The changing face of the modern cemetery: Loudon’s design for life and death

In Foucault’s lecture to architects, the cemetery is the most prevalent and thoroughly discussed example of heterotopia and yet it has been virtually ignored in most interpretations of the concept. He mentions the cemetery explicitly in relation to two of his ‘principles’. Firstly, he illustrates how these emplacements mutate and have distinct functions within specific historical periods. He discusses in some detail developments at the end of the eighteenth century in France, when enlightened concerns about hygiene and ‘death as a disease’ removed burial of the dead from the crowded sacred space of the church to new cemeteries on the outskirts of cities. Here the growing middle classes could have their own individual space in perpetuity. Secondly, he highlights the cemetery’s profound spatio-temporal disruption, a place that encloses an ‘absolute break with traditional time’ (1998a: 182). For Foucault, the cemetery is the prime example of a ‘fully-functioning’ and ‘highly heterotopian’ site in its enclosure of ‘temporal discontinuities’ [découpages du temps]. Although not mentioned by Foucault, it is also noteworthy that the cemetery links with other principles of heterotopia: a major example of a space that marks a ‘crossing’ or a rites of passage (Ragon, 1983: 65-71) and an emplacement that paradoxically incorporates both extremes of a ‘heterochronia’, an utter break with time as well as an accumulation of time through its formation as a kind of ‘museum’ of the dead (89-105). In his brief comments on the cemetery, Foucault seems to be suggesting that the cemetery combines the principles in a particularly concentrated formation, that the emplacement may provide a lens through which the others can be analysed and, finally, that the importance of these spaces may lie in their historical utility.

Foucault gives a prominent position to the problem and anxiety of how to dispose of the dead not only in his lecture on heterotopia, but also within essays on the politics of health and urban medicine (2001a: 144) and lectures at the Collège de France that introduce his notion
of governmentality (2007a: 21). However, the cemetery is never developed with the precision and breath of related spaces such as the asylum, hospital and prison.

**Spaces of the dead – a brief history of modern European practices.**

The ceremonious burial of the dead in graves marked by a cairn, a tree, or a tall rock, formed perhaps the first permanent meeting place for the living....(Mumford, 1961: 85)

The French historiography of death in early modern Europe is substantial and diverse. Although Ariès’ rather sweeping and eccentric studies of Western attitudes toward death have provoked many critics, no-one questions his profound influence here (McManners, 1981). In particular, he has introduced the pervasive and perhaps seductive view that modern attitudes to death are different to those of previous societies, that the evolution can be traced over extensive eras and that modern attitudes to death are in many ways unhealthy. He argues that we fail to deal with death openly and maturely. A number of distinguished French historians have followed, supplemented and critiqued the work of Ariès, most notably Chauna and Vovelle (see McManners, 1981: 121-130). Ariès traces a fascinating history of the changing spaces of death. Put very briefly, in antiquity there was a fear of the impurity of the dead and burial was not allowed within the city. For example, at the threshold of the Christian epoch, in Rome, the dead were placed at a careful distance from the city, close enough to be visited but far enough to prevent any disturbance, usually by the main gates or along the leading roads (Ariès, 1976: 15 and 1985:2). Often it was an alignment rather than a specific space for the dead and not at all like the modern cemetery. Initially, tombs were built for notables and benefactors, to continue their fame and to honour the city. For the rest, archaeological evidence suggests they were simply dumped in mass graves. However, in the second and third centuries AD, a significant change occurred. Behind the tombs and monuments, a sprawling cemetery started to emerge with burial places from a much wider spectrum of the population. At first this was a horizontal extension but, because of lack of space, was supplemented vertically and burial places were built on top of each other in modest cavities (Curl, 1980: 41).

Over the next centuries a further development occurred which leads directly to the model of the medieval cemetery linked to a church that remained until the end of the eighteenth century. In brief, sites on the edge of towns were often used to bury martyrs. These
emplacements became shrines. People would flock to them and therefore mass would be held. Eventually, churches were built on the same sites and became magnets for those who wished to be buried close to the martyrs. A new model emerged, the church cemetery, but this then became the centre of a new habitat, a provincial town. The world of the living and the dead were no longer separated. According to Ariès, the old fear of the dead had evaporated and replaced with some indifference and familiarity (1981:33). A distinction grew between burial in a church and in the adjoining cemetery, with the former space reserved for the elite. The most prestigious location was by the altar, usually filled by clergy and the upper echelons of the locality. By the thirteenth century, church burial was a clear mark of social and spiritual elevation (Finucane, 1981: 41). There were also clear spatial arrangements in terms of those who were allowed in and out of the cemetery enclosure. Excommunicates, heretics, pagans, Jews, unbaptised infants, lepers and those suspected of committing suicide - all had to be buried outside the churchyard (60). The demand from the powerful and the rich for burial space next to churches became huge and churches themselves became burial grounds with the floors and walls filled with bodies. (Curl, 1980: 71-73). As towns expanded, the churchyards became congested and charnel houses were built. The bones of the dead were stacked up after they were disinterred in order to provide space for new burials (36).

The famous Cimetière des Saints-Innocents in Paris is often cited as a prime example of a medieval cemetery. It was a macabre space within the old city. The spatial organisation of the cemetery was fairly haphazard. The most desirable places for burial were within the chapels. Various individual graves crowded into a small corner. The populace was buried in wide and deep communal graves. Corpses would be piled on top of each other in layers and when full would be covered with a thin coating of soil and another grave opened up next to it. The result was ‘like a crazy quilt where social distinctions followed no evident spatial pattern’ (Etlin, 1984: 75). Here there was no sense of a particular place for a dead person, no sense of a permanent dwelling. The body, in whatever state, was entrusted to the church; the exact location of bones was not significant, as long as they were within the holy grounds. As Ariès records, ‘as yet unborn was the modern idea that the dead person should be installed in a sort of house unto himself, a house of which he was the perpetual owner’ (1976: 22). It was said that the bones of some million dead were stacked in the charniers above the arcades which ran around the high medieval walls of les Innocents.
Nevertheless, what is striking about the various historical accounts of *les Innocents* is their depiction of a thriving public space: an intimate relationship between the living and the dead. The word *cimetiére* denoted a burial place but also a place of asylum, or sanctuary. These spaces also became a resting place for the elderly, a playground for children, a meeting spot for lovers and a place to conduct business as well as to dance, gamble and socialise – a highly heterogeneous, if not heterotopian, place that would eventually be interrogated by ‘enlightened’ concerns and replaced by utopian designs (Ariès, 1976). Cemeteries were open spaces and, in towns, one of the few public spaces available. Indeed, shops and houses developed above the charnel houses. At times the cemeteries resembled a fair: with jugglers, theatrical bands and musicians all vying for attention. The church authorities did try to restrict such activities and intolerance became more apparent by the eighteenth century, but ‘for more than a thousand years people had been perfectly adapted to this promiscuity between the living and the dead’ (Ariès, 1976: 24). A description of a cemetery in Reims in 1770s, reveals this vividly as the space was amongst other things: a short cut, rubbish dump, refuge for wild dogs and a place to hang out washing, gamble, play, relieve oneself and have sex (McManners, 1981: 306). The nearby bones of the dead, despite the apparent stench and the varied states of decomposition of bodies, seem to have made very little impact. Ariès sees this familiarity more widely as a ‘tamed death’, a traditional attitude in which mortality was close and accepted without trepidation (1976: 13). There was a ‘resignation to the collective destiny’ of everyone and assorted bones, collected and then arranged on top of the arcades of the cemetery, were displayed openly for the pleasure of the passer-by:

Frequented like a park by the living, and at the same time a place less of burial than of display, presenting a huge exhibition of human bones, some arranged neatly along the walls, others still lying on the ground, thrown up by the overcrowded and newly turned soil. (Ariès, 1985:23)

As Foucault remarks, in an era when people believed in the immortality of the soul, there was no special importance given to mortal remains (1998a: 181). Corpses lost any sense of individuality and the space became a pleasure and leisure ground for the living. As we shall see, it is only with a growing atheism in the West and the bourgeois appropriation of the cemetery that we find the gradual establishment of a ‘cult of the dead’ and a deep, sentimental concern for the corpse. Eventually, ‘the age-old heterogeneity of the dead was to be decisively removed from the midst of the living’ (Brookes, 1989: 7).
During the eighteenth century the traditional familiarity and spatial intimacy between the living and the dead became rejected. As Curl illustrates, the vast majority of burials in Europe and in Britain took place in churches or in churchyards until the example of France provided a model for all to follow (1983). By the second half of the eighteenth century there was growing criticism of the disordered accumulation of the dead within church grounds. ‘An entire body of literature bears witness to this’ (Ariès, 1981:483). Much of this literature centres upon the debate, campaigns and plans that developed in France. There was a public health question regarding the dangers of pestilence from the common burial grounds and mass graves that were a feature of sixteenth and seventeenth century Paris, and also a growing concern for the dignity of the dead. Enlightened reformers lambasted the church for being concerned with the soul but not the body (Ariès, 1982: 483-49 and McManners, 1981: 309).

How to dispose of the dead safely became a major preoccupation in France and then elsewhere in Europe, particularly in England where such ‘dangers’ were at the heart of the concerns of liberalism and debates about health reform. Foucault explains how in the political framework of sovereignty, there was an obligation to protect the subject from various internal external dangers, or enemies, but with liberalism the notion of danger becomes a more complex matter of balancing features of security and freedom in order to produce the ‘least exposure to danger’(Foucault, 2008: 66). He argues that one of the most important implications of liberalism involves both the stimulation and management of dangers. This can be seen around fears about sexuality and degeneration, but it is also apparent in the concerns about disease and sanitation in the middle of the nineteenth century and specifically the campaigns around burial reform.

It is tempting to conceive of an overall narrative that traces the deliberate, authoritarian movement from a creative jumble of bodies, a rich ambivalence and proximity between life and death, as outlined in the previous section, to the rigid individuality and order of the modern cemetery (see Hotz, 2001; Lacquer, 1983 and 2001; Richardson, 1987; Roach, 1996). In this narrative, liberal burial reformers demean traditional ways of disposing of the dead; idealise middle class sanitary ways of disposal; introduce administrative procedures that split any link or proximity between the living and the dead; and introduce a modern regime of regulation and surveillance. Few writers question this narrative of a growing ‘functionalism’ of death, with the dead relegated to the periphery of the city, forming both a specialised and
neutralised space (Ragon, 1983: 202). A wistful romanticism is sometimes mixed in with this argument. For example, Laqueur contrasts modern forms of burial with the parish churchyard typified in Gray’s famous elegy with its ‘historical specificity’ and sense of place (2001: 4). He avoids mention of the massively overcrowded urban burial grounds that were receiving popular condemnation, yet at least tacit support from many laissez-faire politicians and burial company owners (see Brooks, 1989: 33; Jupp 1997). As I go on to argue, Lacqueur’s acknowledgement that ‘bodies were jostled quite a bit’ rather than each resting in Gray’s ‘narrow cell’ does not at all do justice to the complexity of, and conflicts within, the burial debate that took place within emerging forms of liberalism.

In some respects, the social historian Joyce also buys into this account. According to Joyce (2003: 89), the dead were traditionally part of the heart of the city without it being a cause of concern, or ‘even interest’ and were forcefully removed to a place ‘abstracted from human life’ (2003: 89). Echoing Richardson (1987), Joyce asserts that the ‘new governance of death represented a massive assault on the culture of the poor’ as the ‘corpse in popular culture was a metaphysical object, in its liminal situation between life and the finality of death’ (2003: 91). Although there are resonant aspects to all these narratives, they tend to simplify matters, for example, avoiding any acknowledgement that burial reform, as with liberalism as a whole, was a contested arena. Chadwick, for example, usually cast as the ogre in these top-down accounts, argues for burial reform in order to contest the exploitation of the poor by clergy, undertakers and cemetery shareholders – many of whom opposed the reforms or imposed compromises (Brooks, 1989: 46-7). Such narratives also miss a variety of other, wider and ‘productive’ mechanisms related to what Foucault calls ‘bio-politics’ (2008: 132).

**Loudon’s cemetery: utilitarianism as a technology of government**

I want to argue that the modern cemetery, as a heterotopia both ‘in place’ and ‘out of place’, connecting with and manipulating a variety of other spaces, works as a dispositif, concentrating and illustrating what Foucault describes as a new form of ‘technical-political object of management and government’ that started to emerge clearly towards the end of the eighteenth century. I use the term dispositif in the sense of a mechanism that relates to actual practices and, at the same time, acts as a wider method of analysis or ‘grid of intelligibility’ (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 121). The dense relational quality of the cemetery makes it a
particularly productive heterotopia in terms of a device of analysis. Throughout his lecture on heterotopia, Foucault stresses a variety of relational formations. Both heterotopias and utopias have:

the curious property of being connected to all other emplacements, but in such a way that they suspend, neutralise, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected or represented by them. (1998a: 178)

The cemetery itself is ‘connected to all other emplacements’ (180). I argue that the modern cemetery links with, incorporates and adapts a range of other spaces forming a dispositif that highlights a variety of contradictory or ambivalent principles and features, new functions, effects, experiences, opportunities and dangers and, in this case, uncovers a reconfigured economy of death and wider features of modern forms of governance.

Oddly neglected in academic research, the ideas, designs and experiments of John Claudius Loudon provide the spotlight for this essay. A friend and disciple of Bentham, considering the philosopher the ‘greatest benefactor to mankind… since the commencement of the Christian era’ (Loudon, 1834: 60), Loudon campaigned vigorously for burial reform (Chadwick, 1843: 129-139) and became crucial in the reconfiguration of the cemetery (Curl, 1993). He travelled widely and visited many cemeteries, from Stockholm to Naples. He also supported his recommendations with reference and illustrations to cemeteries in China, Persia and Turkey. His proposals for churchyards and cemeteries, set out in a series of articles and published as a book, On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries (1843), were thoroughly pragmatic. Some new cemeteries were planned by Loudon himself (Bath, Cambridge and Southampton) and his principles highlight key features of the many public cemeteries that were built in the 1850s both in Britain and the United States. The vast, semi-rural cemeteries built at Brookwood and Little Ilford, for example, can be seen as incorporating much of Loudon’s philosophy, designs and techniques (see Curl, 1993: 244; Brooks, 1989: 38-9).

Loudon was also one of the most important early public park designers (Conway, 1991: 3) and the first advocate of municipal parks (Legate, 2000: 90). He was a prolific encyclopedist, garden and house designer and arguably ‘one of Britain’s most important popularisers of taste’ (Schmiechen, 1988: 294). His massive two volume Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm,
and Villa Architecture and Furniture, (1833), for example, had a major influence upon English house and landscape design during the first half of the nineteenth century. He published thirty-four books and started and edited four widely read monthly periodicals - at one stage editing all of them at the same time (MacDougall, 1980: 125). Gloag suggests that the benefits we owe to his ideas are seldom traced back to him: ‘those bright oases of creative thought in a huge grey desert of intolerable verbosity........ whose colossal output of words exceeded four million’ (1970: 18-19). Among his many influential inventions was a wrought iron sash bar that made possible the construction of lightweight, curvilinear glasshouses (Simo, 1988: 112-116 and Gloag, 1970: 45). As much as the more acknowledged experiments by Paxton at Chatsworth, Loudon’s ideas and inventions influenced not only the development of the palm house, but also the subsequent design of the Crystal Palace in London (Conway, 1991: 134-136 and Simo, 1988: 113).

Orchestrating the dead and the living

For Loudon, the primary objective of the cemetery was the disposal of the remains of the dead, but in a way that ‘shall not prove injurious to the living, either by affecting their health, or shocking their feelings, opinions or prejudices’ (1843: 1-2). Protection for the living was paramount. Supporting Chadwick, Walker, and other burial reformers, Loudon envisaged that the threat from miasma stretched much wider than the immediate vicinity of the corpse within crowded graveyards. For example, the less crowded cemeteries, owned by Joint Stock Companies, also posed dangers as they were close to town populations. For burial reformers, the depth of a grave was not the answer as doctors of the time, confirmed that miasma could escape from graves more than twenty feet deep. Reformers thought that gasses escaped unnoticed and scattered over local populations. It was only in rural areas or elevated positions that these deleterious gasses became diluted by the air and harmless (Chadwick, 1843: 30). In order to protect the population, graves therefore needed to be situated at a suitable distance from the town population, dug deep and set within a well ventilated site, indicating some key spatialisations of the modern cemetery. For Loudon, trees should be planted along the circumference of the site to form a simple and regular boundary in order to hide the graves from any nearby housing (1843: 14).
In Loudon’s model, the new distant but imposing space for the dead has some family resemblance to descriptions of disciplinary and institutional sites; both in terms of location and internal spatial distribution (see Driver, 1993: 10-15; Markus, 1993: 113-114; Ogborn and Philo, 1994). Foucault describes how the location of a hospital was the primary spatial consideration and became part of the rationale of the overall sanitary city rather than a ‘dark, obscure and confused place’ at its heart. (2007b: 149) In Discipline and Punish, Foucault describes four distinct forms of ‘dispositional techniques’ that are regrouped in response to a particular need, problem or crisis (1977: 138). Each mechanism is played out to some extent in Loudon’s cemetery and the emplacement of individual corpses. ‘Enclosure’ \([la\ cloture]\) specifies a place distinct from all others and closed in on itself. Foucault refers explicitly to boarding schools and barracks in this respect, where separation of the emplacement helps to create order and control (see also Markus, 1993: 101). Within these enclosures, a technique of ‘partitioning’ is applied. Multiplicities, confused masses are avoided: ‘one must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation’ (Foucault, 1977: 143). An ‘analytical space’ is produced in order to give each individual body a precise location. He argues that the primary operation of discipline is the establishment of ‘tableaux vivants’ which convert the ‘confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities’ (148).

Loudon’s design is above all an analytical space. The mass of jumbled bodies of the old burial grounds are replaced by geometry. All features of the cemetery should be rectilinear for the ‘sake of harmony of forms and lines, as for economy of space’ (Loudon, 1843: 53). It is, in terms of Deleuze and Guattari (2004), discussed in chapter six, a highly ‘striated space’. The overall grid system - ‘every grave being a rectangle, and every rectangle being a multiple or divisor of every other rectangle’ (19) - links to Foucault’s third art of distribution which involves the creation of ‘functional emplacements’, the utilisation of a space in order to control and supervise, for example, military deserters, contagion, commodities, or dead bodies. Loudon was implacably opposed to the custom of burying many bodies close to each other in one grave or within catacombs or family vaults. Each body should rest in ‘free soil’ and, if within the same plot, with at least 6ft depth between each body. There is a mirroring of institutional compartmentalisation of cells and beds as found in monasteries, hospitals, schools and prisons.
Foucault’s final disciplinary distribution, the art of ‘rank’, ensures that within a specified grid, each individual, or in this case the corpse, has a precise relational position. An overall systematic arrangement of sectors and sub-divided plots assists the management of the site and facilitates mapping, registration and record keeping. Some systems threw the cemetery into ‘imaginary squares or parallelograms’, with corresponding letters and numbers in order that each grave could be identified from the register and map book, but in practice Loudon thought this produced a random and confused appearance. He preferred ‘double beds with green paths between’ which produced an orderly appearance and easier access and identification, with no need for elaborate mapping (Loudon 1843: 22). The mix or play of the four distributional techniques produces complex spaces that are simultaneously architectural and operational. They are ‘mixed’ spaces involving both real dispositions (of walls, buildings, plots etc.) and ideal projections, involving the arrangement of specific features and calculations. Overall, space is separated, divided, distributed and tabulated; a fundamental economy of form that will be able to produce a rich diversity of effects and functions.

Cultivating the masses

With the freedom to orchestrate dead bodies within a new purpose-built space based upon medical principles, Loudon’s utopian cemetery displays order, safety, security and sanitary conditions. It is a comprehensive, Benthamite conception, with an overall geometrical coherence that links parts to the whole (Simo, 1988: 248). But the rational distribution and hygienic imperative of the cemetery also encompass and reinforce a series of aesthetic-moral effects (see Rabinow, 1989: 50). Loudon puts into practice Chadwick’s principle that ‘careful visible arrangements of an agreeable nature, raise corresponding mental images and associations’ (my emphasis – 1843: 144). The ‘causal link’ that Huxley traces across the spatial rationalities of various utopian town plans is for Loudon an explicit and fundamental objective of design (Huxley, 2007: 199). Although not referring to his work on cemeteries specifically, Schmiechen convincingly argues that Loudon’s wider writings embrace an aesthetic principle of ‘associational functionalism’ which rests on the Enlightenment notion, expressed by Hume and Hartley, that ‘architecture and design are agents that excite and stimulate ideas in our minds because of the associations.... between objects viewed and the values that the object represents in our memory’ (1988: 302) In particular, order and economy of form affect conduct. In Loudon’s own words:
Heterotopian Studies

the mere circumstance of familiarizing the mind with orderly arrangements, regular features, symmetry [or] means adapted to the end in view, either in building, in furniture, or in gardens, must have an influence on conduct. Order is the fundamental principle of all morals: for what is immorality but a disturbance of the order of civilized society (1833: 94).

Although this quotation refers to a design for a labourer’s house, the aesthetic-moral principle underpins Loudon’s cemetery plan. The regularity and symmetry of the cemetery provides a moral framework on which to build more explicit lessons with regard to sentiments and conduct. There are various stages in producing suitable, ameliorative and instructive effects through the cemetery. The space first of all should be ‘rendered inviting’ through displaying attractive monuments along its boundary wall and the borders of roads and walks. The emplacement should then display a well maintained, ordered arrangement with, for example, lawns cut regularly and litter collected daily. To support this, there should also be strictly enforced behaviour banning ‘smoking, drinking, eating, running, jumping, laughing, whistling, singing ...... and walking on graves’ (1843: 39). More importantly, the spatial rationality itself should produce suitable sentiments. In this ordered environment, ‘sameness of form and repetition’ (85) could help to generate the appropriate sentiment of ‘solemnity’. For Loudon, solemnity was not produced by elaborate scenery and monuments, or indeed ‘much exercise of the imagination’, but arose passively through the effect of the economy and repetition of form. Furthermore, the associations of spatial arrangements generated other mutually enhancing aesthetic-moral effects. For Loudon, the important secondary aim of the cemetery was the improvement of the ‘moral sentiments and general taste of all classes, and more especially of the great masses of society’ (1-2). Although a visitor to the cemetery, such as the country labourer, might not have the skills to appreciate the subtlety of architectural styles, they could recognise the ‘difference between slovenliness and neatness, between taste and no taste’ as they walked through cemetery gardens. (74).

Loudon’s sense of the moral geography of the cemetery is also clearly evident in his designs for, and advocacy of, public parks (Legate, 2000: 90). His work on parks, which he considered an off-shoot of his work on cemeteries and botanical gardens, throws light on how his spatial thinking encompasses moral-aesthetic principles and also incorporates instructional and recreational activities. The usefulness of public parks and other green spaces was highlighted in an influential report by the Select Committee on Public Walks chaired by Slaney (1833). Overall, there was concern at the enclosure of common land for
cultivation and building, particularly as towns expanded. Commons were a traditional space for fairs, religious and political meetings, radical protests, horse racing and many sporting activities. This was a particular issue for utilitarians such as Roebuck and Francis Place, who saw it as limiting access to recreation for the majority (Conway, 1991: 28). However, the main concern of the report centred on the need to replace frivolous and damaging recreation with ‘rational recreation’ that could refresh and the body, mind and spirit. With growing urban industrial development and urban expansion, there was grave concern about the need for public walks and open spaces. Exercise and recreation were essential for the ‘industrious’ classes, especially on Sundays and during holidays.

A widespread debate in the 1830s and 40s concerned the reform of recreation for the ‘humble classes’ as a means of social amelioration or improvement (Bailey, 1978). The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (NAPSS), founded in 1857, embraced optimistically the potential of ‘ameliorism’ (Huch, 1985 and Driver, 1998). The threat of the working classes turning to ‘dangerous causes’ such as Chartism often underpinned the argument for providing rational recreation. Chadwick caught this justification by referring to an instance in Manchester, when potential protesters went to the zoo and museum (specifically opened for the purpose by the police chief) rather than going to a Chartist meeting (Chadwick, 1843:337-8). As well as addressing possible political disaffection, there was also an overall concern with regulating and directing recreation, must adamantly expressed by the growing Temperance movement (Bailey, 1978: 58) and also endorsed by working class movements that instigated rational recreation programmes as a means of proving, for example, the appropriateness of a shorter working day (60-61).

Slaney’s committee members were convinced that some ‘open spaces reserved for the amusement (under due regulation to preserve order) of the humbler classes, would assist to wean them from the low and debasing pleasures’ (1833: 8) such as drinking, dog fighting and boxing. A doctor from Manchester, claimed that on ‘Sunday the entire working population sinks into a state of abject sloth or listless apathy, or even into the more degrading condition of reckless sensuality’ (66). It was a common complaint that public houses were open on a Sunday but outdoor facilities such as walks, cemeteries and zoological garden were closed. The Slaney report argued that parks would provide ‘a better use of Sunday, and a substitution of innocent amusement at all times for the debasing pleasures now in vogue’ (1833: 66). Without parks, ‘great mischief would arise’ and general social unrest. Importantly, classes
would be able to mix and feel more at ease with each other. The humble classes especially
would learn to respect other classes, be more contented and less likely to question
fundamental social and economic inequalities (Conway, 1991: 36). Conduct would be guided
and improved because:

A man walking out with his family among his neighbours of different ranks, will be
naturally desirous to be properly clothed, and that his Wife and Children should be so
also; but this desire duly directed and controlled, is found by experience to be of the
most powerful effect in promoting Civilization, and exciting Industry.... (Slaney,
1833: 9)

Loudon was at the forefront of park design. Simo argues that his short treatise on the laying
out of public gardens (Loudon, 1835: 646-650) provides ‘his most concise summary’ of his
practical and philosophical design principles (Simo, 1988: 175). His designs integrated the
irregularity of the picturesque with more standardised, geometrical features. A good example
is his plan for the Derby Arboretum, the first park in England to be designed for public use
and referred to in Chadwick’s Sanitary Report (Simo, 1988: 194). The park is set out as a
‘living museum’, each tree specimen separated out from the others, although from a distance
they blended together. Combining social health and scientific interest, Loudon produced a
pamphlet suggesting an ideal route through the arboretum, with information on more than a
thousand numbered and labelled specimens (196). Such parks incorporated overall what
Loudon described as a ‘gardenesque’ method of landscape design. He first defined the term
in 1832. It became associated with an approach that built on Repton’s notion that ‘comfort,
convenience and neatness’ were often more important than the mere picturesque (87). The
natural ruggedness of the picturesque needed to be tamed for specific functional purposes,
stressing, for example, the convenience of well-kept lawns and paths close to the house.
Trees and shrubs would be carefully managed to give attention to the name, history and uses
of each, the relationships between them and the changes that occurred over the seasons. The
public park here overlaps with the utopian conception of a botanical garden, as discussed in
chapters four and five, as well as linking with another heterotopian site, the museum (see
Bennett, 1995). A systematic and methodical approach highlighted recently imported exotic
and foreign plants and produced both pleasure and education (Conway, 1991: 165 and also
Legate, 2000: 98-99). Some areas of a public garden, depending on size, could be allowed to
run wild, but others should be managed so that the full range of botanical features could be
studied and reflected upon, promoting rational thought and refining pleasure.
Loudon’s cemetery also dovetails into specific recreational and instructional functions related to its organisation, landscape and artefacts:

…..a general cemetery in the neighbourhood of a town, properly designed, laid out, ornamented with tombs, planted with trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, all named, and the whole properly kept, might become a school of instruction in architecture, sculpture, landscape gardening, arboriculture, botany, and in those important parts of general gardening, neatness, order, and high keeping. (1843: 12-13).

In Loudon’s wider writing, he frequently stresses that ‘human happiness and prosperity ... is founded on individual cultivation’ (1829: 692 – my emphasis). Visits to southern Germany convinced him that education was crucial and the environment, whether gardens, architecture or town planning, provided a wonderful stimulus (Simo, 1988: 221). Echoing his friend Bentham, he insisted that ‘knowledge is pleasure as well as power ‘(Loudon, 1829: 692). For Loudon, education led to stability and harmony, breaking the cycle of oppression and rebellion: ‘security for rich and happiness for poor’ (694). Knowledge would not lead to a classless society (he accepted what he called accidents of birth that establish wealth and property for a few), but it did encourage the poor to understand what was inevitable and what could be overcome through self-improvement. Remarkably, he called for the same content and skills to be taught to all members of society within the same institution until puberty (701). Rather than making mundane labour power scarce as some feared, he argued that it would on the contrary produce a greater transparency of skills and capacities. The cemetery was an ideal place to link seamlessly knowledge, taste and appropriate ways of thinking. More specifically, Loudon also saw cemeteries acting as ‘historical records’ in the same way as he considered the country churchyard acted as the labourers ‘library’ harbouring knowledge of ‘history, chronology and biography’: as ‘every grave was to him a page, and every headstone or tomb a picture or engraving’. (1843: 13). In this process, tombs, rather than marking the rupture of time and inevitable decay, become an instructional tool and a spur for memory and continuity (see Hallam and Hockey, 2001). The fears and prejudices that surrounded the horrific realities of the overcrowded burial grounds, and any metaphysical or transitional dimension of death, are dispersed and perhaps dissolved through a mix of historic and aesthetic associations, set within a hygienic, practical, instructional and multi-functional amenity, and grounded in the universalised sentiment of solemnity.
What I am arguing here is that the cemetery in its actuality reveals a certain utility of function, but at the same time acts as a grid of intelligibility, exposing an ensemble of processes that contribute to what Foucault calls the ‘art of government’. In some ways, the analysis of the emergence of the modern cemetery has some resemblance to studies of the birth of the museum. Crimp examines the museum as an institutional formulation of power and knowledge based upon Foucault’s notion of ‘confinement’ within asylums, hospitals and prisons (Crimp, 1983: 45). More convincingly, Bennett argues that it is too restrictive to link the museum and features of confinement and control (1995: 59). In his investigation into the birth of the museum, Bennett takes a more nuanced approach and juxtaposes the ‘exhibitionary complex’ to the disciplinary institutions studied by Foucault specifically in *Discipline and Punish*. The museum does not enclose and sequester dangerous populations, it rather opens up a new cultural space that mingles different classes of the population and embraces a moral register and pedagogic role (93). However, Bennett’s analysis never quite escapes from defining the museum in relation to the prison and questions of surveillance. In contrast, I argue that the cemetery opens up a new cultural space and incorporates a variety of aesthetic-moral registers and educative functions, but it also works as a heterotopian dispositif, concentrating and illustrating a whole ensemble of relations involving ‘coagulation, support, reciprocal reinforcement, cohesion and integration’ (Foucault, 2007b: 239).

**Enlivening the town and country**

Strikingly, Loudon’s design also addresses similar problems to, and shares certain spatial properties with, wider urban developments, particularly new utopian ways of combining and enhancing town and rural features and facilities. If the main purpose concerned the exclusion of ‘all dead matter from the space of the city’ (Osborne and Rose, 1996: 114), the equation ‘the city is life and garbage is death’ (Scanlan, 2005: 154 and see Sibley, 1995) does not quite fit here. There is no simple dichotomy between the heart and the periphery of the city. The corpse is excluded from the city, but its new home replicates and transforms certain aspects beyond the permanency suggested by Ariès (1976: 74). For example, the cemetery and the town posed the same questions concerning ‘circulation’ (Foucault, 2007b: 17). Corbin outlines the attention given to how water, air and products could be constantly circulated in order to avoid corruption (1996: 94). The distribution of space, the precise measurement and
arrangement of exact distances, became both an institutional and a wider urban problem. In describing questions of security that both overlaid and displaced disciplinary questions in the eighteenth century, Foucault explains how town plans incorporated a ‘poly-functionality’ with regards circulation, accentuating the positive effects of hygiene, trade, communication and surveillance (2007b: 20). This involved an on-going calculation of probability concerning people, vehicles, dwellings, miasmas and so on. Security in this sense is about planning a ‘milieu’, a regulated series within a transformable space. Foucault suggests that town architects and planners addressed the fundamental relationship between circulation and causality (for example: overcrowding produces miasmas that produce more disease that produces crowded corpses that produce further miasmas and so on). In Foucault’s terms ‘bio-power’ breaks this cycle and intervenes at the crossroads between the natural biological individual and an artificial environment.

Loudon’s cemetery addresses questions of circulation through an interesting mix of rural and town features. His plans resemble a ‘garden city’ and in this respect it is worth taking a brief detour through his little known imaginative sketch for the future of London (see Schumann, 2003). Soon after visiting the inspiring, utopian, town of Karlsruhe in Baden, with its geometrical mesh of urban, civic and rural components, Loudon compiled a city plan for London. *Hints for Breathing Places for the Metropolitan, and for Country Towns and Villages, on Fixed Principles* (1829) is a brief outline that starts as a practical suggestion for organising London and leads into envisioning a new capital for Europe or Australia. An attempt by parliament to enclose Hampstead Heath sparked his plan for enlarging London in a way that secures safety of the population, supplies provisions, water and fresh air, removes ‘filth of every description’, maintains cleanliness and facilitates business activity (686). In the only urban diagram Loudon presented, fragments of London are made into a coherent governable whole, with a systematic arrangement of concentric zones that could spread over thirty miles. St Paul’s is at its centre, immediately surrounded by a geometric network of drives and lawns. Using this as a foundation, he then turns to a description of an ideal city as a ‘graphical visualisation’. Here he envisages circular zones of about a mile in width, alternating town and country environments, with radiating and concentric streets, allowing ease of transport and communication.

The utopian plan redistributes breathing space so that every person would have access to open land within half a mile of their home. This time, rather than St Paul’s, all governmental
buildings are centrally placed with a fan of routes easing circulation and transport of goods, post, people, sewage and utilities (688). Country zones include slaughter houses and cemeteries, but also churches, markets, theatres, schools and universities, galleries, museums, baths and parks. The ‘open spaces’ encourage people to set up their own enterprises including coffee houses and other ‘harmless amusement’. The remaining country zone is designed as pleasure grounds with various diverse and contrasting water features. ‘To complete the whole there should be certain bands of music to perambulate the zones’ at designated places and times throughout the year. Although an ideal, Loudon ends with a practical recommendation in that all future development bills and plans should provide open spaces, including greens, gardens, playgrounds and so on (689). Schumann (2003) argues that the plan anticipates Ebenezer Howard’s concept of a garden city as set out some 70 years later (see Howard, 1965). There is no evidence that Howard was aware of Loudon’s vision, but there are some seemingly striking resemblances (see Fishman, 1982 and 1987).

Loudon sought to combine and enhance the virtues of both the country and the town. In cultural terms, Raymond Williams suggests:

On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue. On the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre: of learning, communication, light. Powerful hostile associations have also developed: on the city as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition; on the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation. (1973: 9)

For Loudon the town itself stimulates business and enjoyment (for example, through libraries, concerts and other entertainment), whereas the country promotes hospitality and, above all, health, refreshing the body, mind and spirit. Following a strict utilitarian economic principle, ‘the suburbs of towns are alone calculated to afford a maximum of comfort and enjoyment at a minimum expense’ (1838: 10). Loudon’s cemetery can also be said to produce a new well-ordered, secure and safe space and plays out a series of variable interventions within a new suburban framework that integrates the town and country. As some contemporary critics point out (see Curl, 1993: 263), Loudon’s ‘garden’ cemetery has some strong urban features. Simo also confirms that Loudon’s conception was urban and ‘demonstrated the order and efficient land use of densely settled towns’ (1988: 288). For example, in both town and cemetery, roads had to be wide enough to encourage ventilation. Loudon stipulated that the cemetery should have at least one main road leading from a single entrance to the chapel,
with a network of smaller roads and paths to provide easy access to all plots. Drains, given much prominence in Loudon’s plans, must follow this network so as to avoid encroaching upon the individual graves. The methodical mapping of sectors and sub-divided plots would help the overall administration of the site. Significantly, his main criticism of the widely respected and pioneering Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, which he had visited, concerned its lack of a rigid systematic plan of walks, roads and drains (Curl, 1993: 249).

For Loudon, straight roads and paths should be preferred over winding ones and the layout of the lawns and graves should be ordered and avoid any similarity to a ‘pleasure ground’ or country estate (1843: 18). Markus describes the ‘ubiquitous grid’ as a planning principle for new town developments as well as utopian industrial communities (1982: 7). The grid system, with a long tradition fundamental to institutions as noted earlier, could be replicated endlessly and avoid any strict form of hierarchy. In the arrangement of individual burial places, there is also some mirroring of sanitary reformers plans for improved housing. Joyce notes the ‘smoothing out of the irregularity of the spaces of the courts and the wynds’ in rational housing developments from the mid-nineteenth century (2003: 55). As Chadwick frequently highlighted, physical and moral dangers arose through the close proximity of people both between and within houses (see Hamlin, 1998). Loudon’s own plans for housing equated ‘uncouth, mean, ragged, dirty houses’ with ‘coarse, grovelling manners’ (1833: 3). He considered that even rows of houses encouraged vice, recommending ‘double’ (semi-detached) cottages which promoted neighbourliness without the dangers of too much dense proximity.

Within his garden cemetery, the ‘housing’ of the bodies of the poor was a particular concern for Loudon. He castigated the wealthy and cemetery proprietors who were indifferent or callous in regards to the burial of paupers (1843: 47-8). Loudon at least unsettled the overt ‘class struggle in the spatial strategy of the cemetery’ that is frequently discussed (Ragon, 1983: 42 and see Howarth, 2007: 223). For example, the cemetery should have no segregated area for paupers. Although the boundary of the cemetery should present the most impressive tombs, common graves should be spread out amongst graves with large monuments (Loudon, 1843: 41). He also stipulated that no area should be designated exclusively for a specific class. In metropolitan areas, he considered that there should be temporary spaces built for the poor, and those who did not want a monument, which would be cultivated after at least seven years from the last burial (49). Again there is some mirroring of town planning. Markus
notes the feature of ‘embedment’ within housing schemes, where smaller plots are hidden behind or dispersed between principle plots (1982: 19). Similarly, Loudon outlined a system of interment in churchyards: ‘to place the tombs near the edge, and consequently near the walks; and to place the graves without marks in the interior of the compartment’ (1838: 60).

With regards the wealthy, although implacably opposed to the custom of burying many bodies close to each other in one grave, or within catacombs or family vaults, Loudon recognised that the family vault was seen as a mark of distinction. However, he condemned such practices and offered an alternative:

How much more natural and agreeable to see the grass graves of a family placed side by side in a small green enclosure, the property of the family (46).

In Foucault’s words, the bourgeois appropriation of the cemetery started to give each individual ‘the right to his little box for his little personal decomposition’ (1998a: 181). For Loudon, the little box is set within an enclosure reminiscent of his ideal suburban villa and in the reconfigured public cemetery, ‘conspicuous at a distance’, we find a new private space emerging.

A dispositif of governance

The heterotopia begins to function fully when people are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional time; thus the cemetery is indeed a highly heterotopian place, seeing that the cemetery begins with that strange heterochronia that loss of life constitutes for an individual, and that quasi eternity in which he perpetually dissolves and fades away. (Foucault, 1998: 182)

The population, individually and collectively, becomes viewed as dependent on a ‘series of variables’ including material surroundings, customs, tastes, values, conduct, fears, prejudices and means of subsistence. (Foucault 2007b: 70-71). These ‘natural’ features of the population become objects that are penetrated through reflection, analysis and calculation that work on people’s assumed interests and desires. For Foucault, it is this ‘utilitarian philosophy’ that underpins the government of populations, which seeks the benefit of all through identifying and modifying these variables (74). In this light, the cemetery, even more than the public park, is a utilitarian space par excellence. The cemetery is more than a means of disposing the dead whilst protecting the health of the population. It combines physical protection with
moral and aesthetic cultivation. Loudon conceives the cemetery as an opportunity to promote ‘taste’ and make available a range of education for ‘all classes’. The cemetery provides the ideal opportunity to promote new moral-aesthetic habits and customs that in Loudon’s egalitarian conception links classes and produces ‘the internalisation of a universally accepted social code’ (Schmiechen, 1988: 305). For Loudon, the cemetery represents death as universal, in the sense that its lessons are common to all and the place of burial is frequented more than any other, except perhaps a workplace (1843: 12-13). It is therefore an exceptional space for actually enhancing intimately related tastes, affections and conduct (1833: 1-2) and nurturing a ‘well-regulated mind’ (1843: 8-9). The moral geography of the cemetery illuminates the diversity and breath of techniques of governance.

The development of the modern cemetery also illustrates a certain reconfiguration of urban space. Françoise Choay, a friend of Foucault in the 1970s, explains how in the nineteenth century the urban phenomenon is viewed with a ‘clinical eye’ (1969: 9). Using a term borrowed from Haussmann, he describes the process of ‘regularisation’, the general critical planning of a disordered city (15). Within this development, the ‘progressist concept of space’ is not based on the ‘continuity of solids but the continuity of voids’. Air, light and greenery become the symbols of progress within an overall conception of space as standardized, open and functional (32). The creation of empty spaces and greenery blurs the distinction between town and country and at the same time produces a systematic division of functional units. The last two chapters have illustrated how the emergence of the modern cemetery opened up a new specialised space, contributed to the suburbanisation process, loosened the texture of cities and perhaps influenced the later development of the Garden City movement (Conway 1991: 220).

Loudon’s conception links this reconfiguration of the city with a range of economic, moral, aesthetic and educational features. In keeping with his overall notion of architecture, cemeteries are important because they are ‘open to the inspection of all, and interesting to all’; they provide an ‘equalised’ space in terms of convenience and attraction and, at the same time, they promote ‘correct and elegant habits of thinking and acting’ (1833: 1-2). Rather than being a source of disease and corruption, his space for the dead fluently integrates protection, reformation, cultivation and recreation. On the edges of towns, cemeteries became an important part of the drive towards civic adornment within competing municipalities,
along with the development of schools, churches, cultural institutions, botanical gardens and hospitals (see Worpole, 2003). The new civic ethos produced much competition between localities and a well-designed garden cemetery was considered to reflect the importance and wealth of a particular city (Conway, 1991:141-162). Following Loudon, the building of cemeteries was viewed as part of the civilising nature of the urban landscape. Death became tastefully, economically and somewhat democratically distributed.

In many respects, the development of the cemetery links with the emergence of public parks and other green spaces. Joyce argues that the park is the ultimate ‘other’ space in the crowded, manufactured city, the ‘green, earthy, rural and natural heart’ (223). He would concur with Conway that ‘parks were ‘literally and symbolically a world apart, providing oases of green’ (1991: 223), a space of relative freedom and safety, to sit and dream and imagine you were in the middle of the countryside. Joyce explicitly uses the notions of heterotopia and governmentality in his analysis of gardens and parks. He claims that heterotopias have ‘multiple and often opposed effects’ and that ‘parks, as it were, set gardens to work for the ends of governance’ (2003: 223). Joyce does not give much support to his argument that parks work for the ends of governance, but importantly he does suggest that these spaces can have different and contradictory effects. Drawing on Hetherington’s notion of ‘social ordering’, he argues that parks can be understood ‘as complementing and subverting, and enchanting and challenging, the city’ (224). They offer escape, rest and forms of transgression. Somewhat similarly, Billinge argues that parks evoke both ‘difference and familiarity’ as they are ‘in the city, but not of it’ and provoke a ‘rural past and urban present’ (1996: 443).

Heterotopian sites are able to incorporate and sustain forms of governance through their ability to maintain multiple effects, integrate diverse meanings and relate to a wide range of other sites. Often utopian in conception, these spaces are productive both in their actuality and as imaginative devices because of their playful connectivity. It is their ability to both resemble and unsettle that helps them to govern imaginatively. Rose et al argue that government is hardly ever a simple matter of implementation; it is always failing and having to be ‘revised and interconnected’ (2006: 98). Gordon concurs and suggests that the art of government ‘continuously provokes critique and inventiveness’ (1991: 7). Foucault asserts that governance is a method that splits open ‘a thousand diverse processes’ in terms of both ideas and actual practice, covering:
movement in space, material subsistence, diet, the care given to an individual and the health one can assure him, and also to the exercise of command, of a constant, zealous, active, and always benevolent prescriptive activity’ (2007b: 122)

Osborne and Rose illustrate how the city becomes a ‘laboratory of conduct’ (1999: 737). Heterotopias provide a particularly concentrated but at the same time fluid space for the same purpose. This interpretation has some connection to Hetherington’s conception of heterotopias as laboratories for ‘experimenting with ordering society’ (1997: 11-13), but it sets the ‘interweaving of the issues of freedom and control’ within the subtle insights of governmentality. The cemetery is especially productive in resembling, absorbing and transforming other sites and practices. Medieval burial sites such as Les Innocents had been heterotopian in their own way, marking a rites of passage but also enclosing an ambiguous public space, absorbing a place of sanctuary, a resting place for the elderly, a playground for children, a meeting for lovers, a place to conduct business as well as to dance, gamble and socialise (McManners, 1981: 306). But once the traditional familiarity and spatial intimacy between the living and the dead became a major problem and a focus of ‘anxiety, vigilance and intervention’ (Corbin, 1996: 128), a new imaginative, utopian, analytical space could be invented, addressing similar problems to, and sharing certain spatial properties with, wider urban developments and yet also generating a variety of other measures to guide conduct. They are themselves spatial imaginative manifestations, often underpinned by utopian principles and designs, but this blend of the virtual and real, encourage further imaginative play and invention. As dispositifs, they act as an object and method of research.

Although heterotopias alter their functions at certain points in history, they never settle and they remain unsettling. They refuse a consistent definition, producing conflicting and incompatible effects. Hetherington is right in that these spaces do not actually exist as heterotopia except in relation to other sites (1997:8). It is this uncertainty or ambivalence of the space, its connectivity, the play of the ideal and real, that helps the cemetery work for the end of governance in such a diverse fashion and, at the same time makes it both a localised space and an instrument of analysis. Worpole considers that the fascination with the cemetery ‘suggests that it represents a corner of the world that seems inviolable and ageless, possessing a moral order of its own’ and forms a ‘timeless world that is beyond human or bureaucratic control’ (2003: 25). The cemetery shares with varieties of gardens, an otherworldly quality. In this case, it evokes a ‘sleeping world, a horizontal world’ that
contrasts with its surroundings, the ‘footloose, upright, hurrying bustle of the streets’ (28-29). This commonly held sentiment can be acknowledged and yet I have argued almost the exact opposite, revealing how the cemetery’s moral order seeps into our own and how it is administered in a way that mirrors the urban milieu. The authority of these spaces rests on their ability to be both utterly different from, and intimately connected to, their surroundings. Put another way, the modern cemetery is in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms (2004), a highly ‘striated’ space, yet it encloses perhaps the ultimate unthinkable ‘smooth’ space of death captured succinctly by Laura Riding (1980: 89):

Like nothing – a similarity
Without resemblance. The prophetic eye,
Closing upon difficulty,
Opens upon comparison,
Halving the actuality
As gift too plain, for which
Gratitude has no language,
Foresight no vision.
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Heterotopian Studies


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