Underground*, 155 and Barker and Robbins, *A History of London Transport*, 199. Although military and naval installations were the primary targets of these attacks, London was hit 12 times by airship and 19 times by airplane.

⁷¹⁴ Passingham, *The Romance of London's Underground*, 298.

⁷¹⁵ Colin G. Pooley, Jean Turnbull, and Mags Adams, *A Mobile Century?: Changes in Everyday Mobility in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2005), 240.

⁷¹⁶ Pooley, Turnbull, and Adams, *A Mobile Century?*, 240.

⁷¹⁷ Pooley, Turnbull, and Adams, *A Mobile Century?*, 240.

However, Underground officials were reluctant to allow Tubes to be used for shelter, believing it would interfere with the efficiency of the system, which needed to function properly in order to maintain lines of communication and move troops and necessities quickly through London.⁷¹⁸ Some contemporaries also feared that sheltering would cause heavy losses to industrial production as people neglected their work in order to remain safe belowground.⁷¹⁹ Moreover, Underground officials feared that large crowds of working-class citizens (those most likely to take shelter in the Tubes) would pose a social danger to the safe and respectable reputation of these spaces. Critics also feared these masses of sleeping Londoners would spread diseases like diphtheria, pneumonia, or influenza.⁷²⁰ Others worried about the social consequences of so many men and women sleeping in such close quarters each night. Consequently, government officials worked hard to prohibit Tube sheltering and even published posters to this effect.

Despite official resistance to Tube sheltering, Londoners began ignoring regulations by travelling for hours on trains or sleeping on platforms at night to avoid the dangers aboveground. The Battle of London began on September 7, 1940, and by September 8, a huge crowd had assembled at Liverpool Street station and forced their way into the Underground.⁷²¹ Unable to stop public demand, government officials opened the Underground for sheltering, allotting fifteen miles of platforms and tunnels for civilian refuge. Eventually, passengers began bringing blankets and supplies into the Tubes until sheltering became a routine part of these citizens' daily lives. At times, up to 177,000 people spent the night in these tunnels and platforms, while trains continued to

⁷¹⁸ Julian Andrews, *The Shelter Drawings of Henry Moore* (London: Lund Humphries, 2002), 26.

⁷¹⁹ Andrews, *The Shelter Drawings of Henry Moore*, 26.

⁷²⁰ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 239.

⁷²¹ Clayton, *Subterranean City*, 139.

maintain normal services.⁷²² At sixty feet belowground - too deep to be penetrated by German bombs - the Tubes were a natural refuge for Londoners. The Tube provided a sense of comfort and safety not afforded to aboveground shelters in that Underground lines were well-lit and insulated from the sounds and vibrations of the destruction aboveground.⁷²³

Tube sheltering became an iconic symbol of the resilience of the English people during the Blitz. Sheltering also mirrors many of the practices and tensions explored throughout this work. Despite officials' interests in prohibiting Tube sheltering, ordinary Londoners determined how these spaces would serve the city. Moreover, the majority of the citizens who sheltered in the Tubes - working-class Londoners - were those least likely to be targeted by the Tube during peacetime promotions of leisure activities and suburban housing. Thus, through Tube sheltering, this group of people asserted their right to inhabit these public spaces. These people used orderly behaviors while sheltering to prove their respectability and refute claims that this public space was somehow disorderly or dangerous. Indeed, contemporaries like the wartime artist Henry Moore marveled at the orderly conduct of most shelterers. Moore recalled watching "poor-looking women and children" waiting in orderly queues at 4 p.m. to be taken underground for the night.⁷²⁴

Communities developed in these Tube shelters that formed committees, published newsletters, and produced bulletins that normalized and publicized their experiences in the Underground.⁷²⁵ These bulletins included stories, health articles, reports, and

⁷²² Clayton, *Subterranean City*, 139.

⁷²³ Andrews, *The Shelter Drawings of Henry Moore*, 32.

⁷²⁴ Andrews, *The Shelter Drawings of Henry Moore*, 32.

⁷²⁵ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 241.

critiques of authority that helped to establish identities for these communities.⁷²⁶ As a result, these shelters “developed a sense of community, purpose, and comradeship that sustained life during the months of the Blitz” and provided a sense of local autonomy to the shelterers themselves.⁷²⁷ Despite the fact that only four percent of London’s population regularly sheltered in the Tubes, the behaviors of this small group powerfully demonstrated the strength of ordinary passengers’ interest in regulating the spaces of the Underground. Tube sheltering also demonstrated the ways ordinary people appropriated the Underground to their uses, especially in wartime. One female passenger recalled during the war that she witnessed a number of women intimately engaged with American soldiers at Hammersmith station when she passed through with her husband in the evenings.⁷²⁸

Through a form of negotiated control between ordinary Londoners and Tube authorities, Tube sheltering became an emblem of Britain’s resilient struggle on the home front. Tube authorities likened the Tube’s continued operation to the undying will of the British troops. Tube advertisements celebrated the “back room boys” that made the smooth operation of wartime transport possible.⁷²⁹ By enabling Londoners to maintain their routines and continue to work in the face of continued bombing raids, routinely using the Underground was transformed into an act of defiance against Hitler. Authorities even assisted the comfort and safety of the Tube shelterers they had been so reluctant to allow beforehand. Indeed, these authorities eventually established nursing and first aid

⁷²⁶ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 249.

⁷²⁷ Welsh, *Underground Writing*, 248.

⁷²⁸ Mrs. D. Farrall, 5.

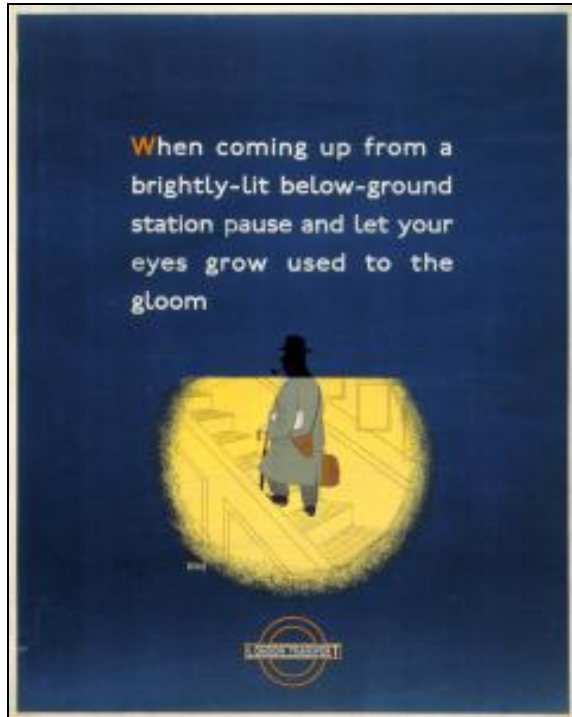
⁷²⁹ For posters of Back Room Boys, see “war work” on <http://www.ltmcollection.org>

stations on platforms, as well as trains carrying tea and cocoa.⁷³⁰ The Tube also became a symbol of the sacrifice the British people made for their country and the evils of war on an innocent population. Sloane Square Tube station was devastated from a 2,000 pound German bomb in 1940 that hit just as the train was leaving the station, killing dozens of passengers instantly.⁷³¹ There were even worse tragedies at Balham Tube Station in 1940 and Bethnal Green in 1943.

The regularity of Tube travel acted as a beacon of hope for Londoners looking for uniformity amidst the chaos of war. Moreover, the Tube acted as a literal beacon by providing one of the only sources of illumination found in London during black outs. Looking to capitalize off this feature, Tube posters emphasized the safety and warmth of the Underground in contrast to the dark and dangerous streets aboveground. Several posters issued warning to passengers leaving Tube shelters to pause before stepping outside, in order to let ones' eyes grow accustomed to the darkened streets. These warnings were part of the larger literature on safety regulations and Tube behaviors that helped to regulate and normalize the unusual circumstances of wartime society. Additionally, these posters revealed the unifying potential of the Underground in the face of the unknown terrors awaiting passengers in the streets above.

⁷³⁰ Andrews, *The Shelter Drawings of Henry Moore*, 32.

⁷³¹ Mrs. I.S. Haslewood, Interview, Imperial War Museum Archives, 12994.



732

Figure 5.12. “Let Your Eyes Get Used to the Gloom.”

In the poster above, the gentleman exiting the Tube is portrayed emerging from a brilliantly illuminated Tube shelter (with discernable features like station stairs) into a completely dark and unrecognizable landscape. This image played off of the fears that London’s streets were becoming unknown and unsafe spaces from the destruction of the Blitz. In contrast, well-lit Tube tunnels, as well as the uniform features of Tube stations, helped to regulate perceptions of London. In the midst of constant change and destruction, the sheltered Tubes remained relatively unharmed and unchanged during this period, thus providing the only stable and constant feature of the city. During the war, the Tube provided Londoners with both the cognitive and actual maps needed to make sense of the metropolis.

⁷³²Nicholas Bentley, *Let Your Eyes Get Used to the Gloom*, poster 1983/4/5492, 1941, London Transport, London Transport Museum Online Collection, <http://ltmcollection.org>.

The Tube also tried to help Londoners make sense of the war raging above their heads by hosting exhibitions sponsored by the Ministry of Information at Charing Cross Underground station. These displays helped passengers understand the German enemy, the importance of growing food for the war effort, the major leaders of each nation, and the intensity of the war in the Pacific. There was even a booth in the station staffed by an American who would answer questions passengers had about America's involvement in the war.⁷³³

In many ways, the Tube became London during the war. As the city above crumbled, Londoners often awoke to a city they no longer recognized. During the war, London transformed from the figurative and imaginative map of the city to the actual city itself; in a chaotic wartime city, the Tube was a constant, safe city belowground. Thus, while the Tube's popularity declined after World War II, its image during wartime remains one of its most enduring and popular representations. The issues of freedom, democratic public space, social control, and mapping London were all central to the Tube's image during this period. Yet, as this work demonstrates, wartime conditions did not create these phenomena. Rather, they enhanced existing issues that had been part of the struggle for control of Underground space from the earliest days of the Tube's operation. London's Underground has not always been such a defining feature of the capital's identity. The lasting success of the Tube map in understanding London or the Underground's mythic contribution to London's wartime resolve are two powerful examples of the ways in which the Underground has become such an identifier for London and its people.

⁷³³ "Ministry of Information Exhibitions During the Second World War, 1942" *Imperial War Museum*, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205195774>

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION: CARRYING ON

At 7:40 in the morning on July 7, 2005, four young men - Mohammed Sidique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, Hasib Hussain, and Germaine Lindsay – found seats and dropped their bulky backpacks down next to them on a crowded Thameslink train bound for London from Luton, Bedfordshire. The men were casually dressed in jeans and tennis shoes. Few passengers paid the men any attention, but those who did later reported that the foursome looked as if they were dressed for a camping trip, a common summertime sight in Luton.⁷³⁴ Many passengers were probably more engrossed in their morning newspapers, whose headlines would have announced that London had won the bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games the day before and that this morning marked the beginning of the G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland.⁷³⁵

After a short delay, the train entered King's Cross Station at 8:23AM. The four men picked up their bags (each packed with nearly five pounds of homemade explosive material) and headed towards the entrance to King's Cross Underground Station. With their bombs tucked out of sight, the men seamlessly blended into the diverse crowd of businessmen and women bound for work in the City, groups of children on school trips, and families on holiday. Passengers rushed past on their way to catch trains and no one noticed the four men who stopped momentarily to hug each other - each man smiling warmly at his companions - before going separate ways. Lindsay and Hussain set off towards the Piccadilly Line entrance, while Khan approached a westbound Circle Line

⁷³⁴ *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 11th May 2006, (London: the Stationary Office, 2006), HC 1087. 3-4

⁷³⁵ *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, 2.

platform and Tanweer sought a train on the same line going the opposite direction. By the time the four men separated, it was nearly 9AM and the train platforms were packed with people. No one paid any attention to Khan, Tanweer, and Lindsay as they each slipped between the double doors and found places on their respective trains.⁷³⁶

The grainy CCTV footage at Liverpool Street station showed Tanweer's Circle Line train stop at the platform around 8:49AM. The train pulled away from the platform again a minute later, leaving some visibly frustrated passengers behind to wait for a less-crowded train. The camera showed the train disappearing into the dark tunnel as it did countless times every day. Suddenly however, the platform descended into panic as thick smoke poured out from the same opening the train had just disappeared into seconds before.⁷³⁷

At 8:50AM, three bombs exploded nearly simultaneously from points all across London. Tanweer, who found a seat near the front of his train, detonated an organic-peroxide bomb just as the train left Liverpool Street station, as seen in the CCTV footage. Seven other people died and 171 were injured, including a passenger who was blinded by a shard of Tanweer's tibia. Khan, the ringleader of the group, blew himself up in the front of the carriage just as his train passed Edgware Road. Other than Khan, six people died and 163 were injured. Seconds later, Lindsay detonated his bomb in an especially crowded train as it travelled between King's Cross and Russell Square. Twenty-seven people (including Lindsay) were killed and more than 340 were injured.

⁷³⁶ *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, 3-4.

⁷³⁷ "7 July London Bombings: What Happened that Day?" *BBC* (London, England), July, 3, 2015 and "7/7 Bombings Timeline: How the Day Unfolded," *Independent*, (London, England), Monday, July 6, 2015.

Five minutes later, CCTV footage of King's Cross station shows the final member of the group, Hussain, emerging onto Euston Road. Telephone records later proved that Hussain had tried in vain to call his friends. He went back into the station to buy a battery (likely to replace a faulty detonator on his explosive). About twenty minutes later, surveillance footage showed Hussain entering the number 30 bus at Euston Station traveling towards Marble Arch. About an hour after the three bombs wreaked havoc belowground, Hussain opened his backpack and detonated a final bomb, blowing the roof off the bus as it passed through Tavistock Square. Despite the group's failure to achieve their intended result of creating a "burning cross of bombs in the heart of London," Hussain's bus explosion still managed to kill thirteen other people and injure more than 110.⁷³⁸

In an hour, the four suicide bombers killed fifty-two people and injured more than 770. However, the subsequent police investigation surmised that up to 4,000 people were impacted by the blasts in some way (either by being on the surrounding stations or streets, in train cars behind those affected, or in other parts of the stations). Many of those people walked away, never seeking psychological treatment.⁷³⁹ In the aftermath, psychologists estimated conservatively that at least thirty percent of those affected (nearly 1,000 people) would go on to develop full-blown PTSD.⁷⁴⁰

The initial reports of the terrorist attacks portrayed the gruesome horror of these incidents, but most media coverage suppressed the variety of individual responses to the

⁷³⁸ Hamilton Bean, Lisa Keränen, and Margaret Durfy, "This is London': Cosmopolitan Nationalism and the Discourse of Resilience in the Case of the 7/7 Terrorist Attacks," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 14, No. 3 (Fall 2011): 428.

⁷³⁹ Ailes, Emma, "7 July Bombings: The Invisible Victims," *BBC* (London, England), July 6, 2015.

⁷⁴⁰ "After Shock," *Guardian* (London, England), Friday, June 16, 2006.

attack in favor of emphasizing the unity and resilience of the victims. One reporter for *the Guardian* wrote that, as he stood near Russell Square later that day, “half the people you met were beginning to acquire the kind of set, dogged, suffering face you see in refugees, and half were going about their business.”⁷⁴¹ These reactions suggested that the British were programmed to be resilient and ready for anything.

This sense of determination was also reflected in how quickly London’s transport network bounced back from the attacks. The Tube remained shut down for the rest of July 7th, but the Heathrow Express - which runs trains from Paddington Station to the airport - resumed service that afternoon and many of the aboveground trains entering London remained running on semi-normal schedules.⁷⁴² Londoners woke up the following morning to a Tube system back in “normal” service, with the exception of the affected lines. Bus services were also running as normal, aside from diversions along the routes impacted by blasts.⁷⁴³

A flurry of national and international leaders responded to the attacks by praising the stiff-upper-lip mentality of the British people. Michael Savory, the Lord Mayor of the City of London asserted, “I am sure that on Monday at 7:00am the City will be humming as usual to prove that Londoners just get on with it. That’s our best answer to terrorist bullies.” Mayor Ken Livingstone argued that British transport hubs the following day would prove the futility of the terrorists’ plan:

In the days that follow, look at our airports, look at our sea ports, and look at our railway stations and, even after your cowardly attack, you will see that people... will arrive in London to become Londoners and to fulfill their dreams and achieve

⁷⁴¹ “Savagely Woken from a Pleasant Dream,” *Guardian* (London, England), Friday, July 8, 2005.

⁷⁴² “Transport Chaos after London Blasts,” *Guardian* (London, England), Thursday, July 7, 2005.

⁷⁴³ “Q&A: Travel Latest,” *Guardian* (London, England), Friday, July 8, 2005.

their potential. They choose to come to London... because they come to be free, they come to live the life they choose, they come to be able to be themselves.

Similarly, Prime Minister Tony Blair noted that the British people responded with resilience “typical of them.” In his speech updating Parliament on the progress of the investigation on July 11th, Blair noted that London had suffered a great sadness but that “London’s buses, trains, and as much of its Underground as possible are back on normal schedules; its businesses, shops and schools are open; its millions are coming to work with a steely determination.”⁷⁴⁴

As political scientists Hamilton Bean, Lisa Keränen, and Margaret Durfy argue, “Commentators overwhelmingly depicted the victims of 7/7 as resilient, and moreover, attributed this resilience to their assumed national identity.”⁷⁴⁵ This belief in British resolve appeared in comments from other world leaders as well. Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld added, “before long...those responsible for these acts will encounter British steel. Their kind of steel has an uncommon strength. It does not bend or break.... The British people are determined and resolute.”⁷⁴⁶ George W. Bush echoed this sentiment, adding that “the nation that survived the Nazi Blitz will not be intimidated by terrorists.”⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴⁴ *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, 10.

⁷⁴⁵ Bean, Keränen, and Durfy, “This is London,” 428. Bean, Kernen and Durfy argue that this discourse around resilience ultimately created an Anglo-American “cosmopolitan nationalism” that suggested all people were capable of overcoming adversity. This rhetoric helped these governments enact more stringing surveillance policies at home and engage in destructive wars abroad in the name of allowing citizens to go about their daily lives.

⁷⁴⁶ Henry Samuel and Alec Russell, “We’re All Londoners Now,” *Telegraph* (London: England), July 8, 2005.

⁷⁴⁷ “‘We Shall Prevail’: Reactions of World and Community Leaders to the Multiple Blasts that Hit London’s Transport System Today,” *Guardian* (London, England), Thursday July 7, 2005.

Responses to Londoners' behaviors during and after the 7/7 attacks drew heavily on references to Londoners' resolute mentality during the Blitz. This comparison served several useful purposes. First, comparing the Nazis to the terrorists ignored major differences between the two aggressors (such as the fact that three of the four suicide bombers were British citizens) in order to create a seemingly unified response to terrorism that suggested hope for becoming stronger after this attack. Comparing the response among Londoners after the 7/7 bombings to the Blitz ignored or glossed over serious difficulties assimilating minority groups in post-imperial British society that might have contributed to the terrorist attack.⁷⁴⁸

Rhetoric about British resilience also worked to provide British citizens with a stark choice: they were either the kind of law-abiding citizens who went about their days in an orderly – and therefore British – way, or they were part of the enemy camp, bent on destroying the democratic way of life. This discussion about British resilience suggested that Londoners would choose to return back to the Tube for their morning commute because it was simply the sort of thing British people did. In this way, “citizens are not ‘free’ to enact alternative subject positions because many of those are symbolically tainted with motives deemed antithetical to British identity: fear, trauma, panic, dead, and the like.”⁷⁴⁹ Studies have shown that Britain's dependence on this notion of resilience may have limited the state's ability to enact more comprehensive security legislation after the 7/7 bombings because this language suggested that British people were already resilient and thus did not require protection.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁸ Bean, Keränen, and Durfy, “This is London,” 444.

⁷⁴⁹ Bean, Keränen, and Durfy, “This is London,” 445.

⁷⁵⁰ Bean, Keränen, and Durfy, “This is London,” 453.

However, referencing the Blitz and British resilience also suggested that the very diverse modern British community could still come together through a concept of unity in resilience. Posters celebrating “Seven-Million Londoners, One London” displayed in Underground stations and other public places after the attacks reflected an imagined community of cosmopolitan Londoners united in their celebration of difference. According to Angharad Stephens, this response “sought to celebrate the plurality and diversity of the city, in contrast to British identity and unity.” However, the underlying message still hinged on the concept that Britons had been united in the past and could therefore find unity again in the present. This kind of rhetoric shows how “different ideas of community are also framed through particular understandings of space and time.”⁷⁵¹

Resurrecting the specter of the Blitz presented “a distinctly national history of London as Britain.”⁷⁵² By suggesting Londoners could overcome their fears by waking up the following morning and going about business as usual, media coverage of the 7/7 aftermath played off of pre-existing connotations between transport and national identity. In this way, behaviors like standing to the right and passing to the left on the escalator took on new importance as markers of a historically demonstrable national identity. In this way, London continued to stand in as a marker for Britain more broadly, and Londoners’ resilience was Britain’s resilience.

⁷⁵¹ Angharad Closs Stephens, “‘Seven Million Londoners, One London’: National and Urban Ideas of Community in the Aftermath of the 7 July 2005 Bombings in London,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 32, No. 2 (April – June 2007), p. 158

⁷⁵² Stephens, “‘Seven Million Londoners, One London’,” 159.

Londoners' inability to truly go about "business as usual" that morning also demonstrated the city and its people's utter dependence on transport to move about and understand their city. A reporter for *the Guardian* who was near Russell Square during the attacks summed up this reality best:

For anyone who has lived in London for more than a few years, the Tube map is more than a map on the wall. It burns itself into the brain, like the circuit diagram its design is based on. At news of any disruption, little stretches of it flash red, and almost without thinking, you try to chart a way round the obstruction. For the whole system to be sealed up without warning is to find the ground beneath your feet, paradoxically, to be not so solid as it was.⁷⁵³

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the Tube map is the quintessential map of London for many of the city's inhabitants. The Tube map "provides the framework into which pieces of the street map are inserted and adjusted, like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle."⁷⁵⁴ Studies have found that many locals create anthropomorphic associations with lines they use often, giving these lines distinct personalities and associating them with different aspects of the city or even with users' own personalities at different points in their lives.⁷⁵⁵ Indeed, Peter Ackroyd argues that a Londoner's daily commute is a ritual in which the Tube journey becomes part of the mental and physical history of the traveler.⁷⁵⁶ Therefore, suddenly finding that some of these lines had been attacked or destroyed could be a deeply personal and incredibly jarring experience for users.

When the terrorists bombed the transport system, just as when millions of ordinary Londoners defiantly resumed their evening commutes on the Tubes and buses that night (or were at least imagined to do so), they were demonstrating the important

⁷⁵³ "Savagely Woken from a Pleasant Dream," *Guardian* (London, England), Friday, July 8, 2005.

⁷⁵⁴ Janet Vertesi, "Mind the Gap: The London Underground Map and Users' Representations of Urban Space," *Social Studies of Science* 38 No. 1 (February 2008), 20.

⁷⁵⁵ Vertesi, "Mind the Gap," 23.

⁷⁵⁶ Ackroyd, *London Under* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2011), 139.

ways that transport in London is a national and even international issue in ways that transport is not in other cities. The 7/7 bombings brought up questions of imperial legacy, issues of public control, and memories of World War II that are intimately tied to London's relationship with transport. The Underground is more than just a transport system for London: it was and is a symbol of British identity whose varied meanings are constantly being contested and, in some cases, attacked.

Other than the 7/7 attacks, politicians and urban reformers have evoked the "Blitz spirit" countless times since World War II as a symbol of a time "before the country lost its moral and cultural bearings." The most recent evocation of Britain's finest hour as a galvanizing memory occurred during the financial crisis of 2008. During this period, a 1939 transport announcement, the "Keep Calm and Carry On" poster, became a hugely popular commercial success. The poster's vaguely authoritative and reassuring message evoked "a yearning for an actual or imaginary English patrician attitude of stiff upper lips and muddling through." In a time when contemporaries suggest that the stiff upper lip of Britain might be quivering, the message to "Keep Calm and Carry On" struck a cord. The original poster was part of a set of three posters developed by the Ministry of Information in 1939 and was intended to strengthen British courage in the event of a Nazi invasion. Test runs of the poster proved unpopular and it was never technically used on public transport. A remaining test print of the image was discovered and then reproduced in a secondhand bookshop in Northumberland, before quickly becoming ubiquitous in tourist shops and retail stores by 2011. The simple red and white color-scheme, Johnston-esque font, and reassuring message made the poster internationally popular as well.⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁷ Owen Hatherley, "Keep Calm and Carry On – the Sinister Message Behind the Slogan that Seduced the Nation," *Guardian* (London, England), Friday, January 8, 2016.



Figure 6.1. “Keep Calm and Carry On.”

While many of the people buying posters, bags, or shirts with the slogan were probably unaware of its associations with transport specifically, the popularity of this poster demonstrates the national significance that both Underground aesthetics and the public memory of the Blitz have achieved in the minds of the British public.

The connection between transport and national identity was also not lost on filmmaker Danny Boyle when he directed the opening and closing ceremonies for the 2012 London Olympic Games.⁷⁵⁹ Boyle told a story of Britain’s past that highlighted the Victorian industrialists as the true heroes of the British nation. Minutes into the ceremony, reformers clad in top hats and suits transformed an idyllic English countryside into a bustling industrial city. Kenneth Branagh, dressed as Isambard Kingdom Brunel,

⁷⁵⁸ Henry Irving, “Keep Calm and Carry On: The Compromise Behind the Slogan,” *History of Government, Gov.Uk.* <http://www.gov.uk.com>

⁷⁵⁹ The handover of the games in the Beijing closing ceremonies began with David Beckham, Boris Johnson, Jimmy Page, and Leona Lewis receiving the Olympic flag on an iconic, red double-decker bus.

stepped into the center of the stage and playfully reassured viewers about the nature of the changes industrialization would bring with Caliban's famous lines from *the Tempest* to "Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises." The city these Victorians created literally set the foundation for the rest of the story of Britain that Boyle told the world. This tale concluded in the closing ceremony with a "typical" day in the life of London in which the main roads joined to form a giant union jack. People poured forth from an opening in the center of the city - suggestive of passengers emerging from the Tube - and iconic double-decker buses and cabs covered in newspapers drove back and forth across the stage. If the transport references were not overt enough for audiences, each of the five Spice Girls rode out in the closing ceremony on their own iconic black taxicabs. In this moment when London could tell the world anything about itself, it depicted a city (and, by extension, a nation) made possible by transport.

However, as central as transport is to London, officials in control of these services still struggle with maintaining control while promoting freedom in public space. Many of these problems ordering London are evoked as examples of the decay of civilized British society, in the same ways that Victorian contemporaries lamented the loss of stable society that could accompany women's greater access to mobility. Christian Wolmar argues that the Underground is reliable and reasonably modern, but that a lack of government investment in the tube for nearly fifty years and overcrowding on the system has combined to make the Tube today equal parts necessary and hated by Londoners.⁷⁶⁰ Consequently, the Tube is often evoked as a sign of the problems with British society as well.

⁷⁶⁰ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway: How the London Underground was Built and How it Changed the City Forever* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), 292.

Until the last decade, the Tube represented Britain's decline more broadly. In 1948, London Transport became one cog in the much larger British Transport Commission, which oversaw all of Britain's railway needs. Consequently, the Tube frequently lost out to bids for mainline railways that were in far worse shape after the war. Bus lines, which were cheaper to invest in than tunneling new Tubes, sprung up all over London to handle increased traffic demands. Transport authorities also assumed that the rising popularity of automobiles after the war would lead to a decrease in Tube ridership. In some ways they were right: the number of yearly Tube passengers sank from 720 million in 1948 to around 670 million in the 1950s as car ownership increased.⁷⁶¹

The Underground suffered from neglect and a lack of funding until it was subsumed into the control of the Greater London Council in 1970. Now under local control, the Underground received modest improvements to existing station infrastructure. The Victoria Line, the first new line in nearly sixty years, was opened in 1968 and the Jubilee Line was added in 1979.⁷⁶² In 1981, Labour politician Ken Livingstone attempted to modernize the Underground when he took over the Greater London Council. He created a "Fares Fair" policy of slashing fares, introducing travel cards for passengers, and creating a system of differently priced travel zones that helped to increase demand for Underground trips. However, the fare reduction sparked a court battle between the GLC and conservatives in the government over whether citizens should be forced to help subsidize a system many did not use. The GLC ultimately had to raise fares to higher rates than before Livingstone's scheme. Shortly after, the Underground moved to the control of the central government again under the newly

⁷⁶¹ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 295.

⁷⁶² Christian Wolmar, *Down the Tube: The Battle for London's Underground* (London: Aurum, 2002), 40-43. Wolmar, *Down the Tube*, 46.

created London Regional Transport, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Transport.⁷⁶³ Wolmar argues that the sad shape of the Underground service and the constant fighting between politicians over the dire state of the Tube this period seemed to contemporaries like one example among many of “Britain’s failure to come to terms with its loss of empire and its pre-eminent role in the world.”⁷⁶⁴

Ironically, the Tube possesses one of the oldest and most immediately recognizable corporate identities, and yet determining who should control and pay for the Underground remains in many ways as complex an issue as it was in the days of competition between the Metropolitan and District lines. The consequences of this constant yo-yoing of Underground control between various government bodies came to an ugly head in November 1987. After a small fire at Oxford Circus station, Underground officials banned smoking in Tube stations in 1985. Passengers might have observed proper etiquette in terms of standing to the right and passing to the left on escalators, but they often ignored the smoking ban and lit cigarettes on the escalator as they started to exit the station. These escalators were also badly in need of repair, with sizable gaps that provided enough space for a cigarette butt to fall through. Station workers had also grown lazy about cleaning under the tracks, and years of grease and trash collected into a flammable ball under the escalator band.

Passenger resistance to smoking rules was clearly nothing new, but the added issue of dirty stations had tragic consequences when a passenger coming out of the Piccadilly line on the evening of November 18th tossed a lighted cigarette onto the

⁷⁶³ Wolmar, *Down the Tube*, 44-45.

⁷⁶⁴ Desmond Fennell, *Investigation into the King’s Cross Underground Fire: Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Transport by Command of Her Majesty*, November 1988 (London: Department of Transport, 1988).

escalator floor. The cigarette dropped into a gap in the stairs and ignited the grease-covered plywood boards underneath. The flames quickly rose to the top of the escalator shaft and pooled against the ceiling. The ceiling, thickly covered in layers of old, flammable paint, caught fire and created an intense tunnel of trapped flames that spread into the ticket hall. The Underground officials did not have an evacuation plan and waited longer than they should have to call the fire department, and thirty-one people died and over a hundred were injured as a result.⁷⁶⁵ In the aftermath, the managers for the London Underground resigned and the Tube received some much-needed press attention and modernization. Modernization required money, however, and the government struggled to justify giving these funds. Eventually, the Underground switched hands yet again and became Transport for London in 2003. TfL initially acquired needed investments from a public-private partnership, a fitting marriage when one considers the complicated relationship between notions of what constituted “private” and “public” in the Underground.

Ultimately, just as their predecessors had done over one hundred years before, issues with overcrowding and congestion on London’s streets at the end of the twentieth century spurred urban planners to seek solutions belowground. A steady increase in car ownership over the decades since World War II created massive traffic delays and government officials worried these delays might be negatively impacting London’s economy. In response, TfL introduced a heavy congestion charge in 2003 for cars driving through London between 7am and 5pm Monday through Friday. The fee dramatically cut automobile congestion on London’s streets, but it also expanded TfL’s revenue stream for improvements. The same year, TfL introduced an electronic ticket (the Oyster card),

⁷⁶⁵ Fennell, *Investigation into the King’s Cross Underground Fire*.

making planning journeys across the city far easier. The ease of paying for and making these trips has since spurred people to make more journeys via Tube.⁷⁶⁶

Throughout these changes in management, the Underground has also continued to struggle with policing and ordering behavior, particularly in terms of gender. A recent study by the British Transport Police and published in *The Independent* found that the majority of sexual assaults were actually reported during peak travel hours when trains were most crowded. Between January 1st, 2014 and December 8th, 2015, 322 sexual assaults were reported between 5-7pm and 291 were reported from 8-10 am, while just 110 were reported by 11pm-1am. While there are of course more people at those times to be assaulted, the percentages of assaults reveal the alarming reality that the victims were likely not isolated, drinking, or putting themselves at greater risk for these situations beforehand.⁷⁶⁷

The rise in reports could also be the result of increased campaigns to urge women to report assaults. TfL launched a campaign called “Report it to stop it” that revealed the sobering reality that 10% of passengers experience unwanted sexual behavior while riding public transport but only one in ten of people assaulted will report it.⁷⁶⁸ The British Transport Police website explains that victims who report any unwanted sexual behavior could make a difference for future passengers by alerting the police about places and times to position increased security or install more CCTV cameras. Transport Police offer enthusiastic but vague solutions to the problem, such as “establishing patterns and

⁷⁶⁶ “Squeezing In: What the London Underground Reveals about Work in the Capital,” *Economist* (London, England), May 23rd, 2015.

⁷⁶⁷ Susie Coen, “Majority of Sexual Assaults on the Tube ‘Committed During Rush Hours,’” *Independent* (London, England), Thursday, January 7, 2016.

⁷⁶⁸ “Transport for London Launches Hard-Hitting Sexual Harassment Campaign,” *Telegraph*, (London: England), April 14, 2015.

introducing undercover officers,” or publishing the details of successful prosecutions in places that will send “a clear message to perpetrators that criminality will not be accepted on the network.” They also receive counsel from a number of women’s advocacy groups to help them understand how to better protect women from these issues.⁷⁶⁹

Several groups have suggested female-only train cars as a solution to the problem. However, most reports on this issue have denounced the gender-segregated cars as an ineffective solution to a much larger societal issue. Indeed, studies have found that cities where there are female-only subway cars (such as Cairo, Tokyo, Jakarta, and Manila) are not actually any safer.⁷⁷⁰ In fact, men frequently ride on these cars for the specific purpose of harassing women.⁷⁷¹ *Guardian* columnist Jessica Valenti argues that women need to occupy public spaces in the same ways men do and that the real solution should attempt to change the behaviors of the harassers themselves instead of trying to segregate transport spaces. She concludes, “If men can’t change, perhaps they should just stick to the harassers’ car on the subway. That, at least, seems like the proper way to separate people: those who know how to behave, and those who do not.”⁷⁷²

While the British pride themselves on being a people that wait calmly and quietly for their turn, complaints about Underground overcrowding suggest a different picture of behaviors in the Tube. Underground officials have also resorted to etiquette posters again to attempt to persuade passengers to follow certain guidelines in the spaces of the Tube.

The advertising campaign, called “Travel Better London,” aimed to make “everyone’s

⁷⁶⁹ “Sexual Offences,” *British Transport Police*, <http://www.btp.police.uk>

⁷⁷⁰ Soo Kim, “New York Subway Safest for Women,” *Telegraph* (London, England), October 31, 2014.

⁷⁷¹ Lorena Rios, “The Women’s Subway Car: Separate, Unequal, and Harassed,” *Egyptian Streets*, July 24, 2014, www.egyptianstreets.com

⁷⁷² Jessica Valenti, “Women Shouldn’t Need Special Train Cars to Avoid Harassers,” *Guardian* (London, England), Wednesday, January 7, 2015.

commute a little bit nicer.”⁷⁷³ TfL held a poetry contest to determine who could write the best rhyme about proper Underground comportment and the winner would have their poem displayed on an Underground poster. Posters featured cartoon illustrations of helpful passengers with pithy poems like, “We really don’t mean to chide/ but try to move along inside/ so fellow travelers won’t have to face/ an invasion of their personal space.” The posters have quickly popped up around Tube carriages and station walls throughout the Underground (Figure 6.2.):



Figure 6.2. “Travel Better London” Poster

⁷⁷³ “Travel Better London,” *Transport for London* <https://tfl.gov.uk/campaign/travel-better-london>

However, passengers' outpourings of annoyance at these advertisements on social media suggests that Underground posters may always have had some difficulty truly influencing behaviors. Blogger Gilead Amit was so offended by the horrible arrangement of verses in the winning poster entries that he composed his own etiquette posters in the style of famous British poets. For instance, for Samuel Taylor Coleridge he writes, "At Waterloo did some strange man/a stately pleasure sub unwrap/ where meatball marina ran/ through fillings measureless to man."⁷⁷⁴

Many of these posters are responses to fears that modern Britons no longer understand proper etiquette in public space and that some of this nationally-prided etiquette is fading away in a more cosmopolitan and fast-paced society. Recent issues about behavior have also intensified because of overcrowding on the Underground. Changes in work patterns – with more people working from home –and another period of rapid population growth have combined to create higher numbers of Tube passengers at all times of day. Consequently, the Underground is again getting flooded with complaints about overcrowding. Overcrowding causes delays and uncomfortable journey situations, but it also demonstrates that "the Underground remains the very life force of the capital...even more so than during its heyday."⁷⁷⁵ In many ways, Londoners complain about the Tube because it is so central to their experiences of London. Indeed, recent Tube strikes have shown just how central the Underground is to millions of Londoner's daily lives. Tube workers have instigated a series of strikes in the last two years because of disputes between unions and the London Underground's management over plans to

⁷⁷⁴ Gilead Amit, "Please Don't Eat Smelly Food," *Underground Poetry Slam*, May 19, 2014. <https://gileadamit.files.wordpress.com>

⁷⁷⁵ Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway*, 293.

add all-night Tube services, which would require drivers to be available for overnight shifts.⁷⁷⁶

The strikes impacted millions of Londoners and several of the city's frustrated inhabitants adapted by making unofficial maps highlighting the distance it would take a person to walk between stations. TfL, which also manages road improvements and biking in London, responded with an official pedestrian map in November 2015 in anticipation of planned Tube strikes in February. The TfL authorities said they created the map because "we have seen...that people are desperate for this sort of thing." An urban planner added that the new pedestrian map might also help station overcrowding after the strikes because "walking from the buzz of Leicester Square to the markets of Covent Garden takes just four minutes, but many tourists make the longer journey by Tube."⁷⁷⁷

The Tube strikes suggest the incredible power the Underground holds on the everyday lives of the city's people. Despite suffering years of neglect, the Tube is now experiencing something of a resurgence. In 2003, the London Underground became a subsidiary of Transport for London. In the intervening years, the system has undergone a much-needed refurbishment that includes station improvements and line extensions. Transport for London also launched a London Overground improvement to better serve areas in the south and east of the city. Perhaps the largest improvement, however, takes the shape of the Crossrail, which will provide services to central London and the Docklands by December of 2018. Crossrail will serve 40 stations including 26 miles of new Underground lines.

⁷⁷⁶ "Tube Strike Begins Across London Underground Network," *BBC* (London, England), July 8, 2015.

⁷⁷⁷ Mark Mollow, "Tube Strike: Walking Map Shows Distance Between Stations Ahead of Planned 2016 Walkout," *Telegraph* (London, England), February 4, 2016.

Crossrail is the largest construction project in Europe and the biggest change to London's underground environment since the Victorian period. Crossrail is also making many parts of London look more like the chaotic construction site of the 1860s than a modern, twenty-first century metropolis. The construction is digging into the past as well. Archeologists have found over 1,800 bodies from the New Churchyard burial site near Liverpool Street station. The old burial ground closed in the mid-1700s, but not before over ten thousand people –many in mass graves during bouts of the plague – had been buried there.⁷⁷⁸

The proposed developments for the Crossrail improvements suggest that urban planners are taking a more analytical approach to understanding the ways that stations act as more than just places to get from one point to another. The project's developers insist that they want to create safe, accessible spaces that also “retain the identity, diversity, and characteristics of local areas.” As part of this plan, Crossrail intends to provide new public spaces at station entrances and exits, including 20 new pedestrian crossings, 328 trees, and 1,335 bike parking spaces. These new station entrances will feature much larger open areas, with spaces for passengers to meet with others and with more retail opportunities outside of stations. The total cost of the project is currently estimated at 130 million, and the funding is to be shared between Crossrail, TfL, and local private interests.⁷⁷⁹

In a post- colonial world where it has become exponentially harder to define what exactly makes someone British, the Tube offers some glimpse at the cultural work that goes into defining a national community. A 1937 *Punch* illustration fittingly chose the

⁷⁷⁸ Sam Knight, “Bedlam's Big Dig,” *The New Yorker*, April 9, 2015.

⁷⁷⁹ “Crossrail's Urban Realm: The Public Spaces Outside the Stations,” *Crossrail*
<http://www.crossrail.co.uk/route/property-developments-and-urban-realm/urban-realm-proposals/>

Underground as the backdrop to mock British values, but the same image would be just as humorously recognizable today:

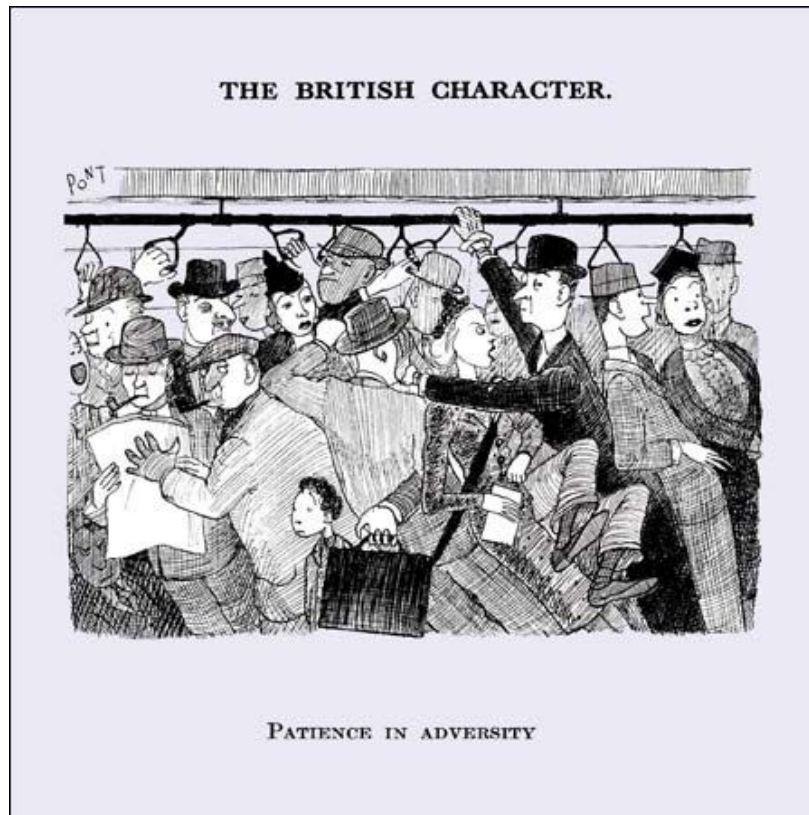


Figure 6.3. "The British Character: Patience in Adversity."

Indeed, in a 2008 survey of 5,000 British adults who were asked to define what traits made the British unique, "great at queuing" came in second out of fifty characteristics (just behind "talking about the weather").⁷⁸⁰ While this work has shown that passengers are often anything but cooperative in public spaces, this constant negotiation between individual Londoners and Underground officials for control of these spaces has helped to make the Tube an integral part of local and even national identity.

⁷⁸⁰ Matthew Moore, "Moaning, Drinking, and Queuing are what Make Us British," *Telegraph* (London, England), November 10, 2008.

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Daniel R. Reedy Quality Achievement Fellowship, University of Kentucky	2009-2012
Breckenridge Jones Prize for the highest-ranking student of History, Centre College	2009
Student Senator for the Humanities Division, Centre College	2008-2009
Junior Marshal, Centre College, awarded to the 19 students in the junior class with the highest academic standing	2008-2009
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