

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Race and the Construction of City and Nature:  
A Study of Three Periods of Park Development in Chicago, 1870, 1945, 2010

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Field of Sociology

By

Kevin Loughran

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

June 2017

© Copyright by Kevin Loughran 2017  
All Rights Reserved

### Abstract

Recent scholarship in critical urban theory, urban political ecology, and related fields has emphasized the “hybridity” of urban-environmental systems. This argument is contrasted with the socially constructed “binary” relationship between “city” and “nature” that dominated historical understandings of urban-environmental connections. Despite wide agreement on these issues, the trajectories that precipitated this shift in city-nature boundaries have been understudied. Many explanations position accelerating urbanization or changes in global political economy as driving the decline of the city-nature binary. This paper proposes that this transformation is bound up in the changing cultural and spatial dynamics of “race” between the nineteenth century and the present. Drawing on research on urban parks in Chicago, I consider the production of park space at three important historical moments: (1) the mid-to-late nineteenth century, when large picturesque spaces were built; (2) the post-World War II period, which was marked by the development of recreation facilities; and (3) the contemporary period, where linear parks like Chicago’s 606 (which I term “imbricated spaces”) bring together built and natural environments in new ways. Through this analysis, I argue that the social construction of city and nature, as spatialized through urban park development, was co-produced with racialized spaces and symbols and contributed to the creation of metropolitan racial boundaries. Further, I argue that historical shifts in these racialized spaces and symbols have been implicated in the weakening of the city-nature binary and the rise of the hybrid city-nature relationship.

## Acknowledgements

“There are two ways of getting home; and one of them is to stay there. The other is to walk round the whole world till we come back to the same place[.]” – G.K. Chesterton

I came to Chicago from New York in 2012, where I’d developed an interest in the city’s new High Line park. It had opened in 2009, a year after I’d moved there, and people seemed to love it sans the snark that usually accompanied widely admired cultural objects – cool things in New York were always almost immediately passé. Someone had to call out the park boosters’ brazen money grab and erasure of democratic public space, I thought – why not me? While a Master’s student at Columbia, I conducted an ethnography of the park, wrote up a paper, and revised it with the assistance of my new advisors at Northwestern. I was fortunate to have the paper published, and I’d assumed that was the end of my time thinking about parks.

In the following years, I tried to find greener sociological pastures. Dissertation ideas were fleshed out. IRB proposals were submitted. Data were collected. Rinse, repeat. These “walks round the whole world” nearly took me round the whole world, quite literally – to Los Angeles, Detroit, New Orleans, and abroad. But in the end, I have returned to where my sociological imagination first took hold: in parks.

Intellectual wanderings are par for the course, of course, and the faculty at Northwestern have been an enduring source of support. The five members of my dissertation committee are true role models; each one is a brilliant scholar in his or her own right, who also manage to be incredibly kind people. They have never been afraid to offer necessary criticism, and all along they allowed this project to unfold on my terms. I thank them all for their support. As anyone who has worked with her knows, superlatives are not enough to describe Mary Pattillo, whose wisdom has guided this project and much of my intellectual and professional development. On matters at the intersection of urban sociology and the sociology of race, she is second to none, and Mary has done so much to draw out this project’s potential. Gary Alan Fine has been incredibly generous with his time and has gone above and beyond to open doors both sociological and epicurean. He has been a trenchant and accessible mentor since my first day at Northwestern, when I pitched him a dozen dissertation ideas. He has never been afraid to tell me which ones weren’t worth pursuing, and for that I am grateful. This particular project most certainly would have never taken flight were it not for the intellect and enthusiasm of Wendy Griswold. Wendy correctly perceived that there was more to New York’s High Line than the foibles of neoliberal urbanism. Her early encouragement to consider the aesthetic and cultural side of things pushed me into the unfamiliar but rewarding terrain of “nature,” and this dissertation is the result. The genesis of this project also owes much to Tony Chen, who kindly shepherded me through the canon of twentieth century urban history. In addition to being tremendously supportive, Tony taught me how to think through research design like a real sociologist; one day I hope my work will reach his high bar for empirical rigor. Historian Kevin Boyle lent his generosity of spirit and gravitas to this

project. Thanks, Kevin, for your interest in my work, and for keeping this sociologist honest in his use of history.

I thank the rest of the Sociology faculty, especially Claudio Benzecry, Chas Camic, Al Hunter, Grégoire Mallard, Aldon Morris, Michael Rodríguez, Quincy Stewart, and Celeste Watkins-Hayes, for their support over the years. I am additionally grateful to our departmental staff – Murielle Harris, Julia Harris-Sacony, Linda Remaker, and Ryan Sawicki – who have always been kind, patient, and helpful. I also thank Ann Aler, Cartographic & GIS Specialist at the Northwestern University Library, for providing indispensable assistance with the geospatial component portion of this project. For their generosity in funding my research, I thank the Black Metropolis Research Consortium and the Dispute Resolution Research Center at the Kellogg School of Management. Camille Brewer and Anita Mechler at the BMRC opened doors to local archivists and welcomed me into a community of fellow historical researchers; this work is far better for that. I thank the archivists at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Chicago Park District, and the University of Chicago for their kind assistance. I also thank my interviewees, who generously gave their time and energy to speak with me about the Bloomingdale Trail/606.

In ways large and small, many people have helped me become a better sociologist. Hillary Angelo, Japonica Brown-Saracino, Brad Hunt, Marcus Hunter, Greg Smithsimon, Forrest Stuart, and David Wachsmuth are all gifted and generous scholars, and I thank them for talking with me about my work. I am grateful to many people at Columbia – including Peter Awn, Courtney Bender, Andrew Dolkart, Cassie Fennell, Herb Gans, Shamus Khan, Mio Matsumoto, Saskia Sassen, Carla Shedd, Sudhir Venkatesh, Josh Whitford, Gwendolyn Wright, and especially the late Manning Marable – for helping me find my intellectual footing. For their social and intellectual camaraderie, I thank my fellow graduate students past and present, at Northwestern and beyond, especially Robin Bartram, Megan Albaugh Bonham, Anya Degenshein, Voni (and Clivens) Deeds Pamphile, Diego de los Rios, Philip Fang, Brittany Friedman, Juliette Galonnier, Theo Greene, Anthony Johnson, Michael Mauskapf, David McElhattan, Mariana Oliver, Andrew Owen, Jeffrey Parker, Jane Pryma, Christopher Robertson, John Robinson, Michael Sierra-Arevalo, Ari Tolman, Rhaisa Williams, and Hannah Wohl.

My friends and family helped sustain me on this academic journey. Whether they read my articles or knew next to nothing about my work, I especially want to thank Kate Aufses and Justin Oldfield, Brendan and Briana Devine, Sam Dolbee, Sean Gillis and Briar Goetz, Stephen Lassiter, Steve Lemeshow, Abbas Rattani, Becky Ramsay, Hilary and Doug Roj, and Sam and Kate Shepard. I would never have made it to Northwestern without the friendship of Heba Gowayed, Ryan Hagen, and especially Nicholas Occhiuto, who enlivened my life in New York and continue to make sociology fun, even at a long distance. And I would have never made it through Northwestern without Jordan Conwell, whose friendship and sharp intellect have made the last five years immensely rewarding. The Loughran, Dougherty, Miller, Graham, and Daly-Pavlis families have been amazing supporters. Thanks to all of you for your kind encouragement and interest in me (and my work) over the last five years – especially my parents, Joe and Eileen Loughran, and my four parents-in-law, Melanie and Sanford Miller and Stephen and Ann Graham.

Most of all, I am grateful to my wife, Caroline Graham, for the undying love and support she has provided me for the past nine years. She has walked every step of this journey with me, from New York to Chicago and soon to Houston, and all of the hypothetical research sites in between. Her encouragement helped me take the first steps down this academic path and sustained me during the many moments when slinging espresso seemed like a more appealing vocation. She deserves these 200 pages and so much more.

### List of abbreviations

No abbreviations appear in the text of this dissertation. However, because of the frequent references to archival collections as a means of citation, particularly in chapter three, a few have been employed in the footnotes:

CPD: Chicago Park District Archives

UC: Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago

UIC: Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago

*For Caroline*



## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	11
1.1. Keywords: Nature, Race, City	
1.2. Plan of the Present Work	
2. Modernity, the City-Nature Binary, and Chicago’s South Park .....	23
2.1. Introduction	
2.2. Modernity and Cultural Representations of City and Nature	
2.3. Creating the Picturesque	
2.4. Planning Responses to Expanding Cities and Disappearing Nature	
2.5. Chicago’s South Park: An Unnatural History	
2.6. The Social Uses of South Park	
2.7. The Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in the South Park Design	
2.8. Conclusion	
3. Post-World War II Urbanization and the Redefinition of Parks-as-Nature .....	76
3.1. Introduction	
3.2. Setting the Stage for Postwar Park Development: Parks in Chicago, 1900-45	
3.3. Building Parks for the Postwar City	
3.4. Controlling Racial Conflict and Racial Boundaries in Chicago’s Parks	
3.5. Black Responses to Segregated Parks	
3.6. Socio-Spatial Practices: White Resistance	
3.7. Conclusion	
4. The 606 and the Racialized Reemergence of Urban Nature.....	138
4.1. Introduction	
4.2. City-Nature Hybridity and Imbricated Spaces	
4.3. Chicago Parks in the Age of “Urban Crisis”	
4.4. The Long Shadow of the High Line	
4.5. A High Line for Chicago	
4.6. The Politics and Development of the 606	
4.7. The 606 and City-Nature Hybridity	
4.8. Conclusion	
5. Conclusion .....	202
References.....	208

## List of Tables and Figures

- Table 2.1: The separation of city and nature. p. 37
- Figure 2.1: *Thomson's Aeolian Harp*, J. M. W. Turner, 1809, p. 40
- Figure 2.2: Olmsted and Vaux's South Park Plan, 1871, p. 55
- Figure 2.3: The Upper Division (Washington Park) Lagoon from the Southopen Ground, p. 62
- Figure 2.4: The plan for the Southopen Ground; the administration building, p. 70
- Figure 3.1: Map of the 10 Year Plan with Chicago's Black Population, 1940/1950, p. 91
- Table 3.1: Investment in Plant Material, 1945-51 (in 1951 dollars), p. 95
- Figure 3.2: Wreck-Creation or Recreation?, p. 98
- Table 3.2: Distribution of Park District Police Personnel, p. 103
- Figure 3.3: From the Chicago Urban League's "Summer Time" pamphlet, p. 115
- Figure 3.4: Selected South Side Parks, p. 122
- Table 4.1: The ontological separation of city and nature, p. 144
- Table 4.2: The unity of city and nature, p. 145
- Figure 4.1: Chicago Census Tracts by Race, 1990, p. 152
- Figure 4.2: The High Line's original imbrication, p. 164
- Figure 4.3: "Wild" plants on the High Line, p. 165
- Figure 4.4: The High Line's 10th Avenue Square, p. 166
- Figure 4.5: The 606, p. 169
- Figure 4.6: Map of Chicago parks with the Bloomingdale Trail/606, p. 171
- Figure 4.7: Fliers by the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, p. 174
- Figure 4.8: A luxury condominium development advertises "Life on the 606," p. 180
- Figure 4.9: Puerto Rican flag sculpture on Division Street, p. 182
- Figure 4.10: Graffiti on the 606, p. 185
- Figure 4.11: Officially sanctioned murals on the underside of the structure, p.185
- Figure 4.12: Architectural rendering of topographic variation on the 606, p. 193
- Figure 4.13: The Bloomingdale Trail prior to redevelopment. p. 195
- Figure 4.14: "Wild" nature on the 606, p. 196
- Figure 4.15: View of Humboldt Boulevard from the 606, p. 197
- Table 5.1: Park Development in Chicago, 1870, 1945, 2010, p. 204

## Ch. 1: Introduction

This study examines the socially constructed relationship between urban spaces and the spaces of nature through the lens of urban parks. The study is premised on the idea that this relationship has been transformed between the nineteenth century and the present. The longstanding “binary” relationship that divided town from country, city from nature, and society from nature, has fragmented. While its ontological remnants remain powerful, a “hybrid” understanding of how built and natural environments interrelate has emerged in recent decades. This hybrid understanding views the historical separation of city from nature as a social construction; it can be found in many places, including green urbanism policy prescriptions, growing societal awareness of global warming, and new forms of sociological knowledge.<sup>1</sup> City-nature hybridity assumes an understanding of nature that goes beyond its ability to be commodified or controlled: a recognition of the agency of nature to act on urban society.

The argument offered in this study is that this change to the city-nature relationship – broadly conceived as the shift from a binary to a hybrid – is more than a story of planetary urbanization;<sup>2</sup> it can and should be understood through the changing socio-spatial dynamics of race between the 1800s and the present. Cities and nature are more than categories that societies

---

<sup>1</sup> Hillary Angelo, “From the City Lens Toward Urbanisation as a Way of Seeing: Country/City Binaries on an Urbanising Planet,” *Urban Studies* 54, no. 1 (2017): 158-78; David Wachsmuth, “Three Ecologies: Urban Metabolism and the Society-Nature Opposition,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2012): 506-23.

<sup>2</sup> “Planetary urbanization” connotes the idea that urban society has overtaken anything that could be considered “nature” through the “fragmentation and destruction of traditional ... cities; ... in the extension of logistical, commercial and tourist infrastructures deep into previously remote areas; ... in the destruction of quasi-autonomous agrarian communities in formerly rural zones; and in wide-ranging processes of environmental degradation[.]” Neil Brenner, “Introduction: Urban Theory without an Outside,” in *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*, ed. Neil Brenner (Berlin: Jovis, 2014), 17.

have assigned to physical spaces. Each concept has an ideological basis,<sup>3</sup> and in the historical social construction of city and nature, ideas and ideologies of race have been deeply intertwined. This argument is examined through the lens of urban parks, a type of social space that materializes the socially constructed city-nature relationship across different time periods and different social contexts. Specifically, this study marshals evidence from public parks in the city of Chicago at three important moments of park creation: 1870, 1945, and 2010. At each of these historical junctures, new socio-spatial relations between cities and nature were being formed through institutional processes of park development, changing racial demographics, and shifting cultural understandings of the ideal uses and users urban parks.

### **1.1: Keywords: Nature, Race, City**

Nature, to borrow a phrase from Raymond Williams, is one of the most complicated words in the English language.<sup>4</sup> At once it connotes the totality of physical and biological forces, the natural world – those places, objects, and animals outside the realm of humans and human development, even a mode of social classification: “what is the nature of your critique?” It conjures images of natural landscapes and greenery, a persistent “nature vs. nurture” binary in pop psychology, something that might explain individual behavior and social outcomes.

Typically, to bring the words “nature” and “race” into the same sentence is to touch the third rail of American social thought, policy, and politics. That long and undistinguished history of biological racism – from Social Darwinists and Eugenicists to Bell Curve acolytes and those

---

<sup>3</sup> Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); David Wachsmuth, “City as Ideology: Reconciling the Explosion of the City Form with the Tenacity of the City Concept,” *Environment and Planning D* 32, no. 1 (2014): 75-90.

<sup>4</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 87.

who still search for genetic explanations of social phenomena – gives a whole other connotation to nature when discussing race.<sup>5</sup>

This study takes a different approach. Rather than viewing nature as an essential biological category with implications for human genetics, flora, and fauna, here it is examined it as a social construction: a cultural category that is inherently malleable, temporally unstable, and spatially variegated.<sup>6</sup>

To say that nature occupies a particular space may seem self-evident: trees, grass, mountains, rivers, and so on. But cultural meanings of natural phenomena vary across time and place; further, these “natural” spaces are implicated in global flows of capital, goods, and people: rivers carry commodities just as easily as they carry fish. The demarcation of nature from society is a social construction – and one that rests on a questionable ontology.<sup>7</sup> Yet, for centuries, Western societies have insisted on precisely this spatial and symbolic separation. “Modernity,” understood as the nexus of social processes like capitalism, urbanization, and racialization, gave rise to philosophers, writers, artists, and social scientists who asserted that nature and modern society were functional opposites.<sup>8</sup> Early sociologists like Georg Simmel, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Robert Park were centrally concerned with modernity as representing a break from a human

---

<sup>5</sup> Ann Morning, *The Nature of Race: How Scientists Think and Teach about Human Difference* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Joseph L. Graves, Jr., *The Emperor's New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001); Dorothy Roberts, *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: The New Press).

<sup>6</sup> William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991); Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002); Colin Jerolmack, “Toward a Sociology of Nature,” *The Sociology Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2012): 501-5.

<sup>7</sup> Wachsmuth, “Three Ecologies.”

<sup>8</sup> Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

existence rooted in nature.<sup>9</sup> The creation of an idealized form of nature in the paintings of the Hudson River School, the philosophy of Edmund Burke and William Gilpin, and the writings of James Fenimore Cooper and Henry David Thoreau provided a resonant cultural image; the parks of Frederick Law Olmsted and Andrew Jackson Downing laid this image down in spatial form: a pastoral understanding of nature as spatially and spiritually distinct from urban modernity.

This socially constructed relationship between nature the city is central to the very definition of the terms themselves. Like other social constructions that separate cultural phenomena into oppositional categories – such as male/female or black/white – cities and nature have been understood in relation to each other. As with many other socially constructed binaries, the city-nature binary has come under scrutiny in recent years.<sup>10</sup> Growing awareness of nature’s forces – augured ominously by global warming, rising seas, and natural disasters, and reflected in the contemporary urban planning strategies that attempt to deflect and contain such energies – is no mere scholarly abstraction, but something with real world, everyday consequences.<sup>11</sup> City and nature, once clearly demarcated, now commingle – spatially, symbolically, and ontologically.

The present study is far from the first to take up these sorts of questions. For several decades, scholars have been uncovering the social construction of nature and its relationship to

---

<sup>9</sup> Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” in *The Blackwell City Reader*, ed. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), pp. 103-11; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899); Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925).

<sup>10</sup> Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Kevin Fox Gotham and Miriam Greenberg, *Crisis Cities: Disaster and Redevelopment in New York and New Orleans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Lawrence J. Vale and Thomas J. Campanella, eds., *The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover from Disaster* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

urban space.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the particular identification that city and nature have undergone this historical transformation, though of ongoing scholarly interest, is not a new revelation.<sup>13</sup> What is unique here is the theoretical intervention that emphasizes the social construction of race and the racialization of space in structuring socio-spatial changes to city and nature. Whereas much work in critical urban theory and urban political ecology has understood global capitalism as the primary driver of such changes,<sup>14</sup> this study, while not denying the central role of political economy, centers cultural production.<sup>15</sup> As the study illustrates, the historical production of urban and natural spaces, from a cultural standpoint, is inextricable from the racialization of space and the spatialization of race, which link ethnoracial groups to particular places and impart places with racial meanings.<sup>16</sup>

Race, like the concepts of city and nature, was explicated under the social conditions of modernity. Though social hierarchies based on differences of caste, clan, or culture had long existed, from the political-economic pathways of colonialism came new social and spatial boundaries and new understandings of human difference.<sup>17</sup> Race became a justification for the forcible extraction of people and resources from the African continent and was embedded within

---

<sup>12</sup> Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*; Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*.

<sup>13</sup> Angelo, "From the City Lens Toward Urbanisation as a Way of Seeing;" Wachsmuth, "Three Ecologies."

<sup>14</sup> Brenner, *Implosions/Explosions*.

<sup>15</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> Alastair Bonnett, "The Metropolis and White Modernity," *Ethnicities* 2, no. 3 (2002): 349-66; Elijah Anderson, "The Iconic Ghetto," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 642, no. 1 (2012): 8-24; Elijah Anderson, "The White Space," *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 1, no. 1 (2015): 10-21.

<sup>17</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Justin E. H. Smith, *Nature, Human Nature, and Human Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

global networks of political economy. Eventually the economic logics became secondary; race developed into a vehicle for domination all on its own.<sup>18</sup>

Nature and race often interacted with each other. Nature was a bludgeon used in service of the race concept: countless philosophical and pseudo-scientific treatises on human nature and race were written in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, with white European and American writers using whatever evidence they could mobilize to “prove” the natural intellectual inferiority of Africans and their enslaved American descendants.<sup>19</sup> These ideas worked powerfully in the service of institutional racism in the United States, serving as the ideological basis for black slavery and Jim Crow. A racial hierarchy based on the natural order of things was beyond reproach.

The creation of both a racial hierarchy and an idealized form of nature had spatial implications. “Blackness,” with its connotation of biological inferiority, was mapped onto the jungles of Africa and the plantations of the rural South, creating a racial category along with particular social spaces that embodied and reproduced it.<sup>20</sup> Blacks toiling in the green spaces of cotton fields confirmed to white observers that black people were closer to nature, both in their labor and in their genes.<sup>21</sup>

Paradoxically, this profane “state of nature” represented by black people and black spaces was developing simultaneously with the creation of nature elsewhere as sacred, pure, and

---

<sup>18</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: The Free Press, 1935); Barbara J. Fields, “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America,” *New Left Review* 181 (1990): 95-118; Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>19</sup> Graves, *The Emperor’s New Clothes*; Joe R. Feagin, *The White Racial Frame* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>20</sup> Peter Edgerly Firchow, *Envisioning Africa: Racism and Imperialism in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*; Rutledge M. Dennis, “Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and the Metaphysics of Race,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 64, no. 3 (1995): 243-52.



culturally valuable. In the second half of the nineteenth century, city leaders began building a new type of social space: picturesque urban parks. These laid out a powerful vision of nature in America's industrializing cities. The white visitors of New York's Central Park, Chicago's Washington and Jackson Parks, and Atlanta's Piedmont Park encountered nature as a site of leisure, not labor: highly aestheticized, pastoral, and beautiful – suggesting that the social definition of nature was mediated by the spaces, practices, and people that represented it.<sup>22</sup>

In the intervening 150 years since the creation of the first generation of urban parks, the spaces of nature – and their corollary, urban spaces – have been redefined several times. As a consequence of accelerating urbanization along with changing racial demographics and cultural practices, over time the symbolic geography of city and nature have moved around within metropolitan areas. Within such contexts, nature's culturally valuable spaces have shifted from picturesque urban parks in the nineteenth century, to suburban backyards in the middle of the twentieth century, and back into cities in the twenty-first through the development of new parks, like Chicago's 606, that highlight a new image of nature – one fully enmeshed in the urban built environment.

## **1.2: Plan of the Present Work**

This study sets out to untangle these changes in the socially constructed spaces of “city” and “nature” through an understanding of how the two concepts and their interrelationship have been racialized over time in the United States. I focus particularly on urban parks, the type of

---

<sup>22</sup> Dorceta E. Taylor, *The Environment and the People in American Cities, 1600s – 1900s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*.

social space that, more than any other, has demarcated ideal types of the city-nature relationship at different historical moments. Through design and through the social geography of park development, urban parks emplace visions of nature into space and form a social relationship to the built environment.<sup>23</sup> As sites of the cultural production of nature, urban parks represent the outcome of ideas about the natural environment, aesthetic preferences, and the institutional structures that govern urban social space.<sup>24</sup> For these reasons, urban parks represent a key domain to examine how racialized representations of city and nature have transformed over time.

Chicago serves as the site of the three periods of park development under study (1870, 1945, and 2010). Despite the city's idiosyncrasies, the findings from Chicago illuminate broader social processes that have shaped the meanings and spaces of race and nature across the United States. Chicago, as a city that came of age during the nineteenth century and continued to grow through the middle of the twentieth, shares many characteristics with other cities in the Northeast and Midwest. Newer Sun Belt cities, with their comparatively recent growth, tend to have different spatial configurations – the predominance of private green space within cities like Los Angeles and Phoenix, for example, modifies the social meaning of parks to an extent.<sup>25</sup> In spite of regional differences, however, every major American city has been touched by wider park development trends. Cities did not need to have a million residents in 1900 for their civic boosters to understand the cultural value of large picturesque parks, for example – consider

---

<sup>23</sup> David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982).

<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Shepard and Gregory Smithsion, *The Beach Beneath the Streets: Contesting New York City's Public Spaces* (New York: SUNY Press, 2011); David J. Madden, "Revisiting the End of Public Space: Assembling the Public in an Urban Park," *City & Community* 9, no. 2 (2010): 187-207.

<sup>25</sup> Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 1990); Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, *Sunbelt Capitalism: Phoenix and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

spaces like L.A.'s Hollenbeck Park (and, the present-day corollary: boosters need not have wide swaths of brownfields or disused infrastructure at their disposal to envision new linear parks as important to luring tourists and wealthy locals to downtown areas – see Houston's Buffalo Bayou Park on this point). Thus, while Chicago clearly cannot explain everything, the social processes identified in this study – of racialized changes in the city-nature relationship and their representation in urban parks – are generalizable to other contexts.

Methodologically, the study employs the tools of historical sociology, using a mix of original archival research, geospatial mapping, and interviews, in addition to an examination of the published historical record. The archival work relies on collections from the Chicago Park District, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the University of Chicago. The geospatial component blends archival data with population statistics from the National Historical Geographic Information System. Interview data are drawn from unstructured interviews conducted with individuals involved in the creation and contestation of Chicago's 606 park.

The study proceeds in three parts. Chapter two centers the creation of Chicago's South Park (present-day Washington and Jackson Parks and the Midway Plaisance), designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in 1871. In Chicago as well as other cities, like Cleveland, Atlanta, New Orleans, and New York, the second half of the nineteenth century was when the city-nature binary took on a new physical form in the first generation of modern urban parks. Influenced by the picturesque vision of landscape that had developed in earlier decades, city boosters set aside large parcels of land to serve as spaces of nature in the midst of urban growth. In the geography, design, and intended uses of these new parks, park developers laid down a set of ideas about city and nature, and along with them, ideas about the people and

practices that inhabited each type of space. I argue that parks, while envisioned as sites of nature within cities, they were also created as sites of whiteness within a racially mixed urban fabric.

Chapter three moves into the next major period of park creation in Chicago. Beginning in 1945 with the wave of urban renewal and suburbanization that were reconfiguring American metropolitan areas, park builders in Chicago – which centrally included the powerful Chicago Park District, founded in 1934 – initiated citywide park plans that would serve the recreational needs of the growing city. These parks were of a different kind than the grand picturesque spaces developed in the nineteenth century. Rather than providing open spaces of nature, the urban parks of the post-World War II period were highly programmed and designed to provide full-time spaces for recreational pursuits.<sup>26</sup> These recreation-focused parks – 194 of which were built in Chicago between 1945 and 1970 – were structured by changing dynamics of race and space. The city's great increase in black population as a result of the Great Migration meant that older parks like South Park, built as spaces of white leisure, were becoming used by black people, thereby disrupting longstanding patterns of racialized park use.<sup>27</sup> Institutional responses from the Chicago Park District, indicated by the geography of new park development and the financing of existing parks, effectively pivoted Chicago's symbolically valuable parks in the postwar period. Older parks, especially those near the South Side's growing Black Belt, gradually lost their appeal as pure nature and, via discourses of crime and on-the-ground social practices that increasingly made parks spaces of policing and social service delivery, were incorporated into an imaginary of the urban.

---

<sup>26</sup> Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*.

<sup>27</sup> Brian McCammack, *Recovering Green in Bronzeville* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015); Colin Fisher, *Urban Green: Nature, Recreation, and the Working Class in Industrial Chicago* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

Chapter four examines the period of contemporary park development in Chicago, focusing particularly on the 606, a park opened in 2015 atop a former elevated railway. This chapter interrogates the emerging trends in park development and design that highlight the newfound hybrid relationship between city and nature. In the aftermath of the postwar changes, the unplanned plant growth that followed from depopulation and disinvestment created a new form of hybrid built and natural environments in vacant lots and other disinvested sites. Though initially the aesthetic gloss on urban poverty, once discovered by white gentrifiers in the last decades of the twentieth century, the “wild” nature of postindustrial landscapes came to be culturally valued.<sup>28</sup> In the latest generation of urban parks, like Chicago’s 606, this new spatial form has been reproduced and given new prominence. This chapter introduces the term “imbricated space” to describe the unique intersection of built and natural environments represented by spaces like the 606. The rise of imbricated spaces as a culturally venerated form of urban nature in the twenty-first century, I argue, has gone hand-in-hand with the racialized re-taking of urban space. Given that the symbolically (and economically) valuable spaces of nature have historically been white spaces – even as both the category of whiteness and the symbolic spaces of nature have shifted over time – the return of the spaces of nature to urban contexts demands critical inquiry.

The final chapter brings analytical closure to these wide-ranging shifts in the city-nature relationship and offers some provisional thoughts on where the city-nature relationship, and future research in this vein, might go from here. The racialized reemergence of nature in the city

---

<sup>28</sup> Nate Millington, “Post-Industrial Imaginaries: Nature, Representation and Ruin in Detroit, Michigan,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 1 (2013): 279-96; Susan Herrington, “Framed Again: The Picturesque Aesthetics of Contemporary Landscapes,” *Landscape Journal* 25, no. 1 (2006): 22-37.

is not without its contestation. The social and economic impact of parks like the 606 has raised concerns about gentrification and displacement, and parks equity now figures prominently in environmental justice movements.<sup>29</sup> Combined with urban growth coalitions' embrace of parks for their newfound cultural and economic benefits, the emerging racialized political conflicts over park development are likely to be exacerbated in the coming years. The concluding chapter considers how such spatial politics may unfold, and their implications for city, nature, and race.

---

<sup>29</sup> Kenneth A. Gould and Tammy L. Lewis, "The Environmental Injustice of Green Gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn's Prospect Park," in *The World in Brooklyn: Gentrification, Immigration, and Ethnic Politics in a Global City*, ed. Judith DeSena and Timothy Shortell (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2012); Christopher G. Boone, Geoffrey L. Buckley, J. Morgan Grove, and Chona Sister, "Parks and People: An Environmental Justice Inquiry in Baltimore, Maryland," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, no. 4 (2009): 767-87.

## Ch. 2: Modernity, the City-Nature Binary, and Chicago's South Park

### 2.1: Introduction

As outlined in the introductory chapter, the city-nature binary, this study's primary object of interest, has its origins in the social conditions of "modernity." Modernity, understood broadly as the overlapping rise of capitalism, nation states, bureaucracy, the division of labor, and other macro-level processes between roughly the 1500s and the present, is the object or theoretical background of much social science research.<sup>1</sup> This chapter focuses on modernity's spatial ramifications and the cultural forces that allowed the city-nature binary to take on a particular spatial form in the urban parks built in Europe and North America after 1800.

Societies, and all institutions for that matter, necessarily create social spaces that embody them and give a setting for social action: as philosopher Henri Lefebvre asks, "What would remain of the Church if there were no churches?"<sup>2</sup> Modernity therefore depended upon a spatial representation, and "modern cities" became just that. Cities of course existed well before the dawn of industrial capitalism and statehood;<sup>3</sup> but within these new social systems, cities *qua* built spaces of density and multiplicity encountered an entirely new set of social meanings. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Sociology in particular was founded on the systematic study of modernity's new social forms. See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958); Émile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, ed. George Simpson, trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (New York: The Free Press, 1951); W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899). For more recent treatises on modernity, see Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Social Change* (Malden: Blackwell, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 44.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (New York: Harcourt, 1961); Max Weber, *The City*, ed. Don Martindale, trans. Gertrud Neuwirth (New York: Free Press, 1958).

modern nation-state made existing cities its loci of political and economic power.<sup>4</sup> New networks of capital exchange were superimposed upon extant built forms, and the two did not always fit. Medieval walls needed to be torn down to open city centers to new flows of capital and labor; new streets were needed to promote ease of movement and guard against the health crises associated with urban density.<sup>5</sup> Cities, traditionally the “fusion of fortress and market,”<sup>6</sup> became disembedded from their local spatial and temporal contexts and enmeshed in standardized, transnational relations of time and space.<sup>7</sup>

While we could raise many questions about the character of these changes – their universality, their temporality, their ontology, and so on<sup>8</sup> – the basic material differences between pre-capitalist, pre-industrial cities and their modern counterparts seem hard to refute. These changes happened in different places at different times, to be sure; but these shifts in the built fabric of urbanity are clearly associated with corresponding shifts in the social relations and social processes that constitute society. And from the perspective I will take here, the particulars of urbanization matter less than the *idea*, and the *ideology*, of the modern city as a coherent set of spaces, practices, and images.<sup>9</sup> For the terms of the present study, the concept of the modern city as space and symbol of modernity, as site of capitalism, surveillance, and bureaucracy, is the cultural and intellectual concept that anchors one end of the city-nature binary.

---

<sup>4</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Foucault writes that modern changes to city spaces served four “circulatory” purposes: hygiene, trade, transit, and surveillance. *Security, Territory, Population*, 18.

<sup>6</sup> Weber, *The City*, 77.

<sup>7</sup> Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 21.

<sup>8</sup> Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); David Wachsmuth, “Three Ecologies: Urban Metabolism and the Society-Nature Opposition,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2012): 506-23.

<sup>9</sup> David Wachsmuth, “City as Ideology: Reconciling the Explosion of the City Form with the Tenacity of the City Concept,” *Environment and Planning D* 32, no. 1 (2014): 75-90.



The other side of this binary, nature, was also radically changed by modernity. Like cities, ideas and spaces of nature pre-dated the emergence of modern social processes. Conceptions of its sacredness animated poetry, art, and literature since ancient times.<sup>10</sup> Its spaces formed the fabric upon which human societies were built: early settlements were chosen at defensible sites or places adjacent to certain natural resources. The very act of settlement, however, necessarily altered nature's physical properties.<sup>11</sup>

Modernity brought the spaces of nature a much-intensified form of human intervention. Nature was revolutionized by capitalism's commodity question. In the famous words of Marx and Engels, "all that is solid melts into air": pieces of nature such as trees and land became abstract commodities like timber and real estate.<sup>12</sup> Their social meanings were, like cities, lifted out of their immediate context and brought into an ever-growing web of social and economic flows. In Marx's conception, objects like trees have a use-value: they can provide shade, firewood, and oxygen; but as commodities, they also have an exchange-value: they can be bought and sold in exchange for other commodities, like money.<sup>13</sup> This process of commodification, beyond bringing nature further into the economic realm, created a particular standardization of natural objects across space-time.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Peter Coates, *Nature: Western Attitudes since Ancient Times* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998); Mark Elvin and Liu Ts'ui-jung, eds., *Sediments of Time: Environment and Society in Chinese History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Charles Segal, *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral: Essays on Theocritus and Virgil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 46-53.

<sup>12</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 476.

<sup>13</sup> Marx, *Capital*, 125-31.

<sup>14</sup> Here I am again referring to Giddens's notion of "disembedding." The act of commodification constructs commodified items as sharing common properties; this assumption of standardization allows for their exchange across space-time.

The other major effect of modernity upon nature was its disappearance. As cities swallowed up the countryside, the green spaces of nature became further and further removed from the urban. As Lefebvre writes, this expulsion of nature relegated it to a symbolic realm: “It is still the background of the picture; as decor, and more than decor, it persists everywhere, and every natural detail, every natural object is valued even more as it takes on symbolic weight[.]”<sup>15</sup> No longer found in the immediate vicinity of an increasingly urbanized population, the spaces of nature became valorized for new reasons. The perception of nature’s limits, and its seeming contradistinction to urbanity, allowed for its symbolic linkage to other sacred objects, religiosity, and femininity. Juxtaposed with a grey modern city, nature’s modern guise made it a fitting opposite as space and symbol.

This chapter’s theoretical analysis begins at this historical juncture: this broad moment of the social cognizance of urbanization’s effects: when “city” is understood as a productive-destructive, totalizing force; when “nature” is symbolically vanquished, banished from city limits, represented only in art, literature, and other cultural products. Given the reflexivity between knowledge and society (and therefore the reflexivity between knowledge and social space),<sup>16</sup> the web of cultural and sociological knowledge that emerged concurrently with modern urbanization should be understood as co-constituting the social conditions and social spaces of

---

<sup>15</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 30.

<sup>16</sup> Giddens writes, “The reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character.” Extending Lefebvre’s notion that modern society is reflected in and constituted by social spaces allows us to build an assumption that there is a reflexive relationship between knowledge and social space: Knowledge ↔ Society ↔ Social Space. Social spaces are constructed, often by experts, with ideas and assumptions about how social spaces are to be used; this “spatial knowledge” is continuously revised based on actual spatial practices. Further, the users of social spaces are aware of the codes embedded in social spaces – they understand that walls signal unauthorized spaces, for example. Thus, spatial knowledge is a two-way relationship that mirrors the relationship between knowledge and society more broadly. See Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 38; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.

modern cities. That is, *ideas* of city and nature cannot be untangled from the *spaces* that represent city and nature. Because all social spaces exist on multiple levels – at once mental, material, and lived – ideas and symbols are as much a part of their creation as the efforts of planners, architects, and builders.<sup>17</sup>

This chapter shows the interplay of spatial ideas and material space in the context of socially constructing the city-nature binary: how and why such sharp symbolic boundaries were drawn between natural spaces and urban spaces. I present an overview of the powerful cultural representations that produced city and nature as oppositional cultural objects as well as the efforts to bring these representations into social space via early urban parks. In particular, I focus on the influence of ideas about city and nature – from art, literature, and philosophy – on urban planning and landscape architecture. The people who assumed these new occupational categories became the key creators of the spaces that attempted to materialize the city-nature opposition.<sup>18</sup>

The chapter then moves into the empirical case study of the construction of the city-nature binary in Chicago in 1870. I focus here on nineteenth-century efforts to build green spaces for a rapidly expanding metropolis. Among American cities, Chicago in the nineteenth century was both typical and unusual. Like other Midwestern towns vying for economic and cultural supremacy as the nation’s “manifest destiny” of settler colonialism pushed toward the Pacific, Chicago rose quickly.<sup>19</sup> Unlike older cities, like New Orleans and New York, Chicago’s built

---

<sup>17</sup> See Lefebvre’s analytical triad (spatial practice, representations of space, representational spaces), *The Production of Space*, 38-9.

<sup>18</sup> David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). On the rise of expertise more generally, see Theodore M. Porter, *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 31-54.

fabric was almost entirely a creation of industrial capitalism. It had no historical districts and few existing roads to navigate as the city grew outward into the prairie. It was, in the eyes of early city boosters, a blank canvas where a purely scientific, modern conception of urban space could be laid out.<sup>20</sup> Between Chicago's railroad infrastructure and rectilinear street grid, the city was a rational, technological creation geared toward the needs of capital.<sup>21</sup> Nature in this context was a series of commodities to be accumulated, marshaled for economic growth – the raw materials building the great city. Chicago became the regional epicenter of such commodity exchange: here the natural resources of the “Great West” were bought and sold on a scale unseen anywhere else.<sup>22</sup>

But the story of Chicago's urban and natural spaces is not purely an economic one. Modern planning techniques engaged in cultural considerations as well: the methods perfected in Haussmann's Paris opened the old city to new capital flows, yes, but they also bolstered public health and offered public spaces designed for civic virtue and political participation.<sup>23</sup> In Chicago, as in other North American and European cities, these cultural aspects of urban planning included public parks. Given that the city developed in the second half of the eighteenth century, Chicago's leaders had the advantage of learning from New York, London, and other cities that parks were important for a city's cultural power, that they structured land values, and that they were a means of “civilizing” an increasingly diverse population. As was fitting for a city of Chicago's ambitions, none other than Frederick Law Olmsted, designer of New York's

---

<sup>20</sup> While these efforts pre-dated the “high modernist” planning efforts that created Brasilia, for example, similar utilitarian logics of organizing space developed in Chicago. See Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

<sup>21</sup> Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew Gandy, *The Fabric of Space: Water, Modernity, and the Urban Imagination* (Cambridge: MIT Press), ch. 1.

Central Park and the nation's foremost proselytizer of landscape architecture in general and the "picturesque" vision in particular, was called to build a great park for Chicago.<sup>24</sup>

The production of nature on Chicago's urban landscape was a complicated process. The cultural visions of nature that followed in manifest destiny's wake did not always align with the natural landscapes of these newly colonized places. Smoothing the discontinuities between the culturally powerful picturesque vision of nature and the actually existing prairies on the shores of Lake Michigan therefore became a central ambition of park creation. Architects and city boosters sought to restructure the city's natural landscapes to align with broader cultural expectations, especially in prominent park projects like Olmsted's South Park (present-day Washington and Jackson Parks), which played host to the 1893 Columbian Exposition. As this chapter describes, if the city of Chicago was a fully modern, technological creation, its nature was in many ways just as modern, just as technologically produced. Chicago therefore presents as an exceptional lens to observe the social and material construction of the city-nature binary.<sup>25</sup>

This chapter analyzes the ways that the creation of city and nature played out on the ground as planners, politicians, and the public attempted to direct the aesthetics and geography of green space in an ever-expanding urban environment. Parks built in the late nineteenth century were central pieces of the broader planning fabric of Chicago. Their placement had key implications for social inequality as ethnoracial divisions were crystallizing; decisions to place new parks near rich or poor neighborhoods would have lasting effects on park access, property

---

<sup>24</sup> Witold Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the 19th Century* (New York: Touchstone, 1999).

<sup>25</sup> In this sense, we can consider Chicago a "paradigmatic" case of the socio-spatial construction of the city-nature binary. See Ted Palys, "Purposive Sampling," in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Sage: Los Angeles, 2008); Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Sage: Los Angeles, 2014); Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research* (Sage: Thousand Oaks, 1995).

values, and other spatialized forms of inequality.<sup>26</sup> On a symbolic level, park planning was embedded not only in seemingly innocuous ideas about city and nature, but in understandings of race, colonization, and immigration. As this chapter argues, urban parks were more than spaces of nature-in-city; their creation necessarily engaged with questions of raced and classed use: who were the ideal park users? What kinds of park activities should be supported, and what kinds should be banned? The answers hinged on critical understandings of who had the right to access the public realm and shaped the very definition of the public itself.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.2: Modernity and Cultural Representations of City and Nature

Understanding the creation of the city-nature binary as a cultural concept and as something emplaced in social space requires an examination of the symbolic systems around the ideas of city and nature. These systems include collective, colloquial understandings as well as the images of city and nature that were created by cultural producers – especially writers, philosophers, and artists – and became sanctified by cultural receivers and institutions.<sup>28</sup> It is this cultural base that enabled modern landscape architecture to take the form that it did – a spatial project that sought to sharply separate urban and natural spaces. The goal here is to sketch the broad cultural schema that formed the basis for social understandings of the city-nature

---

<sup>26</sup> On the effects of unequal park access, see Christopher G. Boone, Geoffrey L. Buckley, J. Morgan Grove, and Chona Sister, “Parks and People: An Environmental Justice Inquiry in Baltimore, Maryland,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, no. 4 (2009): 767–87; Andrea Abraham, Kathrin Sommerhalder, and Thomas Abel, “Landscape and Well-Being: A Scoping Study on the Health-Promoting Impact of Outdoor Environments,” *International Journal of Public Health* 55, no. 1 (2010): 59–69; Jennifer R. Wolch, Jason Byrne, and Joshua P. Newell, “Urban Green Space, Public Health, and Environmental Justice: The Challenge of Making Cities ‘Just Green Enough,’” *Landscape and Urban Planning* 125 (2014): 234–44.

<sup>27</sup> Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982); David J. Madden, “Revisiting the End of Public Space: Assembling the Public in an Urban Park,” *City & Community* 9, no. 2 (2010): 187–207.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Schudson, “How Culture Works,” *Theory and Society* 18, no. 2 (1989): 153–80; Wendy Griswold, *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2013).

relationship at the beginnings of modern urbanization processes. A systematic approach to the development of these ideas across time and space goes well beyond the scope of the present work – instead I wish to highlight core ideas that connected a wide array of cultural products in Europe and North America between roughly 1750 and 1850.<sup>29</sup> These representations, I argue, are the nexus of key symbols that influenced the designs, meanings, and uses of natural and landscaped green spaces – the sorts of spaces that became central to the reproduction of the city-nature binary.

The dominant theme in modern cultural meditations on city and nature was to collapse urban and natural spaces into a sacred/profane binary that has structured many types of oppositional cultural objects. As classical sociologist Émile Durkheim wrote, cultural phenomena often “assume[] a binary division of the known and knowable universe into two genera that include all that exists but radically exclude each other[,]” the “sacred” and the “profane.”<sup>30</sup> For Durkheim, sacred objects are those “protected and isolated by prohibitions[;]” profane objects, in contrast, “are those things to which prohibitions apply and which must keep their distance from what is sacred.”<sup>31</sup> The modern social construction of the city-nature relationship was established on the assumption that nature (and its associated spaces and

---

<sup>29</sup> Many of the examples used here come from Great Britain and the United States as there is a rich scholarship on cultural formulations of the city-nature binary in these two countries. But similar conceptions of city and nature can be found in many places. See Coates, *Nature*; Elvin and Ts’ui-jung, *Sediments of Time*.

For a much deeper look into the development of these forms of cultural production, see Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, ed. Mark S. Cladis, trans. Carol Cosman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 40.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

symbols) was sacred and the city (and its associated spaces and symbols) was profane.<sup>32</sup> This division had its structural supports in the whole earthly range of social actors who created, acknowledged, or reproduced an understanding of city and nature as opposites in their cultural products, social knowledge, or daily activities.<sup>33</sup>

This socially constructed binary, while constituted in new ways by modern social processes, was built atop a cultural structure with a long history in Europe and elsewhere. Versions of city-nature antagonisms were present in many times and places.<sup>34</sup> As cultural theorist Raymond Williams notes, opposing visions of the “pastoral” and the “counter-pastoral” are frequent themes in literature dating back to Ancient Rome and Greece: Virgil’s *Eclogues*, for example, written around 40 BC, contrasted “the pleasures of rural settlement [with] the threat of loss and eviction.”<sup>35</sup> For Williams, although modernity radically changed the spaces of city and countryside, it did not disrupt long-held beliefs of cities as places of both worldly learning and atomized avarice and of rural areas as places of both family virtue and ignorance.<sup>36</sup> Despite heterogeneity across and within urban and rural areas, these sorts of sweeping binary associations proved remarkably durable. Part of this phenomenon can be explained by the shifting cultural frameworks of the present that provide an elusive, and illusory, vision of the

---

<sup>32</sup> The “city-nature binary” is one of many ways of describing this antagonism; other scholars have described this binary relationship in terms of nature-society, city-country, and so on. In my reading, all of these formulations are describing the same or a very similar relationship between the spaces and social processes associated with human activity on the one hand, and those rooted in “nature” on the other. See Wachsmuth, “Three Ecologies”; Williams, *The Country and The City*; Kevin Loughran, “Imbricated Spaces: The High Line, Urban Parks, and the Cultural Meaning of City and Nature,” *Sociological Theory* 34, no. 4 (2016): 311-34.

<sup>33</sup> Paul DiMaggio, “Culture and Cognition,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1997): 263-87; Richard A. Peterson and N. Anand, “The Production of Culture Perspective,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (2004): 311-34.

<sup>34</sup> Mumford, *The City in History*; John Rich and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, eds., *City and Country in the Ancient World* (New York: Routledge, 1991); William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (New York: New Directions, 1974).

<sup>35</sup> Williams, *The Country and The City*, 17.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 1-2.



past.<sup>37</sup> In Williams's case, British literature, the idea of "an unlocalised 'Old England'" recedes further and further into history as each successive generation mourns the loss of the social mores and social spaces they had known.<sup>38</sup> This process, repeated over the generations, allows for a reproduction of city and nature's cultural associations despite wide social and spatial variation.<sup>39</sup>

The social construction of nature as a sacred space and symbol was more than just nostalgia. Nature's long history of religious associations made it well-suited to be the symbolic opposite of modern urban society: if cities were clearly the creation of humans, then nature was the product of God, "a permanent marvel and permanent miracle."<sup>40</sup> Spiritual reverence for nature ranged from the sorts of "primitive" nature worship that fascinated early anthropologists to ecologically driven parables that are prevalent across the world's major religions.<sup>41</sup> Consider that it was the Garden of Eden, not the Town of Eden, that represented spiritual purity for the Abrahamic faiths; parables involving cities often dealt with the wicked and the damned – the Sodoms and the Gomorrahs – or at least the secular.<sup>42</sup>

Real or imagined differences of social and economic structures between urban and rural areas further contributed to the city-nature binary. Specifically, variations in forms of labor and

---

<sup>37</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>38</sup> Williams, *The Country and The City*, 10.

<sup>39</sup> On cultural reproduction more broadly, see Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000); Chris Jenks, ed., *Cultural Reproduction* (New York: Routledge, 1993); on its relationship to memory and history, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006); Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott, "Generations and Collective Memories," *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 3 (1987): 359-81.

<sup>40</sup> Max Müller, *Physical Religion* (New York: Longman, Greens, and Co., 1891), 120, cited in Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 65.

<sup>41</sup> David Kinsley, *Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995); Bron Taylor, *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Antonio Cordoba and Daniel García-Donoso, eds., *The Sacred and Modernity in Urban Spain: Beyond the Secular City* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015); Hugh McLeod, "Religion in the City," *Urban History* 5, no. 1 (1978): 7-22.

community relations held substantial historical weight: whether one worked the land or in a factory; whether one's daily routine was determined by the rhythms of street life or the rhythms of nature.<sup>43</sup> These appearances, however, could often be deceiving. For example, delineating where urban trade networks began and ended was impossible; non-human animals lived in cities; and the industrial revolution in England and elsewhere was "based on a highly developed agrarian capitalism."<sup>44</sup> In many ways, the imagined opposition between cities and the spaces of nature depended on a reciprocal interchange between the two ideal types of places.

Socio-spatial networks between cities and rural areas engendered the very forms of cultural production that reproduced the antagonism. Art historian Ann Bermingham argues, for example, that the aesthetic admiration of the British countryside found in early modern literature and landscape painting was a direct consequence of the enclosure movement – the acquisition of common land by private landowners – that occurred between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>45</sup> The increasing encroachment of urban infrastructure into outlying areas inflated the economic value of farmland and allowed for city-based cultural producers and receivers to access the countryside.<sup>46</sup>

This socio-spatial exchange between cities and their green surroundings belied their sharp symbolic distinctions. Modern genres of cultural production, especially eighteenth-century and

---

<sup>43</sup> Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996); Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century: The Structure of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820-1940* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

<sup>44</sup> Williams, *The Country and The City*, 2; Ian MacLachlan, "A Bloody Offal Nuisance: The Persistence of Private Slaughter-Houses in Nineteenth-Century London," *Urban History* 34, no. 2 (2007): 227-54; Daniel M. Bluestone, "From Promenade to Park: The Gregarious Origins of Brooklyn's Park Movement," *American Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1987): 529-50.

<sup>45</sup> Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 9-11.

<sup>46</sup> Griswold, *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*.

nineteenth-century movements in literature and painting, tended to consecrate the city-nature binary. A wide-ranging nostalgia for nature struck Europe and North America as industrialization accelerated after 1750. Though, as mentioned above, this was a familiar cultural response to socio-spatial disruption, the joint progression of technology and the urban built environment indicated that industrial capitalism's modernizing advances differed in both kind and magnitude from prior shifts in urban-rural dynamics. The response from cultural producers was to offer nature, which was "embodied par excellence by the countryside," as "the image of the homely, the stable, the ahistorical."<sup>47</sup> In England around the turn of the nineteenth century, the work of landscape painters like Thomas Gainsborough, Thomas Girtin, J. M. W. Turner, and John Constable focused specifically on nature's beauty, often vis-à-vis the everyday qualities of rural life.<sup>48</sup> This romantic portrayal of vernacular landscapes, rather than sites of special historical or religious meaning, departed from prior generations of landscape artwork and prefigured later movements such as the Hudson River School in the United States. To the extent that cities were portrayed in this genre, they were kept at a distance, a grey threat on the horizon juxtaposed with nature's sacred qualities. Modern poets and writers from George Crabbe to Henry David Thoreau were similarly drawn to rustic landscapes and country life and echoed the artists' praise for nature.<sup>49</sup> Differences in cultural form also allowed writers to express more explicitly their feelings about cities, which Thoreau did in *Walden* (1854), announcing, "Deliver me from a city built on the site of a more ancient city, whose materials are ruins, whose gardens

---

<sup>47</sup> Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 9.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid; Katharine Baetjer et al., *Glorious Nature: British Landscape Painting 1750-1850* (Manchester: Hudson Hills Press, 1996); Ysanne Holt, *British Artists and the Modernist Landscape* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003).

<sup>49</sup> Williams, *The Country and The City*; Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*; Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*.

cemeteries. The soil is blanched and accursed there[.]”<sup>50</sup> Taken as a whole, the theme of lost nature and the mournful attitudes that accompanied it permeated much cultural thinking at the dawn of modernity as cultural producers offered up funerary rites for nature – and often mourned the loss of community, God, and other sacred concepts by extension.<sup>51</sup>

Collectively, the combination of a longstanding cultural framework, nostalgia, religious associations (and other deeply rooted connections to gender, family, and community), and new modes of cultural production all contributed to the institutionalization of the city-nature binary in the modern period. The emergence of modern social processes like capitalism and the division of labor not only seemed to threaten the existence of nature, but created new vehicles for the transmission and reproduction of city-nature symbols and cultural products.<sup>52</sup> The modern city-nature antagonism is therefore situated as part of a broad network of binary cultural relationships, as illustrated in Table 2.1. Viewing city and nature through these associations indicates why this binary is so powerful. Collective beliefs in sharp differences between city and nature tap into more than just the visual distinctions between urban streets and country fields. The spaces of nature and urban spaces stand in for many sacred or profane ideas, respectively; therefore, their symbolic weight is very heavy.

---

<sup>50</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Walden: or, Life in the Woods* (Houghton Mifflin: New York, 1910), 291.

<sup>51</sup> Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>52</sup> Wendy Griswold, *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theater, 1576-1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*; Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

<b>Table 2.1: The separation of city and nature.</b>	
<b>City:</b>	<b>Nature:</b>
Capitalism	Feudalism
Modernity	Premodernity
Society	Community
Industry	Agriculture
Profane	Sacred
Nation	God
Masculinity	Femininity

Ideas of city and nature share links to additional socially constructed binaries, namely those surrounding race. The historical development of binary divides like European/non-European, black/white, white/non-white, and black/non-black were structured along similar sacred/profane lines. While such ideas do not correlate perfectly with conceptions of city and nature, there are many connections: modern cities were often understood as spaces of racial admixture, but consider colonial cities that served as outposts of white “civilization” in the midst of a “racially othered exterior”;<sup>53</sup> nature’s artistic representations often linked its beauty to rural white spaces, but nature’s connections to racial hierarchies complicated some of these symbolisms – as seen with links between Africans or black people and a primal “state of nature.”<sup>54</sup> As this chapter indicates, ideas of city and nature become increasingly bound up in spatial questions of race through processes of urbanization, colonization, migration, and demographic change.

All of this is prologue to the primary aim of this chapter: how modernity and modern urbanization forced a new spatialization of the city-nature binary. In this broad historical period, nature no longer seemed defensible from the expanding urban environment and people perceived

<sup>53</sup> Alastair Bonnett, “The Metropolis and White Modernity,” *Ethnicities* 2, no. 3 (2002): 349-66, 354.

<sup>54</sup> David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002); Barnor Hesse, “Racialized Modernity: An Analytics of White Mythologies,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 4 (2007): 643-63.

that cities, wrapped in the built environment's totalizing façade, needed green spaces inside of them. The development of urban green spaces – their aesthetic appearance, their intended social uses, as well as their geography – was a direct consequence of collectively held symbolisms of city and nature. As landscape architects and urban planners laid down these symbolisms in social space, the socially constructed city-nature binary morphed from a set of cultural associations to something much more permanent: a set of spatial ideologies baked in the cake of modern urbanism.

### **2.3: Creating the Picturesque**

Cultural representations of city and nature shared not only a binary orientation, but ultimately coalesced around a set of specific images. The valorization of nature writ large tended to come along with the valorization of a particular iteration of natural space; after all, the cultural producers whose work became institutionalized were working within particular social contexts.<sup>55</sup> Given the geopolitical realities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these were white European and American men whose encounters with nature occurred in the British Isles and New England, where artists, writers, and philosophers collectively developed the picturesque aesthetic vision.<sup>56</sup> For these cultural producers, the version of nature they celebrated was self-evidently nature writ large. Their paintings and descriptions of nature were local in their inspiration, but

---

<sup>55</sup> Wendy Griswold, "A Methodological Framework for the Sociology of Culture," *Sociological Methodology* 17, no. 1 (1987): 1-35; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

<sup>56</sup> Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

they were also intended as universal in their application.<sup>57</sup> As these images and writings became more popular – disseminated through cultural institutions and educational systems and cultivated through the rise of nature tourism – the rather specific picturesque vision would grow to become dominant across geographic contexts.<sup>58</sup> As cities expanded with industrial capitalism, the emplacement of nature within urban contexts via parks tended to reproduce the picturesque vision, regardless of what was ecologically “natural” to particular places.

As an aesthetic concept, the picturesque has many interpretations, but fundamentally it means “‘like a picture,’ and implies that each scene fills some pictorial prescription in terms of subject-matter and composition.”<sup>59</sup> The picturesque is centrally about the gaze of the observer; in theory, a wide array of landscapes can be found picturesque, depending on one’s perspective. Scenes of “first nature” that evoked artistic form drew cultural producers to them for inspiration. The interplay of light, color, and depth across the foreground, middleground, and background of a scene created visual interest: they were vistas upon which one’s gaze could linger, finding new pleasures as one’s eye roamed across the horizon. Cultural producers enamored of the picturesque were drawn to certain, often humble, natural phenomena: rolling hills, winding rivers, and tree-filled rambles. Artists and writers found that these objects highlighted nature’s

---

<sup>57</sup> Scholars have debated the apparent “universality” of picturesque aesthetic philosophy. Certainly, key elements – such as an appreciation for ruin or the undulations of hills and rivers – can be, at a conceptual level, be found all over the Earth. However, from the perspective of urban park development in the United States, which will become our focus, the picturesque represents a very specific version of natural landscapes. See Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, eds., *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics Since 1770* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Donna Landry, “The Geopolitical Picturesque,” *Spatial Practices* 13, no. 1 (2012): 91-114.

<sup>58</sup> Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Charlotte Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature: British Landscape Art In The Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Pamela J. Belanger, J. Gray Sweeney, and John Wilmerding, *Inventing Acadia: Artists and Tourists at Mount Desert* (Rockland: University Press of New England, 1999).

<sup>59</sup> Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, vii.

power – the raw, physical forces required to shape the landscape, and also the power of nature-as-agent to create a space of beauty that diverged from the formal representations of human creation such as manicured gardens (and angular buildings and city streets). Paintings like J.M.W. Turner’s *Thomson’s Aeolian Harp* (1809) offer instructive examples of the picturesque in visual form. Turner’s work (Figure 2.1) depicts the contrast of city and nature, celebrating the romantic intimacy of nature in the foreground while the greyed buildings of Twickenham, London fade into the background. From his vantage point atop Richmond Hill, the soft curve in the Thames River and plentiful greenery create the sort of contrasts that the picturesque celebrated.<sup>60</sup>



Figure 2.1: *Thomson’s Aeolian Harp*, J. M. W. Turner, 1809

---

<sup>60</sup> John Gage, “Turner and the Picturesque – I,” *The Burlington Magazine* 107, no. 742 (1965): 16-25; John Gage, “Turner and the Picturesque – II,” *The Burlington Magazine* 107, no. 743 (1965): 75-81.



Central to shaping definitions of the picturesque was British philosopher William Gilpin. His key text on aesthetics, *Three Essays*, established a set of conditions for picturesque beauty.<sup>61</sup> This work built on the aesthetic philosophy of Edmund Burke, who sought to define natural beauty in a manner that paralleled the English rustic tradition and prefigured many of the key concepts of the picturesque.<sup>62</sup> Both writing in late-eighteenth-century Britain, Gilpin, an Anglican priest, and Burke, a statesman, articulated a vision of natural beauty that valorized “the rough touches of age,” “the fractured rock present[ing] its grey surface, adorned with patches of greensward running down its guttered sides,” and other broken, decayed representations of nature’s forces.<sup>63</sup> As Bermingham writes, Gilpin’s introduction of the picturesque “enlarged Burke’s category of beauty[,]” as Gilpin’s conception held that “[b]y virtue of their roughness, irregularity, and variousness, picturesque objects were better suited for painting than beautiful ones, whose smooth, neat qualities lacked pictorial definition.”<sup>64</sup> Such feelings brought the vernacular landscapes of rural Britain into an expanding conception of nature’s beauty, transforming mundane natural objects into fine art.

The picturesque vision of landscape had much to do with how people could “receive” green spaces from nature and recreate them as cultural producers.<sup>65</sup> This process of reproduction of natural landscapes for wider cultural consumption depended on people visiting these landscapes as well as a broader field of cultural reception that upheld certain expectations for

---

<sup>61</sup> William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape: to which is added a poem, On Landscape Painting* (London: Strand, 1792).

<sup>62</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*.

<sup>63</sup> Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 14, 21.

<sup>64</sup> Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 63.

<sup>65</sup> See Griswold’s “cultural diamond,” *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*, 14-6.

what nature “should” look like.<sup>66</sup> It may border on the obvious to note that cultural receivers, like late-eighteenth-century British nature tourists, should find particularly salient the landscapes native to their home regions. However, prior to the discovery of the picturesque, human-made, formal green spaces – embodied most clearly in ornate gardens – dominated cultural trends in Europe.<sup>67</sup> More broadly, a countervailing appreciation for manufactured spaces – such as canals, buildings, and bridges – reflected a general conception of society’s domination of the natural world.<sup>68</sup> Further, given that the land itself was more often the site of labor than leisure, it is far from a given that the mass of people will intrinsically value the aesthetic qualities of their home landscapes. An appreciation for natural landscapes, and for nature’s ability to create beauty, had to be cultivated.

Philosophical texts on the picturesque and other modes of natural beauty therefore offered didactic guides on landscape appreciation. Gilpin’s essay “On Sketching Landscape” is a primary example. Here Gilpin emphasizes the importance of finding the proper position to gaze upon nature: “when you find a scene you wish to sketch, your first consideration is to get it in the best point of view. A few paces to the right, or left, make a great difference. The ground, which folds awkwardly here, appears to fold more easily there[.]”<sup>69</sup> This conception of point of view, so central in the minds of philosophers as well as landscape painters, would later figure prominently in the field of landscape architecture. The latter field, which in its early development was a direct descendent of picturesque aesthetic philosophy, would shift cultural producers’ engagement with

---

<sup>66</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

<sup>67</sup> Birmingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 11-4; Ralph Dutton, *The English Garden* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1938).

<sup>68</sup> Writing in the 1800s, Frederick Law Olmsted would remark that this shift reflected “a healthy change in the tone of the human heart.” Frederick Law Olmsted, “A Healthy Change in the Tone of the Human Heart,” in *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

<sup>69</sup> Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 63.

nature from mere observation to the active manipulation of the earth in the name of natural beauty.

Political and cultural links between Great Britain and the United States allowed the picturesque to flourish on both sides of the Atlantic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the United States, cultural producers engaging with the continent's nature found plenty of inspiration in picturesque imagery. Writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, painters like Thomas Cole and his Hudson River School, and many other American cultural producers continued working within an aesthetic framework that upheld the city-nature binary.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps the most influential cultural producer from the standpoint of this study was Andrew Jackson Downing, a founding landscape designer who spread the gospel of the picturesque. Additionally a writer and a horticulturalist, Downing was central to bringing picturesque ideas into the design of new parks, gardens, and buildings.<sup>71</sup> Through his prolific writings on architectural taste, horticulture, and natural beauty, Downing helped push American tastes away from classical revival and toward picturesque styles,<sup>72</sup> Perhaps most crucially, Downing also served as an inspiration for the first generation of landscape architects in the United States – advocating for the creation of New York's Central Park and providing mentorship to Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*; Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*; Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor As Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).

<sup>71</sup> David Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015); Robert Twombly, ed., *Andrew Jackson Downing: Essential Texts* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012); Caren Yglesias, *The Complete House and Grounds: Learning from Andrew Jackson Downing's Domestic Architecture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

<sup>72</sup> Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste*, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance*.

Downing was instrumental in the translation of picturesque imagery from something observed – or something created with oil paints or prose – to something created in social space. By making prominent this aesthetic style of nature, the efforts of Downing and other proselytizers helped create a field of cultural reception for picturesque landscape design at a historical moment when American cities were undergoing substantial social and spatial change. As it would happen, the creation of the first major public parks in the United States coincided with the height of cultural tastes for the picturesque.<sup>74</sup>

Collectively, the work of all of these cultural producers – from painters to philosophers to landscape designers – accomplished a linking of natural and social geographies. The valorization of the natural landscapes of New England and Great Britain – the elevation of these landscapes to the preeminent form of nature – concealed the relations of political, economic, and military power that made certain landscapes valuable.<sup>75</sup> Social spaces, when symbolically linked to particular types of social actors and particular social activities, obscure the social relations underlying their production.<sup>76</sup> Over time, as aesthetic or architectural styles take on a life of their own, these initial associations can be forgotten, but the symbolic relationship between a culturally valued form of nature and a socially powerful group can be rather enduring – as can be its inverse: links between devalued landscapes and marginalized social groups. Particularly as these relationships move from a symbolic to a material realm, they have implications for inequality in their power to influence the cultural aspects of place stratification.

---

<sup>74</sup> Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste*.

<sup>75</sup> James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*.

<sup>76</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*; Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*; Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984).

## 2.4: Planning Responses to Expanding Cities and Disappearing Nature

In addition to these developments around aesthetic tastes for nature, modernity came with new technologies for physically creating social space. The expansion of European and North American cities that accompanied the rise of industrialization prompted politically organized efforts to channel urban growth in socially and economically productive ways. New plans for street grids, public works, and urban parks emerged in Western economic capitals in rising numbers after 1800. Grids themselves were not new ideas, but historically important interventions like New York's 1811 Commissioners' Plan, which laid out a rectilinear street system for Manhattan Island, and Baron Haussman's 1854 rebuilding of Paris, which demolished swaths of the city in the name of civic progress, embodied central principals of the new discipline of urban planning.<sup>77</sup> These included: the ordering of present and future city spaces in precise, almost scientific terms; an emphasis on efficiency of transport; a recognition of the central importance of land values and of making the city a conduit for capital; and efforts to eliminate crowding, thereby making urban populations less susceptible to public crises of disease.

Early urban plans sought to structure future growth by forcing new land development along certain geometric lines. As this growth became realized in later decades, however, the limits of such plans became apparent to city governments and other civic actors. New York's plan is a telling example. When it was laid out as a market-driven blueprint in 1811, the city

---

<sup>77</sup> Mumford, *The City in History*; Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); David P. Jordan, *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussman* (New York: The Free Press, 1995); A. E. J. Morris, *History of Urban Form Before the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

proper occupied a relatively small portion of Manhattan.<sup>78</sup> There were other municipalities on the island, like Greenwich Village and Harlem, as well as unincorporated settlements like Seneca Village, but for the creators of the Commissioners' Plan, there was little concern for these, or for the island's topography.<sup>79</sup> Eliding the inconvenient fact that Manhattan became rockier and more elevated as one moved north, the eventual fulfillment of the Commissioners' Plan would require substantial excavation.<sup>80</sup> The plan's other major problem, its density, similarly became apparent as the grid filled in with development. Within a few decades of its implementation, it was evident to many observers – including newspaper editors, reformers, and politicians – that the grid needed to be opened up via the creation of public space.<sup>81</sup> Small green spaces, like Battery Park and Bowling Green, were old features of New York that occupied specific functions at the time of their creation, such as military parade grounds. When the mass of urban population could walk to the “wilderness” at the edges of the built environment, large parks were not needed. Creating a geographically substantial public green space therefore became a necessary invention of modernity.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Indeed, as Peter Marcuse describes it, the Commissioners' Plan (designed by Gouverneur Morris, Simeon De Witt, and John Rutherford) was hardly a “plan” at all. See Peter Marcuse, “The Grid as City Plan: New York City and Laissez-Faire Planning in the Nineteenth Century,” *Planning Perspectives* 2, no. 3 (1987): 287-310.

<sup>79</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*.

<sup>80</sup> Catherine McNeur, *Taming Manhattan: Environmental Battles in the Antebellum City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

<sup>81</sup> Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 37-59.

<sup>82</sup> Although older European cities contained parks built prior to the nineteenth century, industrial urbanization after 1800 transformed the cultural meanings and social uses of many such spaces. For example, the “crown jewel” of London, Hyde Park, was built in the sixteenth century as a royal hunting ground on the outskirts of the city, only becoming a genuinely “urban” space (and a public space) in the nineteenth century when the city's westward growth finally encompassed it on all sides. See Nan H. Dreher, “The Virtuous and the Verminous: Turn-of-the-Century Moral Panics in London's Public Parks,” *Albion* 29, no. 2 (1997): 246-67; John Michael Roberts, “Spatial Governance and Working Class Public Spheres: The Case of a Chartist Demonstration at Hyde Park,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 14, no. 3 (2001): 308-36.

There were also important demographic factors that drove the development of the first generation of modern urban parks. The urban population growth that characterized the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe and North America was driven in large part by immigration from outside areas. Regardless of local context, the increase of new residents meant that cities inevitably expanded and that existing spatial boundaries – between rich and poor neighborhoods, for example – were often thrown into disarray. The immediate consequences of rapid urban change are legible in the frequent relocations of wealthy families during the nineteenth century: as new areas opened to development, families with means, whether in London, New York, or Chicago, often moved to take advantage of better housing stock and new civic amenities.<sup>83</sup> This process, in addition to white European immigrants' assimilating efforts – where established families would move out of ethnic enclaves to more desirable neighborhoods and new immigrants would take their place – created a regular process of residential turnover within industrial cities.<sup>84</sup>

Of course, there were important limits to these changes in residential geography. Especially in the United States, urbanization processes were inextricable from the social structures of race, immigration status, and class.<sup>85</sup> In a nation whose spaces were built atop the slave trade and the genocide and displacement of native peoples, racial-spatial boundaries of all

---

<sup>83</sup> Kenneth A. Scherzer, *The Unbounded Community: Neighborhood Life and Social Structure in New York City, 1830-1875* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992); Ann Durkin Keating, ed., *Chicago Neighborhoods and Suburbs: A Historic Guide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

<sup>84</sup> Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and what that Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Vilna Bashi, "Racial Categories Matter Because Racial Hierarchies Matter: A Commentary," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 5 (1998): 959-68.

<sup>85</sup> Walter J. Nicholls, "The Los Angeles School: Difference, Politics, City," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 1 (2011): 189-206; Alastair Bonnett, "The Metropolis and White Modernity," *Ethnicities* 2, no. 3 (2002): 349-66; Kevin Loughran, "The Philadelphia Negro and the Canon of Classical Urban Theory," *Du Bois Review* 12, no. 2 (2015): 249-67.

sorts have a long history. Though lines of social division, particularly in cities, can be written and re-written quickly via demographic and spatial change, some boundaries prove more durable than others – with the lines around black settlement being the most historically fixed. Slavery was present in many American cities during the colonial era and continued in much of the country through 1865; but regardless of blacks’ residence in a free or slave state, in urban areas their residential choices were highly circumscribed by racial boundaries.<sup>86</sup> The processes that formed early black neighborhoods differed in certain respects from the factors that shaped the “ghettos” of the twentieth century.<sup>87</sup> Absent the massive governmental interventions that reproduced racial boundaries (the placement of public housing in black neighborhoods, for example), black urbanites were nevertheless forced into segregated conditions by multiple “push and pull” factors: providing the push was a combination of racial prejudice and segregated housing and labor markets that prevented them from settling in non-black areas; pull factors included the existence of community social networks and available (albeit overcrowded) housing.<sup>88</sup>

Racial-spatial divisions were therefore a fact of American urbanism prior to the heightened immigration of non-Anglo-Saxon Europeans after 1880, and well before the Great Migration brought millions of blacks from the South to the industrial cities of the North and

---

<sup>86</sup> Jennifer M. Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Kimberly S. Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

<sup>87</sup> Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

<sup>88</sup> Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*; Stephan Thernstrom and Peter R. Knights, “Men in Motion: Some Data and Speculations about Urban Population Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 1, no. 1 (1970): 7-35.



West.<sup>89</sup> Prefiguring the anti-immigrant sentiments that would culminate in federal legislation in the 1920s, raced and classed concerns about how cities should manage the influx of migrants from Ireland, Italy, and elsewhere were a critical issue of mid-nineteenth-century urban politics, especially when such populations included Catholics and Jews.<sup>90</sup> The crowded neighborhood conditions that urban migrants typically faced were cause for reform-minded concerns about public health and the social production of vice and criminality. To anti-immigrant whites, dilapidated and overpopulated immigrant spaces offered clear evidence of their inferiority and therefore were part of a cycle of continuing prejudice that linked stratified spatial symbols with the material conditions of poverty.<sup>91</sup>

For the terms of this study, these historical lines of ethnoracial division play out in urban parks and public spaces in important ways. As discussed, parks were a response to new spatial conditions of industrial cities. But this response did not occur in a vacuum: decisions about where to build parks are inherently political acts. Given the unequal state of citizenship status in the nineteenth-century United States, the very act of accessing public space, as a physical extension of the public realm, was highly political. For blacks, immigrants, and women, a lack of civil rights meant that the public realm was effectively closed. Marginalization along social, political, and economic lines indicated that their access to urban public space was highly

---

<sup>89</sup> St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945).

<sup>90</sup> Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Immigrants, Immigrant Neighborhoods, and Ethnic Identity: Historical Issues," *The Journal of American History* 66, no. 3 (1979): 603-15; Jon Gjerde, "New Growth on Old Vines—The State of the Field: The Social History of Immigration to and Ethnicity in the United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18, no. 4 (1999): 40-65.

<sup>91</sup> Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The 19th-Century New York City Neighborhood that Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum* (New York: The Free Press, 2001); Mona Domosh, "Those 'Gorgeous Incongruities': Polite Politics and Public Space on the Streets of Nineteenth-Century New York City," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 2 (1998): 209-26.

scrutinized and subject to social control efforts. (In Southern cities, this was especially visible as blacks were barred from using the vast majority of parks).<sup>92</sup> But forms of social control are not impermeable, and people's everyday movements (however circumscribed) through early modern cities necessarily brought them into public spaces. For reformers and like-minded political actors, parks offered a potential solution to the "urban problems" associated with marginalized groups.<sup>93</sup> New park construction therefore brought together many strands of nineteenth century urban politics, including how different groups would interact in public space and how the geography of new parks would structure a city's civic future.

All of this suggests that the rational modes of planning that characterized the rise of modern cities were not independent from the racial logics that build cultural meanings into urban social spaces. Scientific ideas of urban planning, in the abstract, are egalitarian; rectangular grids have no more ability to produce inequality than other modes of laying out city streets.<sup>94</sup> But the moment these plans are made manifest in social space, they immediately encounter the social conditions of a particular urban context. And once laid down in space, streets and other infrastructural interventions border on permanence. Individual buildings can be built and demolished with relative ease; but urban infrastructure and the networks of capital and labor that they support are more difficult to disrupt.<sup>95</sup> No matter how widely New York's grid was criticized – either in the nineteenth century or in the present – it is impossible to imagine, barring some sort of apocalyptic destruction, a complete redesign of Manhattan's street system. These

---

<sup>92</sup> Tyina Leaneice Steptoe, *Houston Bound: Culture and Color in a Jim Crow City* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2015); Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans*.

<sup>93</sup> Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*; Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*.

<sup>94</sup> Of course, the production of scientific knowledge is itself a highly political process. See Bruno Latour, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

<sup>95</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 201-39.

early planning decisions thus put New York, Chicago, and other cities on particular, hard-to-alter paths.<sup>96</sup> While grids in and of themselves did not create ghettos or other means of socio-spatial enclosure, they laid the framework for such enclosures to be created through policing, symbolic barriers, and other social practices. Like grids themselves, once a geography of social difference is created, it often proves hard to destroy.

These arguments apply similarly to early planning decisions surrounding parks and public spaces. New parks can be built or renovated (or even torn down), but creating urban parks of the size and scope of New York's Central Park, London's Hyde Park, or Chicago's Lincoln Park is difficult as built environments expand outward and locations that could have housed large, centrally located public spaces were long ago developed.<sup>97</sup> While certain aspects of older parks are malleable – a twentieth-century planner like Robert Moses might build tennis courts and playgrounds, for example – their spatial boundaries and their aesthetic styles tend to be set in place at the moment of their creation. Given the cultural trends that dominated representations of nature during this time period, there was little stylistic question about nineteenth-century park design in the United States. The dominance of picturesque philosophy, and all of the symbolisms it carried, led to its appearance in park designs throughout the country. How these ideas were emplaced in social space is the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

---

<sup>96</sup> André Sorensen, "Taking Path Dependence Seriously: An Historical Institutional Research Agenda in Planning History," *Planning Perspectives* 30, no. 1 (2015): 17-38; James Mahoney, *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

<sup>97</sup> Though widespread "greening" through disinvestment in cities like Detroit and St. Louis certainly raises this possibility.

## 2.5: Chicago's South Park: An Unnatural History

Chicago, like other industrial cities in Europe and North America, encountered these dual questions of urban planning and loss of nature as the city experienced significant population and spatial growth in the nineteenth century. What made Chicago somewhat distinct was that it did not have the older urban spaces of New York, Paris, and other cities with pre-industrial histories. There were no narrow streets and crowded residential districts to demolish in the name of future growth;<sup>98</sup> Chicago faced few of New York's topographical limitations: it was no island, and the land was flat. Lake Michigan, the resource that drew Native Americans and French traders to the area in earlier centuries, was the defining environmental feature of the region; in all other directions, the prairie dominated the horizon. Following the final defeat of the Potawatomi and other Native American tribes in the early nineteenth century, Chicago's early boosters and political leaders envisioned this expanse of prairie as a spatial blank slate where a modern city could be developed.<sup>99</sup>

Chicago exploded from a frontier outpost of 200 settlers at its founding in 1833 to a metropolis of 1.7 million by 1900.<sup>100</sup> Despite its relative youth compared to the cities of the East Coast, Chicago quickly caught up in terms of economic and cultural prominence. The city built massive wealth as the finance capital of the Great West, which drove the establishment of cultural institutions that might rival those of New York: the Chicago Public Library, founded 1873; the Art Institute of Chicago, 1879; the Newberry Library, 1887; the University of Chicago,

---

<sup>98</sup> Though, to the extent the city's initial settlements proved problematic to developers, the Great Fire of 1871 eliminated many of them – a fact that, for some, has conspiratorial overtones. See Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb, and the Model Town of Pullman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>99</sup> Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*.

<sup>100</sup> Dominic A. Pacyga, *Chicago: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

1890; the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 1891.<sup>101</sup> Hosting the 1893 Columbian Exposition was the young city's pinnacle achievement: that Congress selected it over New York and Washington solidified Chicago's standing as a global economic and cultural capital.

Like other big cities before it, Chicago's pursuit of cultural prominence included the development of distinguished public parks. In the second half of the nineteenth century, no American city could claim cultural prestige without a park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Beginning with his plan for New York's Central Park, Olmsted and his colleagues designed hundreds of public parks across the United States – in Boston, Brooklyn, Detroit, and many other cities. By the time Olmsted was commissioned to build Chicago's South Park in 1869, he was regarded as the nation's greatest landscape architect.<sup>102</sup>

Olmsted's rise was connected to the broader nineteenth-century cultural trends discussed above. His design style reflected the picturesque aesthetic vision that had come to dominate America's nature-imaginary by mid-century. In the context of rapid urbanization and industrial expansion, urban parks emerged as a means to preserve a bit of garden inside the machine – an opportunity for urbanites to experience some form of nature, to develop in citizens an appreciation for the beauty of the picturesque, and to provide needed public open space.

High-minded cultural aspirations alone did not drive the first generation of modern urban parks. While such ideals were important, parks also represented an intervention in the political economy of urban land. Wealthy landowners and other elites, therefore, were centrally concerned with the emerging geography of parkland in the nineteenth century. As scholars have

---

<sup>101</sup> Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago, Volume III: The Rise of a Modern City, 1871-1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

<sup>102</sup> Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance*.

reported, the location of New York’s Central Park, for example, was the outcome of a political battle between competing groups of elites.<sup>103</sup> Though parks were a new fact on the urban landscape at this time, elites were keenly aware that parks, as a civic and cultural amenity, had the potential to raise adjacent land values.

Land values mattered in another way, too: nineteenth-century city leaders often set aside undesirable parcels for park development. Areas that could not be easily accommodated by expanding street grids or offered little value to developers could be designated as pleasure grounds. Such was the case in Chicago when Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux were contacted by Chicago’s South Park Commission about developing a grand park on a marshy lakefront site in 1869.<sup>104</sup>

In Olmsted and Vaux’s original design (Figure 2.2), which was completed in 1871, South Park was to comprise present-day Washington Park and Jackson Park, connected by the green strip of the Midway Plaisance.<sup>105</sup> In 1871, the area surrounding the South Park site was, in Olmsted’s words, “uncultivated country, much of it unenclosed and sparsely inhabited.”<sup>106</sup> Olmsted believed that South Park would be a “great roaming ground[], to which people go out by railway, generally spending a day in excursion.”<sup>107</sup> Olmsted realized that Chicago would likely grow to encompass South Park on all sides; dismissing, therefore, the idea that the park would remain “distant suburban excursion grounds” in perpetuity, he noted that “it is proper to

---

<sup>103</sup> Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*.

<sup>104</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, “The Landscape Architecture of the World’s Columbian Exposition,” in *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

<sup>105</sup> By the time the parks were actually built as part of the 1893 Columbian Exposition, the two sites had assumed their new names.

<sup>106</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, “Report Accompanying Plan for Laying out the South Park,” Chicago South Park Commission (1871), 3.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

have in view, as a secondary purpose, the general improvement of the neighborhood with reference to its healthfulness as residence[.]”<sup>108</sup> In other words, structuring the community life of the area’s imagined future was an important consideration. Land that would serve as a suburban nature retreat in 1871 would certainly serve different purposes as Chicago’s radial growth marched toward it in subsequent decades.

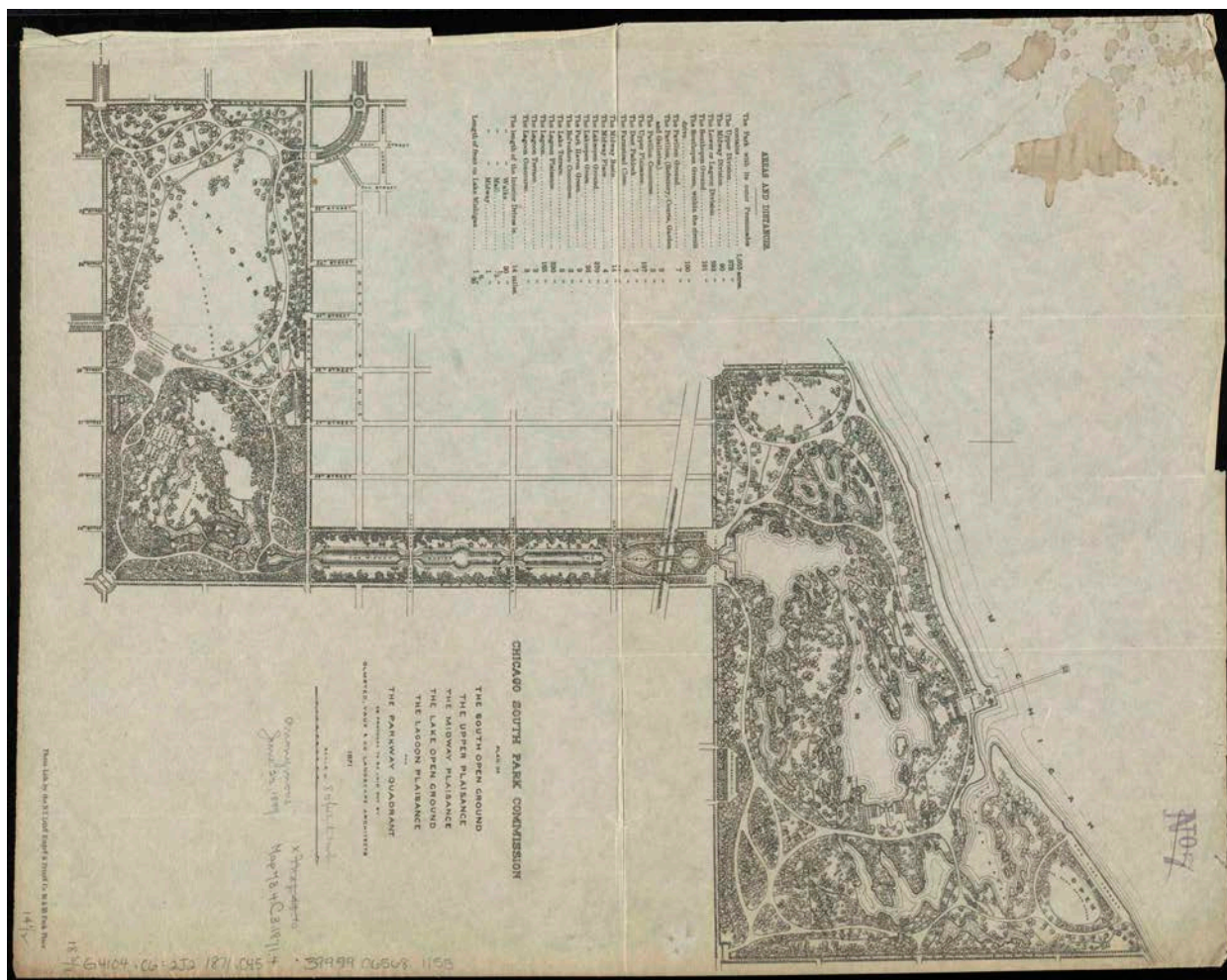


Figure 2.2: Olmsted and Vaux’s South Park Plan, 1871

In this way, Olmsted was attuned to the social exchange between city spaces and urban parks, seeing the two categories as shaping each other and redefining each other over time. He

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 4.

envisioned that South Park, given that it was distant from existing business areas and had “nowhere near it any special inducements to the rise or extension of a commercial quarter[.]” would “secur[e] domestic comfort” and “hardly fail to soon establish a special reputation for the neighborhood and give assurance of permanence to its character as a superior residence quarter.”<sup>109</sup> Indeed, the majority of the homes that would eventually surround South Park – in the Hyde Park, Jackson Park Highlands, Grand Boulevard, and Woodlawn neighborhoods – would be gracious single-family greystones built for the white professional class that would populate the area by the 1890s.<sup>110</sup>

The “really populous and wealthy district”<sup>111</sup> that Olmsted envisioned in South Park’s shadow was tied to the display of nature and the social life that he intended for the park. Expecting that the “whole body of citizens” would use the park on special occasions but that “a large number must be expected to resort to it for their daily exercise and recreation[.]”<sup>112</sup> South Park was to incorporate aspects of both nature retreat and recreational space.

Importantly, the vision of nature that Olmsted wished to display in South Park was *not* the natural landscape as it then existed on the shores of Lake Michigan. “The first obvious defect of the site is that of its flatness[.]” Olmsted wrote.<sup>113</sup> This flatness contrasted sharply with the picturesque qualities that Olmsted typically implemented in his park designs, where the deployment of rocky terrain, rivers, and rolling hills created the roaming vistas valorized by picturesque aesthetic philosophy.

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>110</sup> Robin F. Bachin, *Building the South Side: Urban Space and Civic Culture in Chicago, 1890-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

<sup>111</sup> Olmsted, “Report Accompanying Plan for Laying out the South Park,” 5.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 9.



The site had other defects, according to Olmsted. “Great spreading trees, ... the distinctive glory of all park scenery” were nowhere to be found.<sup>114</sup> As he wrote to the South Park Commission, “The trees at present on your ground are ... of considerable size, but not one of these has a character which would be of high value in a park. Most of them are evidently struggling for mere existence, and the largest are nearly all decrepit.”<sup>115</sup> Olmsted valued tall shade trees in part because they were one of the key spatial mechanisms of separation between city and nature. As in many of his park designs, in the South Park plan Olmsted called for a tree-lined perimeter, which was especially crucial for protecting open pastoral spaces – such as the meadow planned for the north end of the park’s Upper Division (present-day Washington Park) – from the intrusion of all things “urban.”

The one redeeming quality of Chicago’s landscape was the vast lakefront. For Olmsted, Lake Michigan was the only “object of scenery ... of special grandeur or sublimity,” and that “artificial means” could make it “no more grand or sublime.”<sup>116</sup> Thus, Olmsted rejected the idea of inserting human-made hills into South Park to enhance lakefront views; instead, he devised to bring water into the park through a series of lagoons. His design thereby sought to ameliorate the site’s decidedly non-picturesque conditions by physically modifying its nature and using water to produce visual coherence between the park and the lake. The system of lagoons and its drainage system would have another effect: making the soil more hospitable to the large tree growth that Olmsted desired.

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 10.

Bringing in visions of nature from elsewhere was a persistent theme of Olmsted's South Park plan. He mused that a warmer climate could have afforded "a most interesting and fascinating character, that, namely of the wooded lagoons of the tropics."<sup>117</sup> Given this impossibility, however, he offered a compromise: "if you cannot reproduce the tropical forest in all its mysterious depths of shade and visionary reflections of light, you can secure a combination of the fresh and healthy nature of the North with the restful, dreamy nature of the South[.]"<sup>118</sup> Olmsted also proposed that the South Park Commission import numerous species of birds and other animals – "rare and beautiful birds of Asia, Australia, and the Antarctic regions[.]" "the common song birds of the north of Europe[.]" along with "Bisons, Elks, Bears[.] or amphibians, as Seals and Sea Lions" – to further enhance the appeal of the park's nature.<sup>119</sup> Finding a natural landscape out of sync with the picturesque vision – developed, as it was, in the hills of Great Britain and New England – Olmsted sought to create a new green landscape on the shores of Lake Michigan that reflected the dominant cultural conception of what an urban park was supposed to look like. Believing that the territory had few beautiful qualities, his South Park plan disregarded local flora and fauna; instead, Olmsted treated the land as a blank slate to be shaped according to the dominant view of nature.

---

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 13. Discussing this curious statement, McCammack (p. 95, footnote 6) argues that "as an abolitionist in the decade prior to the Civil War, [Olmsted] did not intend to idealize plantation life." While Olmsted may have opposed slavery, the idea of the South's "restful, dreamy nature" speaks to a vision of the region's natural landscapes that is nevertheless divorced from the dehumanizing conditions that black slaves and sharecroppers endured while laboring in cash crop fields. Though the statement need not be understood as an endorsement of slavery, it can be read as an implicit indication of "who" would be looking upon South Park's green spaces: white Northerners, like Olmsted himself, who might appreciate a simulacrum of the South's semi-tropical landscape absent its social context. See Brian McCammack, "Recovering Green in Bronzeville," Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2012.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 29, 30. Olmsted did caution, though, "No bird or animal should be allowed in the Park which will not surely be healthy and happy in it."

## 2.6: The Social Uses of South Park

Olmsted's sense that South Park would eventually serve as both nature retreat and community recreational space informed his efforts to structure various social activities through the park's design. First, facilitating an appreciation for nature was fundamental to his overall vision for park users' engagement with the space. In line with landscape architecture's broader "civilizing" mission in the nineteenth century, Olmsted wished to not only inspire urbanites through direct interactions with nature, but sought to encourage a more refined understanding of the aesthetic beauty of natural landscapes.<sup>120</sup> Olmsted saw a very clear link between society's appreciation for natural landscapes and an overall "advance in civilization."<sup>121</sup> He believed that cultural tastes for nature had evolved – writing that "[t]he civilization of our time ... finds a greater pleasure in rivers than in canals; it enjoys the sea, it enjoys the distinctive qualities of mountains, crags, rocks"<sup>122</sup> – and that he was obligated to present park users with a vision of nature that aligned with their aesthetic preferences, and perhaps implicitly assist in cultivating the tastes of visitors who might not yet appreciate the picturesque style.

In South Park, as in his other park designs, Olmsted sought to build spaces for contemplation, where visitors could physically and emotionally feel the picturesque. Following the philosophies of aesthetic beauty that linked landscape architecture to landscape painting, Olmsted sought to present artistic scenes of nature through grand vistas and fleeting glimpses

---

<sup>120</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, "A Consideration of the Justifying Value of a Public Park," in *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

<sup>121</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns," in *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 213.

<sup>122</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, "A Healthy Change in the Tone of the Human Heart," in *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 122.

alike.<sup>123</sup> This centered the park user's point of view, making them at once cultural receivers – of Olmsted's landscapes – and cultural producers – of a distinctive phenomenological experience of nature mirroring that of a landscape painter.<sup>124</sup> Given this presentation of nature as image, he was deeply concerned with the notion of movement, both as it pertained to physical, bodily movement through the space as well as the movement of the user's eye, as if reading a work of art. He wrote:

The absence of obstruction is the condition of ease of movement, and a park as a work of design should be more than this; it should be a ground which invites, encourages and facilitates movement, its topographical conditions such as make movement a pleasure; such as offer inducements in variety, on one side and the other, for easy movement, first by one promise of pleasure then by another, yet all of a simple character and such as appeal to the common and elementary impulses of all classes of mankind.<sup>125</sup>

Olmsted further emphasized how this notion of “easy movement” could be designed into park landscapes. Seemingly at odds with picturesque aesthetic philosophy's privileging of rocky terrain and topographical variation, Olmsted argued that physical exertion was to be minimized. Olmsted's belief was that the landscape was to be viewed from particular perspectives; the terrain was to be contemplated, not traversed in its entirety:

You will recollect that I used the term hospitable as descriptive of the essential characteristic of park topography[.] ... I ... described this quality of hospitality to consist [of] conditions which make the ground appear pleasant to wander over. Among such conditions, one will be the absence of anything which should cause severe exertion to the wanderer[,] and another[,] the presence of opportunities for agreeable rest at convenient intervals. Together these conditions imply general openness and simplicity with occasional shelter and shade, which latter [sic] will result both from trees and from graceful undulations of the surface.<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> Gilpin, *Three Essays*.

<sup>124</sup> Griswold, *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*.

<sup>125</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, “Address to the Prospect Park Scientific Association,” in *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 194.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 198-9.

These descriptions indicate that Olmsted had in mind, as an ideal type of park user, a solitary wanderer engaging with nature in spiritual and phenomenological terms. This romantic ideal of a lone flâneur drifting through nature was central to the overall ideology of the picturesque, as it highlighted the individual spiritual experience of sacred nature. In the South Park design, Olmsted brought this ideal into space through numerous elements that would encourage visitors to experience the park in this manner. In the Upper Division (present-day Washington Park), Olmsted's plan for the park's central open space, the Southopen Ground (Figure 2.3), offered the sweeping vistas of pastoral greenery valorized by nineteenth-century landscape architects and romantic landscape painters. From several vantage points, park visitors would observe topographical conditions that would invite wandering, via the landscape's gentle undulations and the simplicity and hospitality that Olmsted considered conducive to peaceful reflection and artistic appreciation. As he described the space:

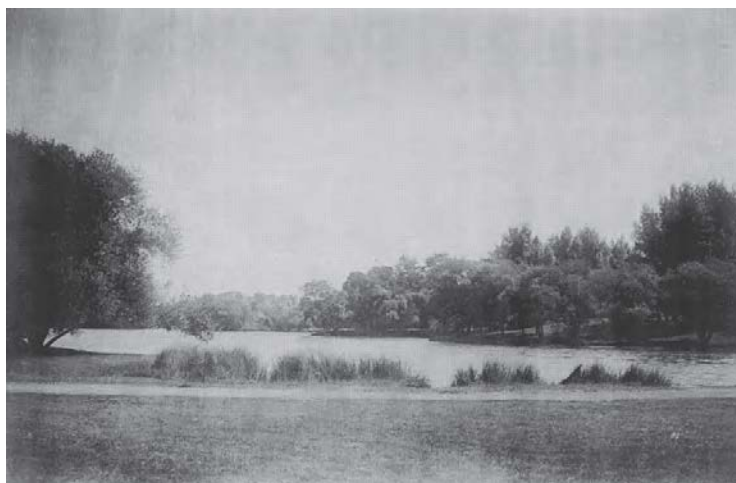
The Southopen ground ... consists of a nearly level meadow with a grove of large trees surrounding it on all sides but one, where the character of the plantation, as it is extended into the adjoining closed district, changes to that of a denser and more picturesque wood, with glades of turf reaching far into it from the meadow. Entering the park from either of the two principal approaches from the city, the visitor, as he passes through the outer grove, will thus find a view opening before him over a greensward without a perceptible break, considerably beyond the limits of the Open Ground itself, and ending in one direction in a glimmer of water reflecting tall trees nearly a mile away.<sup>127</sup>

Additional moments of picturesque beauty were designed into the interior walkways of the Upper Division. For the two approaches from the city referenced above, Olmsted planned for one to easily accommodate groups and larger crowds while the other was “designed with a view to more quiet and leisurely movement, and its principal feature is a walk or series of walks passing

---

<sup>127</sup> Olmsted, “Report Accompanying Plan for Laying out the South Park,” 21.

somewhat indirectly through a grove with frequent interludes of shrubbery, fountains and arbors to invite rest and contemplation.”<sup>128</sup>



**Figure 2.3: The Upper Division (Washington Park) Lagoon from the Southopen Ground, c. 1920<sup>129</sup>**

In the Lower Division (present-day Jackson Park), Olmsted planned for two distinct nature images that would offer visitors scenes of the picturesque and the sublime. First, the lakefront, which brought the violence of nature’s forces into view, and second, the system of lagoons, the symbolic link between the park and the lake, which would provide a series of picturesque vignettes and cloistered spaces for communion with nature. He described the lakefront as a “necessarily simple, raw, storm-lashed foreground,” while the interior lagoons would be “intricate, sequestered, sylvan and rich in variety of color and play of light and shade[.]”<sup>130</sup> Olmsted wanted visitors to experience the transition from lake to lakefront to lagoons as seamless. Hoping that many park users would arrive via boat from the city’s downtown Loop, he wrote that “the Park would practically begin at the mouth of the Chicago river,” thereby

---

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>129</sup> Alfred Freeman Photograph Collection, Box 1, Series B, number 47, Chicago History Museum; reproduced from McCammack, “Recovering Green in Bronzeville,” 122.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 15.

weaving the sublimity of the lake with the park in a continuous, meditative experience of nature's beauty.<sup>131</sup>

Collectively, these design strategies structured the contemplative mode of experiencing the space. The key activities – walking, viewing the scenery, exploring the lagoons by boat – were intended to be as spiritual or restorative as they were recreational. For Olmsted, creating views of picturesque green landscapes was a means to encourage a broader cultural appreciation for nature. Particularly at the Chicago lakefront, on a site he maligned as “the least parklike ground within miles of the city,”<sup>132</sup> creating awe-inspiring, picturesque or sublime vistas was necessary for the symbolic withdrawal from urbanity that Olmsted wished to create through the *mélange* of grand entrances, winding paths, secluded rambles, and secretive lagoons.

Related to these efforts, Olmsted sought to design other aspects of passive recreation into the landscape. In addition to artistically framing picturesque beauty, versatile spaces like the Southopen Ground were intended to support a range of social activities. Connected in spirit to the *flâneur*-like wandering described above, these pastimes included picnics, strolls along the park's wide promenade, and other “neighborly receptive recreations, under conditions which shall be highly counteractive to the prevailing bias to degeneration and demoralization in large towns.”<sup>133</sup> More particularly, he described the ideal passive recreation as:

[A] familiar domestic gathering, where the prattle of children mingles with the easy conversation of the more sedate, the bodily requirements satisfied with good cheer, fresh air, agreeable light, moderate temperature, snug shelter, and furniture and decorations adapted to please the eye[.]<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>132</sup> Olmsted, “The Landscape Architecture of the World's Columbian Exposition,” 170.

<sup>133</sup> Olmsted, “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns,” 227.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 227.

This wistful description of park activity mirroring family life was structured by several spaces in the South Park design: the Pavilion and Pavilion Concourse on the edge of the Southopen Ground, for “large picnic parties and for societies, fraternities, Sunday school and other organizations,” the Lake Terrace at the southern edge of the Lower Division’s lakefront, which bordered the Park Haven Green, a smaller open space, and “[f]ive open places ... in order to allow carriages to stand together, so that their occupants may engage in conversation, listen to music or look upon some prospect of special interest[.]”<sup>135</sup> Importantly, each of these “familial” spaces was immediately adjacent to the city’s street grid, thereby enabling the future residents of the surrounding neighborhoods to access them regularly.

These spaces, and the activities they structured, offered a sharp rebuke to the daily conditions of the industrial city. Their purpose, again, was as much about emotional renewal as it was about physical exercise:

We want a ground to which people may easily go after their day’s work is done, and where they may stroll for an hour, seeing, hearing, and feeling nothing of the bustle and jar of the streets, where they shall, in effect, find the city put far away from them. We want the greatest possible contrast with the streets and the shops and the rooms of the town ... . We want, especially, the greatest possible contrast with the restraining and confining conditions of the town, those conditions which compel us to walk circumspectly, watchfully, jealously, which compel us to look closely upon others without sympathy.<sup>136</sup>

Taken as a whole, the passive spaces of South Park were about structuring partitioned engagement with nature. Sharing a pastoral sensibility that was linked affectively to the domestic life that was expected to take root around the park, South Park’s lagoons, woods, and pastoral open green spaces undergirded the symbolic extension of domestic tranquility into the public

---

<sup>135</sup> Olmsted, “Report Accompanying Plan for Laying out the South Park,” 24, 20.

<sup>136</sup> Olmsted, “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns,” 230-1.



realm and offer decidedly non-urban spaces in the midst of the city. Such ideas clearly connected to the broader sacred/profane binaries that structured the city-nature relationship in the first place.

## **2.7: The Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in the South Park Design**

As we have seen, Olmsted's plan for South Park called for a sharp separation of the park's green nature from the grey spaces of industrial Chicago. This plan called for park spaces to be used in ways that could incorporate multiple types of uses and users. These uses mapped onto particular nineteenth-century social positions and cultural mores. In many respects, Olmsted's ideas of park use privileged white middle- and upper-class activities and linked picturesque nature to family life and other sacred concepts; the profane city he wished to keep at bay was one of racial admixture and immorality. Part of the impetus for building large parks like South Park was to offer spaces where white women could partake in "respectable public recreation" away from the racialized bodies of city streets and sidewalks.<sup>137</sup> In the context of increasing immigration of racial others to Chicago – Irish, Italians, Jews, and later, Southern blacks and other groups – coupled with broader concerns about the demoralizing and degrading aspects of urban society, these racialized, gendered concerns became built into the landscape via urban parks.<sup>138</sup> In approaching South Park's design in this way, Olmsted helped reproduce associations between nature's beauty and particular social groups. Like the picturesque artists and philosophers who valorized the British countryside – and by extension, the white Britons

---

<sup>137</sup> Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 27.

<sup>138</sup> Dror Wahrman, "'Middle-Class' Domesticity Goes Public: Gender, Class, and Politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria," *Journal of British Studies* 32 (1993): 396-432; Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape*.

who lived there – Olmsted’s park design transferred similar symbols to the new green spaces of industrial cities. Rather than British farmers, here the virtuous were the bourgeois white families who, at a distance from the bustle of downtowns, enjoyed nature in the context of wholesome community life.

But Olmsted was aware that South Park was a public space. He may have preferred upper-class picnics to immigrant baseball games, but he understood that his parks would serve multiple constituencies and therefore was somewhat inclusive when it came to structuring other activities via park spaces. Prefiguring the recreation movement of the twentieth century, Olmsted was cognizant of the need for parks to allow active recreation (or what he termed “exertive recreation”) as well.<sup>139</sup> Thus, South Park’s multipurpose Southopen Ground was to serve an additional function: the park’s central space for sports and other athletic events.

Keeping in mind that nineteenth-century active recreation, especially for the white middle-class clientele to whom Olmsted’s design ultimately catered, included properly countryside pursuits such as hunting and other field sports, Olmsted wrote that he would “leave out of consideration all that class of pastimes which, except in the open country, cannot easily be pursued without danger to persons not taking part in them[.]”<sup>140</sup> South Park would thus accommodate sports that could safely and feasibly make use of the Southopen Ground’s 100-acre open meadow:

Among the purposes for which public grounds are used is that of an arena for athletic sports, such as base ball, foot ball, cricket, and running games, such as prisoner’s base, and others which are liable to come again much more in fashion than they have been of

---

<sup>139</sup> Taylor, *The Environment and the People in American Cities*; Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*; Olmsted, “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns.”

<sup>140</sup> Olmsted, “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns,” 224.

late. Another is that of a ground for parades, reviews, drills, processions and public meetings and ceremonies in which large spaces are required.<sup>141</sup>

This support for active recreation came with qualifications, however. Olmsted had concerns about exertive activities interfering with the health of plant life. Noting that in the areas adjacent to the Southopen Ground, as in other “grounds where large numbers of people are liable to come together[,]” it would not be “practicable to guard shrubs and low branching trees from injury.”<sup>142</sup> Therefore, durable turf and clear demarcation between active and passive areas would be required. Olmsted wrote that more picturesque areas of the park would demand “an entirely different scheme of regulations” for social activity, and that “the line between one class of grounds and the other must be sharply defined so that it cannot be passed unconsciously even under excitement.”<sup>143</sup> Thus, while the vast majority of South Park’s spaces would be oriented toward passive recreation, Olmsted found it critical that the portion of the park open to active recreation was carefully delimited in order to preserve the integrity of picturesque nature and the contemplative activities associated with it.

Structuring the social uses of urban parks is equally a question of prohibiting certain activities from taking place. Just as the careful construction of a landscaped environment can facilitate nature walks, picnics, and baseball games, building spatial barriers – or suggesting them through symbolic means – can likewise restrict unwanted activities.<sup>144</sup> For the South Park design, Olmsted also wanted to eliminate objectionable elements, which centered on concerns about the possibility of crime taking place in the park.

---

<sup>141</sup> Olmsted, “Report Accompanying Plan for Laying out the South Park,” 16-7.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>144</sup> Steven Flusty, *Building Paranoia: The Proliferation of Interdictory Space and the Erosion of Spatial Justice* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design, 1994); Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992).

Although “fear of crime” narratives would become prominent aspects of public parks discourse in the second half of the twentieth century, the construction of nature in South Park and other nineteenth-century spaces reflected an awareness that the city was never too far away from the quiet beauty of green spaces. Though efforts to build a space of nature away from the city in part reflected fears of social disorder brought on by industrialization, immigration, and population growth, park spaces themselves reflected the idea that the city’s social problems could also take root in parks.<sup>145</sup> If the city was profane and unsafe, parks and nature were to function as the province of security; the question for landscape architects like Olmsted was how to ensure this.

Olmsted sought to implement sufficient social control in parks through design and through policing strategies. Though he had many thoughts on the latter – as commissioner of New York’s Central Park he instituted strict rules for park use<sup>146</sup> – at South Park he would have no such supervisory role and therefore his efforts consisted of recommendations to the South Park Commission and attempts to enforce “proper” park behavior through design. In the South Park plan, Olmsted acknowledged that certain park spaces could prove generative for crime. The same picturesque areas that Olmsted valorized for their seclusion and intimacy (the cloistered rambles and lagoons) offered, in their privacy, a lack of surveillance that would-be criminals might find inviting, particularly during evening hours. He wrote:

It is impossible to make grounds in the midst of large towns which offer numerous places of complete obscurity, safe places of general resort after nightfall. Wherever it has

---

<sup>145</sup> Taylor, *The Environment and the People in American Cities*; Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).

<sup>146</sup> Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, ch. 9.

been attempted in Europe or America, decent people have soon been driven from them, and they have become nurseries of crime and immorality.<sup>147</sup>

Believing, however, that some park uses were appropriate after nightfall, Olmsted called for the Commission to find a “distinction between grounds to be used by day only, and grounds to be open night and day[.]”<sup>148</sup> The pastoral open greens, if well-lighted, could serve similar passive uses in the evening; the rambles and lagoons, however, would require closure. These picturesque places, despite their beauty, offered “advantages for evil purposes” and could not be adequately observed nor properly illuminated.<sup>149</sup> Such spaces would thus “require a much larger police force by night” if they were to remain open.<sup>150</sup>

Olmsted, despite his typical objections to architectural works within parks,<sup>151</sup> believed that South Park’s security could be ensured through the placement of several buildings on the edges of the Southopen Ground (Figure 2.4). The administration building on the southeast corner of the meadow, the pavilion building on the southwest corner, and the public carriage drive that connected them offered spatial boundaries between the open green and the rambles and lagoons. Enclosing the grounds in this manner would enable park police to streamline their efforts, by simultaneously blocking visitors from wooded areas and enabling the police to survey visitors across the green: “It reduces and strictly defines the area within which it is necessary to require

---

<sup>147</sup> Olmsted, “Report Accompanying Plan for Laying out the South Park,” 17.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. Note that Olmsted was additionally concerned about lamp gases harming the plants.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>151</sup> Elsewhere, Olmsted wrote, “The objection, then, to monumental and architectural objects in works of landscape gardening is this, that, as a rule, they are not adapted to contribute to any concerted effect, but are likely to demand attention to themselves in particular, distracting the mind from the contemplation of the landscape as such, and disturbing its suggestions to the imagination.” Frederick Law Olmsted, “On Landscape Gardening,” in *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 141.

visitors to conform themselves to regulations of a special character, and desirable that they should be under special police observation.”<sup>152</sup>

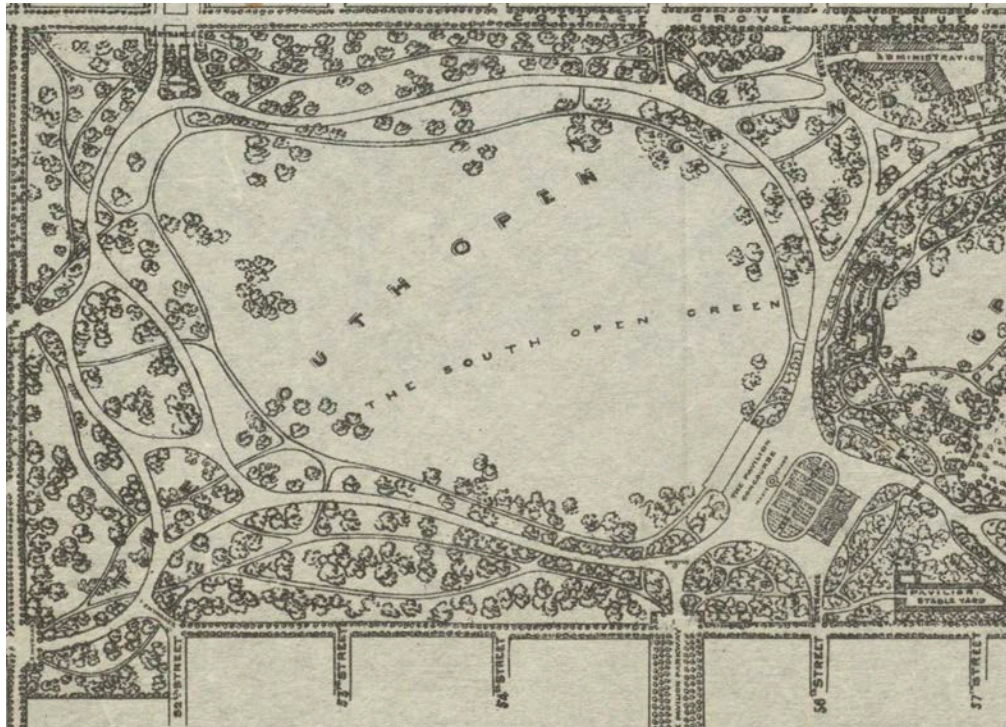


Figure 2.4: The plan for the Southopen Ground; the administration building is at the top right, the pavilion is at the bottom right

Ultimately, Olmsted argued, policing park behavior would be a collective effort spurred by the “respectable people” of the community. Understanding that spaces could frame or facilitate certain uses but that social behaviors would not be wholly determined by his architectural design, he wrote:

The only way in which any town park can long be kept in a generally useful and improving condition, is by providing so well and amply for the uses which are designed to be made of it that the great body of decent, orderly, tidy, and respectable people will not be impelled to fall into practices inconvenient to others or unfavorable to the preservation and improvement of its natural beauty. This done, the silent influence of example and of an obvious custom, acting helpfully to the police regulations, will strongly persuade others to exercise due control upon perverse inclinations.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Olmsted, “Report Accompanying Plan for Laying out the South Park,” 23.

<sup>153</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *Mount Royal, Montreal* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1881), 53.

Of course, these questions of crime and “perverse inclinations” have much to do with questions about who would be using the space. Though nothing in Olmsted’s writings indicates a theory of crime per se, implicitly there is an assumption that Chicago’s wealthy whites would not be the ones *causing* crime in South Park. This is suggested by the fact that Olmsted hoped that the park would be surrounded by a “superior residence quarter,” sought to connect park spaces and activities to middle-class domesticity, and indicated that well-to-do park visitors would set an example for proper park behavior.

Nineteenth-century discourses of urban crime typically centered on the racial others coming into Northern cities from Europe.<sup>154</sup> Though urban black populations outside of the South were small prior to the fall of slavery in 1865 and the Great Migration of the twentieth century, black urbanites were also implicated in popular concerns about crime and immorality.<sup>155</sup> But given that there were few blacks living in Chicago in 1871, we can infer that Olmsted’s concerns surrounded “the toiling population of Chicago, [which,] relieved from work at an early hour on the last day of the week, will be carried to the South Park by many tens of thousands[.]”<sup>156</sup> Unlike the wealthy whites that Olmsted expected to live around the park and use it regularly as their primary space of nature and recreation, the great mass of workers would be that segment of park visitors to whom South Park was “distant suburban excursion grounds.”<sup>157</sup> Though Olmsted was

---

<sup>154</sup> Taylor, *The Environment and the People in American Cities*; David Ward, *Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>155</sup> Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*.

<sup>156</sup> Olmsted, “Report Accompanying Plan for Laying out the South Park,” 15.

<sup>157</sup> It is an open question as to how likely this feared intrusion of the working class into the upscale South Park space actually was. The racial and class geography in Chicago at this time was such that the vast majority of immigrants and white-ethnics lived in or around the Loop, often on the present-day Near North and Near West Sides. (At the time of South Park’s design, the city’s wealthiest communities were located south of the business district – largely relocating to the “Gold Coast” on the North Side after 1900). Given that accessing South Park would have required

concerned with ensuring that this group was acculturated to the beauty of nature and that the park structured their recreational needs, their intermittent presence nevertheless suggested the disruption of the restful nature and firmly white-bourgeois social uses that were to define South Park.<sup>158</sup>

These race- and class-based concerns about the working poor further structured South Park's racial symbolism. The powerful city-nature binary was bolstered in the design of South Park by the implication that white-ethnics and other undesired people might despoil sacred nature by bringing their decidedly urban ways with them into the park – in everything from baseball games to crime. The city-nature binary, therefore, was not purely a categorization of space, but a question of categorizing types of people and types of activities. City and nature were each a constellation of social and spatial symbols, and the intense preoccupation with their demarcation illustrates the intellectual and political work behind their reproduction.

But at the same time, the very notion that South Park's nature was in need of protection from urbanity suggests an inherent instability in the city-nature binary. Despite the best efforts of architects like Olmsted to design parks as separate entities from the cities that surrounded them,

---

travel by train or boat, residents of these areas had much closer options for large, picturesque parks: Lincoln Park on the North Side and Douglas Park and Garfield Park (then known as Central Park) on the West Side, all of which were designed and built at approximately the same time as South Park. See Robert Bruegmann, "Built Environment of the Chicago Region," in *Chicago Neighborhoods and Suburbs: A Historic Guide*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); see also Jane Addams, ed., *Hull House Maps and Papers* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1895); Daniel Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

<sup>158</sup> The clearest example that Olmsted wanted the city's workers to experience the full beauty of nature is suggested by his concerns about the visual approach from Lake Michigan. Expecting that many would arrive to South Park by boat – and that these would inevitably be the working classes – his emphasis on a sublime visual approach that transitioned into the picturesque lagoons indicates that, despite his clear privileging of the park's community-level uses for the presumably well-off local population, he also wanted workers to find beauty in this landscaped environment. Further, though it is not discussed in the South Park plan, his writings elsewhere indicate that Olmsted believed in the "civilizing" mission of landscape architecture – that working-class cultural tastes could be improved through experiences with nature. See Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*.



this line of demarcation was a social construction. That the presence of certain social groups and certain social uses could fracture the bucolic nature that parks represented illustrates that cultural producers like Olmsted were aware of this instability. The South Park plan sought to guard against improper uses through design and active policing of the space. If the urban could not be prevented from infiltrating South Park, it could be deterred through spatial distance, lack of inviting uses, and surveillance. While building this city-nature binary may have proved easy in the abstract – in park plans, landscape paintings, and literature – in the decades that followed the design and construction of South Park, the power of this demarcation between city and nature would be tested.

## **2.8: Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a theoretical overview of the creation of the city-nature relationship. Aligning with other sacred/profane cultural binaries, city and nature were conceptualized in Chicago and other cities as oppositional spaces and symbols. The spectacular urban growth that began in the late seventeenth century upended long-standing social relations and seemed to endanger the countryside, despite an historical reciprocity between urban areas and their rural counterparts. Building on social understandings of city-nature antagonisms that dated back many centuries, cultural producers worked to commemorate nature in the midst of the urban threat. Particularly in Great Britain and the United States, these cultural products coalesced around the idea of the picturesque, a conception of nature that valorized the rough elements of landscape found in Britain and New England. The philosophical underpinnings of the picturesque drove the first generation of modern landscape architecture, a field that itself heralded a key shift in city-nature relationships: with the creation of urban parks, humans were

no longer observing or painting landscapes, but were re-ordering the physical environment in the name of natural beauty.

Urban parks were the product of cultural impulses as well as a response to the spatial conditions of modern urbanity. They were part and parcel of a modernist planning project that sought to manage space along rational and scientific lines. The implementation of rectilinear street grids as Western cities expanded in the nineteenth century were an archetypal planning intervention; parks helped growing cities manage the circulation of people and capital, bolster land values, and provide needed open space. Urban parks laid the socially constructed city-nature binary down in social space, as picturesque landscape architects like Frederick Law Olmsted sought to sharply divide the green spaces of parks from urban spaces. The intended social uses, and the ideal types of social users, often reinforced other aspects of the sacred/profane duality of city and nature. In cities like Chicago, large parks were built only in part as a remedy for overcrowding and other issues faced by immigrants and industrial workers. Parks were envisioned by planners and politicians as an extension of middle-class domesticity into the public realm.

In Chicago, the 1871 design of Olmsted and Vaux's South Park was paradigmatic of nineteenth-century urban park design. The park was planned to structure a southward extension of the city, providing an amenity to the future communities of what would become the South Side. South Park emplaced a vision of nature that broke dramatically from the actually existing natural landscapes of the Chicago area. Rather than working with the marshy prairie, Olmsted and Vaux transformed the land into a picturesque landscape. Like Olmsted's other green spaces, South Park represented a rejection of urbanity and its associated symbols. Although Olmsted's writings reveal particular biases for and against certain uses and users along lines of race, class,

and gender, what the park ultimately provided was a spatial structure; the social practices of its users would determine how social differences would be worked out in space. The following chapter will examine some of these processes by analyzing how significant demographic and spatial changes to Chicago in the twentieth century affected park use and shaped ideas of city and nature. As the imagined neighborhoods around South Park became realized, and as new streams of black migrants and European immigrants moved to the city, new interventions in urban parks, new racial-spatial conflicts, and new forms of cultural production would all prove influential in the re-making of the city-nature binary in the following decades.

## Ch. 3: Post-World War II Urbanization and the Redefinition of Parks-as-Nature

### 3.1: Introduction

After the development of picturesque urban parks in the second half of the nineteenth century, the most consequential era of park creation in the United States occurred in the years following World War II. Across social science disciplines, there is wide consensus that the period 1945-70 represents a decisive moment in American urbanization: a period of dramatic social change that paralleled transformations in the built environments and social geographies of metropolitan areas.<sup>1</sup> Governmental actors remade cities and their surrounding areas through a combination of interstate highways, public housing projects, and subsidies for suburban development.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, as Thomas Sugrue has influentially argued, it is during the postwar period that the “origins” of contemporary urban poverty and racial segregation can be found.<sup>3</sup> Of particular consequence was the concentration of poverty through the creation of “second ghettos” – state-led planning that reified existing lines of racial division in new and lasting ways.<sup>4</sup>

In the postwar period we find historical events and social processes that have largely defined American metropolitan areas for the past 75 years: suburbanization, ghettoization, white flight, the Second Great Migration, the Civil Rights Movement, urban black uprisings, the decline of the Rust Belt, and the rise of the Sun Belt. To varying extents, these processes

---

<sup>1</sup> Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*.

<sup>4</sup> Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); D. Bradford Hunt, *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

continue to organize American social geography. For example, the postwar period was the key era in the creation of suburbs as domains of white economic and racial privilege. Scholars have exhaustively documented how governmental agencies like the Federal Housing Administration, coupled with real estate industry practices such as redlining, ensured that postwar suburbs were developed as all-white spaces.<sup>5</sup> The mass movement of African Americans from the South to the urban North and West fundamentally reconfigured America's racial geography.<sup>6</sup> The concomitant political changes won by the Civil Rights Movement shifted the class dynamics of black communities.<sup>7</sup> Fissures in regional political economy were also critical: many of the cities that had attracted migrants from Southern plantations and European slums – such as St. Louis, Detroit, and Cleveland – were beginning their seemingly inexorable decline while newer Sun Belt cities like Los Angeles, Houston, and San Jose were exploding in size.<sup>8</sup>

This was also a critical period for the racialized ideas, symbols, and spaces of city and nature that are this study's central interest. The urban parks of the post-World War II period were also undergoing significant changes. Debates centered on the modernist remaking of American cities: in creating new parks and public spaces via urban renewal programs, older places were often destroyed.<sup>9</sup> The modernist movement in architectural design that reached its apogee after

---

<sup>5</sup> Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*; Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development*.

<sup>6</sup> St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945); Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: The Free Press, 1984); Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1984).

<sup>8</sup> Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, *Sunbelt Capitalism: Phoenix and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> And older parks were occasionally targeted for demolition by urban renewal programs – usually to be cleared for new highways or public housing. See the famous battle between Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses over the fate of New York's Washington Square Park, for example. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New

World War II had key impacts on the design and intended uses of public spaces, especially parks. As architectural historians have argued, this was a time of “denatured visions”<sup>10</sup>: on the one hand a transformation of older pastoral meadows into full-time baseball fields and the like, and on the other the production of new, highly structured recreational spaces.<sup>11</sup>

These changes in park design and use were tied to new forms of social control, many of which served to constrain black access to public space in the urban North.<sup>12</sup> As scholars have argued, social control operates in even the most populist or democratic public spaces.<sup>13</sup> Postwar developments reflected white social actors’ and white-dominated institutions’ efforts to delimit black mobility and access to parks that served as de facto “white spaces.”<sup>14</sup> The demographic consequences of the Great Migration and the baby boom, coupled with structural economic changes that limited the number of young people entering the workforce,<sup>15</sup> encouraged policymakers to look to parks as a means to enforce social control.<sup>16</sup> Particularly for the generation of young people coming of age after the war, the abundance of free time was seen as a social problem.<sup>17</sup> Though broader concerns about “juvenile delinquency” concerned both black

---

York: Random House, 1961); Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Stuart Wrede and William Howard Adams, eds., *Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982); Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> In the Jim Crow South, public parks remained racially segregated by law until the 1958 *New Orleans City Park Improvement Association v. Detiege* Supreme Court decision.

<sup>13</sup> Benjamin Shepard and Gregory Smithsion, *The Beach Beneath the Streets: Contesting New York City’s Public Spaces* (New York: SUNY Press, 2011); David J. Madden, “Revisiting the End of Public Space: Assembling the Public in an Urban Park,” *City & Community* 9, no. 2 (2010): 187-207.

<sup>14</sup> Elijah Anderson, “The White Space,” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 1, no. 1 (2015): 10-21. On the slipperiness of de facto/de jure forms of racial segregation, see Matthew D. Lassiter, “De Jure/De Facto Segregation: The Long Shadow of a National Myth,” in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, eds. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*.

<sup>16</sup> Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*, 105-6.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew J. Diamond, *Mean Streets: Chicago Youths and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multiracial City, 1908-1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

and white young people (and primarily young men), the ways in which these concerns were mediated by urban planning decisions and policing strategies placed black people and black communities at distinct disadvantages. Postwar park development largely bypassed black neighborhoods; accessing parks therefore required the crossing of existing racial boundaries. This forced blacks into the crosshairs of the police and angry whites who sought to retain de facto ownership of “their” parks and public spaces.

This chapter documents the politics of park development and park access in postwar Chicago. Situating this analysis in light of the ways that the ideas and spaces of race, city, and nature were colliding, I examine several sides of the story. First, I center the Chicago Park District, founded in 1934, as the key institutional actor in shifting the racial meanings of urban nature in Chicago after World War II. I focus specifically on the Park District’s 1945 Park Expansion and Improvement program, also known as the “10 Year Plan.” I examine the political and racial geography of the 194 parks built through this program and other Park District initiatives between 1945 and 1970. Along with these planning efforts, I interrogate the ways that the Park District engaged in programmatic and policing efforts in the city’s parks during this period. Between 1934 and 1959, the Park District maintained its own police force with full jurisdiction over Chicago’s parks and parkways. I find that both institutional strategies and on-the-ground policing disadvantaged black communities in several ways: black park users were disproportionately subject to arrest, and park police often failed to protect black people’s rights to access public space. Additionally, the Park District’s programming efforts, such as its casework-oriented Youth Bureau, indicated a shift in parks’ social function as parks became in part a platform for the delivery of social services. Beyond the Park District, I consider how community organizations focused on ameliorating racial inequality engaged with parks as spaces

to achieve particular social outcomes. Lastly, I examine more informal intersections of race and parks via whites' massive resistance to black park use. In the archival record, I find many instances of white-on-black violence occurring in Chicago parks. These incidents had a range of causes and effects; their frequent occurrence in the years following World War II suggests an affinity with the broader dynamics of neighborhood change.<sup>18</sup> Yet, as I will explore, park-related conflicts had some qualities that distinguished them from other racial conflicts of the postwar period (over housing, jobs, and schools, for example). Importantly, I find that these incidents had an institutional basis – as Park District police often turned a blind eye to violent harassment, and sometimes aided white youth in enforcing the de facto segregation of Chicago's parks.

Such processes, I argue, strongly influenced the city-nature relationship. While increasing urbanization and urban migration after 1900 set in motion demographic and cultural changes in park use and placed some cracks in the socially constructed city-nature binary, these post-World War II transformations firmly redefined the cultural meaning of urban parks. The same spaces once valorized as “nature” were becoming fully “urban” and, in many cases, re-racialized. The expansion of black residential space ended many older parks' identity as spaces of nature and white leisure. The mere entry of blacks into these spaces disrupted existing norms of racialized park use and led to violent reprisals by whites. As blacks moved into much of Chicago's South and West Sides, parks that had once been surrounded by whites, like Washington and Jackson Parks, by the 1960s bordered majority black communities who could claim collective ownership over these spaces. Second, suburbanization enabled whites to leave the city in unprecedented numbers and shifted the metropolitan locus of symbolically valuable nature to areas outside of

---

<sup>18</sup> Amanda Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Kruse, *White Flight*.



the city proper through the powerful cultural image of a suburban green lawn and through the creation of new nature-related institutions like the Chicago Botanic Garden, located 13 miles north of city limits in the affluent North Shore suburbs. Third, as mentioned above, architectural changes to parks heralded the end of pastoral activities' dominance. The unstructured recreation valorized by Olmsted and Vaux now took a backseat to baseball fields, basketball courts, and fieldhouses. While such spaces were fixtures of the "small parks" built in working-class neighborhoods after 1900,<sup>19</sup> their intrusion into pleasure grounds – as park districts turned picturesque meadows into full-time ball diamonds – represented a different order of cultural change. This chapter sheds light on this process of cultural change. It is a shift that would, for many decades, exile "nature" to areas beyond the city and create the cultural context for city-nature hybridity to eventually emerge around the turn of the twenty-first century.

### **3.2: Setting the Stage for Postwar Park Development: Parks in Chicago, 1900-45**

As discussed in the previous chapter, nineteenth-century parks like Chicago's South Park embodied the attempted spatialization of the city-nature binary. The first major challenges to the understanding of parks-as-nature were a result of spatial and demographic changes around the turn of the twentieth century. In general terms, the consequences of population increase and urban growth were becoming fully realized and parks again figured as spatial solutions to social problems. Just as the creation of South Park was in part a response to the perceived disappearance of nature, around 1900 new concerns related to working and housing conditions led to reformer-led attempts to use parks in new ways.<sup>20</sup> A growing belief that public open spaces could help solve overcrowding and related social issues prompted the "small parks" movement

---

<sup>19</sup> Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

in Chicago and other North American cities. In contrast to large pleasure grounds like South Park, these new parks would be modest, targeted interventions. Their purpose had far less to do with nature and beauty and much more to do with improving the lives of industrial workers.<sup>21</sup>

If architects and planners held that South Park and the like existed in some ways beyond the urban, small parks could not as easily support this fiction. Their diminutive size prevented designers from incorporating typical picturesque landscape features: rolling vistas and waterfalls were traded for playgrounds and fieldhouses.<sup>22</sup> Apart from size and aesthetic differences, small parks differed in that they were much more structured spaces: areas for sports like baseball or swimming became permanent features.<sup>23</sup>

The racial meanings of small parks also diverged from those of South Park. While the first generation of modern parks in the United States represented white spaces built apart from the racially mixed city, small parks were quite intentionally embedded in the multiethnic urban fabric. Though their size and degree of architectural merit varied, their geographic placement tended to coincide with the neighborhoods of white-ethnic groups like the Irish and Italians.<sup>24</sup> If earlier landscape architects made gestures toward the idea of democratic access to nature,<sup>25</sup> small parks seemed to make good on this promise, providing workers with immediate park access

---

<sup>21</sup> Marta Gutman, *A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850-1950*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> Joan E. Draper, “The Art and Science of Park Planning in the United States: Chicago’s Small Parks, 1902-1905,” in *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City*, eds. Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>23</sup> Wrede and Adams, eds., *Denatured Visions*.

<sup>24</sup> Marian L. Osborn “The Development of Recreation in the South Park System of Chicago” (master’s thesis, the University of Chicago, 1928). Note that not all “small parks” were green spaces. Some were concrete playgrounds and other “grey” recreational facilities. The small parks developed by the South Park District for the South Side of Chicago, such as Armour Square Park and Cornell Square Park, which were designed by the firm of Frederick Olmsted’s sons, tended to contain architectural gestures towards nature and passive recreation that were similar to those found in the older pleasure grounds.

<sup>25</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns,” in *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, ed. Robert Twombly (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010).

rather than a suburban retreat. The South Park District's small parks connected via boulevards to South Park, which had been renamed Washington and Jackson Parks in the late nineteenth century, thereby creating a spatial and symbolic link to the ideal form of nature found in those spaces.<sup>26</sup> Small parks offered a civic benefit to groups at the margins of whiteness: spaces with a clear purpose of uplift – if not quite the picturesque parks' "civilizing" purpose in terms of cultural tastes, then in terms of creating socially desired behaviors, as indicated in the following assessment by Jane Addams:

In Chicago a map has recently been made demonstrating that juvenile crime is decreasing in the territory surrounding the finely equipped playgrounds and athletic fields which the South Park Board three years ago placed in thirteen small parks. We know in Chicago, from ten years' experience in a juvenile court, that many boys are arrested from sheer excess of animal spirits[.] ... The women of Chicago are studying the effect of these recreational centers provided by the South Park Committee upon the social life of the older people who use them. One thing they have done is enormously to decrease the patronage of the neighboring saloons. Before we had these park houses, the saloon hall was hired for weddings and christenings, or any sort of event which in the foreign mind is associated with general feasting[.] ... As you know, the saloon hall is rented free, with the understanding that a certain amount of money be paid across the bar[.] ... The park hall, of course, is under no such temptation and, therefore, drinking has almost ceased at the parties held in the parks.<sup>27</sup>

The small parks' seemingly more egalitarian geography was complicated by the lack of new parks for Chicago's expanding black community. Chicago's black population more than tripled between 1900 and 1920, growing from 30,150 to 109,458; over ninety percent lived in the South Side's Black Belt.<sup>28</sup> The Black Belt around 1920 was bounded by 22<sup>nd</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> Streets and Wentworth and Cottage Grove Avenues, forming a series of boundaries that were at once

---

<sup>26</sup> The South Park District was the outgrowth of the same South Park Commission that developed South Park in the nineteenth century. The South Park District developed and managed parks on Chicago's South Side until it was merged with other park organizations to create the Chicago Park District in 1934.

<sup>27</sup> Jane Addams, "Women's Conscience and Social Amelioration," in *The Jane Addams Reader*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 258-9.

<sup>28</sup> Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 8, 174.

symbolic and material.<sup>29</sup> The South Park District's small parks not only bypassed the Black Belt, but their place on the urban landscape helped structure lines of racial division. At 10-acre Armour Square, for example, a contemporary report indicated that blacks represented "less than one half of one percent of the users of the park," despite constituting "about 40 percent of the population within a radius of six blocks."<sup>30</sup> While some racial-spatial boundaries held firm for multiple decades, the expansion of black residential spaces on the South Side implicated many parks as sites of interracial conflict,<sup>31</sup> particularly as anti-black animus formed a key piece of the racial projects that were propelling white-ethnics into the broader white racial group in the early twentieth century.<sup>32</sup> Initial tensions came to a head when conflict at a lakeside beach sparked the city's 1919 riots; as this chapter will discuss, in the following decades park-based racial violence would become routine, typically driven by white youths who sought to prevent black use of recreational facilities.<sup>33</sup>

Despite widespread resistance by white communities, black Chicagoans still found their way into the city's parks. With the Black Belt's western boundary proving impervious due to violent resistance in the early decades of the twentieth century, the black community pushed south toward Washington Park. This initial encroachment into white space<sup>34</sup> was met with the bombing of black homes between 1918 and 1921.<sup>35</sup> Harassment and physical attacks often

---

<sup>29</sup> Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 222.

<sup>30</sup> Osborn "The Development of Recreation in the South Park System of Chicago," 108.

<sup>31</sup> Diamond, *Mean Streets*.

<sup>32</sup> Vilna Bashi Treitler, *The Ethnic Project: Transforming Racial Fiction into Ethnic Factions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> Arnold R. Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953-1966," *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (1995): 522-50.

<sup>34</sup> Anderson, "The White Space."

<sup>35</sup> Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*.

followed blacks into Washington Park.<sup>36</sup> After years of advocacy by the Chicago *Defender*, black alderman Robert Jackson, settlement workers, and others, the South Park District was finally compelled to build a park for the black community – Madden Park, constructed between 1927 and 1930.<sup>37</sup>

Black park use was circumscribed not only by white resistance but by intra-racial cultural politics. A key factor here were the racist associations between blacks and a “state of nature.” Dating to the European colonization of Africa, white racial ideologies assumed that blacks were biologically closest to pre-human ancestors. In the United States, such ideas were used to justify chattel slavery and Jim Crow laws.<sup>38</sup> In the early twentieth century, the black leadership in Chicago was well aware of the impacts of primitivist associations and stereotypes.<sup>39</sup> Parks brought black behaviors into the view of white observers; in part for this reason, parks emerged as important sites for the enactment of respectability politics.<sup>40</sup> Cultural conflicts surrounding black park use broke along lines of class, generation, and regional identity. Middle-class blacks encouraged “proper” etiquette at Washington Park’s tennis courts and boathouse and looked down upon public displays of sexuality and “backward” acts, such as using Lake Michigan as a baptismal pool.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the creation of the “New Negro” identity after World War I – a self-consciously “urban” designation – was in part a rejection of what the black middle class understood as primitive cultural practices linked to land-based labor, slavery, and general

---

<sup>36</sup> Brian James McCammack, “Recovering Green in Bronzeville: An Environmental and Cultural History of the African American Great Migration to Chicago, 1915-1940” (Ph.D. Diss, Harvard University, 2012), 108-14.

<sup>37</sup> McCammack, “Recovering Green in Bronzeville,” 136-9.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph L. Graves, Jr., *The Emperor’s New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

<sup>39</sup> Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes*.

<sup>40</sup> Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> McCammack, “Recovering Green in Bronzeville,” 125.

underdevelopment.<sup>42</sup> This emergent group instead sought to embrace the “cultivated” aspects of both urban society and green landscapes.

All of this dislocated some of the meanings of city and nature that had been laid down in the nineteenth century. The distinctly “urban” intentions of small parks moved parks away from their meaning as pure nature. The geographic expansion of park space that accompanied the demographic/definitional expansion of whiteness – bringing ethnic groups like the Irish and Italians closer to “native whites” – extended white cultural power. As Chicago’s racial boundaries hardened after 1900, the race and class politics of park use became focal points of interracial and intra-racial conflict. Older parks like Washington and Jackson Parks, built as the province of nature and white leisure, were now broached by blacks. This entry of black social actors into previously all-white spaces threatened the stability of parks’ cultural value: if the form of sacred nature represented in parks was inextricably linked to white cultural practices, then the presence of blacks called these assumptions into question. The idea of the urban, a concept with links to types of people and types of practices, was reaching spaces that represented nature, dislodging the city-nature binary from its nineteenth-century foundation.

### **3.3: Building Parks for the Postwar City**

In the decades following World War II, the Chicago city government embarked on an ambitious reworking of the city’s built environment. Like other cities across the United States, Chicago used urban renewal funds from the federal government to construct highways and public housing along with new institutional spaces and other infrastructure. Mirroring the consequences found in many other American cities, in Chicago the resultant spatial changes had

---

<sup>42</sup> Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes*.

ramifications for the social geography of the metropolitan area: highways divided neighborhoods and opened up a new era of suburbanization, public housing concentrated black poverty in a handful of sites, and new hospitals, universities, and a convention center were built atop the rubble of flattened communities.<sup>43</sup> All of these changes were in addition to the continued urban migration of African Americans, a major influx of immigrants from Latin America, and the continued “whitening” of groups like the Irish, Italians, and Jews.<sup>44</sup>

In the midst of these wide-ranging socio-spatial changes, parks loomed as important spaces in the emerging postwar social geography. In Chicago, as elsewhere, the substantial public funds available for urban renewal purposes, coupled with the booming postwar American economy, meant that parks figured prominently into new development plans.<sup>45</sup> Chicago’s power brokers – who chiefly included Mayors Edward Kelly, Martin Kennelly, and Richard J. Daley, all of whom emerged from the city’s Irish Catholic-dominated Democratic machine to run the city from 1933-47, 1947-55, and 1955-76, respectively<sup>46</sup> – implemented major plans for new park construction in the decades after the war.

The postwar expansion of Chicago’s park system represented in important ways a departure from the city’s culturally valuable parks. Although smaller parks had been built in earlier decades, for the most part Chicago’s older parks were characteristic of the nineteenth-century picturesque park movement. These 300-plus-acre green spaces were architecturally open – containing a variety of fields, woodlands, and lagoons – and open to a wide range of social activities. In the eyes of city officials, however, the demographic and spatial changes to postwar

---

<sup>43</sup> These sites included the campuses of the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Illinois Institute of Technology, and the McCormick Convention Center. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*; Hunt, *Blueprint for Disaster*.

<sup>44</sup> Treitler, *The Ethnic Project*.

<sup>45</sup> Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*.

<sup>46</sup> Adam Cohen and Elizabeth Taylor, *American Pharaoh: Mayor Richard J. Daley - His Battle for Chicago and the Nation* (New York: Little, Brown, 2000).

Chicago demanded a new type of green space. Mirroring nationwide changes to urban parks and public spaces and building on the precedent set by many of the small parks, Chicago officials planned for dozens of new parks whose chief purpose was programmatic, rather than unstructured, recreation.<sup>47</sup> Such spaces were intended to serve the city's burgeoning population, especially the thousands of new children populating the city, baby boomers.

Central to the creation of the city's postwar parks was the Chicago Park District, a powerful agency formed in 1934 by an act of the Illinois state legislature. The nascent Park District consolidated twenty-two longstanding Chicago park organizations (including the South Park District), receiving more than \$100 million combined from the WPA and the state and city governments to organize and modernize the city's parks.<sup>48</sup> Financially, the Park District was to operate independently of the city government (though this divide was largely symbolic: the Park District President would be a mayoral appointee, and the city's Democratic machine was the primary feeder for Park District jobs).<sup>49</sup> The city government maintained a separate entity, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation, which managed a separate portfolio of parks until it merged with the Park District in 1959. Together, the Park District and the Bureau of Parks and Recreation developed 194 new parks between 1945 and 1970.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> This divide is often characterized as a difference between "active" and "passive" recreation, but as Cranz notes, picturesque parks were also intended to structure active recreation – just not on the permanent basis indicated by full-time baseball fields and basketball courts. Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*.

<sup>48</sup> Julia S. Bachrach, *The City in a Garden: A History of Chicago's Parks* (Chicago: Columbia College Chicago Press, 2012). Per the Bureau of Labor Statistics, that amount is equivalent to \$1.8 billion in 2017 dollars ([https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)).

<sup>49</sup> From its founding in 1934 through the 1980s, the Park District would be ground zero for patronage jobs and corruption; see Thomas J. Gradel and Dick Simpson, *Corrupt Illinois: Patronage, Cronyism, and Criminality* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015). Indeed, Richard J. Daley's papers are littered with correspondence between himself and local Democratic Party operatives seeking employment or promotion with the Park District.

<sup>50</sup> Author calculation, Chicago Park District, <http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com>.



In 1945, the Park District unveiled its “10 Year Plan” to develop new parks across Chicago. This bond-financed \$60 million dollar program would, in the words of Park District President Robert Dunham, have “significance ... [that] compares with the developments of 1869 when the West, South, and Lincoln Park systems were established” – recalling the construction of Chicago’s most prestigious green spaces.<sup>51</sup> The 10 Year Plan had a clear supporter in Mayor Kelly, who had formerly served as President of the South Park Commission and in 1935 had established the Chicago Recreation Commission.<sup>52</sup> For the Park District, the development plan would ameliorate ... the “many parts of the city ... entirely, or almost entirely, devoid of parks.”<sup>53</sup> And further, “the plan promises to keep Chicago in a predominant position among all large cities of the world with regard to its outstanding and serviceable neighborhood parks.”<sup>54</sup>

As indicated in Figure 3.1, the location of the parks included in the 10 Year Plan mapped onto and helped structure the emerging racial geography of Chicago. With restrictive covenants helping to hold the Black Belt’s boundaries until 1948, at the time of the plan the city’s black spaces were clearly demarcated. On the whole, 29 of the 31 parks created under the 10 Year Plan were constructed in areas that had few, if any, black residents at the time of the 1940 Census (the exceptions were Addams Park, built on the Near West Side in the major site of black settlement outside of the South Side’s Black Belt, and Durso Playlot, adjacent to the Cabrini-Green Homes on the Near North Side). The bulk of these parks were developed in the white neighborhoods rising on the city’s periphery with the aid of FHA mortgages, such as North Park, Mount

---

<sup>51</sup> Chicago Park District, “1945 Annual Report” (CPD, 1946), 13.

<sup>52</sup> McCammack, “Recovering Green in Bronzeville,” 260.

<sup>53</sup> Chicago Park District, “1945 Annual Report” (CPD, 1946), 26.

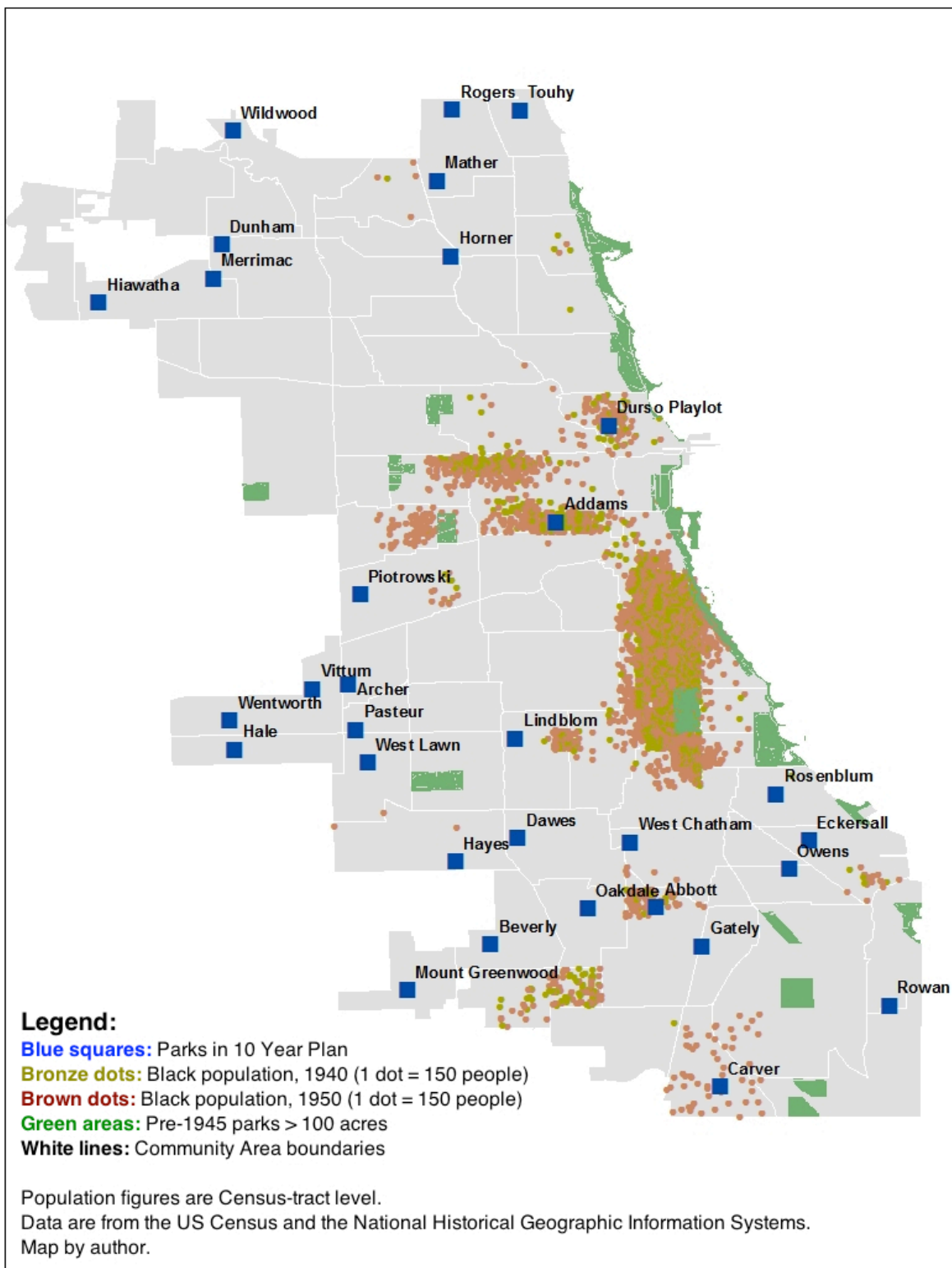
<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

Greenwood, and Clearing.<sup>55</sup> Many of these new parks were modeled after the small parks of earlier decades: smaller than one acre in size and exclusively contained playgrounds and other dedicated recreational spaces, typically designed with families in mind. The most expansive of these spaces included Mount Greenwood Park and Oakdale Park on the Far South Side, Rogers Park and Touhy Park on the Far North Side, and Merrimac Park and Horner Park on the Northwest Side. For the newly built, predominantly white communities that received these green spaces, the parks served as resources that would anchor local community life and increase the desirability of these urbanizing places.

---

<sup>55</sup> Ann Durkin Keating, ed., *Chicago Neighborhoods and Suburbs: A Historical Guide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

**Figure 3.1: Map of the 10 Year Plan with Chicago's Black Population, 1940/1950**



Chicago's black community was passed over in this new park development, and despite its proximity to older spaces – namely Washington and Jackson Parks – black park access was heavily circumscribed by the enforcement of de facto segregation in public space and the uneven distribution of Park District resources within older parks. Washington Park had first been broached by black park users in the late 1910s as the black middle class moved south from the core of the Black Belt.<sup>56</sup> By 1930 the park was used almost exclusively by black people; by 1945 Drake and Cayton could deem it the “playground of the South Side[,]” a place where “in the summer thousands of Negroes of all ages congregate to play softball and tennis, to swim, or just lounge around.”<sup>57</sup> While Washington Park had become situated within the positive cultural imaginary of “Bronzeville,”<sup>58</sup> other parks proximate to the postwar Black Belt were effectively off-limits to the growing black community. Parks to the west, in the white-working-class district of Bridgeport, had been off limits to blacks for decades.<sup>59</sup> The Black Belt's sole park, Madden Park, was a 10-acre mix of playgrounds, baseball fields, and a swimming pool at 38<sup>th</sup> Street, just east of South Parkway (present-day Martin Luther King Drive).<sup>60</sup> Built in the late 1930s with WPA funds after a decade of activism, Madden Park had “languished for years with few improvements[.]”<sup>61</sup> Racial boundaries on the South Side's public beaches, the other public recreational spaces near the Black Belt, dated to the beginnings of the Great Migration. As mentioned above, conflict at the 29<sup>th</sup> Street beach, long a racial dividing line, had served as the

---

<sup>56</sup> McCammack, “Recovering Green in Bronzeville,” 105-31.

<sup>57</sup> Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 380.

<sup>58</sup> Mary Pattillo, “Foreword,” in *Black Metropolis* by St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), xvi-iii.

<sup>59</sup> Osborn, “The Development of Recreation in the South Park System of Chicago.”

<sup>60</sup> Madden Park no longer exists, having been demolished in the early 2000s along with the adjacent Madden Park public housing complex.

<sup>61</sup> McCammack, “Recovering Green in Bronzeville,” 144.

flashpoint of the city's 1919 race riots.<sup>62</sup> In some instances, these boundaries were made more concrete – such as when the South Park Commission erected a fence to divide black and white beachgoers at Jackson Park in the 1930s.<sup>63</sup> The effect of these boundaries was to constrain black access to parks and public space. At the time of the Park District's 10 Year Plan, the average Black Belt resident lived far from public parks. Even Washington Park, by then the city's de facto “black” green space, was, in the words of one black migrant to Chicago, “much too far away” from the heart of the Black Belt for regular use.<sup>64</sup>

Another factor circumscribing black park access in the postwar period was the Park District's distribution of resources across existing parks. Using Park District records, a revealing comparison can be drawn between the city's dual “crown jewel” parks – Grant and Lincoln – and Chicago's primary black park of the postwar period, Washington. Lincoln Park, the predominantly white North Side's picturesque counterpart to the South Side's Washington and Jackson Parks, and Grant Park, the Loop's highly visible, tourist-friendly green space, emerged as the city's most symbolically valuable parks after World War II.<sup>65</sup> Investment in plant material – Park District dollars spent on turf, trees, flowers, and other flora – indicates concrete efforts to beautify a park, enhance park users' access to or appreciation of nature, and increase the cultural value of park spaces. As illustrated in Table 3.1, between 1945 and 1951 Park District investment in plant material totaled \$35,954 in Grant Park, \$535,119 in Lincoln Park, and \$9,740

---

<sup>62</sup> Diamond, *Mean Streets*.

<sup>63</sup> Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 105.

<sup>64</sup> McCammack, “Recovering Green in Bronzeville,” 131.

<sup>65</sup> Both Grant Park and Lincoln Park, like South Park, were built in the late nineteenth century and were redeveloped in various ways in the twentieth century. The corollary of the rising importance of Lincoln and Grant Parks was the symbolic and physical decline of other older parks in Chicago, especially Garfield, Jackson, and Humboldt Parks (on Garfield Park in the postwar period, see Seligman, *Block by Block*, 99-118).

in Washington Park (in 1951 dollars).<sup>66</sup> Evaluating total investment in the three parks on a per-acre basis reveals similar differences: \$137 in Grant Park, \$443 in Lincoln Park, and \$26 in Washington Park. In short, Grant Park received 5.2 times the comparable public support for plant material of Washington Park; Lincoln Park received 16.9 times more than Washington Park. These measures are far from the totality of differential investment in the three parks: other significant expenditures in Lincoln Park included the Park District's 1946-48 construction of new jetties at a cost of \$134,132<sup>67</sup> and the 1946-47 addition of landscaped limestone blocks at a cost of \$102,400.<sup>68</sup> While plant material is only one metric of the Park District's investment in these public spaces, the magnitude of differential investment illustrates the sort of institutional decisions influencing Chicago's parks after World War II. More qualitative descriptions of Black Belt park conditions included a frank assessment from the Chicago Commission on Human Relations: "The area between the railroad and the lake [the western and eastern boundaries of the Black Belt] is practically devoid of any facilities for recreation."<sup>69</sup> In short, neighborhoods that already had substantial economic resources or were politically connected via Chicago's Democratic machine were bolstered with ample park funding while the Black Belt received little such investment.

---

<sup>66</sup> Data are collected from Chicago Park District Annual Reports, 1945-51. Unfortunately, these are the only years for which such data exists; for reasons unknown, the Park District stopped producing richly detailed reports in 1952. Historical inflation rates calculated with data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics ([https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)). In 2017 dollars, the total figures are \$335,809 for Grant Park, \$4,997,991 for Lincoln Park, and \$90,971 for Washington Park.

<sup>67</sup> Chicago Park District, "1948 Annual Report" (CPD, 1949), 27.

<sup>68</sup> Chicago Park District, "1947 Annual Report" (CPD, 1948), 21.

<sup>69</sup> Chicago Commission on Human Relations, "Monthly Report of the Executive Director, July-August, 1951" (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series I, Box 272, Folder 2788), 13.

<b>Table 3.1: Investment in Plant Material, 1945-51 (in 1951 dollars)<sup>70</sup></b>			
	Lincoln Park	Grant Park	Washington Park
1945	\$77,830	\$1,317	\$414
1946	\$87,668	\$440	\$1,099
1947	\$73,298	\$6,274	\$1,678
1948	\$68,486	\$6,446	\$1,595
1949	\$74,077	\$7,224	\$1,859
1950	\$90,634	\$4,694	\$1,858
1951	\$63,125	\$9,559	\$1,237
Total	\$535,119	\$35,954	\$9,740
Total per acre	\$443	\$137	\$26

Beyond the implications of this stratified park planning and financing for racial inequality in Chicago, the Park District's interventions had particular ideological goals that further implicated parks in the racialized remaking of the city-nature relationship. As a central purpose, the Chicago Park District's postwar park development had in mind the creation of a particular type of urban citizen. The city's combination of a large youth population and increasing immigration created a set of social problems that parks could, in theory, help solve. First and foremost, these included the phenomenon of "juvenile delinquency." Juvenile delinquency, understood broadly as crime committed by people under the age of 18, had been a topic of

<sup>70</sup> Data are collected from Chicago Park District Annual Reports, 1945-51. Historical inflation rates calculated with data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics ([https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)).

serious interest for the Chicago School of Sociology and other observers for several decades.<sup>71</sup> Although the concept of juvenile delinquency had racialized origins – as a term to describe white youth (especially white young men) – in the postwar period it would take on multi-racial overtones: flexible enough to describe the members of white “athletic clubs”<sup>72</sup> as well as black youth who were more likely to be seen in harsher terms – as “criminals,” rather than “delinquents.”<sup>73</sup> Juvenile delinquency rates were tracked extensively and driven to the point of moral panic in popular culture and the media.<sup>74</sup> After World War II, the Chicago city government tried several avenues to ameliorate juvenile crime and idleness, and the Park District was well situated to participate in these efforts and extend the ideas laid out by Jane Addams to a citywide scale. As Park District President Robert Dunham noted at the unveiling of the 10 Year Plan in 1945, “The entire [park development] program is definitely tied up with ... the juvenile delinquency program.”<sup>75</sup> Like parks in other American cities, Chicago’s postwar spaces centered on providing wholesome recreational spaces for youth who might otherwise be drawn into crime

---

<sup>71</sup> Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay, *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942).

<sup>72</sup> As described by Andrew Diamond, Chicago was home to numerous white “athletic clubs” in the early-to-mid twentieth century (302 according to a 1927 study by Frederic Thrasher). These organizations, which had “connection[s] to the coffers of ... local politician[s], who usually provided a clubhouse and funding for various social activities, was at times all that separated the typical athletic club from a street gang.” Diamond concludes that such groups were often at the forefront of whites’ massive resistance to integration and were central “in structuring the everyday milieu of racial hostility” in Chicago. Diamond, *Mean Streets*, 20.

<sup>73</sup> Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); David B. Wolcott, *Cops and Kids: Policing Juvenile Delinquency in Urban America, 1890-1940* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005); Miroslava Chávez-García, *States of Delinquency: Race and Science in the Making of California's Juvenile Justice System* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2012). Here we might also draw insight from Matthew Lassiter, who, in examining the historical construction of drug crimes, notes that white youths’ construction as ideal racial citizens precluded their simultaneous labeling as “criminals” – a term incompatible with the social construction of white identity. Matthew D. Lassiter, “Impossible Criminals: The Suburban Imperatives of America's War on Drugs,” *Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (2015): 126-40.

<sup>74</sup> Diamond, *Mean Streets*.

<sup>75</sup> “43 New Parks Proposed in 60 Million Plan,” *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 21, 1945, 3.



and other undesirable pursuits.<sup>76</sup> “Recreation” thus became the central buzzword for the Park District and community groups across the city who sought to prevent juvenile delinquency.<sup>77</sup>

Their solutions centered on reengineering the quotidian routines of the city’s youth. Figure 3.2 displays a flyer for a 1952 workshop of the Washington Park-Grand Boulevard Conference of Ministers and Social Workers that puts the issue into stark, if somewhat absurd, terms: a cartoon of a child’s face, smiling sweetly over the word “recreation,” if turned upside-down revealed the same face as menacing, underlined by the phrase “wreck-creation.”<sup>78</sup> With this understanding in mind, throughout the postwar period the Park District organized a variety of activities centered on “creative expression in physical, aesthetic, intellectual, and social activities.”<sup>79</sup> These included leagues for sports like football, baseball, softball, and basketball,<sup>80</sup> as well as swimming lessons, “fishing rodeos” in park lagoons, “fitness festivals,” summer camps, and other leisure time activities at parks throughout the city.<sup>81</sup> More particular programs included the 1950 “School-Park Plan,” a joint effort with the Board of Education to link park facilities with city schools in order to cut costs by using school buildings as quasi-fieldhouses; this would also provide youth with a constructive institutional environment during evening hours – the

---

<sup>76</sup> Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*.

<sup>77</sup> Interestingly, Cranz notes that the move toward “recreation” differed from prior emphases on “play”: “unlike play, [recreation] seemed to exclude no activity or age group.” Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*, p. 103.

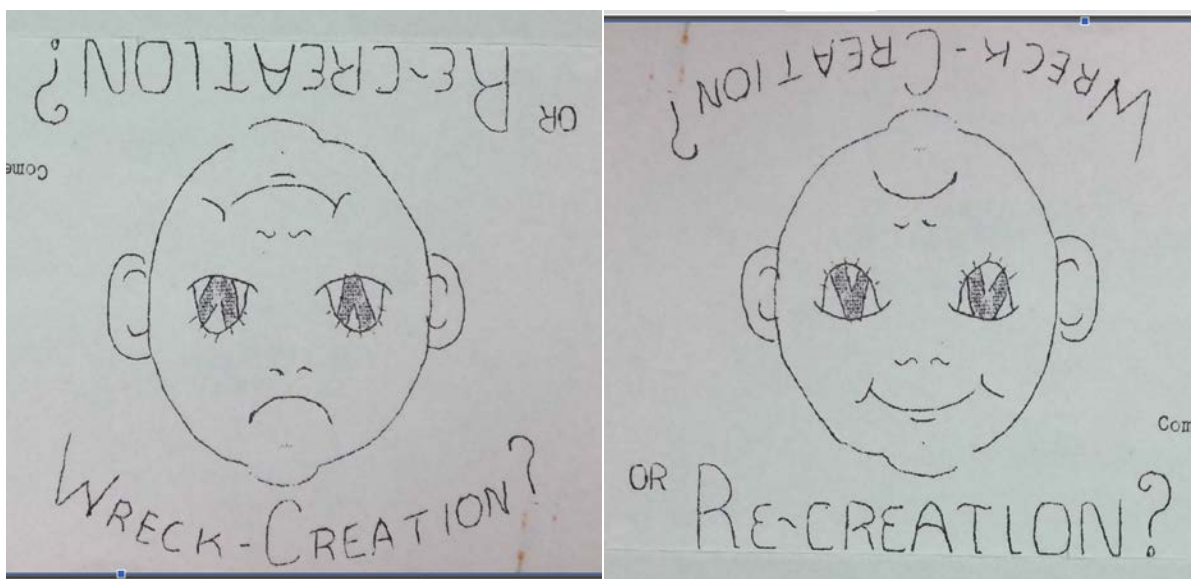
<sup>78</sup> Washington Park-Grand Boulevard Conference of Ministers and Social Workers, “Recreation Workshop” (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series III, Box 198, Folder 2135, 1952), 1.

<sup>79</sup> Chicago Park District Annual Report 1965: 11.

<sup>80</sup> “Youth Football at Washington Park,” *Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, Aug. 28, 1948; “Organize New Baseball Loop at Jackson Pk,” *Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, May 4, 1957; “Photo Standalone 18 – No Title,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, Aug. 4, 1965; “Park Finals Set,” *Chicago Defender (Big Weekend Edition)*, Feb. 8, 1969.

<sup>81</sup> “130,000 Set for ‘Learn to Swim’ Class,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, June 18, 1962; “Youngsters Can Win Prize for Big Fish,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, July 15, 1963; “Area Three of Park District Plans ‘Festival of Fitness,’” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, Apr. 18, 1963; “Day by Day,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)* May 23, 1961. The *Defender*’s rigorous coverage of these youth-oriented recreational activities – and that many were held in parks adjacent to predominantly black neighborhoods – suggests that, even if Park District activities were not always racially integrated or equitably distributed throughout the city, black youth were still participants.

facilities were to remain open until 11 p.m.<sup>82</sup> Other efforts included job-oriented youth corps programs; in the 1965 Annual Report, for example, the Park District boasted that “[o]f outstanding note was [youths’] experience in forestry, which was of such significance that many individuals were drawn into gainful employment with private employers.”<sup>83</sup>



**Figure 3.2: Wreck-Creation or Recreation?**

City actors continued to see a causal link between recreation and social control through the late 1960s. As black Chicagoans organized around myriad civil rights issues during this decade, the city’s fear of militant groups like the Nation of Islam made Mayor Daley eager to compromise without fully capitulating to black political demands. An easy issue for the city government was recreation, an issue that came to a boil in July 1966 when the police shut off a West Side fire hydrant – the primary mechanism for water-based recreation in places without nearby public swimming pools (pools that were unevenly constructed as part of the postwar park-building efforts). The subsequent riots led the mayor to call in the National Guard, and the

<sup>82</sup> Chicago Park District, “Report of the Joint Committee on School-Park Plan” (CPD, 1950), 1-4.

<sup>83</sup> Chicago Park District, “1965 Annual Report” (CPD, 1966), 4.

following month a peace of sorts was brokered between Daley and Martin Luther King.<sup>84</sup> The mayor, though he largely ignored King's push for open housing, agreed to increase black access to water for recreation. As journalist Mike Royko described it, Daley then "embarked on a crusade to make Chicago's blacks the wettest in the country"<sup>85</sup> by instituting a program of pools and sprinklers in Chicago's black neighborhoods. This recreation-centric approach to quelling social unrest was continued after the 1968 riots – and Daley's infamous "shoot to kill" order<sup>86</sup> – via the mayor's "Reach Out" program, which kept twenty-six high school pools open throughout the summer months in 1969 and 1970, fifteen of which were in all-black areas.<sup>87</sup>

From these various pieces of evidence, a picture emerges of how parks and recreation fit into a reorganization of cities' social geographies (and agendas of social control) after World War II. Similar to the nineteenth-century intentions of park development – in that, in both periods, parks were used as spatial solutions to perceived social problems – Chicago's postwar parks were a response to the social dislocations of urbanization and demographic change. The parks constructed under the Park District's 10 Year Plan helped build a new social geography for Chicago while programmatic and architectural changes modified the symbolic value of nature that parks previously represented. The Park District's racially stratified placement of new parks across the city, the unequal funding for existing parks, and the deployment of recreation as a

---

<sup>84</sup> Ronald E. Shaw, "A Final Push for National Legislation: The Chicago Freedom Movement," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 94, no. 3 (2001): 304-32.

<sup>85</sup> Mike Royko, *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago* (New York: Penguin, 1971), 153.

<sup>86</sup> As Cohen and Taylor indicate, in the aftermath of the West Side riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Mayor Daley was quoted as saying "I said to [the Superintendent of Police] very emphatically and very definitely that [he should issue an order] immediately and under his signature to shoot to kill any arsonist or anyone with a Molotov cocktail because they're potential murderers, and to issue a police order to shoot to maim or cripple any arsonists and looters[.]" As the authors note, "Many cities had been torn by rioting in the wake of King's assassination, but Daley was alone in advocating that his citizens be fatally shot." Cohen and Taylor, *American Pharaoh*, 455.

<sup>87</sup> Chicago Board of Education, "Board Report 70-517" (UIC, Richard J. Daley Collection, Series I, Sub-Series 1, Box 87, Folder 3, June 24, 1970).

social control strategy all conspired to secure the cultural value of Chicago's white community spaces while marginalizing the city's historically underdeveloped black spaces. While the Park District's planning ensured that parks after 1945 remained predominantly white resources, as the postwar decades unfolded the demographic and political shifts resulting from the Great Migration challenged the cultural power and racial boundaries represented in parks. The following section indicates how the Park District sought to manage racial changes in park use through its policing efforts.

### **3.4: Controlling Racial Conflict and Racial Boundaries in Chicago's Parks**

The Park District's view that parks could serve as a spatial antidote to juvenile delinquency through social programming had a corollary: an explicit strategy for policing Chicago's parks focused on controlling areas of interracial conflict. The Park District maintained an independent police force from its founding in 1934 through its merger with the Chicago Police Department in 1959. This gave the Park District the authority to make arrests, investigate crimes, implement surveillance, and use force to keep order in public parks.

Nothing summarized the Park District's approach to policing better than the 133-page monograph *The Police and Minority Groups*, published by the Park District in 1947. Written by University of Chicago sociologist Joseph D. Lohman under the direction of Roger F. Shanahan, Park District Chief of Police, *The Police and Minority Groups* served as a race relations training manual for the Park District police. The specter hanging over the document was the 1943 Detroit race riot, which began in Belle Isle Park. Detroit's riots magnified collective memories of

Chicago's own 1919 riot, which also started in public space.<sup>88</sup> Ameliorating racial tensions fell not only to the city government's newly established Commission on Human Relations, but to organizations like the Park District that could provide both carrot and stick to black and white youth.

*The Police and Minority Groups* therefore outlined a set of theories and methods for dealing with interracial tension in public space. “[D]esigned for the instruction of the entire police force[,]” the Park District set out to improve “the judgment, skill, and relative insight in the handling of racial, religious, and other minority-group tensions of such individuals as policemen, who are the custodians of public order.”<sup>89</sup> The Park District's policing concerns were twofold: on the one hand, the Park District sought, in principal, to ensure the equal treatment of all groups; on the other, it wanted to prepare its police force for a race riot. In both cases, Lohman and Shanahan considered that the city's “racial frontiers ... are in the streetcars and elevated lines; the beaches along the lake front; the small parks where the differing nationalities and races meet in seeking recreation[.]”<sup>90</sup> Informed by Lohman's sociological training, *The Police and Minority Groups* analyzed the dynamics of neighborhood change via the model of “ethnic succession” proposed by Park and Burgess;<sup>91</sup> for the Park District, the consequences of neighborhood demographic changes were felt most acutely in parks:

---

<sup>88</sup> Diamond, *Mean Streets*. Riots also occurred in the summer of 1943 in Los Angeles and New York. The events in Detroit surely loomed largest for Chicagoans: a review of the urban-historical literature indicates a strong social and economic symbiosis between the two cities during the mid-twentieth century. As Arnold Hirsch wrote of the 1943 Detroit riots, “Of all the cities, ... Chicago felt the reverberations ... with the most acute sensitivity.” See Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, p. 43. See also Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

<sup>89</sup> Joseph D. Lohman and Roger F. Shanahan, *The Police and Minority Groups* (Chicago Park District, CPD, 1947), ix.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>91</sup> Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925).

Nearly all of the small parks of the city are stationed in the paths of ... moving populations. ... It is within these public parks that the different minorities are first contacting one another. ... It follows that these are the significant places in which the different groups must be successfully mediated to one another. The importance of the ... park policemen cannot be underestimated. They are, so to speak, at the crossroads of the community, and they are a major resource in the maintenance of peace and civil order during the periods when strange and contrasting nationalities and races are having their initial contacts with one another.<sup>92</sup>

The conflict that could accompany this intermingling therefore demanded a specific policing approach. From *The Police and Minority Groups*, we see that the Park District's surveillance efforts were focused on parks located adjacent to racially transitioning neighborhoods: "Public parks ... frequented by both races are ... points requiring the continuous attention of the police authorities."<sup>93</sup> As indicated in Table 3.2, the Park District's distribution of its police force across Chicago's parks conformed with these recommendations. On the city's South and West Sides, where racial tensions were becoming a regular social fact in many parks after World War II, the Park District deployed an average of 245 and 208 officers, respectively, between 1945 and 1951, while the relatively small Loop averaged 120 and the predominantly white North Side averaged 168.<sup>94</sup> Proportionally, South Side parks contained a 46% greater police presence than North Side parks. Unfortunately, Park District data do not indicate the distribution of police across specific parks; however, Lohman and Shanahan warn strenuously that "the boundaries of the Negro community ... are the regions of greatest aggravation and tension[,]” and therefore, "The police officers ... assigned to Washington and Jackson Parks

---

<sup>92</sup> Lohman and Shanahan, *The Police and Minority Groups*, 43.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>94</sup> Data are from Chicago Park District Annual Reports, 1945-46, 1948-51. The 1947 Annual Report did not include data on the distribution of park police personnel. Note that the Annual Reports list the Loop district as "Central;" Table 3.2 represents this area as the "Loop," the commonly used name for Chicago's downtown, for the sake of clarity.

should be especially prepared to detect incidents which may be signs of developing tension and to cope with them before they snowball into unmanageable proportions.”<sup>95</sup>

<b>Table 3.2: Distribution of Park District Police Personnel</b>				
	<b>Distribution of Park Police Personnel</b>			
	<b>Loop</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
1945	19	176	269	192
1946	115	158	235	213
1948	135	152	210	191
1949	142	176	254	227
1950	155	180	271	230
1951	153	164	233	196
<b>Average</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>208</b>

Beyond a sense of which spaces should be targeted by the police force, the Park District sought to target particular types of social actors in park spaces. The corollary to the above-mentioned efforts to use recreational programming to fight juvenile delinquency was to focus police surveillance on young people. As Lohman and Shanahan prescribed: “Juvenile delinquents as a hardened and venturesome lot are more readily disposed toward violence[.] ... As far as possible, a careful check should be kept on the activities of all juvenile gangs, since they are the spearhead for group conflict.”<sup>96</sup> Given that in predominantly black areas of Chicago “as many as 15 percent of the boys from ten to sixteen years of age are arrested annually,” compared to rates near zero in the majority of white neighborhoods,<sup>97</sup> the understanding of “who” was likely to be a juvenile delinquent or a criminal broke along racial lines as the Park District sought to “confront[.] ... disproportionately large amounts of Negro crime.”<sup>98</sup> As part of

<sup>95</sup> Lohman and Shanahan, *The Police and Minority Groups*, 21.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 37.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 36-7.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 34. The widely applied label of “juvenile delinquent” recalls the more contemporary epithet of “suspected gang member,” which as Dorothy Roberts notes, in some cities encompassed “nearly half” of the young black male

these surveillance efforts, in 1945 the Park District Police established a Youth Bureau with a mission to “reach and correct the socially maladjusted child before he becomes a delinquent, and eventually graduates into a full fledged criminal.”<sup>99</sup> With these efforts, Park District officials served in many respects as caseworkers. The Park District’s Annual Reports often touted purported successes in detail: the 1947 Annual Report described the case of Sally May, “a fourteen-year old youngster living with a former hillbilly family from the Ozarks[;]” her offenses included “growing up in an unladylike manner, using profane language and associating with rough boys.”<sup>100</sup> According to the Park District, their intervention helped “[bring] Sally to a sounder view of her actions and [she] became well adjusted to a normal creditable existence.”<sup>101</sup> Sally May was one of 1576 children who were brought into the Youth Bureau’s custody in 1947, the second year of the program’s existence; these cases had a mean age of 12.1 years and a quarter of the cases ended up in Juvenile Court.<sup>102</sup> By 1955, the Park District’s Youth Bureau was processing 2428 cases annually.<sup>103</sup>

Such figures indicate the scope of the Park District’s intervention in the lives of Chicago’s youth after World War II. The Police Division, despite gestures toward “absolute equality” in the abstract,<sup>104</sup> was not always egalitarian in practice. By targeting parks at the boundaries of black settlement in Chicago and by placing a full-time police station in

---

population. Dorothy E. Roberts, “Race, Vagueness, and the Social Meaning of Order-Maintenance Policing,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 89, no. 3 (1999): 775-836.

<sup>99</sup> Chicago Park District, “1946 Annual Report” (CPD, 1947), 60.

<sup>100</sup> Chicago Park District, “1947 Annual Report” (CPD, 1948), 68.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>102</sup> Chicago Park District, “1947 Annual Report” (CPD, 1948), 67.

<sup>103</sup> Chicago Park District, “1955 Annual Report” (CPD, 1956), 27.

<sup>104</sup> Lohman and Shanahan, *The Police and Minority Groups*, v.



Washington Park,<sup>105</sup> the Park District police aimed its surveillance strategies at black park users. And, despite regular physical attacks from whites, the Park District police were not always there with the protection of black park users in mind. As a later section of this chapter will indicate, in many instances the park police acted as enforcers of racial boundaries, discouraging blacks from entering into parks in white neighborhoods and failing to protect them when they did – a process I illustrate through a series of vignettes from the unpublished historical record that illustrate the nexus of racialized police practices and quotidian socio-spatial practices that helped uphold racial boundaries. When considered in conjunction with the previous section’s documentation of unequal park funding, it is clear that the Park District channeled its institutional power in two racially distinct directions: parks in white neighborhoods received funding for beautification and community programming; parks in or near black neighborhoods received the police.

### **3.5: Black Responses to Segregated Parks**

These joint processes of uneven park development and stratified park policing did not go unchallenged by Chicago’s black community. These challenges had both political and cultural dimensions; in the postwar conceptualization of parks as a community resource, parks-as-recreation, rather than parks-as-nature, emerged as the dominant frame for Chicago’s black leadership. In seeing parks on much the same terms as the Park District – as sites for community building, recreation, and social control – black contestations of parks were not definitional challenges, but challenges for equal distribution of recreational spaces and equal rights to access parks across the city. In the South Side’s Black Belt/Bronzeville,<sup>106</sup> political leaders had been

---

<sup>105</sup> Chicago Commission on Human Relations, “Monthly Report of the Executive Director” (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series I, Box 272, Folder 2788, July-August 1951), 41-3.

<sup>106</sup> Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*; Pattillo, “Foreword.”

lobbying for park development since the early 1930s with mixed results.<sup>107</sup> With the breaking of many residential racial boundaries throughout the postwar period, the city's "black spaces" were expanding. These included parks that had once been predominantly, if not exclusively, used by whites. In many cases, especially on the city's South Side, spatial barriers were broken by the black middle class – a relevant social fact because this meant that institutional links (particularly to the Chicago Urban League, the *Chicago Defender*, and the Chicago Commission on Human Relations) and political capital accompanied the breaking of park-based racial boundaries. Several variables drove this process. First and foremost was the lack of open park space and modern recreational facilities in the Black Belt. As with middle-class efforts to find better housing,<sup>108</sup> this forced a crossing of racial boundaries as black people sought to access parks in white neighborhoods. Second, there was a cultural element: with park-based respectability politics dating back several decades in Chicago,<sup>109</sup> in the postwar period the black middle class continued to seek "nature-making"<sup>110</sup> practices that would offer a degree of cultural "distinction."<sup>111</sup> As in previous decades, such efforts brought the black middle class to rural nature resorts as well as green spaces farther from the core of the Black Belt. On the political side, black-led institutions remained heavily involved in park improvement and advocacy even as the black middle class was increasingly moving beyond Washington Park. Groups like the Chicago Urban League saw parks in much the same terms as the Park District: as spaces for social service delivery and community building, rather than nature-making per se. In short,

---

<sup>107</sup> McCammack, "Recovering Green in Bronzeville."

<sup>108</sup> Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: How the Struggle Over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and Urban America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009).

<sup>109</sup> McCammack, "Recovering Green in Bronzeville."

<sup>110</sup> Gary Alan Fine, *Morel Tales: The Culture of Mushrooming* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>111</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

Washington Park and other parks adjacent to the Black Belt may have lost some cultural value for the black middle class, but they retained substantial political importance.

The political aspect was borne out in several ways. First, advocacy for park development had been a component of black political activism in Chicago since the 1910s. As noted by McCammack, advocacy efforts had resulted in the construction of the Black Belt's Madden Park in 1930 and new pools in Washington Park in 1937.<sup>112</sup> After World War II, public lobbying for park improvement centered on a new fieldhouse for Washington Park and for improved facilities in parks that were in the paths of black settlement. On this issue, the *Defender*, one of the nation's foremost black newspapers and the unofficial organ of the South Side's black middle class,<sup>113</sup> made frequent use of its editorial pages. The push for a new fieldhouse in Washington Park began in the 1930s, with *Defender* columnists encouraging the black community to write letters to the Park District;<sup>114</sup> however, it took twenty years before one was constructed (in the 1955 Annual Report, the Park District boasted that it was "[p]robably the most modern fieldhouse devoted to community recreation" in the city).<sup>115</sup> Other sites where black community leaders advocated for access to parks and recreation included the park portions of the infamous "tower in the park" style of public housing that dominated the Black Belt's skyline by 1970. In many cases the Park District was involved in the building and management of these nominal parks and adjacent indoor recreational spaces.<sup>116</sup> Like the public housing that accompanied them,

---

<sup>112</sup> McCammack, "Recovering Green in Bronzeville," 136-9, 239-40.

<sup>113</sup> Kim T. Gallon, "Between Respectability and Modernity: Black Newspapers and Sexuality, 1925-1940" (Ph.D. Diss, the University of Pennsylvania, 2009); James R. Grossman, "Blowing the Trumpet: The *Chicago Defender* and Black Migration during World War I," *Illinois Historical Journal* 78, no. 2 (1985): 82-96.

<sup>114</sup> John Thomas, "Seek Funds for Six Parks on Near South Side," *Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, Oct. 5, 1935.

<sup>115</sup> Chicago Park District, "1955 Annual Report" (CPD, 1956), 5.

<sup>116</sup> Mary Bolton Wirth, "Interview—Mr. Joe Ford, Supervisor, Robert Taylor Park, Chicago Park District" (UC, Mary Bolton Wirth Papers, Box 1, Folder 5, February 18, 1965).

some black Chicagoans were initially optimistic about these parks.<sup>117</sup> As indicated in a 1962 *Tribune* profile of Robert Taylor Park, which was connected to the South Side's Robert Taylor Homes,<sup>118</sup> when initially opened the “indoor park” became “one of the most used parks in the city, ... serv[ing] about 1200 children daily and about 3000 [children] altogether.”<sup>119</sup> Focusing on the newly arrived Adams family, the *Tribune* profile extolled each member's participation in recreational activities at Robert Taylor Park: “Derrick, 11, and Bobby, 12, play volleyball in the gym after school one night a week. ... Fourteen-year-old Deborah is a baton-twirler in an after-school class and an actress in an evening dramatics group. Inez, 7, is hard at work making an ash tray for her father in her afternoon art-craft class. Mrs. Adams delights in turning into a hat-designer one evening a week.” The corollary to black families' initial appreciation for these park-based amenities – things that, in spite of their segregated context, at the time represented conditional political victories for black Chicago<sup>120</sup> – was that, perhaps more so than large outdoor parks, the fate of indoor facilities like Robert Taylor Park were highly dependent on continued funding for staff, programming, and maintenance. This state of affairs' limitations, evident in retrospect, were compromised by the subsequent state-driven decline of the Robert Taylor Homes and other communities – and perhaps foretold by Robert Taylor Park supervisor Joe

---

<sup>117</sup> “Photo Standalone 7 – No Title,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)* Apr. 5, 1962. On optimism regarding public housing conditions, see Nicholas D. Bloom, *Public Housing That Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); J. S. Fuerst, *When Public Housing Was Paradise: Building Community in Chicago* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

<sup>118</sup> On the development of the Robert Taylor Homes, see Hunt, *Blueprint for Disaster*; Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, *American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 1-64; Audrey Petty, ed., *High Rise Stories: Voices from Chicago Public Housing* (San Francisco: McSweeney's Books, 2013).

<sup>119</sup> Mary Huff, “Family Fun Comes Thru Move: ‘Home’ is Near Recreation of Park,” *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 21, 1962, S\_A1.

<sup>120</sup> The dire need for housing in the Black Belt after World War II led to wide support among Chicago's black political leadership for public housing that was open to blacks. However, because of white resistance to integrated public housing, this meant that sprawling complexes like the Robert Taylor Homes were built in black neighborhoods and became all-black spaces. See Hunt, *Blueprint for Disaster*; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*.

Ford, who lamented in a 1965 interview that “the park’s purpose is to cooperate with public housing ... – It is ‘just a park,’ ‘recreation only.’”<sup>121</sup>

The second wing of black park activism focused on integrating parks across Chicago. As noted by the Park District in its “Police and Minority Groups” report, “the pressure of the Negro community for unrestricted uses of beaches, pools, and parks is one area in which friction is continuous.”<sup>122</sup> Black political organizations like the Urban League encouraged its supporters to cease “bunch[ing] up in Washington Park or at the Jackson Park or 31<sup>st</sup> Street beaches. ... [W]ith all the parks and beaches there are, we ought to spread ourselves all over the city. ... Let’s go everywhere we want to – to the Oak St. Beach, to Lincoln Park, to the Brookfield Zoo – all over town.”<sup>123</sup> These three sites – significant because of their social location: the first two on the white North Side and the third in the white western suburb of Brookfield – spoke to a socio-spatial strategy that confronted the uneven development of Chicago parkland. The corollary to the push for park development in the Black Belt as this: if the Park District wouldn’t adequately develop or maintain park space in black areas, black people would assert their rights to use parks “all over town.” More formal political efforts included the series of “wade-ins” at South Side beaches in the early 1960s. As residential racial boundaries broke on the South Side, black use of parks and beaches that had once been far from black settlement was increasing. Particularly in lakefront sites like Calumet Park and Rainbow Beach, which had been white working class recreational domains, there was significant hostility. The most notable of these incidents occurred at in 1961 at Rainbow Beach, a Park District site in the South Shore neighborhood.

---

<sup>121</sup> Mary Bolton Wirth, “Interview—Mr. Joe Ford, Supervisor, Robert Taylor Park, Chicago Park District” (UC, Mary Bolton Wirth Papers, Box 1, Folder 5, February 18, 1965), 5.

<sup>122</sup> Lohman and Shanahan, *The Police and Minority Groups*, 71.

<sup>123</sup> Chicago Urban League, “Summer Time” (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series I, Box 268, Folder 2738, n.d.), 4-5, 11.

Here, Civil Rights groups including the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) led integration efforts in the face of prolonged anti-black mob violence.<sup>124</sup> As reported by the *Defender*,

Police here are under blistering community and NAACP fire for their alleged failure to control a taunting, rock-throwing mob of nearly 1100 white persons who on Sunday attacked 10 members of a Negro youth group attempting to integrate Rainbow Beach[.] ... About seven police officers were present when the mob began to gather, ... and stood with their arms crossed doing nothing. ... The NAACP said it is ... taking these actions: 1—To meet with Superintendent of Police O. W. Wilson and his aides on the matter of police inertia. 2—To unite community groups in an effort to break down racial barriers at Rainbow Beach, and to urge total community participation in the project. ... [D]emands will be made for increased police patrols – fully integrated – assigned to the beach area; that the Chicago Park District integrate the lifeguard force at the beach, and that in the event of future trouble, arrests be made of guilty participants. No arrests were made in Sunday's riotous activities.<sup>125</sup>

With many of these park-related political venues contested or circumscribed by white animosity, the intra-racial cultural politics of park use emerged as another venue for achieving black middle class goals as they related to the use of Chicago's parks. As the Great Migration proceeded – particularly while restrictive covenants held the Black Belt's historical boundaries through 1948 – the collective use of Washington Park by the city's established black bourgeoisie, working class, and incoming Southern migrants engendered class conflict.<sup>126</sup> Constraints on black residential and recreational space were paralleled by limitations on black progress in the economic realm: Chicago's Jim Crow economy relegated upwardly mobile blacks into less prestigious occupations; markets for even the most successful black-owned businesses' goods and services were typically limited to the Black Belt.<sup>127</sup> As sociologist E. Franklin Frazier

---

<sup>124</sup> “Kennedy Jabbed On Chicago,” *Chicago Defender (National edition)*, Jul. 15, 1961.

<sup>125</sup> Kenneth C. Field, “Mob Drives 10 From Beach: Rap Police As White Mob Drives 10 From Beach,” *Chicago Daily Defender (Daily Edition)*, Jul. 5, 1961, 2.

<sup>126</sup> Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, 430-69; Michelle R. Boyd, *Jim Crow Nostalgia: Reconstructing Race in Bronzeville* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

– who famously analyzed the emergent black bourgeoisie in the 1950s – argued, given the marginalized economic position of African Americans the social construction of class position during the postwar period was more a question of cultural capital than purely economic definitions of class, such as one’s relationship to the means of production.<sup>128</sup> In Chicago, as in other cities, parks proved a key site for the performance of class-based culture. McCammack notes that in the first decades of black migration to Chicago, Washington Park was “literally in the black elite’s front yard” as bankers and other wealthy black people gradually moved down South Parkway in the 1920s and 30s.<sup>129</sup> Despite occasional violent resistance from white parkgoers in these decades, Washington Park’s amenities made it well-positioned to host black forays into semi-elite practices such as tennis and cricket, as well as more popular recreational pastimes like baseball.<sup>130</sup>

The growth of mass recreation in Washington Park after 1945 led some members of the black middle class to seek out other parks, especially the adjacent Jackson Park, which carried high symbolic value with its lakefront location, picturesque design, and upscale amenities – including a public golf course, yacht clubs, and a stately lakefront pavilion at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street<sup>131</sup> – in addition to its historical use by the middle-to-upper-class whites of the surrounding communities of Hyde Park, Woodlawn, and South Shore. Two particular activities – golf and boating – emerged as key ways of signaling class status through recreational pastimes.<sup>132</sup> Built in the late nineteenth century, the Jackson Park golf course was the most prestigious of the city’s public

---

<sup>128</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, *The Black Bourgeoisie* (New York: The Free Press, 1957).

<sup>129</sup> McCammack, “Recovering Green in Bronzeville,” 79. South Parkway is now known as Martin Luther King Drive.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-157.

<sup>131</sup> The Jackson Park Fieldhouse at 64<sup>th</sup> and Stony Island, not to be confused with the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street Beach House (1919), opened in 1957.

<sup>132</sup> Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*; Lawrence Otis Graham, *Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991); see especially ch. 9, “Black Elite in Chicago.”

golf courses – remaining so even in the era of white flight as it was the only course with a full 18 holes;<sup>133</sup> in the postwar years, it was visited by black touring professionals and frequented by the black middle class.<sup>134</sup> By 1963, the *Defender* was remarking that “Golf on [the] South Side is no longer a hit and miss sport. Today players are shooting low scores and the prizes are worthwhile. Not only is this true but the competition is very keen.”<sup>135</sup> Boating was another pastime of the postwar black middle class that signaled high economic and cultural status. The Chicago lakefront was home to numerous places to dock boats, many of which were associated with private yacht clubs that operated on public land with the consent of the Park District;<sup>136</sup> three clubs were located in Jackson Park.<sup>137</sup> According to the *Defender*, approximately fifteen black-owned boats were moored in Jackson Park in 1962, though none were members of the Jackson Park Yacht Club.<sup>138</sup>

Interestingly, the yacht clubs would emerge as a notable park-related civil rights battleground in Chicago. In September 1962, Theodore Jones, an insurance executive, and William Walker, a physician, were denied membership by the Burnham Park Yacht Club, located in Burnham Park on the Near South Side. After the two men threatened legal action, the Park District investigated the club’s membership practices and determined that the club was in

---

<sup>133</sup> There were four public golf courses in Chicago in 1945, in Jackson, Lincoln, Marquette, and Columbus Parks. The city would later add two more courses through the acquisition of two private country clubs, South Shore and Edgewater, by 1975.

<sup>134</sup> “Golf Tourneys Inspire Players Young And Old,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, Sep. 17, 1962; “Community House Provides Golf Lessons,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, Jul. 2, 1963; “Down the Fairway,” *Chicago Defender (National Edition)*, Apr. 11, 1953.

<sup>135</sup> “So They Say: Young Tom McCraw in Sox ‘Building’ Plans for Future,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, Jul. 31, 1963.

<sup>136</sup> Chicago Park District, “1949 Annual Report” (CPD, 1949), 75.

<sup>137</sup> These were the Museum Shore Yacht Club, the Southern Shore Yacht Club, and the Jackson Park Yacht Club. Glenn McCarthy, “African American Sailors in Chicago – Really? Really,” *Chicago Now*. Feb. 25, 2014, accessed Jul. 21, 2015, <http://www.chicagonow.com/sail-lake-michigan/2014/02/african-american-sailors-in-chicago-really-really>.

<sup>138</sup> “Race Ban Gets Airing at Yacht Club Meet Friday,” *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, Sep. 6, 1962.



violation of Park District rules and canceled the club's lease.<sup>139</sup> Per the *Defender*, the club subsequently "elected a liberal slate into office, ousting the 'no-Negroes' faction" and admitted the two men.<sup>140</sup> The uproar led the Park District to investigate other segregated yacht clubs, including two of the three Jackson Park clubs, though these investigations did not lead directly to their integration.<sup>141</sup>

The cultural politics of black park use extended well beyond the middle class's forays into elite recreational activities. Concern for the race's overall spatial mobility as well as the ways that black middle class identity was inescapably linked to the ways that whites perceived the black poor prompted efforts to regulate the park-based practices of the black masses. (The regulation of broader black nature-making practices extended to front yards, alleys, and other private spaces adjacent to black homes, which were monitored through the cultural pressure of block clubs).<sup>142</sup> Black civic groups such as the Chicago Urban League were central to advancing a middle-class agenda of "proper" park use. A key wing of the Urban League's integrationist program was community outreach; through numerous published pamphlets and other materials, the Urban League sought to instruct black Chicagoans generally, and incoming Southern migrants in particular, on prescribed park practices.<sup>143</sup> An especially illustrative document from the early 1950s reads as follows:

---

<sup>139</sup> "Photo Standalone 5 – No Title," *Chicago Defender (National edition)*, Oct. 13, 1962. "Biased Yacht Club Loses Park Lease," *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, Oct. 11, 1962.

<sup>140</sup> "Yacht Club Ousts Biased Officers," *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, Nov. 5, 1962.

<sup>141</sup> "Four More Yacht Clubs to be Probed," *Chicago Defender (Daily Edition)*, Oct. 18, 1962. Little in the historical record exists regarding the integration of these clubs. According to Glenn McCarthy, a Chicago sailor and sailing blogger, the Jackson Park Yacht Club was integrated in 1982; see Glenn McCarthy, "African American Sailors in Chicago – Really? Really?"

<sup>142</sup> Amanda I. Seligman, *Chicago's Block Clubs: How Neighbors Shape the City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

<sup>143</sup> A similar phenomenon occurred in Chicago's Puerto Rican community after World War II. Leaders of Chicago's Puerto Rican community engaged in socialization efforts that included "proper" park behaviors – an apparently relevant concern because of many migrants' rural backgrounds. Along with groups like the Urban League, leaders

You know, Neighbor, I've always wondered why folks stay cooped up in houses in hot weather. The city pays people to make parks beautiful and to keep 'em clean. I can't for the life of me see why we don't use them more – and use all of them. Those of us who do go to the parks and beaches for outings, all bunch up in Washington Park or at the Jackson Park or 31<sup>st</sup> Street beaches. Why, with all the parks and beaches there are, we ought to spread ourselves all over the city.

Now somebody is going to say that white people don't want Negroes spreading out in parks and beaches all over the city. That could be true. But I betcha they wouldn't say a thing if we looked nice and acted properly when we were around them. They expect us to talk loud and draw a crowd – you know, “Yeah man! Ain't that chick fine!” They think we cuss and make low-down remarks about women – and some of us do! – more's the pity. ... And listen, Neighbor. The best way for us to let our white neighbors *know* that we're just like them, is to go to places where they can see us and prove it to them ... [a]s long as we are clean and decently covered by clothes suitable for the park or beach[.]

But WE MUST BE CLEAN! You know, summer time brings out things besides roses. ... Now, there are parts of us that even playsuits and bathing suits are SUPPOSED TO COVER. When any of these areas are exposed[,] ... [s]ew it up – patch it – let out the seams – but for the sake of the poor helpless people who have to look at you, *don't* dress like a striptease artist. ...

So, come on, Neighbor! Let's go cool off in the beautiful parks and along the shore of old Lake Michigan. Let's go everywhere we want to – to the Oak St. Beach, to Lincoln Park, to the Brookfield Zoo – all over town. The law says nobody can keep us out—and nobody will if we look CLEAN AND NEAT AND ACT LIKE NORMAL CIVILIZED PEOPLE! If somebody tries to bar us, we call a police officer. If we get no results from that, the Chicago Urban League, the NAACP, or the Civil Liberties Committee can help out. But it's not likely that anybody will start to act like Bilbo unless we bring it on ourselves.<sup>144</sup>

As Figure 3.3 illustrates, the pamphlet concluded with the following poem:

*Mind your business and act just right,  
Don't use cuss words or start a fight;  
Make sure you're clean and dressed okay  
And no one will try to bar your way!*<sup>145</sup>

---

pushed the city to institutionalize the socialization of migrants, resulting in the creation of the Mayor's Committee on New Residents as a branch of the Commission on Human Relations in 1956. See UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series I, Box 274.

<sup>144</sup> Chicago Urban League, “Summer Time” (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series I, Box 268, Folder 2738, n.d.), 3-12; emphasis and capitalization in original.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 12.

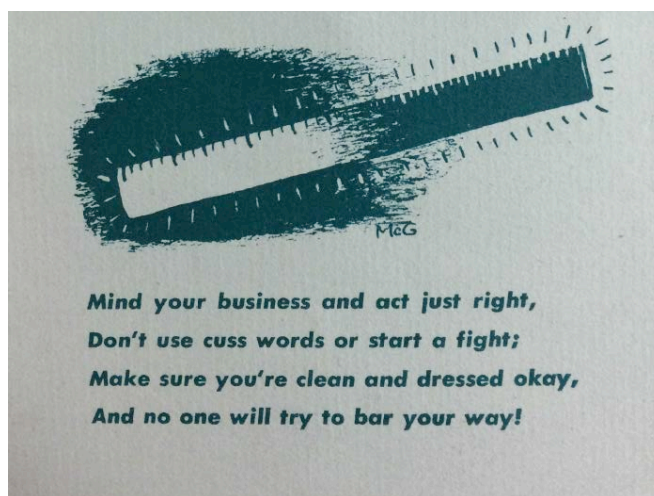


Figure 3.3: From the Chicago Urban League's "Summer Time" pamphlet

Many of these documents were explicitly directed at Southern newcomers.<sup>146</sup> In schooling newcomers on the ways of public accommodation in Chicago, the Urban League not only prescribed appropriate park behaviors, but often endorsed the recreation-based remedy for juvenile delinquency and unwanted public space behaviors, which, as discussed, was a common trope of the postwar period. As another Urban League Document indicated:

TO THE NEWCOMERS, THE CHICAGO URBAN LEAGUE SAYS – Welcome! ... Chicago is a BIG city in a good State and people have rights here that they don't have in some other places. ... Illinois has a Civic Rights Law so that NOBODY can be barred from any ... public park ... BECAUSE OF HIS RACE, COLOR, OR CREED! ...

On the other hand, if we want to keep our rights, we've got to face our responsibilities too. ... [A]bout the children – they shouldn't be roaming around the street day and night – playing with ruffians – learning bad habits and language. No sir! The boys could go to the Y.M.C.A. at 3763 South Wabash Ave., or to the Boys' Club at 3949 South Michigan. Kids play basketball there, and swim and have a lot of fun.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Interestingly, in 1956 a Park District official, Oscar Rose, related to the Commission on Human Relations that "The Park District runs no special programs for new residents[.] ... A major problem facing Park District staff is that of involving more people, new residents and others, in its program. ... [A]dditions to staff would be necessary to carry out ... a program [of newcomer outreach]." Chicago Commission on Human Relations, "Park District Facilities for New Residents" (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series I, Box 274, Folder 2817, Sep. 4, 1956), 1. Such a reality suggests another potential motivation for these sorts of park-based socialization efforts: the lack of institutional support from the Park District placed the onus on community groups to acculturate newcomers in public space decorum.

<sup>147</sup> Chicago Urban League, "Hi, Neighbor" (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series I, Box 268, Folder 2738, n.d.), 1-9; emphasis and capitalization in original.

The thrust of all this is that Chicago's black communities saw parks in largely the same terms as the Park District and the city government. The black middle class of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s extended its locus of nature-making to new areas and new activities, leaving Washington Park – the historical center of black park use in Chicago – to mass use. The black middle class's embrace of more “cultivated” spaces like Jackson Park and uses of nature signaled an alignment with shifting park mores and changing meanings of city and nature. While Chicago's black political leadership challenged the Park District and the city government on several fronts, there were few, if any, challenges to the growing consensus around parks as recreation, not nature, suggesting that black agency to define collective meanings around urban parks did not diverge from the broader definitional shifts driven by white-controlled institutions.

One critical difference between parallel understandings of city and nature for influential black and white social actors after World War II was that black access to sites of nature beyond the urban remained highly circumscribed even as the Civil Rights Movement opened up previously closed-off spaces. Continuing limitations on black spatiality, coupled with the processes of racialization and ghettoization that forced the black middle class to reckon with the fates of working-class and poor blacks in a way that middle-class whites did not need to, meant that the older parks that were being left behind (by both blacks and whites) remained politically and culturally relevant for the black middle class. Further, these constraints meant that the historically new black use of sites like Jackson Park were still in the city, still subject to the Park District's institutional underdevelopment, racially stratified policing, and grassroots white hostility. Taking a perspective that foregrounds black agency suggests that, in many respects, collective understandings of urban nature among Chicago's black middle class represented an

outcome or an extension of the New Negro identity forged in the 1910s and 20s:<sup>148</sup> the idea of the ideal black identity as an urban social actor, but one who could appreciate nature in its culturally best forms. With the second (post-World War II) wave of the Great Migration amplifying intraracial cultural conflicts – particularly in the sense that many people from rural communities were moving to Chicago – the black middle class’s socialization strategies centered on educating newcomers especially, and poorer blacks generally, on proper park use – helping them to see parks as urban spaces, not spaces of nature – and in the process mold them as urban citizens.

### **3.6: Socio-Spatial Practices: White Resistance**

As indicated in the preceding sections, institutional planning strategies, demographic changes, and broader shifts in metropolitan social geographies and built environments came together to redefine the cultural meaning of urban parks. No longer symbols of nature, parks became fully situated as urban spaces as powerful actors like the Chicago Park District reoriented parks’ social uses around recreation and social service delivery. This reorientation was widely shared in Chicago and other American cities; as the previous section indicates, even Chicago’s black leadership, who collectively pushed against segregation and park-related inequalities, came to similar conclusions as the Park District about the social uses of urban parks after World War II. The discourses about juvenile delinquency and other social problems reverberated in the city’s black communities, both in terms of how issues were framed – e.g., recreation as a cure for the ills of crime and social alienation – and in terms of the black middle class’s parallel agenda of using parks as a central venue for community building and social control.

---

<sup>148</sup> Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes*.

While all of this is crucial in understanding how parks and the city-nature relationship were changing after World War II, these factors are only part of the story. Also important were the socio-spatial practices that occurred in parks. As the historical record indicates, the Park District's institutional control of parks shaped the daily experience of public parks for many Chicagoans; particularly for the city's youth, parks were often encountered as sites of programmatic recreation and, for youth in black and racially transitioning neighborhoods in particular, sites of bureaucratic interactions with police and caseworkers. But institutional decisions, however forceful, do not dictate the totality of what will happen in public space. As a socio-cultural resource – one that, in its ephemerality of use, can never be fully occupied or controlled – parks are open to claims of symbolic ownership through current use.<sup>149</sup> Thus, preventing blacks from occupying a de facto “white” park or public space requires ongoing collective action on the part of white social actors: parks that represented instantiations of white community identity often became defended spaces.

As studies of housing and neighborhood transition have indicated, episodes of racial violence have often accompanied historical shifts in racial-spatial boundaries.<sup>150</sup> Given the changes in metropolitan racial geographies during the post-World War II period, violence was a regular occurrence, typically driven by whites' resistance to the integration of white spaces. As the postwar decades wore on, racial violence acquired a sort of staccato rhythm: white communities' initial resistance to the breaking of racial boundaries was typically met first with a

---

<sup>149</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991 [1974]); Shepard and Smithsimon, *The Beach Beneath the Streets*; Ryan Centner, “Places of Privileged Consumption Practices: Spatial Capital, the Dot-Com Habitus, and San Francisco's Internet Boom,” *City & Community* 7, no. 3 (2008): 193-223.

<sup>150</sup> Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*; Seligman, *Block by Block*; Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age* (New York: Henry Holt and Company).

fight, then by flight.<sup>151</sup> Though this process has been extensively documented at the level of housing and neighborhoods, parks too figured into this process. Many parks embodied an extension of community identity; they were spaces over which, unlike housing, all community members could claim symbolic ownership. While a portion of the explanation for park-based racial violence can be subsumed within a broader argument about neighborhood change, there are distinct aspects of park-based conflict that stand out. First, parks were sites of interracial bodily contact. Partly as a consequence of the Park District's rigorous focus on recreational programming in parks, athletic competition and other forms of organized social activities often brought youth of different racial groups together, particularly in areas at the borders of white and black communities. Further, because many parks in Chicago included pools and beaches, there was a threat of interracial sexual contact that informed parks' social interactions. As one of the vignettes below indicates, fears of miscegenation sometimes emerged as the explicit catalyst for violence. A second distinction for park-based conflicts was that despite the Park District's surveillance and programming efforts, parks were relatively open, autonomous spaces. Parks' comparatively lower degree of institutional control than more formal settings like workplaces and schools enabled youth the necessary space to clash with each other. Third, park-based conflicts often engaged with different types of social actors than conflicts in other social arenas, like those around housing, for example. Combatants in park violence were often, but certainly not exclusively, teenagers or children. As Andrew Diamond argues – here discussing Irish American youth on the South Side, but the sentiment has wider applicability – youth “circulated within a subculture that invested them in the bodies of racial others in ways that older residents were not. If ... [white youth] represented community-wide sentiments and national cultural

---

<sup>151</sup> Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Kruse, *White Flight*.

currents in their efforts to patrol neighborhood boundaries and exclude racial undesirables, their intimacy with the street violence such activities called for set them apart from the rest of community.”<sup>152</sup> Though young people – and young men in particular – were often participants in race riots and other disturbances,<sup>153</sup> conflicts over housing engaged in more “adult” concerns about housing economics that were a consequence of the racially segregated housing market in the United States.<sup>154</sup> Chicago’s youth, because of their central social location in a tangled nexus of “racial hatred and racial desire[,]”<sup>155</sup> were situated in a way that made them important social actors in the creation and negotiation of park-based racial conflicts.

As the following archival vignettes demonstrate, these intersections of youth, recreation, neighborhood boundaries, racial identity, and the strange mix of racial hatred and desire coalesced in real-time conflicts over urban park space after World War II.<sup>156</sup> Events like those related here were also bound up in the remaking of the city-nature relationship in the twentieth century United States. Part of the process by which nature fell away as the dominant frame for conceptualizing urban parks was through the emerging connections among parks, crime, and violence. Although the ways that such connections were racialized would evolve as the twentieth

---

<sup>152</sup> Diamond, *Mean Streets*, 46.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*; Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development*.

<sup>155</sup> Diamond, *Mean Streets*, 46.

<sup>156</sup> Representing even part of the daily life of a social space using archival materials is a complicated process. The published and unpublished historical record contains events deemed to have value by those who exercised varying degrees of power to assemble archival collections or interpret historical materials (in studies like the present one). When considering the totality of events that take place in parks, those presented here are surely a small piece of the puzzle. Quotidian events are, for the most part, lost to history. Historical materials will tend to have already been “selected on the dependent variable” in the sense that the notable, even singular, events will persist in archival holdings or historical monographs. Still, there is great value in attempting to portray daily events with the sort of “thick description” found in the work of historians and historical ethnographers if such events can help illuminate important social processes. While the archival materials presented here should not be taken as portraying a constant state of affairs in Chicago parks, these were nevertheless the episodes of racial violence that punctuated the enforcement of racial boundaries and racial segregation in public parks after World War II.

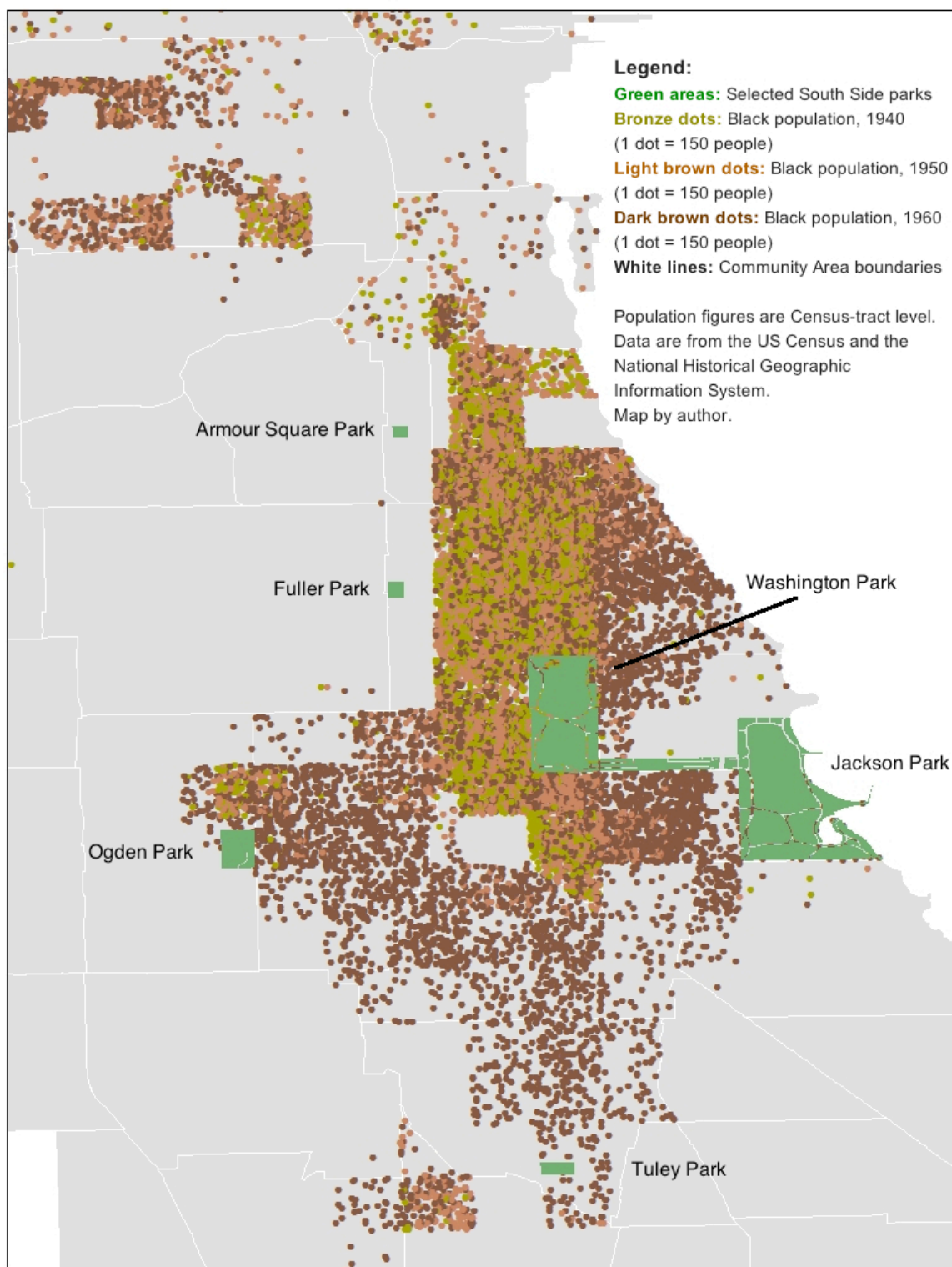


century wore on,<sup>157</sup> events like those presented here did much to emplace parks within an imaginary of the urban. The social problems, the social actions, and the social actors of the city were moving seamlessly through park spaces, becoming part of the very fabric of urban parks in the second half of the twentieth century. For the youth who clashed in Chicago's parks, nature was clearly not the object at stake. At stake were racial identities, racial hierarchies, and neighborhood boundaries, and each act of violence chipped away at the symbols surrounding the Olmstedian ideal of urban parks as nature. Figure 3.4 displays selected South Side parks along with the city's black population during these decades of racial conflict.

---

<sup>157</sup> As the consequences of white flight and state retrenchment from public space became more evident in the 1970s and 80s (the period of so-called urban crisis), Many parks came to lack Jane Jacobs's "eyes on the street"; coupled with sensationalist news coverage of park-based crimes like the 1989 Central Park jogger case, urban parks became implicated in racialized narratives that linked blackness with urban crime and disorder. See Miriam Greenberg, *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis was Sold to the World* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Alex S. Vitale, *City of Disorder: How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics* (New York: NYU Press, 2009).

**Figure 3.4: Selected South Side Parks**



September-October, 1950:

*On September 21, Judge Slater telephoned the Commission [on Human Relations] and reported ... a complaint that he had received concerning the alleged discrimination against a group of teenage Negro boys, organized in a group known as the "Spartans," attempting to use the gymnasium facilities at Tuley Park ... .*

*Mr. Pollard, staff member of the Commission, contacted and visited Mr. John Morris, Supervisor of Tuley Park. Mr. Morris volunteered the following information: He said that he had received information through his physical instructor in regard to the use of the gymnasium facilities by the aforementioned group. The instructor informed him that the group wanted to use the facilities at a time when the facilities were scheduled for other activities. When asked by Mr. Pollard whether or not any of the group would be able to participate in these other activities, Mr. Morris answered that he had instructed all of his personnel to be courteous and polite to all persons wishing to use the park facilities and that the park facilities were open to anyone without regard to race, creed, color, or religion. ... When asked about what percentage of Negro children used the park facilities, he answered, "about 1%." He attributed the small percentage of the use of facilities to ... [the fact] that there is a certain amount of community resentment to members of a different racial group using the park facilities. This community resentment, he said, was due to a fear of another racial group flooding into this community and "taking over," thereby reducing property values.*

*When asked what he had done to alleviate or combat the problem, he answered that he had instructed all of his park personnel as to the availability of park facilities to all persons regardless of race, creed, or color; ... that there wasn't too much he could do to encourage the participation of Negroes in park activities if the Negroes didn't frequent the park.*

*Mr. Morris said that he thought the problem could be worked out if there was a gradual integration of Negroes into the use of the facilities, rather than a large group at a time.*

...

*On the evening of October 2, Mr. Marshall Knox, Negro group leader of a group of about eighteen teenage boys from the West Chesterfield community, called Mr. Pollard and reported that his group of boys had encountered trouble trying to register for gymnasium classes at Tuley Park. Mr. Knox said that he had talked with Mr. Morris, Supervisor, Tuley Park, regarding the use of the facilities there and that Mr. Morris told him to "register the group at 7:00 P.M. on October 2, and that everything would be taken care of." Mr. Morris and Mr. Knox agreed that the boys should enter the park[] two or three at a time so as not to give the appearance of a gang entering the park.*

*At about 6:45 P.M. on October 2, the Negro boys started entering the park; upon entering the administration building, they asked to speak with the gym instructor or the supervisor. ... While the Negro boys were waiting to hear from their leader, a large group of boys confronted them and demanded that they leave Tuley Park and "use their own park." One of the Negro boys ... was struck in the face by one of the Caucasian boys, and another was kicked as the boys attempted to leave the park. ...*

*The following day, Mr. Pollard conferred with Captain Cooney, Commanding Officer of the South Section Park District Police, who confirmed the incident as reported by Mr. Knox, and that additional men would be assigned to Tuley Park to prevent any recurrence. ...*

*On the next evening, October 3, the Negro boys returned and registered without difficulty. As the Negro boys left the gymnasium and the park a group of white boys attempted to intimidate them by name-calling and rock throwing. Four white boys were apprehended by the*

*City Police and turned over to the Juvenile Officer of the 11<sup>th</sup> District. ... These boys were given a stern warning by the officers not to participate in any more such activities as they had that evening or the law would take its course. The boys were turned over to the supervision of their parents on the condition that the parents would see to it that the boys would behave themselves and cease their previous activities.*

...

*On October 16 the Negro boys returned to Tuley Park and attended the first of the series of fall classes. The class was mixed—Caucasian and Negro—and all activities were conducted on an integrated basis. Both City and Park Police had assigned men to and around the Park.*

*Nothing unusual happened during the gym class. As the Negro boys left the gym on their way out of the building, some Caucasian boys taunted them and one Negro boy was kicked from behind. The Park District Police dispersed groups of white boys attempting to gather. As the Negro boys left the Park grounds at 91<sup>st</sup> and Eberhart, one of the Negro boys was hit on the head from behind, resulting in a superficial injury. An adult Negro parent visiting the gym class discovered upon returning to his automobile that his windshield had been smashed ... .*

*On October 18 the Negro boys returned for their second class. During the free-play period, before the beginning of the class, one of the Negro boys was hit by a basketball as it was allegedly thrown to the gym instructor. Words were passed but the boys quieted down. The class was called to order ... . At the command, "Right dress!", the boys started elbowing each other; words passed and fighting broke out. Several blows were struck—none resulting in serious injury. The Park District Police stopped the fighting and arrested two white boys ... . The boys were reprimanded and turned over to the Juvenile Youth Bureau for supervision.*

...

*On October 19 Mr. Pollard and Mr. Wishner conferred with Chief Roger Shanahan of the Park District Police. Commission representatives stated their approval of the interest of the Park Police in assigning extra men to Tuley Park to [e]nsure the rights of the group of Negro boys to use the facilities. There was some discussion about possible closer surveillance in both the building while the class was in progress and in the Park as the boys left. ... Chief Shanahan stated that he would see to it that the police activity would be "tightened up." ...*

*On the morning of October 19 the Commission on Human Relations received a report that there was a rumor in the Negro community of West Chesterfield that the Negro student attending Fenger High School had better stay away. A later report from the Human Relations Section of the Chicago Police Department stated that on the same morning about 8:00 A.M. the first of a series of retaliatory attacks occurred at 95<sup>th</sup> and South Michigan. Alex Skiba, 14, and Ed Staszewski, 15, on their way to school were assaulted by a group of Negro boys as they attempted to transfer streetcars ... .*

*The boys were asked by their attackers if they were present at Tuley Park the evening before, and then were set upon. ... Later, on the afternoon of the same day about 4:00 P.M. Gerald Young ... was accosted and assaulted by a group of Negro boys in approximately the same vicinity, losing two front teeth as a result of the altercation. He, too, was asked by his attackers if he was at Tuley Park the previous night. ...*

...

*[Following the Commission on Human Relations meetings with the Chicago Park District and the parents of the Spartans,] [o]n Sunday, October 29, Mr. Wright, Mr. Wishner, and Mr. Pollard met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Young, together with Mrs. Staszewski, Mr. and Mrs. Skiba and Mr. J.A. Kahoun of the Rosemore Terrace Improvement Association.*

*The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the incident involving Gerald Young and other similar incidents that had been happening in the area. The first thing the group set out to do was to identify the problem. Mr. Young was of the opinion that the assault on his boy, Gerald, was the result of gang influence in and about the community; that there was no racial significance to be attached to this particular incident. He was also of the opinion that once the gang and its leaders were apprehended and punished for the acts committed that it would put an end to such incidents. ...*

*Members of the Commission, however, pointed out that the incident which involved Mr. Young's boy was an incident following directly as a result of racial antipathy shown the Negro boys as they tried to use the facilities at Tuley Park. ... Other members of the group agreed with the Commission's analysis that the incident had racial overtones and was a problem involving the entire community as a whole ... and grew out of the specific park situation.*

...

*On October 30 the Spartans returned to their regularly scheduled class. Only two white boys were present in the session. There was no incident. Extra police precautions will be continued until a normal pattern of use is established and accepted.<sup>158</sup>*

July 7, 1951:

*On Saturday morning, July 7, [1951], Mrs. Gloria Parker, 243 W. DeSaible [sic], Wentworth Gardens, telephoned the offices of the Commission to report that on Friday at 3:00 PM, the day before, Theodore Washington, 11, 3745 S. Princeton; George Woods, 12, 241 W.*

---

<sup>158</sup> Chicago Commission on Human Relations, "Monthly Report of the Executive Director, October 1950" (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series 1, Box 272, Folder 2788), 24-30.

*DeSaible; and Edward Shackelford, 8, 3872 S. Wentworth; were assaulted while being accompanied by her to Armour Square Park located at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Shields Avenue.*

*Mr. Pollard met with the boys and their parents at the home of Mrs. Parker and received the following information. Mrs. Parker stated that Mr. Woods, father of one of the boys, drove her, three boys and three girls, the children all under the age of thirteen, and a baby in arms to Armour Square Park about 2:55 Friday afternoon. Upon reaching the Park the girls went directly to the swings located in the playground. The boys who had planned to play softball at Beautner Playground located at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Wentworth were attracted by the children swimming in the pool at Armour Park and decided to watch them for a few moments. While they were standing, peering through the fence watching the children, they were set upon by a group of young white boys between the ages of thirteen and sixteen and beaten. Mrs. Parker heard George Woods cry out and when she turned around to investigate she saw Theodore Washington on the ground being beaten and kicked by about ten boys. George and Edward ran towards her crying and shouting that they had been hit. Mrs. Parker said that she rushed up to the group, screaming at them to stop the assault. As she did this, the group scattered in all directions but kept shouting that Negroes had no business in the park and should get out. Mrs. Parker immediately sought the policeman and the Park Supervisor and upon finding them brought them to the scene. Mrs. Parker said that when she asked them what they were going to do about the incident, the officer replied, "There isn't anything I can do. I didn't see it." The Supervisor replied, "There are a few bad ones in the park."*

*Mrs. Parker further stated that by this time a group of white children had gathered about them hurling names, epithets, and telling them to stay out of the park. Neither the officer nor the Superintendent did anything to stop them. ...*



*[Several days later,] Captain Duffy [of the Park Police] assigned Officers Griffin and Pool to investigate the incident. Officers Griffin and Pool, after talking to the offended boys and their parents, took the boys to Armour Square Park for the purpose of identifying, if possible, any of the offenders. One boy, Bruno Bertucci, white, 13, 3256 Princeton Avenue, was identified by the Woods boy as the one who kicked him and told him to get out of the park. Bruno was apprehended and turned over to Officer Murtaugh of the Juvenile Section, Chicago Park District. ...*

*On July 25, P.M. Kowancki, a referee at the Juvenile Court, heard the testimony and evidence of the complainants and the defendant. ... Bruno Bertucci, the defendant, testified that "As I was leaving the swimming pool, I saw a bunch of boys beating the colored boy on the ground and I kicked him and told him to get out of the park." When asked why he kicked the boy, he replied, "The colored boys are always coming to the Park shooting bee-bee guns and throwing rocks at us. Several of our girls have been cut and killed by them." When asked who had been cut and who had been killed, he replied, "I don't know." When asked where he received his information, he replied, "A boy whose name I don't know said he read it in the paper."<sup>159</sup>*

August 4, 1951:

*On Monday morning, ... Mr. Waitstill Sharp, Director of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination, telephoned the Commission [on Human Relations] to report that he heard ... that there was a great deal of tension in the Fuller Park area because of*

---

<sup>159</sup> Chicago Commission on Human Relations, "Monthly Report of the Executive Director, July-August 1951" (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series I, Box 272, Folder 2788) 30-2.

*an incident that happened involving the swimming pool in the park. ... Mr. Pollard and Mr. Wishner visited Mr. [Charles] Brooks on August 8, and he volunteered the following information:*

*On several occasions his three children, all under the age of fifteen, had reported to him that they were threatened and intimidated when they attempted to use the swimming pool at Fuller Park. On one occasion his little boy came home with a bump on his head where he had been hit by one of the white boys at the park when he attempted to use the facilities there.*

*One afternoon, during the week of July 30, Mr. Brooks stated that he went to [Fuller] Park. While visiting the park he noticed a group of Negro boys watching the white boys swim in the pool. When Mr. Brooks asked them why they weren't swimming, they replied that they would be beaten up if they attempted to use the pool. Mr. Brooks stated that he told them to go home and get their swimming trunks and return. The Negro boys did this and when Mr. Brooks attempted to take the boys into the building containing the locker rooms, he was stopped by a gang of white boys. Mr. Brooks stated that this group told him that he had better not enter the pool or someone would find themselves at the bottom of the pool with a bullet in him. One of the boys brandished a gun to show that they meant business. Mr. Brooks said he reported this to the officer on duty at the park and pointed out the group of boys to him. He was told to report it to the Washington Park Station. Mr. Brooks stated that he went to the station and reported the incident to Captain Duffy. Capt. Duffy, he explained, told him to let him know when the boys were going swimming and he would give them ample protection. Mr. Brooks stated that he couldn't understand why he had to gather the boys at a specific time to take them to the pool under police protection. His position was that the children should be allowed to go normally and*

*to have enough officers there to see that they weren't molested. ... Mr. Brooks reluctantly agreed to follow this plan and said he would have the group there at 1:30 P.M. the following day. ...*

*Mr. Brooks arrived with the Negro boys, and Negro and white boys went swimming without incident. Mr. Wishner and Mr. Pollard were present. ... [The following] morning[,] Mr. Walter Roy, Director of Recreation, Chicago Park District, telephoned the Commission offices to report that during the night garbage had been thrown into the pool. He stated that the pool would have to be drained, scrubbed, and disinfected; therefore, the pool would not be open for swimming again until the following Monday.<sup>160</sup>*

July, 1953:

*On July 21 a Mrs. Thornton, 5933 S. Elizabeth Avenue, telephoned the Commission to report that on July 16 she accompanied her two daughters to the swimming pool located in Ogden Park at 65<sup>th</sup> Street. As the girls prepared to enter the pool they were told by an unidentified man that they were not wanted in the pool. As Mrs. Thornton stepped up to intervene and sit where she could watch the children more closely, a man, who she described as wearing a Chicago Park District uniform, said to her, "Lady, you can't sit there. Sit on the bench." A group of white girls swimming in the pool yelled, "Boy, that's telling her off."*

*When Mrs. Thornton's children left the pool, a little white girl about their age came up to Mrs. Thornton and said, "My very best friend, a Negro girl, was chased out of the pool by a cop because she was colored." Mrs. Thornton said that she thought it rather peculiar never seeing*

---

<sup>160</sup> Chicago Commission on Human Relations, "Monthly Report of the Executive Director, July-August 1951" (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series I, Box 272, Folder 2788), 41-3.

*any Negro children in the pool, especially in view of the fact that so many live in the immediate area of the park.*

*On the morning of July 22 Mr. Chuck Davis of the Chicago Defender telephoned the Commission [on Human Relations] to relate that the office of the Defender had received a report that a Negro girl had been assaulted by a white girl while attempting to swim in the Ogden Park pool. Also that a police officer told Negroes whoa attempted to swim in the pool to go to Washington Park. There was also a report that a gang of Negro boys were to return to Ogden Park in the afternoon of the 22<sup>nd</sup>.*

*The person who gave the information to Mr. Davis ... said that her son, who was present at the time of the incident, told her the following story: White girls had driven some Negro girls out of the pool about 1:00 P.M. on July 21; the police officer on duty did not protect the Negro girls; that a Mrs. Duncan and her two daughters were at the pool when the incident occurred[.]*

...

*Captain Fossier, Commanding Officer of the South Section Chicago Park District Police, was contacted and he stated that a Mrs. Duncan had entered the pool with her two daughters on July 21, and that she had a knife pinned to her bathing suit. She was quoted as having stated, "If they do anything to prevent my daughters from using the pool, I will cut their tongues out." The white girls reported this to the police officer who arrested Mrs. Duncan and charged her with disorderly conduct. (Mrs. Duncan was later released and put on probation.)*

*Six Negro boys entered the pool on the afternoon of July 22. Some of the white boys in the pool chanted, "We want them out." The park supervisor and patrolman kept a watchful eye on the group but did nothing to prevent or stop the chanting. ... Mr. McNamara and Mr. Pollard visited Lt. O'Brien at the Washington Park Station and requested that at least two uniformed*

*officers be detailed inside the pool area. A detail was so arranged. ... Negroes and whites have been swimming in the pool since that time and no further disturbances have been reported.*<sup>161</sup>

These archival vignettes provide a glimpse into the conflicts that animated the daily life of Chicago's parks after World War II. In areas that served as the city's "racial frontiers," as the Park District put it, whites' massive resistance to park integration played out over the course of the late 1940s and into the mid 1960s. Given the "problem of the archive," the events highlighted above are in certain ways exceptional. They are examples of the institutional involvement of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, a governmental group that was accountable to the South Side's black middle class and was able to convince the Park District to provide adequate police protections in some cases. Several of the above incidents transpired over the course of days and weeks, indicating that racial conflicts over park space were ongoing, iterative processes. We see clearly that the specter of interracial sex hangs over several of these events – again pointing toward the distinct role that youth played in negotiating park-based conflicts, and indicating that there was more at stake here than community public space. For the white youth who violently contested black park use, they were defending their racial terrain from perceived threats: as Bruno Bertucci, the Armour Square Park assailant, asserted, "Several of our [white] girls have been cut and killed" by black youth. Such claims, regardless of their veracity, highlight the salience of miscegenation as a motivating cause of park-based racial violence. Though whites' violent resistance eventually fell apart as the postwar decades wore on, it is reasonable to infer that the real-or-threatened violence illustrated above was a regular fact of

---

<sup>161</sup> Chicago Commission on Human Relations, "Monthly Report of the Executive Director, July-August 1953" (UIC, Chicago Urban League records, Series I, Box 273, Folder 2798), 10-1.

park use for black people who visited parks in or adjacent to white neighborhoods in the decades after World War II.

### **3.7: Conclusion**

Taken as a whole, the aspects of post-World War II parks examined here – park planning and development, policing, programming, activism, and park-related conflicts – illuminate a very different state of affairs for urban nature in the middle of the twentieth century. This critical moment of park creation – a moment paralleled in geographic scope and level of economic investment only by the nineteenth-century picturesque park movement and the park developments of the twenty-first century – laid down new socially prescribed uses and symbolically valuable locations of urban parks.

Postwar park development advanced trends initiated earlier in the twentieth century, especially the elevation of “recreation” as parks’ *raison d’être* that originated in the small parks movement in Chicago and elsewhere. Recreation, as a perceived antidote to the social ills associated with industrial urbanization, was built into the fabric of parks through design changes that placed playgrounds and athletic fields into parks as well as through programmatic changes initiated by the Chicago Park District and other park institutions that sought to organize the daily uses of public space. The massive social and economic investments that accompanied all of this helped make these shifts (literally) concrete.

The social geography of these investments indicated that new urban parks would structure public community spaces in white neighborhoods while ignoring the historical underdevelopment of parks in black neighborhoods. With only one of the 31 parks planned under the Park District’s 10 Year Plan located in a predominantly black area – and notably, this one

park was not in the nearly park-less Black Belt, at the time home to 90% of the city's black population – Chicago's park development program reproduced longstanding racial-spatial inequalities. By at least one measure (plant material), comparable per acre investment in the white North Side's Lincoln Park was 17 times that of Washington Park, the primary, if not the only park used by residents of the black South Side. This uneven development was happening in tandem with the targeted surveillance of black park users, both in Washington Park and in the parks adjacent to areas of black settlement – sites where racial conflicts were likely to arise. But when conflicts did arise, as they did frequently over the course of the postwar period, the Park District's police force was often on the side of white antagonists, doing very little to stop or prevent attacks and sometimes actively engaging in efforts to keep parks segregated. Such powers were checked only by the work of groups like the Commission on Human Relations, the NAACP, and the *Chicago Defender*, who could use institutional pressure or the power of the press to compel the Park District to resolve policing issues at sites of ongoing interracial conflict.

The shadow hanging over many of these changes was the growth of suburban forms of nature. Accompanying the socio-spatial process of white flight was the suburban exodus of culturally valuable nature. Suburban forms of nature encompassed many forms. Central to the postwar “American dream” of a single-family, detached home was a well-tended green lawn.<sup>162</sup> In addition to a new cultural image, this type of space embodied a privatized experience – one bearing little resemblance to the public, collective activities of urban parks. Suburbanization also heralded new nature-based institutions. Sprawling residential areas and private lawns obviated the need for grand public spaces; in their place were country clubs and institutions like the

---

<sup>162</sup> David R. Roedinger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

Chicago Botanic Garden, which opened in 1972 in the wealthy suburb of Glencoe, 25 miles north of the Loop and 13 miles from Chicago city limits. As white flight accelerated in the 1950s and 60s, several nature-related institutions in Chicago were abandoned. South Shore Country Club was sold to the city after white flight on the South Side ravaged its membership rolls; Edgewater Country Club on the North Side met the same fate. And while the Cook County government (which included Chicago) was building the nearly 400-acre Botanic Garden, the once-prestigious Garfield Park Conservatory, which by the 1960s was surrounded by newly black neighborhoods on Chicago's West Side, was falling into disrepair.<sup>163</sup> These shifts in the symbolic economy of nature at the metropolitan level enhanced the suburbs' cultural power at the expense of Chicago proper and disrupted urban parks' cultural prestige.

The effect of this simultaneous green space development in the suburbs and park disinvestment in black areas of the city was to "naturalize" the disparities of economic and cultural capital that structured these representations of nature. The Chicago Park District built few parks in black neighborhoods, spent far less money to maintain and improve Washington Park and other parks used predominantly by blacks, and arrested black youth at far higher rates than their white counterparts. These factors marginalized black neighborhoods at a critical moment of park investment. Instead of atoning for older spatial inequalities, postwar park planning reaffirmed the city's racial boundaries by bolstering the aesthetic differences between black and white neighborhoods – the former were reproduced as ghettoized and underdeveloped while the latter contained plentiful, newly created parks. By 1970, a familiar pattern had emerged, one clearly bound up in neighborhood change more generally: blacks would break

---

<sup>163</sup> William Aldrich, "Our Hidden Oasis: The Years Have Taken Their Toll, but Garfield Park Conservatory is on the Comeback Trail," *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 4, 1990.



older park boundaries; whites would initially resist, often resorting to violence; but when this resistance would fall apart, the Park District responded by disinvesting from black spaces. The image of “best nature” relocated along with many whites to the suburbs, where it appeared well kept and ecologically and socially salubrious. The neglect of urban parks led them to appear overgrown, dangerous, and having few of the positive qualities promised by previous generations of landscape designers; they were fully tied to urban symbols and urban social actors.

The following chapter draws out the consequences of these threads, examining how decades of disinvestment and demographic changes affected the city-nature relationship at the turn of the twenty-first century. As the cultural ideal of urban nature crumbled under the weight of the urban crisis, nature itself began to act as a force on the urban landscape in new ways. In vacant lots and other disinvested sites, new intersections of built and natural forms were emerging. Like the changes to urban nature documented in the present chapter, contemporary developments in parks and other urban green spaces are also bound up in questions of race; this is the subject of the following chapter.

## **Ch. 4: The 606 and the Racialized Reemergence of Urban Nature**

### **4.1: Introduction**

This study has sought to uncover some of the spatial dimensions of the socially constructed city-nature relationship. The preceding chapters have examined the two most critical historical moments of urban park creation in the United States. First, the mid-to-late nineteenth century, when the picturesque park movement, embodied in Chicago by parks like Olmsted and Vaux's South Park, attempted to lay down a sharply defined binary relationship between the spaces of the city and the spaces of nature. Through the discourses, intended uses, and symbolic systems surrounding the creation of South Park and other picturesque urban parks, I have argued that this was fundamentally a racialized process: the culturally valorized spaces of nature were those tied to white park uses and users. The subsequent chapter examined the recreation-focused park development of the mid twentieth century. In Chicago and other cities, longstanding cultural meanings around urban parks were thrown into disarray as a result of the Great Migration. The millions of black Southerners who encountered the spaces of urban nature fundamentally altered older parks' cultural identities; in Chicago, the institutional response to racial demographic changes was to re-frame the intended uses of parks and to shift the social geography of urban nature, allowing culturally valuable parks to remain a white resource.

The first two decades of the twenty-first century mark a period of park development of equal cultural and political significance. In many American cities, parks – and the (new) form of nature they represent – are back on the radar for growth coalitions and city leaders after a half-century of neglect. Spectacle-driven park development has become a central strategy of downtown revitalization: a means to draw tourists and wealthy local residents to previously

underdeveloped urban areas.<sup>1</sup> With the rise of “sustainability” imperatives providing further rationale for green space development, parks are seen as environmentally friendly and important for combating the effects of global warming.<sup>2</sup> Although New York’s High Line, opened in 2009, is likely the most well-known contemporary example,<sup>3</sup> the process of park-driven economic redevelopment has been percolating in many cities since the 1990s. As scholars of public space have indicated, the rise of public-private partnerships to control and manage urban parks has catalyzed a reorientation toward commerce and cultural consumption as two of parks’ central purposes.<sup>4</sup> The newest generation of parks like the High Line and Chicago’s Millennium Park and 606 embody an emergent strategy of park development oriented around dual aims of cultural prestige and economic growth.

While much could be said about this phenomenon, for the particular terms of this study what many new parks most crucially herald is a racialized shift in the social construction of the city-nature relationship. Rather than separating city and nature through design considerations and programming efforts, Chicago’s 606 and New York’s High Line construct city and nature as spatially and symbolically linked. These two parks in particular – both crafted out of disused elevated railways – have indicated the cultural embrace of hybrid forms of built and natural

---

<sup>1</sup> Setha Low, Dana Taplin, and Suzanne Scheld, *Rethinking Urban Parks: Public Space and Cultural Diversity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Kevin Loughran, “Parks for Profit: The High Line, Growth Machines, and the Uneven Development of Urban Public Spaces,” *City & Community* 13, no. 1 (2014): 49-68; Sharon Zukin, *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Miriam Greenberg, “What on Earth Is Sustainable?: Toward Critical Sustainability Studies,” *Boom: A Journal of California* 3, no. 4 (2013): 54-66.

<sup>3</sup> David Halle and Elizabeth Tiso, *New York’s New Edge: Contemporary Art, the High Line, and Urban Megaprojects on the Far West Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Nate Millington, “From Urban Scar to ‘Park in the Sky’: Terrain Vague, Urban Design, and the Remaking of New York City’s High Line Park,” *Environment and Planning A* 47, no. 11 (2015): 2324-38.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Shepard and Gregory Smithsimon, *The Beach Beneath the Streets: Contesting New York City’s Public Spaces* (New York: SUNY Press, 2011); David J. Madden, “Revisiting the End of Public Space: Assembling the Public in an Urban Park,” *City & Community* 9, no. 2 (2010): 187-207. Early iterations of private influence in public parks date to the creation of the Central Park Conservancy in 1980. Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

environments. The spatial separation sought by early landscape architects like Olmsted has fallen in many respects as contemporary landscape architects and park developers attempt to highlight a new socially constructed relationship: an apparent symbiosis of city and nature.

This chapter analyzes the contemporary intersection of city and nature as represented in urban parks. Chicago is again the site of the central case study; the city's 606 (formerly known as the Bloomingdale Trail), opened in 2015 on the Near Northwest Side, embodies this cultural convergence. Built atop a rail viaduct, the park's design and its placement in the urban landscape indicate stark departures from Chicago's prior generations of park development. In this chapter, I develop the concept of "imbricated space" to help explain this new socio-spatial formation. As I will discuss, though parks like the 606 make hybridizing processes explicit because of the actions of political brokers and cultural producers, imbricated spaces can be found in many places where built and natural environments collide. Once again, race serves as a central organizing variable in the remaking of the spaces of city and nature, though in different ways than in the past. The emergence of imbricated spaces – initially created by the forces of nature as a consequence of disinvestment and depopulation – is a highly racialized process. These spaces emerged from the literal ruins of the public and private retrenchment that devastated urban communities of color as white populations and corporations fled to the suburbs and Sun Belt.<sup>5</sup> The recent creation of imbricated spaces via urban parks is further implicated in the racialized re-taking of urban space through processes of gentrification and displacement. Parks like the High Line and the 606 have gone hand-in-hand with contemporary growth machines' economic

---

<sup>5</sup> Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, *Sunbelt Capitalism: Phoenix and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

development strategies.<sup>6</sup> These strategies take several forms: in downtown areas, the use of parks and public spaces as tools for regeneration dates back several decades;<sup>7</sup> in outlying neighborhoods that are targeted for redevelopment, parks now figure as community-level amenities that can make neighborhoods more attractive to wealthier, whiter newcomers. As with other strategies of neighborhood redevelopment that commodify local culture or ethnoracial identity for consumption purposes,<sup>8</sup> imbricated spaces have emerged as an important way for boosters to promote gentrification. Another way that race fits into this phenomenon is by structuring the growing cultural appreciation for hybrid representations of city and nature; this appreciation relies on a privileged framing that elides the racial histories behind these city-nature intersections.<sup>9</sup> Nature, a concept exiled beyond city limits in the twentieth century, has returned to the city, corresponding to demographic shifts that have brought governmental institutions, white people, and capital back to neighborhoods that were socially and economically abandoned in prior decades.

This chapter proceeds as follows: first, I will present an overview of contemporary understandings of city-nature relationships as an ontological parallel to the development of new parks and other hybrid spatial formations. Second, I introduce and explain the “imbricated space” concept, a key theoretical contribution of this study. Third, I summarize key park-related changes between the period of post-World War II park development in Chicago and the

---

<sup>6</sup> Harvey Molotch, “The City as Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place,” *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 2 (1976): 309-32; Josh Pacewicz, “The City as a Fiscal Derivative: Financialization, Urban Development, and the Politics of Earmarking,” *City & Community* 15, no. 3 (2016): 264-88.

<sup>7</sup> Shepard and Smithson, *The Beach Beneath the Streets*.

<sup>8</sup> Frederick F. Wherry, *The Philadelphia Barrio: The Arts, Branding, and Neighborhood Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Derek S. Hyra, *The New Urban Renewal: The Economic Transformation of Harlem and Bronzeville* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> On this point, see Gastón R. Gordillo, *Rubble: The Afterlife of Destruction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

contemporary shift toward economically oriented public spaces. Fourth, I discuss the development of New York's High Line – a phenomenon that has so strongly informed subsequent park development (in Chicago and around the globe) that it necessitates summary analysis. Fifth comes an examination of the politics and cultural considerations surrounding the development of Chicago's 606 and the ways that this new park exacerbates a longstanding white-Latina/o racial schism on the city's Near Northwest Side. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how these park-based shifts inform contemporary intersections of race, city, and nature more broadly.

#### **4.2: City-Nature Hybridity and Imbricated Spaces**

In chapter two, I discussed how early sociologists conceived “the city” as the space and symbol of modernity, providing a base of knowledge that was operating in tandem with the cultural representations that envisioned city and nature as competing forces. The contemporary emergence of city-nature hybridity similarly has a basis in knowledge production. In recent decades, social scientists have extensively theorized the ways that nature is socially constructed.<sup>10</sup> Breaking with the essentialist view of nature held by many early theorists, scholars have illustrated how groups construct nature through institutions like zoos and social practices such as mushroom collecting and pigeon handling.<sup>11</sup> Such arguments have forced urbanists to reconsider some of the operating assumptions of urban analysis and the historical exclusion of

---

<sup>10</sup> Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991); Colin Jerolmack, “Toward a Sociology of Nature,” *The Sociology Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2012): 501-5.

<sup>11</sup> David Grazian, “Where the Wild Things Aren't: Exhibiting Nature in American Zoos,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2012): 546-65; Gary Alan Fine, *Morel Tales: The Culture of Mushrooming*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Colin Jerolmack, “Animal Practices, Ethnicity, and Community: The Turkish Pigeon Handlers of Berlin,” *American Sociological Review* 72, no. 6 (2007): 874-94.

environmental concerns from urban scholarship. A special emphasis on the presence of nature in cities has therefore animated much recent research.<sup>12</sup> A growing body of literature considers cities in ecological crisis, illustrating how urban growth in ecologically fragile areas, such as the American West, has had wide-ranging effects on environmental sustainability and social inequality.<sup>13</sup> In a related vein, actor-network theorists have pushed social scientists to consider nature an autonomous “nonhuman” actor.<sup>14</sup> Some scholars have further argued that human agency has profoundly shaped nature itself, creating a new geologic era known as the Anthropocene.<sup>15</sup>

In this recent turn towards nature’s centrality in urban processes, social scientists have coined the phrase “urban metabolism” to describe the hybrid union of city and nature on an infrastructural level: the networked flows of natural materials through cities that carry social and political implications.<sup>16</sup> Scholars like William Cronon and Matthew Gandy have documented how hydrologic systems, waste management, and energy supplies are imbued with power relations; as geographer Erik Swyngedouw colorfully describes it, this approach allows scholars

---

<sup>12</sup> Michael Bennett and David W. Teague, eds., *The Nature of Cities: Ecocriticism and Urban Environments* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1999); Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw, eds., *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism* (New York: Routledge, 2006); David Wachsmuth, “Three Ecologies: Urban Metabolism and the Society-Nature Opposition,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2012): 506-23.

<sup>13</sup> Mike Davis, *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998); Brett L. Walker, *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010); Craig E. Colten, *An Unnatural Metropolis: Wrestling New Orleans from Nature*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*; Jonathan Murdoch, “Inhuman/Nonhuman/Human: Actor-Network Theory and the Prospects for a Nondualistic and Symmetrical Perspective on Nature and Society,” *Society and Space* 15, no. 6 (1996): 731-56.

<sup>15</sup> Will Steffen, Paul J. Crutzen, and John R. McNeill, “The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature,” *Ambio: A Journal of the Human Environment* 36, no. 8 (2007): 614-21; Nigel Clark, “Geopolitics and the disaster of the Anthropocene,” *The Sociological Review* 62, no. S1 (2014): 19-37.

<sup>16</sup> Heynen et al., *In the Nature of Cities*.

to see “the city in a glass of water.”<sup>17</sup> Urban metabolism offers a lens into the ways that the control of natural resources by city governments, corporations, and landowners reproduces inequalities along lines of race, class, and gender through differential access to clean water, green spaces, and other resources.<sup>18</sup> And in work that directly inspires the questions of the present study, scholars from urban political ecology and critical urban theory have indicated how spatially delimiting “city” from its various analytical oppositions (e.g., nature, suburbs) has become problematic given the global expansion of urban infrastructure and capital flows in a process termed “planetary urbanization.”<sup>19</sup> Tables 4.1 and 4.2 respectively summarize the ontological separation and contemporary hybridization of city and nature.

<b>Table 4.1: The ontological separation of city and nature.</b>	
<b>City:</b>	<b>Nature:</b>
Capitalism	Feudalism
Modernity	Premodernity
Society	Community
Industry	Agriculture
Profane	Sacred
Nation	God
Masculinity	Femininity

<sup>17</sup> Erik Swyngedouw, *Social Power and the Urbanization of Water: Flows of Power* (New York: Oxford University Press: 2004), 27. See also Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*; Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> Dorceta E. Taylor, “Urban Parks, Social Class and Leisure Behavior in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Journal of Leisure Research* 31, no. 4 (1999): 420-77; Jennifer Wolch, John P. Wilson, and Jed Fehrenbach, “Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles: An Equity-Mapping Analysis,” *Urban Geography* 26, no. 1 (2005): 4-35.

<sup>19</sup> Neil Brenner, ed., *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization* (Berlin: Jovis, 2014); Hillary Angelo and David Wachsmuth, “Urbanizing Urban Political Ecology: A Critique of Methodological Cityism,” *The International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 1 (2015): 16-27; Hillary Angelo, “From the City Lens Toward Urbanisation as a Way of Seeing: Country/City Binaries on an Urbanising Planet,” *Urban Studies* 54, no. 1 (2017): 158-78.



<b>Table 4.2: The unity of city and nature.</b>	
<b>City:</b>	<b>Nature:</b>
Industry's Afterlife Decay	Anthropocene Insurgence
<b>Unity:</b>	
Hybridity Imbricated Spaces Urban Metabolism Planetary Urbanization	

The re-thinking of the city-nature binary maps onto similar challenges to binaries of race, gender, sexuality, and other categories of social division and analysis.<sup>20</sup> With binaries' socially constructed origins exposed, many scholars have deconstructed the historical production of such binaries, their institutionalization, and their consequences.<sup>21</sup> Race, the category of central concern to the present study, has been transformed by critical scholarly analysis in recent decades.<sup>22</sup> Relevant here is the black-white analytical binary – long the lens through which scholars understood race relations in the United States – which has been under scrutiny in many academic areas.<sup>23</sup> Canonical urban-historical studies such as Arnold Hirsch's *Making the Second Ghetto*, for example, have been criticized by scholars like Andrew Diamond, who writes that the work's "binary conception of Chicago's racial system obscured certain aspects that were far from

<sup>20</sup> Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> Siobhan B. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Vilna Bashi Treitler, *The Ethnic Project: Transforming Racial Fiction into Ethnic Factions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139-67; Derek Bell, "Who's Afraid of Critical Race Theory?" *University of Illinois Law Review* (1995): 893-910; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and Racial Inequality in Contemporary America* (Lanham: Roman & Littlefield, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> Manning Marable, *Beyond Black and White* (Brooklyn: Verso, 1995); Juan F. Perea, "The Black/White Binary Paradigm of Race: The 'Normal Science' of American Racial Thought," *California Law Review* 85, no. 5 (1997): 1213-58; Lawrence Bobo and Vincent L. Hutchings, "Perceptions of Racial Group Competition: Extending Blumer's Theory of Group Position to a Multiracial Social Context," *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 6 (1996): 951-72.

peripheral to the story of racial and ethnic formation and action in twentieth-century Chicago.”<sup>24</sup>

Widening attention to the racial histories of Asians, Latina/os, Arabs, and other groups in the United States,<sup>25</sup> along with increasing awareness of how race and racialization operate in non-US contexts,<sup>26</sup> has disrupted many assumptions. Growing scholarly critique of old binaries does not mean that they completely go away, however. For example, given historical shifts in racial categories, scholars like George Yancey have hypothesized that broadening definitions of “whiteness,” coupled with the continuing degradation of “blackness,” may lead to the hardening of a black-nonblack binary divide in the socially constructed American racial hierarchy.<sup>27</sup> Because they have historically organized much social thought, binaries die hard; they often remain material forces in society and help organize the social world.<sup>28</sup>

The re-thinking of the city-nature binary therefore remains informed by the binary’s long existence. In the spaces where city and nature are converging, part of the resonance of imbricated spaces like the 606 lies in the act of the binary’s disruption – i.e., the cultural appreciation for new parks is built on a cognizance of the historical opposition of built and natural forms. As

---

<sup>24</sup> Andrew J. Diamond, *Mean Streets: Chicago Youths and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multiracial City, 1908-1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 4. Diamond continues: “How did Chicago’s large populations of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans fit into the story? What should we make of the increasing participation of Mexicans in antiblack violence throughout the 1950s? How should we interpret the racial hostility of European Americans toward Mexicans at the very same moment when Mexicans were joining European Americans in apparent struggles to defend their whiteness? How was the formation of Puerto Rican and Mexican enclaves during the 1950s and 1960s related to the making of the second ghetto?”

<sup>25</sup> Anthony Christian Ocampo, *The Latinos of Asia: How Filipino Americans Break the Rules of Race* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016); G. Cristina Mora, *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Amaney Jamal and Nadine Naber, eds., *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Gargi Bhattacharyya, John Gabriel, and Stephen Small, *Race and Power: Global Racism in the Twenty First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Adrien Katherine Wing, ed., *Global Critical Race Feminism: An International Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> George A. Yancey, *Who is White?: Latinos, Asians, and the New Black/Nonblack Divide* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003). See also Bonilla-Silva’s refutation of this hypothesis, *Racism Without Racists*, 177-98.

<sup>28</sup> As W. I. and Dorothy Swaine Thomas famously intoned, if people “define their situations as real, they are real in their consequences.” *The Child in America: Behavior Problems and Programs* (New York: Knopf, 1928), 572.

indicated in the previous chapter, cracks in the city-nature binary emerged as (sub)urbanization and demographic changes prompted new geographies and new cultural meanings of parks. Through the racially uneven development engineered by institutions like the Chicago Park District, parks no longer represented “nature” in the way they once did. After the changes wrought by post-World War II (sub)urbanization, nature now existed firmly beyond the city.

This pivoting of nature’s symbolic spaces – i.e., shifting culturally valued nature away from sites of black park use – was distinct from the emergence of city-nature *hybridity*, which formed as an object of cultural appreciation in the aftermath of the postwar period.<sup>29</sup> As parks were becoming incorporated within an imaginary of the urban, other city spaces were re-encountering nature, though not (yet) the symbolically valuable kind. Another product of disinvestment and depopulation was the proliferation of abandoned buildings, vacant lots, and disused infrastructure. As these assorted sites lost their original social functions, in some cases they were overtaken by nature – plant and animal life that grew within the ruins of the industrial built environment. Often described as “brownfields,” studies have indicated that these disinvested sites have been disproportionately likely to be found in poor and minority areas, owing to the nexus of “deindustrialization, concentration of poverty, and residential segregation” that negatively impacted communities of color in growing numbers after 1970.<sup>30</sup> In addition to

---

<sup>29</sup> Again, to be clear: there was always hybridity in urban parks and in spaces throughout cities. But given the historical social construction of city and nature as binary opposites, this hybridity was rarely recognized or celebrated as such. See Daniel M. Bluestone, “From Promenade to Park: The Gregarious Origins of Brooklyn’s Park Movement,” *American Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1987): 529-50; Sam Bass Warner, *To Dwell Is to Garden: A History of Boston’s Community Gardens* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987); Ian MacLachlan, “A Bloody Offal Nuisance: The Persistence of Private Slaughter-Houses in Nineteenth-Century London,” *Urban History* 34, no. 2 (2007): 227-54.

<sup>30</sup> Sangyun Lee and Paul Mohai, “Racial and Socioeconomic Assessments of Neighborhoods Adjacent to Small-Scale Brownfield Sites in the Detroit Region,” *Environmental Practice* 13, no. 4 (2011): 340-53, 340; Douglas A. McWilliams, “Environmental Justice and Industrial Redevelopment: Economics and Equality in Urban Revitalization,” *Ecology Law Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1994): 705-83; Jonathan D. Essoka, “The Gentrifying Effects of Brownfields Redevelopment,” *Western Journal of Black Studies* 34, no. 3 (2010): 299-315.

their economic basis, brownfields represent a significant ecological puzzle. As noted by geologist Andrew de Wet and his colleagues, the aftermath of industrial urbanization can be felt in these spaces in several ways, including:

(1) [S]oil and water pollution (both surface and groundwater), (2) physical changes to the soil such as compaction and erosion, (3) buried structures such as tanks, pipes, roads, building foundations and concrete or asphalt surfaces, (4) surface debris such as demolition waste, and (5) physical changes to the hydrology and topography[.]<sup>31</sup>

In many circumstances, the aesthetics of decline were seen as evidence of an economic and social crisis.<sup>32</sup> In other cases, urban decay and city-nature hybridity were bound up in “the artistic mode of production” associated with the gentrification of former industrial districts.<sup>33</sup> Cultural desires for “authentic” urban places<sup>34</sup> brought overgrown parking lots, concrete canals, abandoned piers, and unused railways into middle-class gentrifiers’ aestheticization of former industrial landscapes. Though nature’s encroachment of urban spaces was long a marker of decline, the gentrification of postindustrial neighborhoods has modified the symbolic value of these city-nature intersections as an appreciation for the natural landscapes of industrial ruin emerged among new residents of these spaces. As Richard Lloyd describes in his early 2000s study of the gentrification of Chicago’s Wicker Park, “the juxtaposition” of gentrified spaces with “the underdeveloped local landscape serves to *heighten the drama*[,] ... allow[ing gentrifiers] to imagine that they consuming ... product[s] unavailable to those too timid or

---

<sup>31</sup> Andrew P. de Wet, Jonathan Richardson, and Catherine Olympia, “Interactions of Land-Use History and Current Ecology in a Recovering ‘Urban Wildland,’” *Urban Ecosystems* 2, no. 4 (1998): 237-62, 237.

<sup>32</sup> Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Miriam Greenberg, *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis was Sold to the World* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 176.

<sup>34</sup> Japonica Brown-Saracino, *A Neighborhood That Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Suleiman Osman, *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in Postwar New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

uninformed to venture into the wilds of the new bohemia.”<sup>35</sup> While vacant lots and the like are typically “filled in” by subsequent development, they live on in other cultural forms. The contemporary popularity of “ruin porn,” – the photographic portrayal of such sites as contemplative and beautiful – is a primary example of the resonance of such representations.<sup>36</sup> These imbricated representations, of course, require a particular standpoint to appreciate, not unlike the cultural reading of “rubble” as “ruin.”<sup>37</sup>

Scholars have attempted to pin down this new cultural appreciation for more agentic forms of nature in the city. Landscape theorist Susan Herrington has coined the term “industrial picturesque” to describe “[t]he denouement of [industrial] relics” in the cultural imagination; as Herrington writes, the creative re-use of technological ruins by landscape architects “does not criticize the gravity of industry’s consequences on biophysical systems,” but rather “entices people to speculate on the deleterious confidence of infrastructure landscapes or the loss of industrial production to consumer society.”<sup>38</sup> Images of the industrial picturesque have become institutionalized through the construction of new public parks like Chicago’s 606 that emplace city-nature imbrications in physical form. Just as nineteenth-century planners used landscape architecture to spatially construct the classical picturesque and the city-nature binary, contemporary cultural producers are mirroring these efforts in parks that highlight elements of decayed “city” and insurgent “nature.” The cultural power of these representations is reflected in

---

<sup>35</sup> Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Post-Industrial City* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 138; emphasis added.

<sup>36</sup> Nate Millington, “Post-Industrial Imaginaries: Nature, Representation and Ruin in Detroit, Michigan,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 1 (2013): 279-96.

<sup>37</sup> Gordillo, *Rubble*.

<sup>38</sup> Susan Herrington, “Framed Again: The Picturesque Aesthetics of Contemporary Landscapes,” *Landscape Journal* 25, no. 1 (2006): 22-37, 22. As noted by Herrington, the use of industrial relics in contemporary landscape architectural design mirrors the way that natural objects were deployed for visual effect in the classical picturesque.

the economic capital invested – \$95 million for the 606 and \$188 million for the High Line<sup>39</sup> – and the far-flung admiration: the rush to build copycats in cities around the world.

Informed by these contemporary intersections of city and nature, I introduce the concept of “imbricated space” to understand linked representations of “urban” and “natural” forms. Imbricated spaces are social spaces that aesthetically unite representations of agentic “city” and representations of agentic “nature.” Imbricated spaces are one example of broader city-nature hybridity, which, as discussed, has ontological, cultural, and spatial implications. “Imbrication” suggests the blending or layering of multiple components, which in spaces like the 606 manifests as an interweaving of built and natural materials. In these spaces, nature is represented as insurgent – claiming spaces that humans had once conquered. City is represented as decayed – through the rusting and rotting of the built environment. Imbricated spaces connote a broader scale than the industrial picturesque, which refers to a particular architectural style, rather than a type of space. While parks like the 606 offer elements of the industrial picturesque at particular vantage points, imbricated spaces refer to any site where the cultural separation of built and natural forms has been disrupted. When created as urban parks, imbricated spaces are distinct from prior iterations, which, as we have seen, first purported to offer pastoral refuge from city life – removal, rather than immersion – and later were conceived as recreation-focused outlets for pent-up urban energies. Chapter three explained how this initial transformation occurred through the racialized re-ordering of the spaces and symbols of city and nature. The following section will offer an overview of how in the 1980s and 90s the social construction of Chicago’s

---

<sup>39</sup> See Loughran, “Parks for Profit,” 64-5. The High Line was opened in three sections between 2009 and 2014; this total includes the \$35 million used to construct Section 3, which opened in late 2014.

parks shifted from the recreation-focused variants of the mid-twentieth century and, in so doing, laid the groundwork for the creation of imbricated spaces in the twenty-first century.

### 4.3: Chicago Parks in the Age of “Urban Crisis”

Chapter three provided a broad picture of Chicago’s public parks in the decades that followed the end of World War II. As indicated, the institutional efforts of the Chicago Park District, in conjunction with federally funded forces like suburbanization and urban renewal, carved out a racially uneven park geography in Chicago. By 1970, the date often used by historians as the terminus of postwar urbanism,<sup>40</sup> the social geography of the city and suburbs had started to take a new shape after several decades of highly contentious racial change. The city’s non-Hispanic white population, which peaked at nearly 3.1 million at the 1940 Census (representing 91% of the city’s population), fell to under 2 million by 1970 (59%), and bottomed around 1 million in 1990 (38%).<sup>41</sup> The city’s black population, meanwhile, standing at 277,000 in 1940 before the second wave of the Great Migration, reached its peak of nearly 1.2 million in 1980, representing 40% of the city’s population.<sup>42</sup> Hispanics/Latina/os, numbering just 16,000 in 1940, by 1990 stood at nearly 550,000, or 20% of Chicago’s population.<sup>43</sup> Though numerically

---

<sup>40</sup> There are a few dates we could use, including 1968 (the year of black urban uprisings across the United States), 1971 (the end of the Bretton Woods system of global monetary policy, often marked as the beginning of neoliberalism), and 1972 (the year the Pruitt-Igoe public housing complex in St. Louis was demolished – when “modern architecture died” per Charles Jencks). Since these events and more are factors in the present study of park development in Chicago, 1970 marks a round date to demarcate a shift from the state-driven plans of post-1945 (including the Park District’s 10 Year Plan) to post-1970 retrenchment.

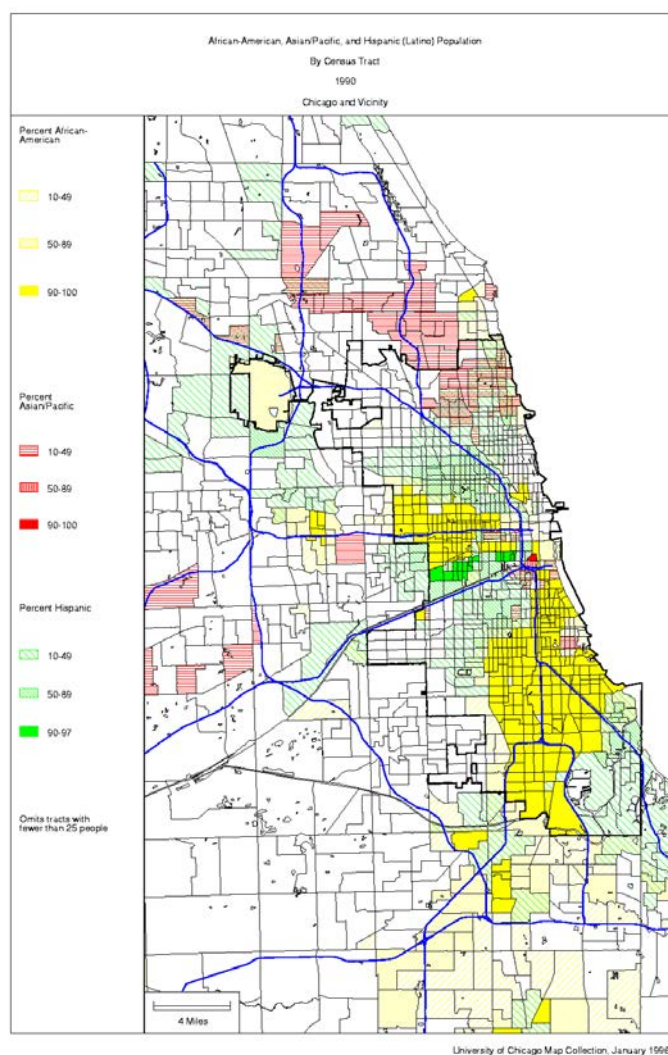
<sup>41</sup> U.S. Census, <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/ILtab.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. The historical terminology here is tricky as the Latina/o group identity did not emerge until later in the twentieth century. See Clara Rodríguez, *Changing Race: Latinos, the Census, and the History of Ethnicity in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Tanya Golash-Boza, “Dropping the Hyphen? Becoming Latino(a)-American through Racialized Assimilation,” *Social Forces* 85, no. 1 (2006): 27-55. On preferences for the terms Hispanic and the Latina/o, see Paul Taylor, Mark Hugo Lopez, Jessica Martínez and

smaller, the city also gained a significant Asian population in the second half of the twentieth century, up from 14,000 people in 1940 to 104,000 in 1990.<sup>44</sup> In short, Chicago, an overwhelmingly white city in 1940, emerged as a highly segregated, racially fragmented metropolis by the end of the “urban crisis” (see Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1: Chicago Census Tracts by Race, 1990<sup>45</sup>**



Gabriel Velasco, “When Labels Don’t Fit: Hispanics and Their Views of Identity,” Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/04/when-labels-dont-fit-hispanics-and-their-views-of-identity/>.

<sup>44</sup> U.S. Census, <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/ILtab.pdf>.

<sup>45</sup> The University of Chicago Library, <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/collections/maps/chibhae.gif>.



A few park-related events are worth mentioning here. Of particular importance was the decline of the Chicago Park District's political power in the 1980s and 90s following a series of major scandals. Combined with the rise of Chicago's first black mayor, Harold Washington, park inequalities emerged as a factious political issue during this period. Ultimately, what followed from the fall of the Park District was not a period of racially egalitarian park development, but the rise of two powerful mayors – Richard M. Daley and Rahm Emanuel – who directed a strategy of neoliberal park development in areas of the city considered ripe for economic growth.

Readers have likely inferred from chapter three that the Park District acted as a source of institutional racism during the postwar decades;<sup>46</sup> this conclusion was also reached by the US Department of Justice, which after a three-year battle with the Park District over racial discrimination obtained a federal consent decree in May 1983, just two weeks after Harold Washington assumed office.<sup>47</sup> The suit charged:

[F]or years the Chicago Park District has favored parks in white neighborhoods to the detriment of those in black and Hispanic areas. Among the complaints are that parks in black and Hispanic neighborhoods have fewer indoor facilities, such as field houses, craft shops and senior citizens' centers; offer fewer outdoor facilities, including ice skating rinks, tennis courts and day camps; have fewer instructional programs, such as arts, crafts and drama, and spend less money on recreational personnel, maintenance and capital improvement.<sup>48</sup>

Under the terms of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974,<sup>49</sup> the DOJ charged the Park District with failing to provide equal resources for parks in communities of color. As a

---

<sup>46</sup> Kwame Ture [f.k.a. Stokely Carmichael] and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Vintage, 2002); Louis L. Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt, eds., *Institutional Racism in America* (Paterson: Prentice Hall, 1969).

<sup>47</sup> Andrew H. Malcolm, "Accord Is Reached On Chicago Parks," *New York Times*, May 11, 1983, <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/05/11/us/accord-is-reached-on-chicago-parks.html>.

<sup>48</sup> "U.S. Sues Chicago Park District, Charging Racial Bias in Programs," *New York Times*, Dec. 1, 1982, <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/12/01/us/us-sues-chicago-park-district-charging-racial-bias-in-programs.html>, 1.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Wright and Caroline Rand Herron, "In Chicago, City Hall Is For Fighting," *New York Times*, May 15, 1983, <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/05/15/weekinreview/the-nation-in-chicago-city-hall-is-for-fighting.html>.

consequence of the expansion of Chicago's black and Latina/o communities after 1945, 270 of Chicago's 580 parks were located in communities of color at the time of the consent decree.<sup>50</sup> As noted by the *New York Times*, "only 35 percent of the minority facilities" had Park District employees present, indicating the level of institutional abandonment that went hand-in-hand with black and brown spatial expansion in Chicago.<sup>51</sup> Such stark racial inequalities had been compounded by the Democratic machine's firm grip on Park District resources; for example, as noted by the *Tribune*, at the time of the consent decree, the North Side's Welles Park (located in then-Park District Superintendent Edmund Kelly's home ward) "had as many fulltime recreation workers as sprawling Humboldt, Columbus, Douglas and Garfield Parks put together. It had more landscape attendants assigned to its 15 acres than the big four with their combined 700 acres."<sup>52</sup> The Park District, which per the terms of the consent decree could avoid admitting guilt, nevertheless "agreed to increase the number of work hours for personnel assigned to recreational programs in minority areas, to speed up maintenance of these facilities and, over a six-year period, to increase capital expenditures there."<sup>53</sup> Although the precise outcomes of the consent decree are difficult to discern, over the course of the subsequent six years, the Park District expanded, renovated, or made some other significant improvement to twenty-one parks, though

---

<sup>50</sup> David H. Koehler, and Margaret T. Wrightson, "Inequality in the Delivery of Urban Services: A Reconsideration of the Chicago Parks," *The Journal of Politics* 49, no. 1 (1987): 80-99; Kenneth R. Mladenka, "The Distribution of an Urban Public Service: The Changing Role of Race and Politics," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 24, no. 4 (1989): 556-83.

<sup>51</sup> Malcolm, "Accord Is Reached On Chicago Parks," 1.

<sup>52</sup> The parks mentioned were all located in predominantly black or Latina/o areas in the 1980s. "A Fitting Farewell from Ed Kelly," *Chicago Tribune* Jul. 22, 1986, [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1986-07-22/news/8602220778\\_1\\_park-system-mayor-washington-city-parks](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1986-07-22/news/8602220778_1_park-system-mayor-washington-city-parks), 1.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

only ten were located in neighborhoods that had large black or Latina/o populations in the 1980s.<sup>54</sup>

The Park District received further unwanted political attention as a consequence of the 1983 mayoral election of Harold Washington and several additional scandals uncovered by federal investigations.<sup>55</sup> Washington, who ran on a reform-oriented platform, targeted the Park District and its longtime Superintendent, Edmund Kelly, for employing racially biased policies.<sup>56</sup> However, the organizational structure of the Park District, coupled with major resistance to Washington's administration in the city council, limited reform efforts.<sup>57</sup> Despite the mayor's eventual ability to appoint new park leaders in 1986, in-fighting and other opposition thwarted attempts to build a racially egalitarian park program.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Author calculation, Chicago Park District records, <http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks/search>. These ten parks (and their respective neighborhoods, in parenthesis) were: Blackwelder (Morgan Park), Harding (Grand Boulevard), Harrison (Pilsen), Mamie Till-Mobley (Woodlawn), McKiernan (Mt. Greenwood), O'Hallaren (Auburn Gresham), Piotrowski (Little Village), Tilton (West Garfield Park), Unity (West Town), and Wicker Park (West Town).

<sup>55</sup> Another federal consent decree, known as the Shakman case – filed in 1969, litigated over the following decades, and finally lifted in 2015 – implicated the Park District in politically motivated hiring practices. The Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted two federal probes into the Park District and its employees in the 1980s, Operation Phocus and Operation Lantern, both of which revealed that Park District employees were taking kickbacks in the hundreds of thousands of dollars in exchange for Park District contracts and other forms of influence. “Chicago Park District Released from Shakman Decree Ending 46-Year Lawsuit,” Office of the Mayor, City of Chicago, Dec. 22, 2015; C. Richard Johnson, “Successful Reform Litigation: The Shakman Patronage Case - The Lawsuits,” *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 64, no. 2 (1988): 479-96; Thomas J. Gradel and Dick Simpson, “Patronage, Cronyism and Criminality in Chicago Government Agencies: Anti-Corruption Report Number 4,” University of Illinois at Chicago, 2011, [http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/pols/ChicagoPolitics/AntiCorruptionReport\\_4.pdf](http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/pols/ChicagoPolitics/AntiCorruptionReport_4.pdf), 18; R. J. Nelson, *Dirty Waters: Confessions of Chicago's Last Harbor Boss* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); William Crawford Jr., “Phony Invoices Seen as Key to Kickback Scheme,” *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 11, 1987: 1; Maurice Possley, “City Facing More Probes: U.S. Targets Corruption in Public Office,” *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 27, 1987: 1.

<sup>56</sup> David Axelrod, “Mayor Says Park Chief Mismanaging District,” *Chicago Tribune*, Sep. 16, 1983, A1; see also Gary Rivlin, *Fire on the Prairie: Harold Washington, Chicago Politics, and the Roots of the Obama Presidency* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013).

<sup>57</sup> “Mayor Urges Fast Action on Park Nominees,” *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 15, 1984, B16; James Strong and Robert Davis, “Mayor Captures Committees: Council Foes Stripped of their Power,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jun. 7, 1986: 1.

<sup>58</sup> John Camper and Robert Davis, “Mayor's Allies Push Aside City Parks Boss Kelly,” *Chicago Tribune* Jun. 17, 1986: 1; John Camper, “Court Reaffirms Parks Takeover: Ruling Saps Kelly's Hopes,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jul. 15, 1986: A1; Bruce R. Dold, “House Sides with Kelly on Parks,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jun. 28, 1986: 1; John Camper and Thomas M. Burton, “Park District Workers Give New Boss the Cold Shoulder,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jun. 18, 1986: 1, 20; Ann Lipinski, “Netsch to Give Up Parks Presidency,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 1987: A1.

Washington's unexpected death in 1987 opened the door for Richard J. Daley's son, Richard M. Daley, to ascend to the mayor's office in 1989. Daley II's noted penchant for implementing neoliberal reforms translated in important ways to Chicago's parks.<sup>59</sup> While Daley's lineage suggested a return to old-school machine politics, the decade of scandals had altered certain levers of influence in the city. Sociologist William Sites describes the mode of mayoral power enacted by Daley II as "mayor-centered neoclientelism,"<sup>60</sup> arguing that post-scandal "legal restrictions on lower end patronage jobs now weakened the intermediary powers of its loyal functionaries, to the advantage of the mayor."<sup>61</sup>

Daley's park agenda laid the groundwork for the development of the 606 in the 2000s. Orienting park development around economic growth and cultural spectacle, Daley's policies helped reframe the central purpose of Chicago's parks in the twenty-first century. By largely obviating the Park District and relying heavily on private funding for park development, Daley helped usher in a new organizational model for park funding and management, one that has privileged private interests and enabled the return of urban nature to unfold along racially unequal lines. Daley centered his park-related goals on the development of Millennium Park in the city's downtown Loop. The broader post-1990 tilt toward entertainment as a key component of downtown revitalization was a planning strategy that in large measure included parks and public spaces.<sup>62</sup> Daley envisioned Millennium Park (built between 1998 and 2004), a northward

---

<sup>59</sup> Larry Bennett, Roberta Garner, and Euan Hague, eds., *Neoliberal Chicago* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2017).

<sup>60</sup> William Sites, "God from the Machine? Urban Movements Meet Machine Politics in Neoliberal Chicago," *Environment and Planning A* 44, no. 11 (2012): 2574-90, 2574.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 2579.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992); Richard Lloyd and Terry Nichols Clark, "The City as an Entertainment Machine," *Research in Urban Sociology: Critical Perspectives on Urban Redevelopment* 6 (2001): 357-78.

extension of much-older Grant Park, to be the cultural *pièce de résistance* of his mayoralty.<sup>63</sup> Millennium Park was dreamed up as a space for the arts, culture, and commerce that would “fill in” the underdeveloped space above the Illinois Central rail yards. Daley was keen to involve private interests from the start; historian Timothy Gilfoyle notes that Daley’s lead intermediary, John Bryan, CEO of the Sara Lee Corporation, was able to solicit donations from “more than two-thirds (15 of 21) of the Illinois residents identified ... in the list of the 400 richest Americans by *Forbes* magazine[.]”<sup>64</sup> Not without its own charges of corruption,<sup>65</sup> Millennium Park eventually cost \$484 million to build: \$310.5 million in public money and \$173.5 million in private donations.<sup>66</sup> In addition to its high price tag and private influence, the park became emblematic of contemporary park development in that its design and uses were structured around spectacle (including numerous public art installations, most notably the \$11.5 million Cloud Gate

---

<sup>63</sup> Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *Millennium Park: Creating a Chicago Landmark* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>65</sup> Figures are in 2004 dollars. On the recurring theme of corruption and park development in Chicago: as plans for Millennium Park were coalescing, the Park District was again implicated in a federal investigation. Operation Silver Shovel led to the conviction of Park District compliance officer Larry Cain on racketeering charges in March 2000. As noted by Thomas Gradel and Dick Simpson, following this operation the public’s attention turned toward corrupt dealings involving Daley’s prized park: “One firm solicited a Park District official for landscaping contracts worth millions of dollars. Michael Lowecki, owner of James Michael Inc., admitted to bribing Park District official, Shirley McMayon to obtain an \$8 million dollar contract for Millennium Park landscaping. Also named in the indictment was John Kevin Hass, who was the Chief Operations Officer of James Michael Inc. until November 2001. McMayon was accused of taking bribes in forms of cash, vacations, car payments and other kickbacks totaling \$137,000. McMayon pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 34 months in prison and ordered to pay \$62,000 in restitution. Lowecki and Haas both pleaded guilty to giving bribes and were sentenced to 46 and 20 months in prison, respectively.” Gradel and Simpson, “Patronage, Cronyism and Criminality in Chicago Government Agencies,” 19-20. Another Millennium Park scandal concerns the Park Grill, a restaurant operated in the park on Park District land. Leased to friends of Mayor Daley, the restaurant pays well below market rate and receives numerous free benefits from the city. See Hal Dardick, “Millennium Park built ‘the Chicago Way,’” *Chicago Tribune*, Jul. 13, 2014, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-millennium-park-costs-met-20140714-story.html>; Gradel and Simpson, “Patronage, Cronyism and Criminality in Chicago Government Agencies,” 19-20.

<sup>66</sup> Gilfoyle, *Millennium Park*, 171-3.

sculpture) and event spaces: a music and dance theater, a music pavilion, and several other event pavilions, all built for tens of millions and named for private benefactors.<sup>67</sup>

In sum, the “urban crisis” decades in Chicago fundamentally altered the Park District’s political power and set the stage for contemporary neoliberal park development. Federal consent decrees, criminal investigations, and the efforts of Harold Washington and his subordinates splintered the Park District’s longstanding patronage power. Richard M. Daley stepped into that void and, as with his other neoliberal reforms to city government, employed public-private partnerships and leveraged Chicago’s donor class to initiate new park development in the city’s downtown. Like sites of neoliberal park creation in other cities, this move allowed Millennium Park to cater to tourists and wealthy residents. Millennium Park and other projects of its ilk were therefore unaccountable to the park demands of communities across the city. Decades of park-related inequalities again became a peripheral political issue, and one easily ignored in the era of privatization. With the public effectively circumvented, park developers and the mayor’s office could focus their attention on building Chicago’s symbolic economy through park projects like Millennium Park and the 606.

---

<sup>67</sup> As Gilfoyle notes, the private influence is felt in many ways: “The park, for example, closes at night (from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.); certain recreational activities (skateboarding and bicycle riding) are prohibited. A private security force polices the space. The lawn and pavilion are too small to accommodate the largest music festivals, such as the Chicago Jazz Festival and the Gospel Music Festival. Nor is it likely to be a space for political rallies. To critics, Chase (formerly BankOne) Promenade, the BP Bridge, the Exelon Pavilions, the Boeing Galleries, and the McCormick Tribune Plaza represent tasteless examples of corporate branding. Rather than a civic center visually divorced from private wealth, as Daniel Burnham envisioned, the Millennium Monument’s roll call of millionaires advertises not only the excess bounty of a society organized around the private market, but the private usurpation of public space.” *Ibid*, 345.

#### 4.4: The Long Shadow of the High Line

The neoliberal reforms that emerged out of the declining influence of the Chicago Park District were by no means unique to Chicago. Although Richard M. Daley was notable for the high degree of privatization of the city's assets and public services that occurred under his administration, similar policy changes were occurring in many American cities after 1990. Owing in part to cuts in federal funding for local parks since the early 1980s,<sup>68</sup> the declining state of older downtowns in the late twentieth century made public spaces particularly malleable for private interests, which have expressed power through an assortment of private park conservancies and business improvement districts.<sup>69</sup> It was within this political-economic landscape that parks like the High Line emerged. Sharing much in common with Millennium Park from a political-economic standpoint, the High Line's development was a product of similar desires for economic growth and cultural prestige. However, while the High Line included public art and postmodern architectural design, it diverged from Millennium Park and other festival public spaces of the 1990s and 2000s in that its visual spectacle engaged directly with "nature." Most crucially, this representation of nature was located *within* the postindustrial built environment and echoed a form of nature that first appeared as a consequence of disinvestment and depopulation – processes that disproportionately affected communities of color as manufacturing and service jobs left older cities for new suburban centers, the Sun Belt, and overseas. The High Line's design reproduced what had been a symbol of racial-spatial disadvantage, but flipped it into a symbol of the New Urbanism and the re-making of cities for

---

<sup>68</sup> Per Gilfoyle, much of the previous federal funding for urban parks had come from the Land and Water Conservation Fund state grant program, which had been cut back significantly since the beginning of Ronald Reagan's first term in 1981. Ibid, 102.

<sup>69</sup> Shepard and Smithsimon, *The Beach Beneath the Streets*; Madden, "Revisiting the End of Public Space."

the “creative class.”<sup>70</sup> Understanding what distinguishes imbricated spaces from other contemporary park developments is crucial for explaining the ontological, cultural, and spatial convergence of city and nature in the twenty-first century.

The High Line was not the first park built atop an elevated railway (that was Paris’s Coulée Verte, opened in 1993), but it does cast the longest shadow. The fact that it so strongly informed the development of Chicago’s 606 – from all angles: the political impetus, the community involvement, and the design – requires a brief discussion of the High Line’s creation. Much more so than other spectacle-driven park development, like Chicago’s Millennium Park or New York’s Brooklyn Bridge Park, the High Line accelerated a global awareness of how parks generally – and imbricated spaces in particular – could spur economic growth and cultural prestige.<sup>71</sup> With more than two billion dollars invested in adjacent real estate development in the first five years of the High Line’s opening,<sup>72</sup> and with elite taste-makers and cultural institutions like the Whitney Museum of American Art lining up to be associated with all things High Line,<sup>73</sup> the park’s development has further awakened urban growth machines’ emerging “green” orientation.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Jamie Peck, “Struggling with the Creative Class,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 4 (2005): 740-70.

<sup>71</sup> A cursory Google search suggests as much: 9.7 million results for “High Line” compared to 2.6 million results for “Millennium Park” and 500,000 results for “Brooklyn Bridge Park” as of March 2017.

<sup>72</sup> Loughran, “Parks for Profit,” 64-5.

<sup>73</sup> Anticipating the cultural import of the High Line, in 2007 the Whitney’s leadership initiated the museum’s relocation from New York’s Upper East Side to the High Line’s southern terminus, with the new building opening in 2015.

<sup>74</sup> Steven Lang and Julia Rothenberg, “Neoliberal Urbanism, Public Space, and the Greening of the Growth Machine: New York City’s High Line Park,” *Environment and Planning A*, first published November 24, 2016, DOI: 10.1177/0308518X16677969.



When the High Line opened, the park and its creators bathed in the wide acclaim of critics and visitors.<sup>75</sup> Architectural critics raved about the park's decidedly postmodern design, use of recycled materials, and the juxtaposition between city and nature. As *New York Times* critic Nicolai Ouroussoff wrote, the architecture represented "A subtle play between contemporary and historical design, industrial decay and natural beauty . . . . [T]hose gardens have a wild, ragged look that echoes the character of the old abandoned track bed when it was covered with weeds, just a few years ago."<sup>76</sup> Longtime *New Yorker* critic Paul Goldberger further situated the High Line's historical newness in relation to both traditional park spaces and the "city" from which they were set apart:

Parks in large cities are usually thought of as refuges, as islands of green amid seas of concrete and steel. When you approach the High Line . . . , what you see first is the kind of thing urban parks were created to get away from—a harsh, heavy, black steel structure supporting an elevated rail line that once brought freight cars right into factories and warehouses and that looks, at least from a distance, more like an abandoned relic than an urban oasis.<sup>77</sup>

The High Line's emergence as a symbol of the *new* New York – a city oriented economically around the neoliberal trinity of finance, tourism, and real estate<sup>78</sup> – was something of a turnaround from how it had been viewed in the public imagination for several decades. The railway had last been used for train traffic in 1980, and in the intervening years, the structure became a haven for graffiti artists and urban adventurers. The rail bed was a hospitable home for

---

<sup>75</sup> Diane Cardwell, "For High Line Visitors, Park Is a Railway Out of Manhattan," *The New York Times*, Jul. 21, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/22/nyregion/22highline.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Nicolai Ouroussoff, "On High, a Fresh Outlook," *New York Times*, Jun. 9, 2009, C1.

<sup>77</sup> Paul Goldberger, "Miracle Above Manhattan," *National Geographic*, April 2011, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/04/ny-high-line/goldberger-text>, 1.

<sup>78</sup> Greenberg, *Branding New York*; Julian Brash, *Bloomberg's New York: Class and Governance in the Luxury City* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

flora, mostly wild grasses; for the trespassers who were able to make their way onto the railway, the High Line was a highly valued imbricated landscape.<sup>79</sup>

At the same time, to many other New Yorkers, the High Line was incontrovertible evidence of the city's decline. In the years that followed New York's flirtations with bankruptcy in 1975, New York became home to the "urban crisis" *par excellence*.<sup>80</sup> As in Chicago, suburbanization had gutted a good portion of the city's tax base, with much of the white middle class, along with many corporations, having fled to the suburbs.<sup>81</sup> In the 1980s, the New York city government began agitating to tear down the High Line. In the 1990s, the Giuliani administration (1994-2001) and other principals of the city's growth machine pursued numerous means of demolition.<sup>82</sup> In response to plans proposed by the Regional Plan Association to turn the viaduct into a public park, local residents formed the non-profit Friends of the High Line in 1999.<sup>83</sup> The organization would go on to secure millions in philanthropic dollars and fell into favor with the ascendant Bloomberg administration after 2001. With "super-gentrification"<sup>84</sup> accelerating in the neighborhoods around the High Line, the economic potential of the project became clear to the city government – particularly as Mayor Michael Bloomberg hoped to package the park with the broader redevelopment of Manhattan's West Side.<sup>85</sup> When the park eventually opened in 2009, it was the product of a public-private partnership in its purest form:

---

<sup>79</sup> Martin Gottlieb, "Rail Fan Finds Rusting Dream of West Side," *New York Times*, Jan. 16, 1984, B1.

<sup>80</sup> Kim Phillips-Fein, *Fear City: New York's Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2017).

<sup>81</sup> Greenberg, *Branding New York*.

<sup>82</sup> Loughran, "Parks for Profit."

<sup>83</sup> Joshua David and Robert Hammond, *High Line: The Inside Story of New York City's Park in the Sky* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

<sup>84</sup> Loretta Lees defines this process as "the transformation of already gentrified, prosperous and solidly upper-middle-class neighborhoods into much more exclusive and expensive enclaves." See "Super-gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn Heights, New York City," *Urban Studies* 40, no. 12 (2003): 2487-509, 2487.

<sup>85</sup> Loughran, "Parks for Profit."

the city government had done the majority of the financing, and the Friends of the High Line, a private group, would primarily be responsible for the ongoing fundraising and management.<sup>86</sup>

From a design perspective, the High Line was one of the first parks to present intentionally as an imbricated space. The aforementioned Coulée Verte in Paris, despite its postindustrial location atop a rail viaduct, offered a traditional botanic garden as its form of nature. The High Line offered an attempted simulacrum of the flora that had existed in the space in the 1980s and 90s (see Figure 4.2). Dating to the vacant-lot park conversions that began in Chicago and elsewhere in the late 1960s and early 1970s, imbricated spaces have a history of being made into parks.<sup>87</sup> But these interventions, like those at the Coulée Verte, have tended to demolish the existing imbrication of built and natural forms and instead plop a traditional park (whether a playground or a garden) into their place. The design of the High Line, in contrast, elected to celebrate the space's original imbrication and reproduce it through architecture.

---

<sup>86</sup> Alexander J. Reichl, "The High Line and the Ideal of Democratic Public Space," *Urban Geography* 37, no. 6 (2016): 904-25.

<sup>87</sup> Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982), 144-6. This process was often initiated by community groups seeking to turn empty spaces into recreational amenities and embraced by city governments for their low cost. Community gardens are products of a similar process. See Miranda J. Martinez, *Power at the Roots: Gentrification, Community Gardens, and the Puerto Ricans of the Lower East Side* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010).



Figure 4.2: The High Line's original imbrication (photo by Joel Sternfeld, 2000)

In transforming the “old” High Line into a park, the design team focused on re-creating the elements of decaying city and insurgent nature that had made the original imbricated space so compelling.<sup>88</sup> The logistics of creating a safe, usable public space necessitated the removal of the site's original rail beds and wild flora. In their place, the park designers sought to reconstruct as many of the old elements as possible: for example, by re-using pieces of the original rails for aesthetic effect, developing a rail-inspired planked walkway, and cultivating “wild”-looking plants, all in an attempt to keep the new space in character with the past. These design elements thereby suggested to park visitors the continued agency of insurgent nature and decayed city in shaping the space, despite the fact the park was a space made by people. Differentiating the High Line's natural aesthetics from those found in other urban parks, the grasses, flowers, and trees

---

<sup>88</sup> The High Line's design team was comprised of landscape architect James Corner, architects Liz Diller, Ric Scofidio, and Charles Renfro, and landscape designer Piet Oudolf.

suggested to park users that the appearance of nature within this urban, built context was indeed “natural” (see Figure 4.3).



**Figure 4.3: “Wild” plants on the High Line (photo by author, 2013)**

Creating a new imbricated space also required aspects of the city to re-create the phenomenological experience of the old High Line. The visual union of city and nature was done explicitly, as the park’s designers drew out elements of the High Line’s industrial qualities in spaces like the “10<sup>th</sup> Avenue Square,” where part of the structure was removed to provide park-goers with a glass-enclosed view to the street traffic below (see Figure 4.4). Such spaces created visual exchanges between park users and people in the city; importantly, they also made mundane aspects of urban existence visible to people on the High Line.



Figure 4.4: The High Line's 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue Square (Photo by author, 2011)

Most importantly, the design considerations found within the imbricated space of the High Line have since been transposed to numerous contexts. Globalizing trends in architecture and urban governance have promoted the rollout of copycat High Lines the world over. Some, like Chicago's 606, have already opened to wide acclaim. Others, like Philadelphia's Rail Park and Rotterdam's de Hofbogen, remain in the planning stages as various organizations work to gain funds and government approval. And still others, like Mexico City's Chapultepec Cultural Corridor, have been proposed, only to fall apart. (The Chapultepec Cultural Corridor, for example, was rejected two-to-one by a public referendum amid concerns that the park would only serve elite private interests).<sup>89</sup> The availability of abandoned urban infrastructure is part of these sites' appeal – but the political-economic and cultural changes portended by the High Line extend well beyond elevated parks. Firmly embedded within green urbanism policy

<sup>89</sup> Grace Chua, "Why Mexico City's 'High Line' didn't fly," *CitiScope*, Apr. 8, 2016, <http://citiscopes.org/story/2016/why-mexico-citys-high-line-didnt-fly>; Laura Bliss, "The Backlash to Mexico City's High Line-Style Park," *CityLab*, Sept. 29, 2015, <http://www.citylab.com/design/2015/09/the-terrible-plan-for-mexico-citys-high-line-style-park/408010>.

prescriptions, the wider emergence of imbricated linear parks points towards the increasing centrality of parks within cities' symbolic economies. Spaces as aesthetically and ecologically diverse as Houston's Buffalo Bayou Park and Miami's proposed Low Line can be seen as part of a wider agenda that directs financial resources to park creation in downtowns or wealthy/gentrifying residential areas. In addition to being imbricated spaces, in most cases, these parks are simultaneously "privileged public spaces" in that they carry symbolic and material means of excluding non-white and/or poor visitors. Through policing, programming, and design, these new parks cater to the aesthetic, recreational, and consumption preferences of middle- and upper-class urbanites.<sup>90</sup> As the following section indicates, these issues have all been at play – and indeed, began to be contested – in the development of Chicago's 606.

#### **4.5: A High Line for Chicago**

Much in the way that the creation of New York's Central Park in the 1850s stimulated demand for cities across North America to have "their" version, the High Line's economic and cultural impact has stimulated other communities' interest in converting disused industrial infrastructure into public parks. Particularly with the decline of older manufacturing-based economies in the Rust Belt and elsewhere, many North American cities have numerous abandoned spaces that are ripe for conversion. Given the typical social geography of such spaces, which tend to be found in historically marginalized urban areas, in the twenty-first century they can be found in the paths of gentrification. The imbrication of built and natural environments, long the aesthetic gloss on urban poverty and racial inequality as communities of color were systematically disinvested in the twentieth century, is now being celebrated as a form of nature

---

<sup>90</sup> Loughran, "Parks for Profit."

that – when cultivated in urban parks – provides a “green screen”<sup>91</sup> for the racialized re-taking of urban space by white gentrifiers and growth machines.

The Bloomingdale Trail – or, as it was re-branded, the 606 – has become Chicago’s signature imbricated space since its opening to the public in 2015.<sup>92</sup> Like New York’s High Line, the 606 was built atop an elevated railway that emerged as a hybrid site of built and natural environments following its closure to rail traffic in 2001 (Figure 4.5).<sup>93</sup> The movement to redevelop the space as a public park began much like the High Line’s: after the possibilities for redevelopment came on the city government’s radar in 1998,<sup>94</sup> a group of local citizens founded the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail in 2003 to explore possibilities for the railway. Although the Bloomingdale was not in danger of demolition like the High Line was in the 1990s,<sup>95</sup> this early mobilization of community actors was important in building political and economic support for the redevelopment project.<sup>96</sup> The constellation of public and private organizations that would

---

<sup>91</sup> Hillary Angelo, “Manufacturing *Gesellschaft*: Urbanized Nature and the ‘Green Screen,’” unpublished manuscript, 2017.

<sup>92</sup> The city government’s re-naming of the Bloomingdale Trail as the 606 – the first three numbers of every Chicago zip code – was met with consternation by the park’s community advocates and its designers. Note that there remains some ambiguity about the name – the official position is that the Bloomingdale Trail is the “centerpiece” of the 606, as the 606 includes both the trail and the sequence of street-level parks that dot the trail. However, while some people remain invested in the site’s original name, most of the design documents, official literature, and journalistic coverage have taken to referring to the trail itself as the 606. For that reason, I refer to the park as the 606 in this study.

<sup>93</sup> “Bloomingdale Trail,” City of Chicago, May 2011, [https://www.cityofchicago.org/dam/city/depts/cdot/BloomingdaleTrail\\_INFO.pdf](https://www.cityofchicago.org/dam/city/depts/cdot/BloomingdaleTrail_INFO.pdf).

<sup>94</sup> Chicago Park District, “CitySpace: An Open Space Plan for Chicago,” January 1998, [https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp\\_info/cityspace\\_plan.html](https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/cityspace_plan.html).

<sup>95</sup> Loughran, “Parks for Profit.”

<sup>96</sup> Leaders of the public-private partnerships like those that drove the development of the High Line and the 606 often deploy the abstract term “community” to invoke wide, grassroots support. Definitions of community are slippery, of course, and many of the community-level actors driving the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail came from the predominantly white neighborhoods of Wicker Park and Bucktown. But interestingly, some groups serving the Latina/o communities to the west, such as the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, a consortium of more than 40 community organizations, supported the development of the park in the early years of political mobilization. Brian Perea in conversation with the author, January 2017.



become involved in the park's development included the Chicago Park District, the Trust for Public Land, and the City of Chicago.



Figure 4.5: The 606 (photo by author, 2016)

On the surface, the 606 is simply “Chicago’s High Line” in the way that many cities have their own “Central Park.”<sup>97</sup> Although the High Line and the 606 share important characteristics – both are elevated linear parks that feature a city-nature imbrication as their defining aesthetic feature – there are other factors that complicate a simple reading of the two sites. First, the 606’s development did not occur in a vacuum: it was influenced by the High Line in important ways. How Chicago’s growth machine envisioned the park, how the designers conceived it, and how the project’s emergent opposition understood the economic implications of the park were all

<sup>97</sup> Indeed, the Chicago Park District’s website refers to the Loop’s Grant Park as “[a] city centerpiece much like New York’s Central Park[.]” <http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks/grant-park/>, 1.

shaped by what happened in New York. Second, the 606 case draws out the race and class dynamics of imbricated parks into much clearer view. The tight coupling of the High Line's community partners with the identity of the Chelsea community more broadly – i.e., many of those close to the Friends of the High Line were the predominantly white, often gay, artistically inclined cultural workers who represented the “authentic” keepers of the neighborhood – precluded questions of gentrification from dominating public conversation about the park, even as the park development indicated a westward expansion of that community into the former manufacturing district. If anything, the redevelopment of the High Line represented a celebration and an intensification of Chelsea's identity as an arts district.<sup>98</sup> The 606, in contrast, represented (and continues to represent) a challenge to the established identities of the surrounding communities. The park, which from the east runs from Wicker Park and Bucktown – former Latina/o neighborhoods that became predominantly white by the 1990s – to Humboldt Park and Logan Square – gentrifying neighborhoods that have been predominantly Latina/o since the 1950s, with Humboldt Park serving as the spiritual home of Chicago's Puerto Rican community<sup>99</sup> – is positioned directly in the path of contemporary gentrification pressures. The 606 case illustrates how the development of imbricated spaces is bound up in broader racial-spatial dynamics: first, by raising property values and implanting public spaces for cultural practices associated with a white, middle-class urban habitus, and second, through new parks' top-down refashioning of old markers of decline into valued aesthetic objects for gentrifiers' admiration. Figure 4.6 indicates the position of the 606/Bloomingdale Trail on the Northwest Side of the city.

---

<sup>98</sup> Halle and Tiso, *New York's New Edge*.

<sup>99</sup> Gina M. Pérez, *The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).



Figure 4.6: Map of Chicago parks with the Bloomingdale Trail/606<sup>100</sup>

In what follows, I note two key aspects of the 606's creation. First, I examine the emerging politics of imbricated spaces, noting the ways that these politics, in Chicago and elsewhere, are intimately connected to racialized conflicts over urban space. Second, I analyze aspects of the park's development and design that indicate the socio-spatial convergence of built and natural forms, the "return" of nature to the city, and the development of symbolically valuable urban parks for the first time since the nineteenth century.

#### 4.6: The Politics and Development of the 606

The impetus to redevelop the Bloomingdale Trail as a public park began in the early 2000s as gentrification was becoming firmly entrenched in the areas around the eastern half of the railway. An initial redevelopment study of the site was undertaken by the city government in

<sup>100</sup> City of Chicago, "Bloomingdale Trail and Park Framework Plan," n.d., [https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdot/BloomingdaleTrail/Bloomingdale\\_Framework\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdot/BloomingdaleTrail/Bloomingdale_Framework_Plan.pdf), 2.

1998, and the project first became viable when it was listed on the Logan Square Open Space Plan in 2004, three years after the Bloomingdale Trail closed to rail traffic.<sup>101</sup> The Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, the community group that spurred local enthusiasm for the project, formed in 2003; the group partnered with national non-profit organization The Trust for Public Land in 2006, and the first funds for the park project arrived in 2007.<sup>102</sup>

The Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail had seven co-founders: Darren Beck, Josh Deth, Raul Echeverria, Lucy Gomez, Ben Helphand, Tim Lane, and Paul Smith.<sup>103</sup> The co-founders included five white residents of Bucktown, Wicker Park, and the adjacent East Village (Helphand, a public space advocate and current president of the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail;<sup>104</sup> Beck, an attorney;<sup>105</sup> Smith, a computer programmer;<sup>106</sup> and two beer-makers – Deth, of Logan Square’s Revolution Brewing, and Lane, of Lincoln Park’s Goose Island)<sup>107</sup> as well as two Latina/o community leaders from Humboldt Park and Logan Square (Echeverria, deputy director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Humboldt Park;<sup>108</sup> and Gomez, director of health outreach

---

<sup>101</sup> City of Chicago, “Bloomingdale Trail: History, Background and Frequently Asked Questions,” May 2011, [https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdot/BloomingdaleTrail\\_INFO\\_2011.pdf](https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdot/BloomingdaleTrail_INFO_2011.pdf).

<sup>102</sup> Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, “History of Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail,” 2015, <http://www.bloomingdaletrail.org/history>.

<sup>103</sup> Elaine Coorens, “The 606: Streams Flowed Together Forming a River...The Bloomingdale Trail,” *Our Urban Times*, Jun. 4, 2015, <http://www.oururbantimes.com/parks/606-streams-flowed-together-forming-riverthe-bloomingdale-trail>.

<sup>104</sup> Chicago Community Trust, “Advocate for People, Place & Philanthropy: Ben Helphand,” Jun. 9, 2015, <http://cct.org/2015/06/advocate-for-people-place-philanthropy-ben-helphand/>.

<sup>105</sup> “Bloomingdale Trail Bridge Move Fascinates Everyone From Kids to Rahm,” *DNAinfo*, Apr. 19, 2014, <https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20140419/bucktown/bloomingdale-trail-bridge-move-fascinates-everyone-from-kids-rahm>; “Darren Beck, JD,” *LinkedIn*, 2017, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/darren-beck-jd-1688335>.

<sup>106</sup> Paul Smith, “About me,” 2017, <https://pauladamsmith.com/about.html>.

<sup>107</sup> Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, “Tim Lane,” 2017, <http://www.bloomingdaletrail.org/about/board/tim-lane/>, cached by ZoomInfo, [http://www.zoominfo.com/CachedPage/?archive\\_id=0&page\\_id=2031448843&page\\_url=//www.bloomingdaletrail.org/about/board/tim-lane/&page\\_last\\_updated=2009-03\\_15T00:07:40&firstName=Tim&lastName=Lane](http://www.zoominfo.com/CachedPage/?archive_id=0&page_id=2031448843&page_url=//www.bloomingdaletrail.org/about/board/tim-lane/&page_last_updated=2009-03_15T00:07:40&firstName=Tim&lastName=Lane).

<sup>108</sup> Jeffrey Steele, “Humboldt Park Residents Face Challenges Together,” *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 30, 2009, [http://www.chicagotribune.com/chi-humboldt-profile\\_chomes\\_1030oct30-story.html](http://www.chicagotribune.com/chi-humboldt-profile_chomes_1030oct30-story.html).

at the Logan Square Neighborhood Association).<sup>109</sup> Although many people in the four neighborhoods believe that the creation of the 606 has disproportionately benefitted Wicker Park and Bucktown while harming longtime residents in Logan Square and Humboldt Park – by raising property values and encouraging gentrification – the Friends group attempted to engage genuine support from the Latina/o community. The group’s organizational structure, for example, mandated that the Board of Directors would “always maintain at least 2 representatives from each of the 4 neighborhoods that line the Trail (Humboldt Park, Logan Square, Wicker Park and Bucktown)[.]”<sup>110</sup> Further, the group held many public meetings and events in the area’s Latina/o communities, and many of their community-facing documents were written in both English and Spanish (Figure 4.7).<sup>111</sup> In brief, the founders of the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail intended to create a public park that would serve the needs of all of the surrounding communities. But the realities of a public works project in the twenty-first century indicated that the fate of the park would not rest solely in their hands.

---

<sup>109</sup> Gordon Walek, “The Bloomingdale Trail: It Takes a Village to Make a Park,” *LISC Chicago*, Apr. 25, 2012, <http://www.lisc-chicago.org/news/1796>

<sup>110</sup> Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, “Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail Board of Directors,” 2017, <http://www.bloomingdaletrail.org/about/board.html>, 1.

<sup>111</sup> Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, “2<sup>nd</sup>. Gen FBT Brochure,” 2005, [http://www.bloomingdaletrail.org/pdf/2nd\\_gen\\_FBT\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.bloomingdaletrail.org/pdf/2nd_gen_FBT_brochure.pdf); Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, “Limpieza de Primavera y Picnic,” 2005, <http://www.bloomingdaletrail.org/pdf/fbt-spring-cleaning-2005-es.pdf>.

### Look Up! It's the Bloomingdale

The Bloomingdale Line is the elevated, unused railroad between North & Armitage avenues that runs through Bucktown, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, and Wicker Park.

It may not look like much now, but someday it will be a park and a trail, a place to play, bike, walk, run, explore, commute ...

Spring Cleaning & Picnic  
**Saturday, May 21**  
**10 AM - 2 PM**

Experience the Bloomingdale first-hand and imagine the possibilities!



The Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail is a grassroots organization working to preserve the embankment and transform the line into a multi-use park and trail.

**Here's the Plan**

- Meet at Lawndale & Bloomingdale near the Logan Square YMCA
- 10 AM - Spring Cleaning up on the Line
- 12:30 PM - Picnic at Yates School Playground (Between Francisco & Richmond)

For your safety, please wear closed toe shoes

For more information or to volunteer, call Ben (773) 677-7920, or email info@bloomingdaletrail.org

-----  
 This event is being sponsored by the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail and Openlands Treekeepers  
[www.bloomingdaletrail.org](http://www.bloomingdaletrail.org)

### Mira hacia arriba! Es la Via Bloomingdale

La línea elevada Bloomingdale no ha estado en uso entre la Avenida Norte y la Avenida Armitage. Estan vías pasan elevadas por Bucktown, Humboldt Park, Logan Square y Wicker Park.

No parece mucho ahora, pero algun día sera un parque para jugar, caminar, correr, explorar ...

Limpieza de Primavera y Picnic  
**Sabado 21 de Mayo**  
**10 AM - 2 PM**

Venga y explore las posibilidades por si mismo!



Los amigos de la Vereda Bloomingdale es una organización que trabaja para preservar el terreno y la transformación de esta vereda en un parque para diversas recreaciones.

**Nuestro plan es**

- Reunimos en Lawndale & Bloomingdale Cerca de McCormick Tribune YMCA in Logan Square (Lawndale)
- 10 AM - Limpieza en las vías
- 12:30 PM - Picnic en el patio del Escuela Yates (entre la Francisco y Richmond)

Para su seguridad use zapatos cerrados

para mas informacion, llama Lucy Gomez-Feliciano Maria Oquendo

-----  
 Este evento es hospedado por Los Amigos de la Vereda Bloomingdale y Openlands Treekeepers.  
[www.bloomingdaletrail.org](http://www.bloomingdaletrail.org)

Figure 4.7: English- and Spanish-language fliers by the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail

With Millennium Park already serving as the park-related feather in Richard M. Daley’s cap, the political momentum for the Bloomingdale Trail/606 accelerated after Rahm Emanuel was elected mayor in 2011. As Emanuel recounted in 2015 after the park opened (on June 6, or 6/06), “People have been talking about this for years. I told them when I ran for office in 2011, I said I’m going to be for it. No more bake sales, man.”<sup>112</sup> A longtime insider of the Democratic Party at local, state, and national levels – Emanuel was a former U.S. Congressman who notably served as a senior advisor to Bill Clinton and Chief of Staff under Barack Obama – Emanuel was knowledgeable about the ways public funds could be leveraged for projects like the 606. For the park’s construction, he ultimately employed federal dollars earmarked not for parks, but for transportation – specifically, \$50 million in funds from the Department of Transportation’s

<sup>112</sup> Whet Moser, “What Emanuel Has in Mind for Chicago’s Parks—and How to Pay for It,” *Chicago Magazine*, Jul. 22, 2015, <http://www.chicagogmag.com/city-life/July-2015/A-Friday-in-the-Park-With-Rahm/>.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program<sup>113</sup> – with the result that the city government paid just \$5 million towards the \$95 million cost.<sup>114</sup>

Just as Daley had pinned his cultural legacy on Millennium Park, Emanuel – whose rocky first term included battles with the city’s teachers’ union and scandals involving police violence – saw a shining new 606 as important for his reelection hopes in 2015.<sup>115</sup> According to Frances Whitehead, one of the park’s designers, this political imperative created some compromises in the development of the park. Whitehead had been pushing the Park District and the city government to initiate a sustainability study on the site and pursue LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. As she recalls, “Everybody said we did not have time; and the reason it was moving so fast was because Rahm Emmanuel wanted [the opening of the 606] connected to his reelection campaign. So because of that, a five-year project happened in three years.”<sup>116</sup> As Emanuel’s tenure wore on, and particularly as he faced growing public opposition after his reelection in 2015 (see footnote 115), he began branding himself as a forward-thinking champion of the parks who would resurrect the city’s old *Urbs in Horto* motto by building not only the 606, but by establishing new parks throughout the city.<sup>117</sup> The mayor

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid; Alisa Hauser, “Atop Bloomingdale Trail, Emanuel Sees ‘The 606’ as Neighborhood Unifier,” *DNAINfo*, Jun. 2, 2015, <https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20150602/humboldt-park/atop-trail-emanuel-sees-606-as-neighborhood-unifier>.

<sup>114</sup> Blair Kamin, “Chicago’s New 606 Trail a Boon for Open Space, Neighborhoods It Links,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jun. 2, 2015, <http://chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/ct-606-trail-kamin-met-0531-20150529-column.html/>.

<sup>115</sup> Emanuel defeated fellow Democrat Jesus “Chuy” Garcia 55-45 in a runoff election. This was far from the end of political pressure for the embattled mayor. In late 2015, a poll by the *Illinois Observer* indicated that his approval rating was 18% and 51% of likely voters wanted him to resign after a video revealed that black teenager Laquan McDonald had been shot 16 times by a white Chicago police officer. Aamer Madhani, “Poll: 51% of Chicagoans say Mayor Rahm Emanuel should resign,” *USA Today*, Dec. 8, 2015, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/12/08/poll-51-chicagoans-say-mayor-rahm-emanuel-should-resign/76977622/>

<sup>116</sup> Frances Whitehead in conversation with the author, October 2016.

<sup>117</sup> These other parks included the Loop’s Riverwalk and Northerly Island, Big Marsh on the Far South Side, and West Ridge Nature Preserve on the Northwest Side. This wider framing is reflected in comments Emanuel made in March 2016 to an audience on the South Side: “Chicago remains and always will be the city in a garden[.] ... Now

went as far to call his plans “Building on Burnham,” a reference to the famous architect and planner Daniel Burnham, who designed the Plan of Chicago in 1909.<sup>118</sup> The park program, Emanuel declared, “will elevate the status of our existing parks to help bring cultural vibrancy and economic growth to every Chicago neighborhood.”<sup>119</sup> However, standing in contrast to these grand intentions was information revealed in a 2014 investigative report that indicated that “More than half of the \$500 million spent on Park District improvements since 2011, the year Mayor Rahm Emanuel was elected, went to just 10 of the city’s 77 neighborhoods—seven of them are increasingly white, affluent and have access to outside money.”<sup>120</sup>

Emanuel’s desire to see the 606 as part of his cultural legacy at times clashed with the various other institutional stakeholders involved in creating the park. The Park District was committed to buying land in order to carve out a series of “access parks” that would stand at many of the various entrances to the trail itself. Because the project was additionally defined as a transportation project for funding purposes, the city’s Department of Transportation was also included. \$20 million worth of private interests – representing the community-level organizers (the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail), along with the Trust for Public Land, who brought

---

is the time to make sure that that garden blooms in every neighborhood in our city. Every child in every neighborhood deserves to have these opportunities within reach, and soon they will. And as we connect our children to more recreational and educational opportunities, we will also connect them to the natural areas that exist all around us. We have to be honest. Some kids cannot afford to make it to Wisconsin or out west. Some of our kids never even make it to the lakefront. We must give them access to world-class natural spaces and the experience that come with it without ever having to leave the city.” John Byrne, “Emanuel Makes Parks Pitch,” *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 22, 2016, <https://www.chicagotribune.com%2Fnews%2Flocal%2Fpolitics%2Fct-emanuel-parks-speech-met-20160322-story.html>.

<sup>118</sup> Byrne, “Emanuel Makes Parks Pitch.”

<sup>119</sup> Chicago Mayor’s Office, “The Mayor Announces ‘Building On Burnham,’” Mar. 22, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGgou3FVGPE>, 3:17-3:25.

<sup>120</sup> Angela Caputo, “Leveling the Playing Field,” *The Chicago Reporter*, Summer 2014, <http://chicagoreporter.com/reporter-issues/2014-07-pay-play/>, 6.



matching money to the project, and private donors – had a seat at the table.<sup>121</sup> When fault lines emerged in the development process, they pitted top-down interests in the mayor’s office against the local interests of the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail (who had far fewer dollars to use as leverage); the Trust for Public Land, though recruited to the project by the Friends group, sided with the mayor on issues like the park’s divisive re-branding from the Bloomingdale Trail to the 606.<sup>122</sup> As recounted by the project’s lead artist, Frances Whitehead:

There was a schism ... in the civic discourse out of the mayor’s office—the mayor’s office wanted the new Millennium Park that would be the economic driver, and the neighborhood did not want gentrification, they wanted participation, a bottom-up project, they wanted a green space, exercise, a place for their kids, a gang-free zone, ... they wanted their thing, they didn’t want Millennium Park. And yet, there’s not even public transportation downtown for tourists to even get to the thing. There was a ... big political division between the people who want a top-down Millennium Park tourist driver and people who want a bottom-up neighborhood park. And we can see that in the name. When they changed it to 606 it was incredibly contentious. The design team was not in any way involved, we were not even told. They went into a closed room, the Trust for Public Land, worked with a branding expert ... and came up with this abstraction, this cipher, named after what, the Post Office, a dying institution? You’re going to name this new \$100 million amenity after a dying institution? ... It was very short-sighted. They had a PR person, again the Rahm Emanuel thing, they had these branding people, and when they presented the name of the 606 at the last public meeting, they were booed. The community—not just a little bit, loud, horrendous booing. The community that had ... created the premise of Bloomingdale and had proposed this, ... it’s on Bloomingdale Avenue, it had always been Bloomingdale, it was the Bloomingdale Trail, it was the Bloomingdale Trail project, and all of a sudden it was the 606. ... Nobody gets it, because it’s such an abstraction. And it’s such a political statement: “Oh, it’s for the

---

<sup>121</sup> It should be noted that the 606’s private funds reflected a very different scale of donations, if not a different class of donor, compared to Millennium Park, where private dollars equaled \$173.5 million. That was not necessarily for lack of trying, however. For example, in June 2015, the Trust for Public Land hosted an inaugural Above the Rails Gala, which featured cuisine from celebrity chefs like Rick Bayless and reflected the sort of upscale cultural convergence that had been perfected by the Friends of the High Line. Candace Jordan, “Inaugural Above the Rails Gala was a Celebration of The 606 Trail,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jun. 9, 2015, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-sun-0614-candid-candace-2-20150609-column.html>. See also David and Hammond, *High Line*.

<sup>122</sup> The Trust for Public Land, as a national organization well-versed in public private partnerships (and with a board that includes numerous real estate developers and finance executives), had its own interests at play. For its part in the development of the 606, the TPL partnered with corporations, such as Under Armour and McKee Foods, and likely saw the success of the 606 as important to gaining influence on future park projects, both in Chicago and elsewhere.

whole of Chicago.” Get real, it’s not, it’s a neighborhood connector. It’s not for the whole of Chicago. It was really, I believe, an error. And time will tell whether it’s fixed.<sup>123</sup>

This schism between seeing the 606 as an economic growth strategy for the entire city and seeing the park as a community amenity may have been brought to a head over the naming controversy, but it has broader implications for how the park’s presence affects the surrounding communities. At the 606’s opening ceremony in 2015, Emanuel declared, “We are once again reclaiming the public spaces of the city of Chicago for the citizens of the city of Chicago. And things that were once areas like this, ... things that were once walled off, ... are all now becoming nature preserves, or walks for people of the city of Chicago, and we are opening up the public spaces ... to the public.”<sup>124</sup> A press release from the Mayor’s Office further quoted Emanuel as noting, “It is essential that all Chicagoans have access to world-class parks and open spaces – including playgrounds for children, gathering places for families, and alternative transportation routes for bicyclists and pedestrians[.] ... The Bloomingdale Trail is a major, exciting project that will improve quality of life for many of our residents.”<sup>125</sup> But these gestures towards the park’s civic benefits are highly ambiguous. Left unanswered in glib statements about “the public” are some of the fundamental questions that have animated park development in Chicago since the nineteenth century: who was this new park *for*?

One unusual consequence of the 606’s linearity is that unlike traditional parks’ spatial dimensions – which tend to be rectangular, have clearly defined sides, and be located within a

---

<sup>123</sup> Frances Whitehead in conversation with the author, October 2016. See also Kathy Bergen, “Next Step for Bloomingdale Trail: Creating an Identity,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jun. 17, 2013, [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-06-17/business/chi-bloomingdale-trail-marketing-20130617\\_1\\_bloomingdale-trail-park-project-rail-bed](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-06-17/business/chi-bloomingdale-trail-marketing-20130617_1_bloomingdale-trail-park-project-rail-bed).

<sup>124</sup> LoganSquare.TV, “The 606 and Bloomingdale Trail Opening Ceremony,” Jun. 14, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_DYpW7gwG-Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DYpW7gwG-Q), 7:33-8:06.

<sup>125</sup> City of Chicago, “Mayor Emanuel Leads Groundbreaking On Bloomingdale Trail,” Aug. 27, 2013, <https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2013/August/8.27.13Bloomingdaletrail.pdf>, 1.

single neighborhood or serve as dividers between neighborhoods – the 606 extends *through* neighborhoods, creating a very different spatial relationship to its surrounding areas. This factor brings the park’s gentrifying potential into clear view for eager real estate developers and for anti-gentrification activists (see Figure 4.8). Previously, when parks were bound up in gentrification processes, it tended to be as venues where conflicts over neighborhood space would play out: as dominant park uses began to change or as city governments would make improvements to parks as a result of having a wealthier and/or whiter clientele.<sup>126</sup> In contrast, linear parks are literal pathways for gentrifiers to follow into new communities. Linear spaces constrain the range of potential uses, and the designers of these parks have tended to privilege particular socio-spatial practices – such as walking, running, or taking photographs – that invite pastimes associated with contemporary middle-class urban lifestyles.<sup>127</sup> Economic consequences are a further concern for the emerging opponents of park-related gentrification. Park development has been used a cultural stimulus for land values dating all the way back to New York’s Central Park – whose “central” location was the result of a battle between competing groups of wealthy landowners who wanted the park to increase the value of their respective property holdings.<sup>128</sup> As noted in chapter two, this motive was very much at play in the development of Chicago’s South Park in the latter portion of the nineteenth century, where the

---

<sup>126</sup> Ryan Centner, “Places of Privileged Consumption Practices: Spatial Capital, the Dot-Com Habitus, and San Francisco’s Internet Boom,” *City & Community* 7, no. 3 (2008): 193-223; Sylvie Tissot, “Of Dogs and Men: The Making of Spatial Boundaries in a Gentrifying Neighborhood,” *City & Community* 10, no. 3 (2011): 265-84; Kenneth A. Gould and Tammy L. Lewis, “The Environmental Injustice of Green Gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn’s Prospect Park,” in *The World in Brooklyn: Gentrification, Immigration, and Ethnic Politics in a Global City* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2012).

<sup>127</sup> Though some might argue that the linearity of the rail viaducts forces park creators’ hands – i.e., that a walking trail is the only possible outcome of a park design – this sort of spatial determinism need not be the case, particularly when considering the amount of money being used to develop these parks. There is no definitive reason, for example, why the 606 could not have included a sequence of basketball courts, or as an early proposal for New York’s High Line suggested, a three-mile lap pool. See David and Hammond, *High Line*, 58.

<sup>128</sup> Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*.

land itself was seen as ill-suited for speculative development and the city’s boosters hoped that the new Olmsted-designed park would raise cachet and provide a civic amenity as the South Side grew in population. The 606’s linearity complicates this familiar economic picture; the relatively small park (with the 2.7 mile-long 606 standing just 14 feet wide for most of its length, the park is approximately 5 acres in size, or about 20% the size of Millennium Park and 0.4% the size of Lincoln Park) has the potential to boost property values across a very wide area.<sup>129</sup>

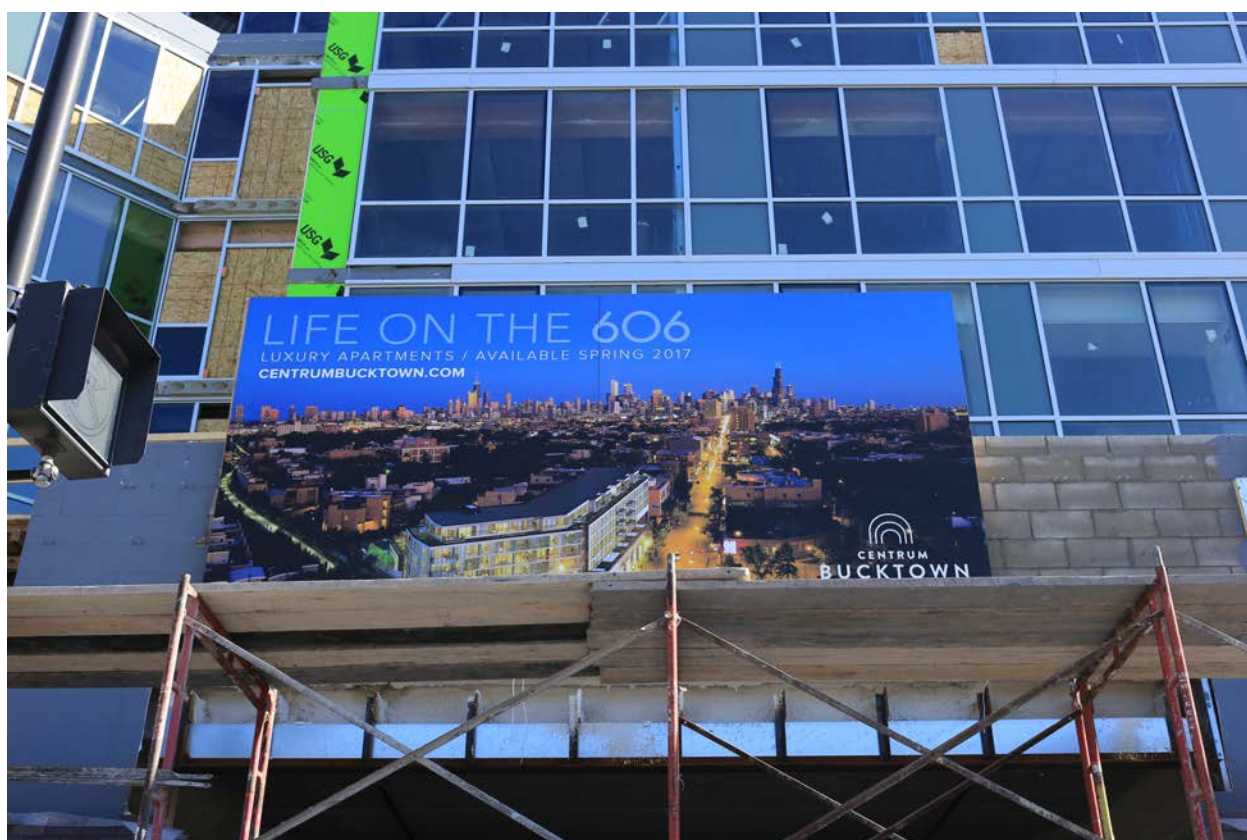


Figure 4.8: A luxury condominium development advertises “Life on the 606” (photo by author, 2017)

From its eastern terminus at Ashland Avenue, the 606 extends west through predominantly white Bucktown and Wicker Park and into the predominantly Latina/o

<sup>129</sup> Indeed, a study by DePaul University’s Institute for Housing Studies already confirms this to be the case, less than two years after the park opened. Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University, “Measuring the Impact of the 606: Understanding How a Large Public Investment Impacted the Surrounding Housing Market,” 2016, [https://www.housingstudies.org/media/filer\\_public/2016/10/31/ihs\\_measuring\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_the\\_606.pdf](https://www.housingstudies.org/media/filer_public/2016/10/31/ihs_measuring_the_impact_of_the_606.pdf).

neighborhoods of Humboldt Park and Logan Square.<sup>130</sup> Humboldt Park in particular had been the major entry point into Chicago for the Puerto Rican migrants who arrived in the city in significant numbers in the late 1940s and 1950s.<sup>131</sup> The creation of the 606 was far from the first time gentrification was threatened in these communities. Adjacent Wicker Park had been predominantly Puerto Rican for much of the second half of the twentieth century prior to the rise of the neighborhood's "Neo-bohemia" and subsequent waves of gentrification in the 1990s and 2000s.<sup>132</sup> The possibility of the continued westward expansion of white gentrifiers along Division Street (known historically in the Latina/o community as *La Division*<sup>133</sup>) led to a major wave of political organizing in Humboldt Park in the 1990s. These efforts were sharply expressed in public space in 1995, when community leaders helped create two massive steel cut-outs of the Puerto Rican flag to hang across Division Street, marking the neighborhood as a Puerto Rican space (Figure 4.9).<sup>134</sup> The eastern flag, standing just west of Western Avenue – since the 1990s, the dividing line between Latina/o Humboldt Park and white Wicker Park – offers in part a warning to potential gentrifiers.<sup>135</sup> Connected to this was the re-naming of the mile-long stretch between the flags as *Paseo Boriqua*, which sociologist Nilda Flores-Gonzalez argues gave the

---

<sup>130</sup> This racial divide has a substantial class component as well: the 2010-14 median household income west of Western Avenue in the Humboldt Park/Logan Square communities was \$49,701, compared to \$115,924 in Wicker Park/Bucktown. Similarly, the 2015 median single-family home price in the two areas was \$450,000 and \$815,000, respectively. See *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>131</sup> Gina M. Pérez, "An Upbeat West Side Story: Puerto Ricans and Postwar Racial Politics in Chicago," *Centro Journal* 13, no. 2 (2001): 47-71.

<sup>132</sup> And, as pointed out by Betancur, gentrification processes, though occurring in piecemeal fashion, initiated in the Wicker Park area as early as the 1970s. John J. Betancur, "The Politics of Gentrification: The Case of West Town in Chicago," *Urban Affairs Review* 37, no. 6 (2002), 780-814; see also Lloyd, *Neo-bohemia*.

<sup>133</sup> Nilda Flores-Gonzalez, "*Paseo Boriqua*: Claiming a Puerto Rican Space in Chicago," *Centro Journal* 13, no. 2 (2001): 7-23.

<sup>134</sup> Maura Toro-Morn, Ivis García Zambrana, and Marixsa Alicea, "De Bandera a Bandera (From Flag to Flag): New Scholarship about the Puerto Rican Diaspora in Chicago," *Centro Journal* 28, no. 2 (2016): 4-35.

<sup>135</sup> In 2017, as gentrification has spread west across Western Avenue into Humboldt Park, newly opened commercial establishments and condo developments that cater to white gentrifiers have largely skipped Division Street; instead these efforts are occurring just to the south, along Augusta Boulevard and Chicago Avenue.

space a sense of ethnoracial permanence that contrasted with the more informal *La Division*, which had originally extended as far east as Ashland Avenue.<sup>136</sup> Part of this push to institutionalize the community's identity was driven by local business interests who envisioned a commodified "Little Puerto Rico" restaurant district along Division, an aspect that helped secure the city government's support for the project.<sup>137</sup>

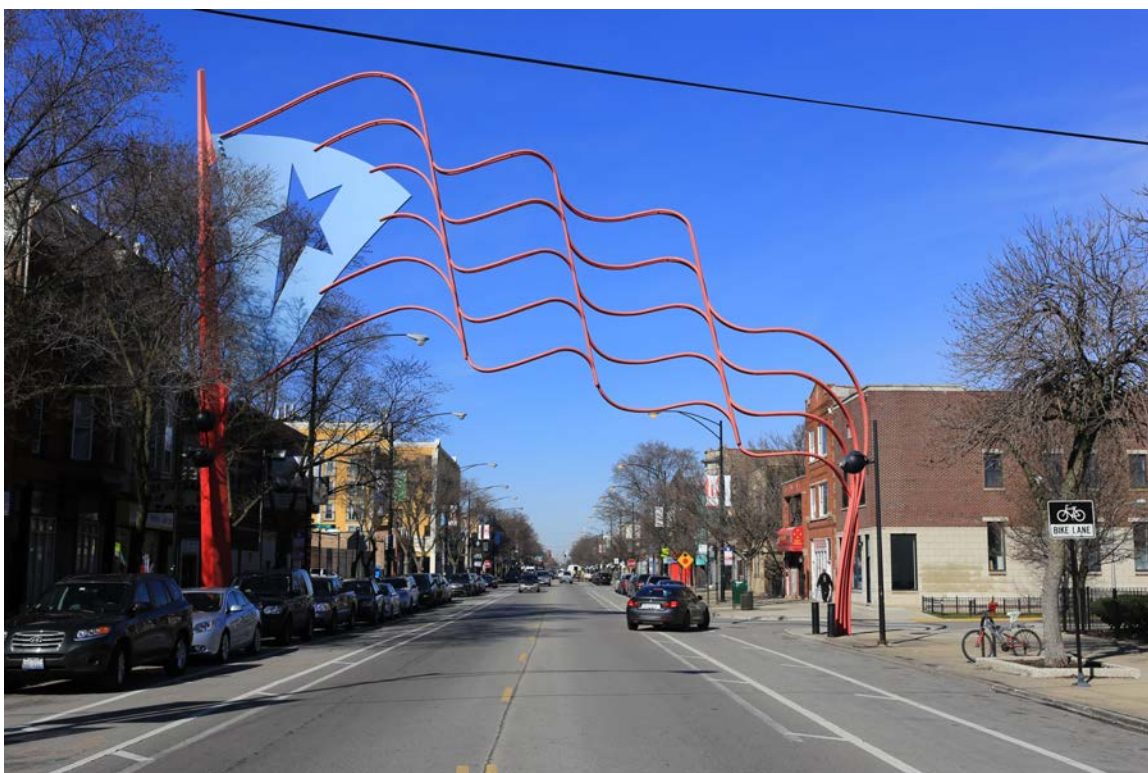


Figure 4.9: Puerto Rican flag sculpture on Division Street (photo by author, 2017)

The development of the 606 was not the first time park-related improvements foreshadowed gentrification in the area. As documented by Flores-Gonzalez, improvements to the neighborhood's namesake, the 207-acre Humboldt Park, in the 1990s made longtime residents suspicious about the city government's intentions for the neighborhood:

Community residents began to suspect that the dredging of the lagoon and beach, the restoration of the boat house and field house, and the fixing of the infrastructure of the

<sup>136</sup> Flores-Gonzalez, "Paseo Boriqua," 14.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 14.

park was connected to the influx of whites nearby. Humboldt Park ... had suffered from neglect for years. ... Although community residents welcome the improvements at the park, they wonder about its timing. Former Alderman Luis Gutierrez ... and his successor Alderman Billy Ocasio had worked diligently for improvements in the ward, which includes the park, but these renovations started only after [the] white influx was under way. ... In 1993, suspicions were confirmed for many when the Park District revoked a permit to place a statue of Pedro Albizu Campos, a Puerto Rican Nationalist leader, in the park[.]<sup>138</sup>

Things with the 606 have unfolded similarly: in the two years since the park opened, some longtime Latina/o residents of the Humboldt Park and Logan Square communities feel that the space is not for them and that its creation may hasten their displacement. From a cultural standpoint, some people have raised concerns about the park uses that are structured by the 606's linearity and the upscale playgrounds and small green spaces that have constituted the Park District's six access parks. One lifelong resident and community activist, Delia Ramirez, commented, "I think the sentiment that [current residents] have is that this is not for me, [the city] built it for those to come[.] ... What we've seen in the High Line and other developments across the country is that when you create these kinds of amenities, it's almost to recruit a new set of people."<sup>139</sup> Another Humboldt Park resident, Jaime Chavez, stated several months after the park opened, "This is like a takeover for me[.] ... I hate to say it, but it's like the yuppies are coming to push us out."<sup>140</sup> Determining how clearly these concerns map onto the actual demographics of park use would require an extended ethnographic analysis that goes beyond the scope of the current study. As other local observers, like Brian Perea, a youth worker and community organizer at the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, note, "Once you start going west, you see more people of color using the trail. ... We're not opposed to the trail or

---

<sup>138</sup> Flores-Gonzalez, "Paseo Boriqua," 11.

<sup>139</sup> Julia Thiel, "Is the Bloomingdale Trail a Path to Displacement?" *Chicago Reader*, Jun. 4, 2015, 3.

<sup>140</sup> John Byrne, "Mayor Emanuel's 606 Affordable-Housing Plan Draws Doubts," *Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 12, 2015, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/politics/ct-emanuel-606-housing-met-20150811-story.html>, 1.

opposed to development, but I think [the terms are] more: having responsible development, that's not a new condo coming into the neighborhood that's going to cost \$600,000 that no one in the neighborhood could afford."<sup>141</sup> Contesting the park-use mores of a space like the 606, as with any public space,<sup>142</sup> are informal efforts, and to date these have included the use of graffiti in the park (Figure 4.10). The city has allowed graffiti to continue on the 606's concrete undercarriage in the Humboldt Park/Logan Square area, where it had long been practiced – but within limits (Figure 4.11). In 2015, Alejandro Ayala, a local artist who had been commissioned to paint a mural by graffiti artist Flash ABC, an official curator of graffiti wall, painted a visage of Rahm Emanuel as the 1982 film character "E.T."<sup>143</sup> Per Ayala, this was done in response to "People ... passing by saying 'The 606 is not for us, paint something for the community that's for us[.]'"<sup>144</sup> But shortly after its completion, the commissioned mural was erased.

---

<sup>141</sup> Brian Perea in conversation with the author, January 2017.

<sup>142</sup> Shepard and Smithsimon, *The Beach Beneath the Streets*.

<sup>143</sup> Paul Biasco, "Rahm Emanuel's Face Removed From E.T. Mural Along The 606," *DNainfo*, Sep. 17, 2015, <https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20150917/humboldt-park/rahm-emanuels-face-removed-from-et-mural-along-606>.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.





Figure 4.10: Graffiti on the 606 (photo by author, 2017)



Figure 4.11: Officially sanctioned murals on the underside of the structure (photo by author, 2016)

More concrete efforts to contest 606-related gentrification have been initiated by the Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA), a consortium of 40 community groups in the

area, along with Latin United Community Housing Association (LUCHA), a local group involved in building affordable housing in the vicinity of the 606. Interestingly, while LSNA was an early community supporter of the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail,<sup>145</sup> LSNA notably took over the 606 for a non-permitted march in May 2016, when hundreds of supporters marched through the park to protest the displacement of longtime residents.<sup>146</sup> Attended by State Senator Omar Aquino, local aldermen, and other community leaders, the march ended with a rally above Humboldt Boulevard.<sup>147</sup> Beyond taking temporary control of the park, the purpose of the march was to raise attention to LSNA's policy efforts to fight 606-related gentrification, which have centered on two points: (1) a tax-rebate program to assist longtime homeowners in paying increased property taxes, and (2) a new city ordinance that would make real estate developers pay a special fee for demolishing older homes, to be used in the service of "help[ing] long-term homeowners stay in the community, whether that's making repairs in the building or giving out micro loans for property taxes."<sup>148</sup>

In response to these kinds of community pressures, in 2015 Rahm Emanuel announced his intent to keep longtime residents from being displaced by rising housing costs. His proposals – which per the *Tribune* referenced “affordable housing examples ... a mile or more from the trail,” as well as “housing projects ... completed more than a decade ago,” and “rent vouchers or subsidies for renovations”<sup>149</sup> – were criticized by Janet Smith, professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago and co-director of the Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement: “This isn't a housing strategy[.] ... We would hope to see vouchers prevalent in

---

<sup>145</sup> Brian Perea in conversation with the author, January 2017.

<sup>146</sup> Paul Biasco, “Hundreds March on The 606 Over Gentrification,” *DNAINFO*, May 18, 2016, <https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20160518/humboldt-park/hundreds-march-on-606-over-gentrification>.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> Brian Perea in conversation with the author, January 2017.

<sup>149</sup> Byrne, “Mayor Emanuel's 606 Affordable-Housing Plan Draws Doubts,” 2.

this area in 10 years, but there's nothing inherent in this program that would lead us to think that will be the case if this part of the city continues to gentrify."<sup>150</sup> A 2016 report by the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University analyzed "the price premium buyers were willing to pay to live within one-fifth of a mile of The 606 before and after the trail opened."<sup>151</sup> The report found:

Before 2012, the abandoned rail line was a penalty on property values of about 1.4 percent. After The 606 was underway, being near The 606 began to command a premium, but only on the western side of the trail. Although the rail line was no longer a penalty in 606 East [the area east of Western Avenue, Wicker Park and Bucktown], buyers did not pay an additional premium for homes near the trail in this higher value market. The story is different in 606 West [the area west of Western Avenue, Humboldt Park and Logan Square]. There, buyers were willing to pay 22.3 percent price premium for properties within one-fifth of a mile of the trail.<sup>152</sup>

Thus, in the already solidly gentrified areas of Wicker Park and Bucktown, the 606 has represented one new amenity among many. In points west, in Humboldt Park and Logan Square, residents' fears of the park itself impacting property values appear well-founded. The predominantly Latina/o oldtimers' concerns – the joint problems of cultural exclusion and economic displacement – have been reflected in the emerging opposition to the park. But contesting the 606 remains complicated: many in Humboldt Park and Logan Square wish to see park-related improvements, and many Latina/o community partners were initially on board with the development of the park. Because parks remain seen as a universal good, and because local Latina/o leaders fought for park improvements in Humboldt Park and other neighborhood green spaces for many years, the issue is not as simple as taking an "anti-park" political stance. As Delia Ramirez, an activist quoted above, noted in 2015: "It's a beautiful space. We just want to

---

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>151</sup> DePaul University, "Measuring the Impact of the 606," 10.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 10.

make sure we're going to be able to stay here to enjoy it."<sup>153</sup> Activists and community leaders are still working through a way to fight 606-related gentrification on winning terms. Much of this story will unfold in the coming years, informing the emerging social justice challenge of making cities "just green enough."<sup>154</sup>

#### **4.7: The 606 and City-Nature Hybridity**

These politics reflect the complexities of city-nature hybridity at the local level as community groups and growth machines alike seek to redevelop imbricated spaces for civic use. The reemergence of nature in the city, after many decades of suburban or exurban exodus, is clearly linked to the racial histories of uneven park development uncovered in previous chapters. Parks like the 606, which bring economic growth and a new form of urban nature, have thrown older park politics into disarray. As indicated by the combined efforts of Richard M. Daley and Rahm Emanuel, parks have returned to prominent places within cities' contemporary symbolic economies. The 606 takes this process further, heralding a broader shift toward a renewed emphasis on "nature" – representing a different framework from the twentieth century's "recreation" orientation, and even a shift from the purely spectacle-oriented spaces, like Millennium Park, that had ushered in the latest wave of urban park development.

City-nature hybridity, which, as argued, has spatial, cultural, and ontological components in addition to this political basis, is further revealed in the park's design. To a considerable extent, the design ideologies brought to bear on the park center on the notion of nonhuman

---

<sup>153</sup> Thiel, "Is the Bloomingdale Trail a Path to Displacement?," 7.

<sup>154</sup> Jennifer R. Wolch, Jason Byrne, and Joshua P. Newell, "Urban Green Space, Public Health, and Environmental Justice: The Challenge of Making Cities 'Just Green Enough,'" *Landscape and Urban Planning* 125 (2014): 234-44.

agency.<sup>155</sup> At the broader level of urban-environmental politics, the recognition of climatic influence on human society is reflected in the emergence of “green” planning initiatives and other policy prescriptions that seek to deal with nature’s forces, rather than dominate them.<sup>156</sup> More particularly at the level of imbricated spaces, the 606 case makes clear that the *appearance* of the natural environment’s agency is central to their appeal, regardless of “who” is actually the active agent behind their creation. In contradistinction to the manicured plants of traditional public parks and botanic gardens, flora in imbricated spaces must be deemed “authentic” by cultural receivers – i.e., that nature had a genuine hand in creating the space – even when, as in the case of the redeveloped 606, the original products of nature have been removed and the new greenery is carefully cultivated by people. Relatedly, the appearance of the *built environment’s* agency is also central. Although the built environment is by definition built by human action, the deterioration of buildings and infrastructure suggests a process of nonhuman agency that likewise contributes to the aesthetic appeal of imbricated spaces. In imbricated spaces, as in other spaces where industrial decline has been aestheticized,<sup>157</sup> blighted buildings and industrial relics present as art objects.<sup>158</sup> At the 606, the real-or-imagined agency of built and natural environments affirms for cultural receivers that city-nature hybridity is a process existing outside of human intervention and suggests that city and nature can be the creators of an aesthetically interesting space.

As with many contemporary park development projects, operating in parallel to the 606’s array of institutional stakeholders was a collaborative team of designers. Comprised of Collins

---

<sup>155</sup> Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>156</sup> Kevin Fox Gotham and Miriam Greenberg, *Crisis Cities: Disaster and Redevelopment in New York and New Orleans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>157</sup> Zukin, *Loft Living*; Lloyd, *Neo-bohemia*.

<sup>158</sup> Herrington, “Framed Again”; Gordillo, *Rubble*.

Engineers, artist Frances Whitehead, and landscape architects Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, the complexity of the 606's site – a thick, concrete structure spanning 2.7 miles and encompassing 38 bridges over city streets – suggested the need for a variety of perspectives and professional skills.<sup>159</sup> The number of individuals involved in designing the 606 meant that there was not a singular vision of urban nature that all cultural producers held in consensus. Indeed, there were several competing factors at play in the park's design and development: the Emanuel administration's desire to drive economic growth and cultural prestige; the renowned Van Valkenburgh team's prevailing style of landscape design;<sup>160</sup> and lead artist Frances Whitehead's commitment to localism. With different design elements, different competing forces won out; the following data points are illustrative of what was ultimately built. Most importantly, despite ideological differences among some of the park's creators, the park's overarching vision reveals a shared conception of aesthetics and the city-nature relationship. In what follows, I draw from interviews, official documents, and public statements, along with photography and visual

---

<sup>159</sup> Indeed, Frances Whitehead argued, "It's really a transportation project. It's really a bridge project – 38 bridges. It's really not a greenscape project. The landscape is on the physical artifact. And the artifact had to be assessed, stabilized. All the bridges had to be checked; the bike paths had to be engineered for drainage. It's very, very much an engineering project." Frances Whitehead in conversation with the author, October 2016.

<sup>160</sup> It is worth noting that Michael Van Valkenburgh was a finalist for the High Line commission, but ultimately lost out to the team of James Corner et al. Though the landscape architects have not admitted as much, the 606 likely presented an opportunity to display what had been denied when they lost the commission for New York's High Line. As one of four finalists for the High Line commission, Van Valkenburgh's vision was a much rawer form of nature than that displayed by the winning design by James Corner et al. The Van Valkenburgh design, which was publicly displayed in 2004, was described by the *Times* as: "Willowy aspens, swaths of mustard flowers and sunflowers and an alternating rhythm of miniature forests and meadows is how TerraGRAM, the team led by Michael Van Valkenburgh, ... has imagined the High Line. Pastoral as it sounds, it's a hard-working landscape. ... Over time, the team maintains, sunflowers and mustard seed can restore the High Line's impoverished soil to full life-bearing capability. Entering the park, visitors would climb a stair from the gritty streets, pass through a trap door and pop up into a 'forest of trembling Aspens – like Alice in reverse,' Mr. Van Valkenburgh explained. 'I fell in love with the contradictory power of this enduring industrial structure living in combination with the in-vitro natural landscape,' he said. ... This design is romance for the postirony crowd: a thousand flowers bloom, but they're shooting up out of 20 inches of gravel and debris." Julie V. Iovine, "Elevated Visions," *New York Times*, Jul. 11, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/11/arts/architecture-elevated-visions.html>, 4.

materials from the design, to illustrate the vision of imbricated city and nature that was created by the design team.

The design of the 606 embraced the hybridity of city and nature in two primary ways. First, the park space itself presents an imbrication of built and natural environments: paths bring park visitors into and through different forms of flora: the plants, and their historically unusual setting inside an industrial relic, are central to the park's appeal. Second, from the elevated walkways of the 606, visitors are given a distinct perspective on the surrounding urban landscape, one that highlights everyday streets and buildings as objects of beauty. In both the physical incorporation of built and natural forms and the celebration of the broader cityscape beyond the park, the designers of the 606 broke from historical precedents in landscape architecture. Indeed, in many ways the incorporation of nature and beauty into an urban park harkens back to the nineteenth century and the design ideology of Olmsted and his contemporaries.<sup>161</sup> There is an interesting parallel here, 150 years apart: a similar operating assumption about parks as spaces of reflection and contemplation. But in the twenty-first century, the objects of admiration are far different – they are the same buildings, streets, and elevated train tracks that would have been entirely out of place in the pastoral landscapes of Chicago's South Park; the form of nature celebrated is not the rustic, sweeping green vistas meant to evoke the English countryside, but rather this distinctly postindustrial hybrid.

---

<sup>161</sup> Landscape architects in the twenty-first century tend to celebrate Olmsted's vision and accomplishments; given the "denatured visions" of urban parks in the twentieth century, they, too, harken back to the nineteenth century pastoral vision for inspiration, often intentionally repurposing concepts from the picturesque in contemporary landscape projects. James Corner, co-designer of New York's High Line, is particularly influential in this regard. See James Corner, ed., *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Theory* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999); see also Herrington, "Framed Again"; Kevin Loughran, "Imbricated Spaces: The High Line, Urban Parks, and the Cultural Meaning of City and Nature," *Sociological Theory* 34, no. 4 (2016): 311-34; Stuart Wrede and William Howard Adams, eds., *Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1991).

With the development of the 606 occurring a good decade after the first wave of contemporary spectacle-oriented parks, such as Millennium Park, the cultural expectations for the 606 created an interesting tension between the local and the universal. Particularly with the opening of the High Line in 2009, the 606 landed in a clearly defined field of cultural reception.<sup>162</sup> By the beginning of the design process for the 606, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates had their hands in many urban park development projects across North America.<sup>163</sup> Their signature mix of wild-looking flora and playful architectural details has become popular across geographic contexts. In many respects, this style has become so common as to suggest a top-down model imposed on urban landscapes regardless of local particularities (a charge that would have fit the global proliferation of the picturesque style in the nineteenth century, which, as indicated in chapter two, was implanted wholesale on Chicago's prairies). However, the landscape architects, and especially lead artist Frances Whitehead, saw value in celebrating Chicago's "authentic" ecology. Landscape architect Matthew Urbanski, principal at Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates who led their contribution to the 606, framed the questions as:

[H]ow do you take this piece of industrial infrastructure and turn it into a public amenity? ... With these infrastructural elements in cities, and converting them into public space, my fundamental question is, what do you keep and what do you change? Because you can't change everything, and you can't keep everything, because it's made for trains. ... What we realized was that there was this volume of soil here – unlike the High Line in New York, which is a bridge – there was this volume of soil. And they had been thinking

---

<sup>162</sup> Wendy Griswold, *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2013). Part of what informed the High Line's cultural reception – and especially as pertained to, as discussed above, the designers' commitment to "re-creating" the site's original imbrication – was that its history of illegal use during its decades of closure gave it a particular social history that people wanted to see reflected in the design. The 606, though sharing a community-led impetus that spurred the creation of the park, did not have this celebrated clandestine history that made the High Line an icon for many people in the local community. See David and Hammond, *High Line*. The 606 did have its own history of illicit use, however – see Mitch Dudek, "The Paved-Over, Unofficial History of the 606 Trail," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 19, 2015, <http://chicago.suntimes.com/news/the-paved-over-unofficial-history-of-the-606-trail/>.

<sup>163</sup> These included New York's Brooklyn Bridge Park and Hudson River Park, Pittsburgh's Allegheny Riverfront Park, Toronto's Corktown Common, among many other parks, gardens, and streetscapes.



of making this site into a park for ten years. But no one had thought of re-grading that soil to make a more interesting experience and to facilitate access. ... We said, you know, right now it's flat, it's kind of ecologically consistent, it's boring. Also, you can't get onto it. What we'd like to do is re-grade that between the bridges, which would give us ecological gradients and then also facilitate access, and then start to reveal the structure as a giant "found object" [Figure 4.12].<sup>164</sup>

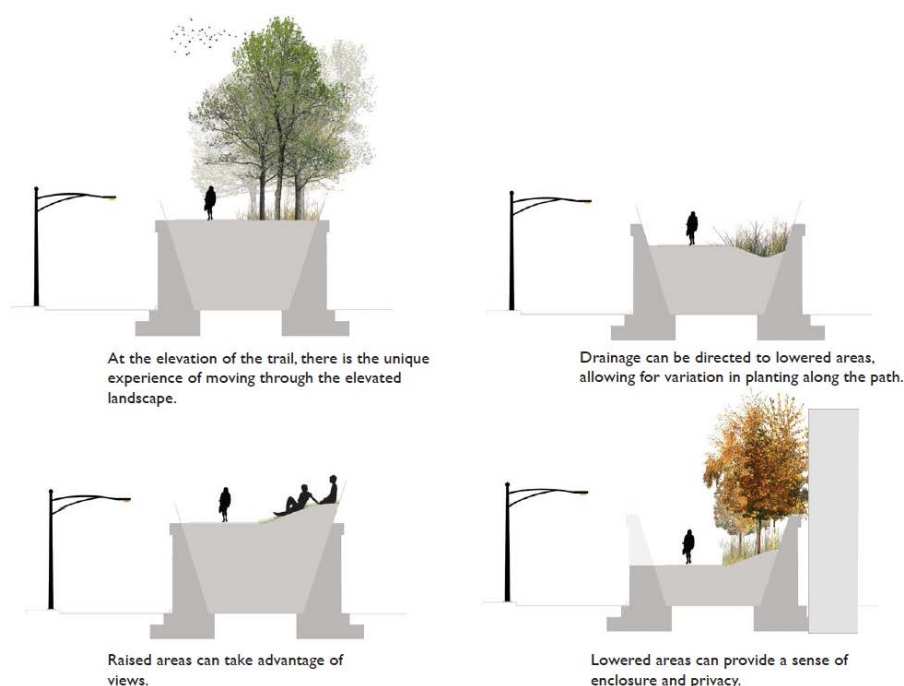


Figure 4.12: Architectural rendering of topographic variation on the 606<sup>165</sup>

While Urbanski and his colleagues saw an opportunity to re-work the structure to facilitate access and aesthetic experience, Whitehead's vision sought to leverage the site's limitations, seeing them as advantageous to producing an aesthetically and ecologically interesting space. The geospatial positioning of the 606 – running along the city's street grid at a perpendicular angle to the Lake Michigan shoreline – allowed for the designers to draw out the site's linearity as a way to emphasize the park's unique social and ecological location. As suggested by Whitehead, such a perspective on the space enabled an authentically Chicago-style way of seeing

<sup>164</sup> Matthew Urbanski, "New Parks for the Livable City" (presentation, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, January 29, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sf8VC021aZs>, 1:15:30-1:18:10.

<sup>165</sup> City of Chicago, "Bloomingdale Trail and Park Framework Plan," 29.

the land, where Lake Michigan often serves as a point of orientation from anywhere in the city: “The unusual East-West arrows turn convention on its head, re-orienting the viewer towards the Lake. These transgressive mapping elements eschew the convention and abstraction of the north arrow, and send the viewers’ attention along the axis of the bioregion reconnecting to the reality of place.”<sup>166</sup> These place-based qualities were further accentuated by the Environmental Sentinel, a design element that allowed the park to serve as a hybrid cultural/ecological model akin to Japan’s cherry blossoms:

Running the full length of the 606, [the] Environmental Sentinel is a climate-monitoring artwork and landscape intervention. The planting will consist of a line of 453 native, flowering trees *Amelanchier grandiflora* (Apple Serviceberry), whose five-day bloom spread will visualize Chicago’s famous Lake Effect. These temperature-sensitive plants will serve as environmental “sentinels” for Chicago, bio-indicators of microclimate change. The planting will also reveal to the public how large bodies of water like Lake Michigan affect local temperature patterns in spring and fall. Modeled after the Japanese cherry blossom festival ..., this phenologic spectacle will become living data visualization, allowing scientists, artists and citizens ... to study climate change and observe Chicago’s relationship to the Lake Michigan over the next one hundred years, and beyond. ... Theoretically it emerges from the cultural hypothesis that sustainability and climate change are cultural problems[,] not technical or biologic problems[,] and that cultural strategies can be used to make these issues and phenomena tangible and legible to the public.<sup>167</sup>

These ideas about the cultural function provided by the park’s nature indicate the broader shift in the terms of park development in the twenty-first century. Another important aspect of the 606’s nature component was the incorporation of plants that mimicked the space’s previously existing flora (Figure 4.13). Helping to differentiate the 606’s natural aesthetics from the

---

<sup>166</sup> Frances Whitehead, “Site Narratives: Art + Design Integration,” June 23, 2014 (personal communication, October 2016), 23. Interestingly, this was one point where Whitehead’s commitment to localism ran into the landscape architects’ more top-down vision. As quoted above, lead landscape architect Urbanski found the site’s flatness “boring.” In an interview with the author, Whitehead pushed against this idea, finding the flatness to be authentically Chicago: “Everyone else was talking about how the linearity, the east-west orientation, the flatness, how these were design challenges. It’s really funny because Van Valkenburgh, they wanted to carve it up and make it undulate, which is fun, fine. But I’m like, you know, it’s pretty cool being flat.” Frances Whitehead in conversation with the author, October 2016.

<sup>167</sup> Whitehead, “Site Narratives: Art + Design Integration,” 20.

ordinary grasses of typical urban parks and the ornateness of botanical gardens, the “wild” grasses, flowers, and trees planted within the park suggested that nature was a social actor very much behind the creation of the space (see Figure 4.14).



**Figure 4.13: The Bloomingdale Trail prior to redevelopment (file photo, *Chicago Sun-Times*)**



Figure 4.14: “Wild” nature on the 606 (photo by author, 2016)

In addition to imbricating built and natural materials within the park itself, the 606 bridges the historical separation of city and nature through visual interactions with the surrounding cityscape, which are central to the experience of the 606. Bringing views of the city into a park would have been anathema to Olmsted and other nineteenth-century park designers; in the twenty-first century, this design ideology reflects the cultural convergence of city and nature and physically reproduces these ideas for park-goers to contemplate. The park’s designers played with the 606’s built materials and the surrounding industrial and residential environments in artful ways. As with the High Line, such efforts drew symbolic and social connections between the elevated park and the surrounding communities. As Whitehead wrote of the 606’s design elements that explicitly draw out the city and link it to park space:

The design concept for the prospect at Humboldt Boulevard is to create an architectural communal seating area and sense of place, focused on the views of the historic boulevard

below, which marks the south end of the Logan Square Boulevards District [Figure 4.15]. A symmetrical bank of stepped wooden stadium bleacher-style seating, is mirrored on both the south and north side of the Trail picking up the formal geometry of the historic site and these important, dramatic views. These clean stepped forms without architectural reveal or bull nosing lend a modern feel to the historic context.

Four rows of petite purple smoke trees extend the median strips below, as if the greenspace is flowing up and over the trail from the street. The containerized trees are up-lit for nighttime drama and when in puffy pink bloom, will be the only hint at mischief in this classicistic design. A series of down-lit arched lampposts extend the architectural language of the contemporary style davit poles used trail wide to make an arcade at the overpass.<sup>168</sup>



Figure 4.15: View of Humboldt Boulevard from the 606 (photo by author, 2016)

#### 4.8: Conclusion

This chapter has argued that new urban parks like Chicago's 606 highlight the hybridization of built and natural forms. As an "imbricated space," the 606 materializes cultural

<sup>168</sup> Whitehead, "Site Narratives: Art + Design Integration," 9.

and ontological discourses about the contemporary collision of city and nature. Indicating that abstract ideas about hybridity and nature's agency, along with the emerging politics and policy implications of the Anthropocene, have physical manifestation in social space. The design of the 606 illustrates how contemporary landscape architects and other park developers view the built and natural environments as mutually constitutive and harmonious.

This chapter has also indicated the racialized political conflicts that are emerging around imbricated spaces. The 606, by virtue of its social location – bridging predominantly white Wicker Park and Bucktown with historically Latina/o Humboldt Park and Logan Square – heightens the new politics of park development. It is clear that the initial emergence of imbricated spaces – in the form of vacant lots and the like – depended on a constellation of institutional disinvestment from particular urban areas, most often neighborhoods of color. The post-1970 racialized restructuring of urban political economy was accompanied by a particular aesthetic: part decayed built environment, part insurgent nature.

The corollary of this unique cultural production is imbricated spaces' reception.<sup>169</sup> Here is the other side of city-nature hybridity's racial coin. Like seeing “rubble” as “ruin,” the social position conducive to understanding such spaces as beautiful depends on little personal connection to the massive disinvestment that helped produce them.<sup>170</sup> For white gentrifiers, imbricated spaces become part of the wallpaper of “edgy,” “dangerous,” or “gritty” neighborhoods. Gentrifiers' thrill of encountering a very different sort of green space – an

---

<sup>169</sup> Griswold, *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*.

<sup>170</sup> Gordillo, *Rubble*.

uncultivated one, one that breaks sharply from polished urban parks and suburban lawns – links to whites’ more general thrill of encountering “the other” in urban space.<sup>171</sup>

There is a key transition for imbricated spaces when city governments and other powerful actors decide to actually *create* imbricated spaces for public consumption: when the “organic” hybridity found in vacant lots and the like is transformed into a cultivated urban park that mimics the dual agency of insurgent nature and decaying built environment.<sup>172</sup> Such efforts have pushed the aesthetics of city-nature hybridity from the avant-garde to the mainstream. The public and private investment required to make parks out of disused rail viaducts and similar spaces indicates that powerful institutions perceive a critical mass of cultural receivers and a particular racial and class geography that would support such interventions. Beyond highlighting an aesthetic of nature that evokes past social decline, the imbricated spaces built by city park developers are tied to the racialized re-taking of urban areas by white social actors and powerful institutions. Like past generations of urban parks, imbricated spaces play a part in social reproduction. In an era where cities like Chicago have embraced the presence of predominantly white, highly educated workers and their cultural accouterments, contemporary cultural preferences and work demands tend to privilege highly structured passive recreation.<sup>173</sup> The most prominent imbricated spaces like the 606 only support a handful of activities, such as walking, jogging, and taking photographs.

But there remains some ambiguity around imbricated spaces – their racial meanings, their geographies, and their prospects. The redevelopment of New York’s High Line, for example, is somewhat singular in that it was built in an already-gentrified, predominantly white part of the

---

<sup>171</sup> Lloyd, *Neo-bohemia*.

<sup>172</sup> Millington, “From Urban Scar to ‘Park in the Sky.’”

<sup>173</sup> Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (New York: Verso, 2014).

city (though its development propelled further gentrification and real estate development); its presence was not explicitly tied to the racialized re-taking of urban space. Newer “high lines” elsewhere have attempted to trade on the economic and cultural appeal of New York’s version, but the social geographies of ex-industrial spaces vary substantially across (and within) metropolitan areas. The fact that the High Line spurred massive increases in property values has made the proponents and opponents of subsequent projects aware of the gentrification that can follow in their wake. For projects like the 606, the racialized dimensions are brought more clearly into focus. As many ex-industrial spaces are located in or adjacent to the neighborhoods of immigrants, the working classes, and people of color, the potential for this green gentrification to displace longtime residents is something activists have mobilized against. The 606’s path from the gentrified, mostly white neighborhoods of Wicker Park and Bucktown to points west in the gentrifying, historically Latina/o Humboldt Park and Logan Square carries not just this new form of nature but substantial public and private investment and the potential for demographic change. As indicated by DePaul University’s study of the 606’s impact on housing prices, a change in the class composition, if not the racial demographics, of areas adjacent to the western end of the park is already underway.<sup>174</sup>

The mere presence of city-nature hybridity harbors no direct ability to *cause* gentrification and racial inequality. But these spaces, and the representations of city and nature that they carry, do not exist in a vacuum. The city-nature binary, founded on associations between people, places, and practices, could not hold in light of the breakdown of older racial structures by subaltern groups in the twentieth century. Powerful institutions and white social actors have correspondingly re-made the spaces of nature across different eras in a dialectical

---

<sup>174</sup> DePaul University, “Measuring the Impact of the 606.”



production of spaces and symbolisms. Historically and in the present, black and Latina/o neighborhoods and other marginalized communities have been passed over by new park development. In an era marked by “colorblind” racism, the racial implications of new developments are complex and easily obfuscated. If imbricated spaces do not always connote the racialized re-taking of urban areas, then they at least rely upon a particular aesthetic vision rooted in histories of racialized disinvestment and the de-racialized lens of ruin that permits white gentrifiers and other privileged social actors to celebrate the spaces of city-nature hybridity while eliding their historical production and social context.

## Ch. 5: Conclusion

This study has proposed that racial meanings and inequalities have been central to the social construction of urban-environmental relationships in the United States. In both historical and contemporary settings, the materialization of “city” and “nature” via urban parks has been constituted by racial geographies, ideas, and symbols. Though the present analysis is far from an exhaustive examination of historical transformations in the city-nature binary and urban-environmental relationships, it points broadly to the ways that the control of nature and urban parks has been tied to racial power and racialized aesthetics, social practices, and spatial symbols.

The study’s first empirical chapter, chapter two, examined the creation of South Park (present-day Washington and Jackson Parks) on the developing South Side of Chicago in 1870. Designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, South Park attempted to materialize the city-nature binary through design considerations and ideal types of park use that sharply demarcated the spaces of the city from the spaces of nature. Designed at a time when the universalizing “picturesque” vision of nature dominated park aesthetics, the architects and the park’s developers flattened the actually existing ecology alongside Lake Michigan. The picturesque vision, one tied to culturally and economically powerful landscapes in Great Britain and New England, beyond representing nature, was accompanied by a host of social and symbolic associations that tied parks like South Park to nineteenth-century ideals of whiteness.

Chapter three analyzed how the city-nature binary and the separation of the spaces of nature *qua* white leisure and the spaces of city *qua* labor and ethnoracial multiplicity was disrupted by the Great Migration. The rapid increase of Chicago’s black population in the

twentieth century brought black people into the historical spaces of white leisure, forcing a reworking of longstanding racial associations. Occurring during the same time period when the Chicago Park District was gaining significant institutional power, the expansion of Chicago's park system in the post-World War II decades reconfigured the spaces and symbols of city and nature. With 194 new parks built between 1945 and 1970, "recreation" emerged as parks' prescribed purpose; the vast majority of new parks were constructed in the developing white neighborhoods at the city's periphery. The postwar focus on parks as recreation also came with a new emphasis on parks as spaces for social service delivery and policing. With the contentious expansion of black space across the South and West Sides of Chicago in the postwar decades as whites resisted integration, parks figured as sites of racial violence and conflict. Ultimately, the changes wrought by the Chicago Park District, coupled with the development of new sites of nature vis-à-vis suburbanization and white flight, pivoted the culturally valuable sites of nature within the metropolitan area; older parks like Washington and Jackson Parks lost much of their status as "nature."

Lastly, chapter four considered how contemporary urban parks like Chicago's 606 indicate a remaking of the historical social construction of the city-nature relationship. Paralleling developments in realms like urban policy and social theory, where a recognition of nature's power to act on human society has influenced both planning strategies and forms of knowledge, the 606 highlights the newfound hybridity of city and nature. Terming the 606 and other sites like it "imbricated spaces," I argue that these new parks are implicated in the racialized re-taking of formerly marginalized urban areas by white gentrifiers and the forces of

capital. The key variables and axes of analysis that linked each of these chapters are displayed in Table 5.1.

<b>Historical period</b>	1870	1945	2010
<b>Case study</b>	South Park	10 Year Plan	The 606
<b>Ideal park type</b>	Pleasure ground <sup>1</sup>	Recreation facility <sup>2</sup>	Imbricated space
<b>Ideal park use</b>	Unstructured passive recreation	Highly structured active recreation	Highly structured passive recreation
<b>Architectural style</b>	Picturesque	Modern	Industrial picturesque
<b>Park geography</b>	Periphery of the city	The new periphery of the city	Gentrifying postindustrial neighborhoods
<b>City/nature relationship</b>	Binary; nature separated from city	Binary; nature shifting beyond the city	Hybrid; nature returning to the city
<b>Metropolitan racial structure</b>	Post-slavery Jim Crow, increasing European immigration	Jim Crow/ ghettoization, suburbanization	Colorblind racism, gentrification
<b>Parks' racial symbolism</b>	Statement of white cultural power	Solidification of white identity for former white ethnics; marginalization of neighborhoods of color	Repurposing of the aesthetics of urban decay; green shield for the white-dominated re-taking of urban space

The theoretical contribution of this study is therefore twofold: first, that the socially constructed city-nature relationship has shifted from a binary to a hybrid, and second, that racial

<sup>1</sup> Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

geographies and symbols have been an important and overlooked piece of this process. What are the broader implications of this argument? And, given current configurations of city, nature, and race, where might these relationships be headed in the future?

In the intervening 150 years between the creation of South Park and the development of the 606, both nature and cities changed in important material ways. In the United States, most cities were long ago built to their politically defined limits.<sup>3</sup> While some cities, like Detroit and St. Louis, have experienced widespread “greening” through disinvestment as vacant lots proliferate on the landscape, most American cities tend to have few open spaces for new parks. With greenfield development limited to the exurban fringe or waterfront infill, city governments, planners, and citizens have tended to work within the spatial framework of the existing built environment, utilizing outmoded industrial infrastructure to reimagine the urban landscape.

While the case of the 606 indicates changes in the cultural orientation toward city and nature, it also reveals important similarities between contemporary public spaces and prior versions. Though early parks such as South Park were intended to shelter urbanites from the tumult of city life and the 606 was to transport visitors to a skyward industrial garden, the cultural producers behind each sought to cultivate passive leisure and pastoral retreat. For nineteenth-century planners like Frederick Law Olmsted, the picturesque represented a means to frame nature for the audience. By using design to accentuate the “roughness” of things like rocky outcroppings and waterfalls, Olmsted and his contemporaries presented cultural receivers with an aestheticized image of the natural world. The design of the 606, though not oriented towards scenes of “first nature,” takes up many of these same themes. From the 606’s picturesque vistas,

---

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

the built landscapes of the Near Northwest Side are transformed from mundane industrial and residential spaces into art objects.

In large measure, the future of imbricated spaces hinges on the emerging counter-politics of park development discussed in chapter four. Because nature's historical symbolism as a universal cultural good remains powerful, parks are proving a difficult political object to mobilize against – and perhaps with good reason: given the historical uneven development of urban parks, communities of color have mobilized for park improvements since the beginnings of the Great Migration. While parks like the 606 flip some of the usual political calculus, longtime residents of marginalized neighborhoods largely desire the civic benefits that accompany parks, such as increased access to recreation, the protection of environmental resources, and, as recent evidence from the 606 suggests, potentially a reduction in proximate crime rates.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the central challenge is how activists can continue to advocate for park improvements while being sensitive to how new parks, especially imbricated spaces like the 606, tend to raise local property values and put new neighborhoods on the map for real estate developers and potential gentrifiers. Just as the 606 case was heavily informed by the High Line's economic impact on its local community, it will be worth examining if the gentrification flowing from the development of the 606 will impact cases in other cities, particularly those – like New York's QueensWay, which is still at the planning stages – that cross neighborhoods of varying ethnoracial and class identities. Along with other new park sites in Chicago (Rahm Emanuel's "Building on Burnham" plan will attempt to place culturally valuable parks, including imbricated spaces like South Deering's in-progress Big Marsh Park, in neighborhoods of color),

---

<sup>4</sup> Brandon Harris, Lincoln Larson, and Scott Ogletree, "Different Views From The 606: Examining the Impacts of an Urban Greenway on Crime in Chicago," *Environment and Behavior*, first published Feb. 10, 2017, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916517690197>.

such cases will also point towards whether there are possibilities for culturally valuable forms of urban nature to diverge from the residential locations of middle-class whites.

Beyond contemporary urban parks, the imbricated space concept has implications for urban and environmental social scientists as it offers a lens into broader intersections between the natural and the social. As scholars have illustrated, people make meaning out of interactions with natural objects and form community around shared experiences with nature.<sup>5</sup> The imbricated space concept helps scholars understand one way that these relationships are not just symbolic, but occur in social spaces. The recent surge in scholarly investigations and public interest in urban-environmental relationships has suggested a fundamental reconsideration of the way city and nature intersect. Despite several decades' worth of environmental justice studies, much urban-environmental research continues to locate race outside of the core concerns. Race is seen as something incidental to the workings of capital and institutional power that shape green and grey urban landscapes. More than just an overview of park development in Chicago, this study serves as a call to scholars to reconsider the ways that the many dimensions of race intersect with the cultural, political, and spatial aspects of the urban environment.

---

<sup>5</sup> Gary Alan Fine, *Morel Tales: The Culture of Mushrooming*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Colin Jerolmack, "Animal Practices, Ethnicity, and Community: The Turkish Pigeon Handlers of Berlin," *American Sociological Review* 72, no. 6 (2007): 874-94.

## References

- Abraham, Andrea, Kathrin Sommerhalder, and Thomas Abel. "Landscape and Well-Being: A Scoping Study on the Health-Promoting Impact of Outdoor Environments." *International Journal of Public Health* 55, no. 1 (2010): 59-69.
- Addams, Jane, ed. *Hull House Maps and Papers*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1895.
- Addams, Jane. "Women's Conscience and Social Amelioration." In *The Jane Addams Reader*, edited by Jean Bethke Elshtain, 252-63. New York: Basic Books, 2002.
- Agrawal, Arun. *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Anbinder, Tyler. *Five Points: The 19th-Century New York City Neighborhood that Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum*. New York: The Free Press, 2001.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 2006.
- Anderson, Elijah. "The Iconic Ghetto." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 642, no. 1 (2012): 8-24.
- Anderson, Elijah. "The White Space." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 1, no. 1 (2015): 10-21.
- Andrews, Malcolm. *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989.
- Angelo, Hillary. "From the City Lens Toward Urbanisation as a Way of Seeing: Country/City Binaries on an Urbanising Planet." *Urban Studies* 54, no. 1 (2017): 158-78.



- Angelo, Hillary, and David Wachsmuth, "Urbanizing Urban Political Ecology: A Critique of Methodological Cityism." *The International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39, no. 1 (2015): 16-27.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Bachin, Robin F. *Building the South Side: Urban Space and Civic Culture in Chicago, 1890-1919*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Bachrach, Julia S. *The City in a Garden: A History of Chicago's Parks*. Chicago: Columbia College Chicago Press, 2012.
- Baetjer, Katharine, Michael Rosenthal, Kathleen Nicholson, Richard Quaintance, Stephen Daniels, and Timothy J. Standring, eds. *Glorious Nature: British Landscape Painting 1750-1850*. Manchester: Hudson Hills Press, 1996.
- Baldwin, Davarian L. *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Barrell, John. *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Bashi, Vilna. "Racial Categories Matter Because Racial Hierarchies Matter: A Commentary." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 5 (1998): 959-68.
- Bashi Treitler, Vilna. *The Ethnic Project: Transforming Racial Fiction into Ethnic Factions*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013.
- Belanger, Pamela J., J. Gray Sweeney, and John Wilmerding, *Inventing Acadia: Artists and Tourists at Mount Desert*. Rockland: University Press of New England, 1999.

- Bell, Derek. "Who's Afraid of Critical Race Theory?" *University of Illinois Law Review* (1995): 893-910.
- Bennett, Larry, Roberta Garner, and Euan Hague, eds. *Neoliberal Chicago*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2017.
- Bennett, Michael, and David W. Teague, eds. *The Nature of Cities: Ecocriticism and Urban Environments*. Tuscon: The University of Arizona Press, 1999.
- Bermingham, Ann. *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Betancur, John J. "The Politics of Gentrification: The Case of West Town in Chicago." *Urban Affairs Review* 37 (July 2002): 780-814.
- Bhattacharyya, Gargi, John Gabriel, and Stephen Small. *Race and Power: Global Racism in the Twenty First Century*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Bloom, Nicholas D. *Public Housing That Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Bluestone, Daniel. *Constructing Chicago*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Bluestone, Daniel M. "From Promenade to Park: The Gregarious Origins of Brooklyn's Park Movement." *American Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1987): 529-50.
- Bobo, Lawrence, and Vincent L. Hutchings. "Perceptions of Racial Group Competition: Extending Blumer's Theory of Group Position to a Multiracial Social Context." *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 6 (1996): 951-72.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and Racial Inequality in Contemporary America*. Lanham: Roman & Littlefield, 2003.

- Bonnett, Alastair. "The Metropolis and White Modernity." *Ethnicities* 2, no. 3 (2002): 349-66.
- Boone, Christopher G., Geoffrey L. Buckley, J. Morgan Grove, and Chona Sister. "Parks and People: An Environmental Justice Inquiry in Baltimore, Maryland." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, no. 4 (2009): 767-87.
- Boulton, Jeremy. *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean-Claude Passeron. *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000.
- Boyd, Michelle R. *Jim Crow Nostalgia: Reconstructing Race in Bronzeville*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Boyle, Kevin. *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Boyle, Kevin. *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Brash, Julian. *Bloomberg's New York: Class and Governance in the Luxury City*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011.

- Braudel, Fernand. *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century: The Structure of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Brenner, Neil, ed. *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*. Berlin: Jovis, 2014.
- Brenner, Neil. "Introduction: Urban Theory without an Outside." In *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*, edited by Neil Brenner, 14-30. Berlin: Jovis, 2014.
- Brodkin, Karen. *How Jews Became White Folks and what that Says about Race in America*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998.
- Brown-Saracino, Japonica. *A Neighborhood That Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Bruegmann, Robert. "Built Environment of the Chicago Region." In *Chicago Neighborhoods and Suburbs: A Historic Guide*, edited by Ann Durkin Keating, 76-88. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Bullard, Robert D., ed. *Confronting Environmental Racism*. Boston: South End Press, 1993.
- Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Burrows, Edwin G., and Mike Wallace. *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

- Centner, Ryan. "Places of Privileged Consumption Practices: Spatial Capital, the Dot-Com Habitus, and San Francisco's Internet Boom." *City & Community* 7, no. 3 (2008): 193-223.
- Chávez-García, Miroslava. *States of Delinquency: Race and Science in the Making of California's Juvenile Justice System*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2012.
- Clark, Nigel. "Geo-politics and the disaster of the Anthropocene." *The Sociological Review* 62, no. S1 (2014): 19-37.
- Coates, Peter. *Nature: Western Attitudes since Ancient Times*. Oxford: Polity Press, 1998.
- Cohen, Adam, and Elizabeth Taylor. *American Pharaoh: Mayor Richard J. Daley - His Battle for Chicago and the Nation*. New York: Little, Brown, 2000.
- Colasanti, Kathryn J. A., Michael W. Hamma, and Charlotte M. Litjensb. "The City as an 'Agricultural Powerhouse'? Perspectives on Expanding Urban Agriculture from Detroit, Michigan." *Urban Geography* 33, no. 3 (2012): 348-69.
- Colten, Craig E. *An Unnatural Metropolis: Wresting New Orleans from Nature*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006.
- Conron, John. *American Picturesque*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.
- Conzen, Kathleen Neils. "Immigrants, Immigrant Neighborhoods, and Ethnic Identity: Historical Issues." *The Journal of American History* 66, no. 3 (1979): 603-15.
- Copley, Stephen, and Peter Garside, eds. *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics Since 1770*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

- Cordoba, Antonio, and Daniel García-Donoso, eds. *The Sacred and Modernity in Urban Spain: Beyond the Secular City*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.
- Corner, James, ed. *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Theory*. Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999.
- Cranz, Galen. *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982.
- Crary, Jonathan. *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*. New York: Verso, 2014.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139-67.
- Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1983.
- Cronon, William. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1991.
- David, Joshua, and Robert Hammond. *High Line: The Inside Story of New York City's Park in the Sky*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.
- Davis, Margaret B. "Quaternary History of Deciduous Forests of Eastern North America and Europe." *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* 70, no. 3 (1983): 550-563.
- Davis, Mike. 1990. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. New York: Verso.
- Davis, Mike. *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998.
- Deloria, Philip J. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

- DeLuca, Kevin, and Anne Demo, "Imagining Nature and Erasing Class and Race: Carleton Watkins, John Muir, and the Construction of Wilderness." *Environmental History* 6, no. 4 (2001): 541-560.
- Dennis, Rutledge M. "Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and the Metaphysics of Race." *The Journal of Negro Education* 64, no. 3 (1995): 243-52.
- de Wet, Andrew P., Jonathan Richardson, and Catherine Olympia. "Interactions of Land-Use History and Current Ecology in a Recovering 'Urban Wildland.'" *Urban Ecosystems* 2, no. 4 (1998): 237-62.
- Diamond, Andrew J. *Mean Streets: Chicago Youths and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multiracial City, 1908-1969*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- DiMaggio, Paul. "Culture and Cognition." *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1997): 263-87.
- Domosh, Mona. "Those 'Gorgeous Incongruities': Polite Politics and Public Space on the Streets of Nineteenth-Century New York City." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 2 (1998): 209-26.
- Drake, St. Clair, and Horace Cayton. *Black Metropolis Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945.
- Draper, Joan E. "The Art and Science of Park Planning in the United States: Chicago's Small Parks, 1902-1905." In *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City*, edited by Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver, 98-119. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

- Draus, Paul Joseph, Juliette Roddy, and Anthony McDuffie. ““We Don’t Have No Neighbourhood’: Advanced Marginality and Urban Agriculture in Detroit.” *Urban Studies* 51, no. 12 (2014): 2523-38;
- Dreher, Nan H. “The Virtuous and the Verminous: Turn-of-the-Century Moral Panics in London's Public Parks.” *Albion* 29, no. 2 (1997): 246-67.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. New York: The Free Press, 1935.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899.
- Durkheim, Émile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Edited by Mark S. Cladis, translated by Carol Cosman. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Durkheim, Émile. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. Edited by George Simpson, translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson. New York: The Free Press, 1951.
- Dutton, Ralph. *The English Garden*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1938.
- Elvin, Mark, and Liu Ts’ui-jung, eds. *Sediments of Time: Environment and Society in Chinese History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Empson, William. *Some Versions of Pastoral*. New York: New Directions, 1974.
- Essoka, Jonathan D. “The Gentrifying Effects of Brownfields Redevelopment.” *Western Journal of Black Studies* 34, no. 3 (2010): 299-315.
- Feagin, Joe R. *The White Racial Frame*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Fields, Barbara J. “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America.” *New Left Review* 181 (1990): 95-118.



- Fine, Gary Alan. *Morel Tales: The Culture of Mushrooming*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Firchow, Peter Edgerly. *Envisioning Africa: Racism and Imperialism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000.
- Fisher, Colin. *Urban Green: Nature, Recreation, and the Working Class in Industrial Chicago*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.
- Flores-Gonzalez, Nilda. "Paseo Boriqua: Claiming a Puerto Rican Space in Chicago." *CENTRO Journal* 13, no. 2 (2001): 7-23.
- Florida, Richard. *Cities and the Creative Class*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Flusty, Steven. *Building Paranoia: The Proliferation of Interdictory Space and the Erosion of Spatial Justice*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design, 1994.
- Foucault, Michel. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*. Edited by Michel Senellart, translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Picador, 2009.
- Frazier, E. Franklin. *The Black Bourgeoisie*. New York: The Free Press, 1957.
- Fuerst, J. S. *When Public Housing Was Paradise: Building Community in Chicago*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
- Gage, John. "Turner and the Picturesque – I." *The Burlington Magazine* 107, no. 742 (1965): 16-25.
- Gage, John. "Turner and the Picturesque – II." *The Burlington Magazine* 107, no. 743 (1965): 75-81.

- Gallon, Kim T. "Between Respectability and Modernity: Black Newspapers and Sexuality, 1925-1940." Ph.D. Diss, the University of Pennsylvania, 2009.
- Gandy, Matthew. *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.
- Gandy, Matthew. *The Fabric of Space: Water, Modernity, and the Urban Imagination*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014.
- Gandy, Matthew. "Urban Nature and the Ecological Imaginary." In *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*, edited by Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw, 63-74. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Gilfoyle, Timothy J. *Millennium Park: Creating a Chicago Landmark*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- Gilpin, William. *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape: to which is added a poem, On Landscape Painting*. London: Strand, 1792.
- Gjerde, Jon. "New Growth on Old Vines—The State of the Field: The Social History of Immigration to and Ethnicity in the United States." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18, no. 4 (1999): 40-65.
- Golash-Boza, Tanya. "Dropping the Hyphen? Becoming Latino(a)-American through Racialized Assimilation." *Social Forces* 85, no. 1 (2006): 27-55.
- Goldberg, David Theo. *The Racial State*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002.

- Gould, Kenneth A., and Tammy L. Lewis. "The Environmental Injustice of Green Gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn's Prospect Park." In *The World in Brooklyn: Gentrification, Immigration, and Ethnic Politics in a Global City*, edited by Judith DeSena and Timothy Shortell, 113-46. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2012.
- Gordillo, Gastón R. *Rubble: The Afterlife of Destruction*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Gotham, Kevin Fox. *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014.
- Gotham, Kevin Fox, and Miriam Greenberg. *Crisis Cities: Disaster and Redevelopment in New York and New Orleans*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Gradel, Thomas J., and Dick Simpson. "Patronage, Cronyism and Criminality in Chicago Government Agencies: Anti-Corruption Report Number 4." University of Illinois at Chicago, 2011.  
[http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/pols/ChicagoPolitics/AntiCorruptionReport\\_4.pdf](http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/pols/ChicagoPolitics/AntiCorruptionReport_4.pdf), 18.
- Graham, Lawrence Otis. *Our Kind of People: Inside America's Black Upper Class*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991.
- Graves, Joseph L., Jr. *The Emperor's New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001.
- Grazian, David. "Where the Wild Things Aren't: Exhibiting Nature in American Zoos." *The Sociological Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2012): 546-65.
- Greenberg, Miriam. *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis was Sold to the World*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Greenberg, Miriam. "What on Earth Is Sustainable?: Toward Critical Sustainability Studies."

*Boom: A Journal of California* 3, no. 4 (2013): 54-66.

Griswold, Wendy. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2013.

Griswold, Wendy. "A Methodological Framework for the Sociology of Culture." *Sociological Methodology* 17, no. 1 (1987): 1-35.

Griswold, Wendy. *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theater, 1576-1980*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Grossman, James R. "Blowing the Trumpet: The *Chicago Defender* and Black Migration during World War I." *Illinois Historical Journal* 78, no. 2 (1985): 82-96.

Gutman, Marta. *A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850-1950*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Hall, Kim F. *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Halle, David, and Elizabeth Tiso. *New York's New Edge: Contemporary Art, the High Line, and Urban Megaprojects on the Far West Side*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

Hanger, Kimberly S. *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

Haraway, Donna J. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

- Harris, Brandon, Lincoln Larson, and Scott Ogletree. "Different Views From The 606: Examining the Impacts of an Urban Greenway on Crime in Chicago." *Environment and Behavior*, first published Feb. 10, 2017, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916517690197>.
- Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Social Change*. Malden: Blackwell, 1990.
- Herrington, Susan. "Framed Again: The Picturesque Aesthetics of Contemporary Landscapes." *Landscape Journal* 25, no. 1 (2006): 22-37.
- Hesse, Barnor. "Racialized Modernity: An Analytics of White Mythologies." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 4 (2007): 643-63.
- Heynen, Nik, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw, eds. *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Hinton, Elizabeth. *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Hirsch, Arnold R. *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Hirsch, Arnold R. "Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953-1966." *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (1995): 522-50.
- Holt, Ysanne. *British Artists and the Modernist Landscape*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2003.

- Howell, Aaron J., and Jeffrey M. Timberlake. "Racial And Ethnic Trends In The Suburbanization Of Poverty In U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 1980–2010." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36, no. 1 (2014): 79-98.
- Hunt, D. Bradford. *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Hyra, Derek. *The New Urban Renewal: The Economic Transformation of Harlem and Bronzeville*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House, 1961.
- Jamal, Amaney, and Nadine Naber, eds. *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008.
- Jasen, Patricia. *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.
- Jenks, Chris, ed. *Cultural Reproduction*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Jerolmack, Colin. "Animal Practices, Ethnicity, and Community: The Turkish Pigeon Handlers of Berlin." *American Sociological Review* 72, no. 6 (2007): 874-94.
- Jerolmack, Colin. "Toward a Sociology of Nature." *The Sociology Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2012): 501-5.
- Johnson, C. Richard. "Successful Reform Litigation: The Shakman Patronage Case - The Lawsuits." *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 64, no. 2 (1988): 479-96.

- Jordan, David P. *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussman*. New York: The Free Press, 1995.
- Jordan, Winthrop D. *The White Man's Burden*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Keating, Ann Durkin, ed. *Chicago Neighborhoods and Suburbs: A Historical Guide*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Kinney, Rebecca. "Longing for Detroit: The Naturalization of Racism through Ruin Porn and Digital Memories." *Media Fields Journal* 11 (2012), <http://www.mediafieldsjournal.org/longing-for-detroit>.
- Kinsley, David. *Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995.
- Klonk, Charlotte. *Science and the Perception of Nature: British Landscape Art In The Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Knowles, Louis L., and Kenneth Prewitt, eds. *Institutional Racism in America*. Paterson: Prentice Hall, 1969.
- Koehler, David H., and Margaret T. Wrightson. "Inequality in the Delivery of Urban Services: A Reconsideration of the Chicago Parks." *The Journal of Politics* 49, no. 1 (1987): 80-99.
- Kolodny, Annette. *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor As Experience and History in American Life and Letters*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.
- Kruse, Kevin M. *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Landry, Donna. "The Geopolitical Picturesque." *Spatial Practices* 13, no. 1 (2012): 91-114.

- Lang, Steven, and Julia Rothenberg. "Neoliberal Urbanism, Public Space, and the Greening of the Growth Machine: New York City's High Line Park." *Environment and Planning A*, first published Nov. 24, 2016, DOI: 10.1177/0308518X16677969.
- Lassiter, Matthew D. "De Jure/De Facto Segregation: The Long Shadow of a National Myth." In *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, edited by Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino, 25-48. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Lassiter, Matthew D. "Impossible Criminals: The Suburban Imperatives of America's War on Drugs." *Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (2015): 126-40.
- Latour, Bruno. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Latour, Bruno. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Lee, Sangyun, and Paul Mohai. "Racial and Socioeconomic Assessments of Neighborhoods Adjacent to Small-Scale Brownfield Sites in the Detroit Region." *Environmental Practice* 13, no. 4 (2011): 340-53.
- Lees, Andrew. *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820-1940*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Lees, Loretta. "Super-gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn Heights, New York City." *Urban Studies* 40, no. 12 (2003): 2487-509, 2487.



- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
- Lloyd, Richard. *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Post-Industrial City*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Lloyd, Richard, and Terry Nichols Clark. "The City as an Entertainment Machine." *Research in Urban Sociology: Critical Perspectives on Urban Redevelopment* 6 (2001): 357-78.
- Locke, Alain, ed. *The New Negro*. New York: Touchstone, 1925.
- Lohman, Joseph D., and Roger F. Shanahan. *The Police and Minority Groups*. Chicago Park District, 1947.
- Loughran, Kevin. "Imbricated Spaces: The High Line, Urban Parks, and the Cultural Meaning of City and Nature." *Sociological Theory* 34, no. 4 (2016): 311-34.
- Loughran, Kevin. "The Philadelphia Negro and the Canon of Classical Urban Theory." *Du Bois Review* 12, no. 2 (2015): 249-67.
- Loughran, Kevin. "Parks for Profit: The High Line, Growth Machines, and the Uneven Development of Urban Public Spaces." *City & Community* 13, no. 1 (2014): 49-68.
- Low, Setha, Dana Taplin, and Suzanne Scheld. *Rethinking Urban Parks: Public Space and Cultural Diversity*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.
- MacLachlan, Ian. "A Bloody Offal Nuisance: The Persistence of Private Slaughter-Houses in Nineteenth-Century London." *Urban History* 34, no. 2 (2007): 227-54.
- Madden, David J. "Neighborhood as Spatial Project: Making the Urban Order on the Downtown Brooklyn Waterfront." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 2 (2014): 471-97, 480.

- Madden, David J. "Revisiting the End of Public Space: Assembling the Public in an Urban Park." *City & Community* 9, no. 2 (2010): 187-207.
- Mahoney, James. *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.
- Marable, Manning. *Beyond Black and White*. Brooklyn: Verso, 1995.
- Marable, Manning. *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in America*. New York: Macmillan, 1984.
- Marcuse, Peter. "The Grid as City Plan: New York City and Laissez-Faire Planning in the Nineteenth Century." *Planning Perspectives* 2, no. 3 (1987): 287-310.
- Martinez, Miranda J. *Power at the Roots: Gentrification, Community Gardens, and the Puerto Ricans of the Lower East Side*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010.
- Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One*. Translated by Ben Fowkes. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. "Manifesto of the Communist Party." In *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker, 469-500. New York: W. W. Norton, 1978.
- Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Massey, Douglas, and Nancy Denton. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993.
- McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

- McCammack, Brian. *Recovering Green in Bronzeville*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- McCammack, Brian James. "Recovering Green in Bronzeville: An Environmental and Cultural History of the African American Great Migration to Chicago, 1915-1940." Ph.D. Diss, Harvard University, 2012.
- McLeod, Hugh. "Religion in the City." *Urban History* 5, no. 1 (1978): 7-22.
- McNeur, Catherine. *Taming Manhattan: Environmental Battles in the Antebellum City*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014.
- McWilliams, Douglas A. "Environmental Justice and Industrial Redevelopment: Economics and Equality in Urban Revitalization." *Ecology Law Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1994): 705-83.
- Millington, Nate. "From Urban Scar to 'Park in the Sky': Terrain Vague, Urban Design, and the Remaking of New York City's High Line Park." *Environment and Planning A* 47, no. 11 (2015): 2324-38.
- Millington, Nate. "Post-Industrial Imaginaries: Nature, Representation and Ruin in Detroit, Michigan." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, no. 1 (2013): 279-96.
- Mitchell, Don. "The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85, no. 1 (1995): 108-33.
- Mitchell, Timothy. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

- Mladenka, Kenneth R. "The Distribution of an Urban Public Service: The Changing Role of Race and Politics." *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 24, no. 4 (1989): 556-83.
- Molotch, Harvey. "The City as Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place." *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 2 (1976): 309-32.
- Mora, G. Cristina. *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- Morning, Ann. *The Nature of Race: How Scientists Think and Teach about Human Difference*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- Morris, A. E. J. *History of Urban Form Before the Industrial Revolution*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Morris, Aldon. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: The Free Press, 1984.
- Morton, Timothy. *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Müller, Max. *Physical Religion*. New York: Longman, Greens, and Co., 1891.
- Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*. New York: Harcourt, 1961.
- Murdoch, Jonathan. "Inhuman/Nonhuman/Human: Actor-Network Theory and the Prospects for a Nondualistic and Symmetrical Perspective on Nature and Society." *Society and Space* 15, no. 6 (1996): 731-56.
- Nelson, R. J. *Dirty Waters: Confessions of Chicago's Last Harbor Boss*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

- Neuman, Gerald L. "The Lost Century of American Immigration Law (1776-1875)." *Columbia Law Review* 93, no. 8 (1993): 1833-1901.
- Nicholls, Walter J. "The Los Angeles School: Difference, Politics, City." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 1 (2011): 189-206.
- Ocampo, Anthony Christian. *The Latinos of Asia: How Filipino Americans Break the Rules of Race*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016.
- Olmsted, Frederick Law. "Address to the Prospect Park Scientific Association." In *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, edited by Robert Twombly, 187-200. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.
- Olmsted, Frederick Law. "A Consideration of the Justifying Value of a Public Park." In *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, edited by Robert Twombly, 283-310. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.
- Olmsted, Frederick Law. "A Healthy Change in the Tone of the Human Heart." In *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, edited by Robert Twombly, 121-38. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.
- Olmsted, Frederick Law. "The Landscape Architecture of the World's Columbian Exposition." In *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, edited by Robert Twombly, 163-86. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.
- Olmsted, Frederick Law. *Mount Royal, Montreal*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1881.
- Olmsted, Frederick Law. "On Landscape Gardening." In *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, edited by Robert Twombly, 139-48. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.

- Olmsted, Frederick Law. "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns." In *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*, edited by Robert Twombly, 201-52. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.
- Olmsted, Frederick Law. "Report Accompanying Plan for Laying out the South Park." Chicago South Park Commission, 1871.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Osborn, Marian L. "The Development of Recreation in the South Park System of Chicago." Master's thesis, the University of Chicago, 1928.
- Osman, Suleiman. *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in Postwar New York*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Pacewicz, Josh. "The City as a Fiscal Derivative: Financialization, Urban Development, and the Politics of Earmarking." *City & Community* 15, no. 3 (2016): 264-88.
- Pacyga, Dominic A. *Chicago: A Biography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Palys, Ted. "Purposive Sampling." In *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Sage: Los Angeles, 2008);
- Park, Robert E., and Ernest W. Burgess. *The City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925.
- Pattillo, Mary. "Foreword." In *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, by St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, xvi-iii. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.
- Peck, Jamie. "Struggling with the Creative Class." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 4 (2005): 740-70.

- Perea, Juan F. "The Black/White Binary Paradigm of Race: The 'Normal Science' of American Racial Thought." *California Law Review* 85, no. 5 (1997): 1213-58.
- Pérez, Gina M. *The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Peterson, Richard A., and N. Anand. "The Production of Culture Perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (2004): 311-34.
- Petty, Audrey, ed. *High Rise Stories: Voices from Chicago Public Housing*. San Francisco: McSweeney's Books, 2013.
- Phillips-Fein, Kim. *Fear City: New York's Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2017.
- Pierce, Bessie Louise. *A History of Chicago, Volume III: The Rise of a Modern City, 1871-1893*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Porter, Theodore M. *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- Rast, Joel. "Manufacturing Industrial Decline: The Politics of Economic Change in Chicago, 1955-1998." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 23, no. 2 (2001): 175-90.
- Reichl, Alexander J. "The High Line and the Ideal of Democratic Public Space." *Urban Geography* 37, no. 6 (2016): 904-25.
- Rich, John, and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, eds. *City and Country in the Ancient World*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Rivlin, Gary. *Fire on the Prairie: Harold Washington, Chicago Politics, and the Roots of the Obama Presidency*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013.

- Roberts, Dorothy. *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: The New Press.
- Roberts, Dorothy E. "Race, Vagueness, and the Social Meaning of Order-Maintenance Policing." *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 89, no. 3 (1999): 775-836.
- Roberts, John Michael. "Spatial Governance and Working Class Public Spheres: The Case of a Chartist Demonstration at Hyde Park." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 14, no. 3 (2001): 308-36.
- Robinson, Zandria F. *This Ain't Chicago: Race, Class, and Regional Identity in the Post-Soul South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014.
- Rodríguez, Clara. *Changing Race: Latinos, the Census, and the History of Ethnicity in the United States*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Roedinger, David R. *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs*. New York: Basic Books, 2005.
- Rogin, Michael. "Nature as Politics and Nature as Romance in America." *Political Theory* 5, no. 1 (1977): 5-30.
- Rosenzweig, Roy, and Elizabeth Blackmar. *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Royko, Mike. *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago*. New York: Penguin, 1971.
- Rybczynski, Witold. *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the 19th Century*. New York: Touchstone, 1999.
- Satter, Beryl. *Family Properties: How the Struggle Over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and Urban America*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009.



- Scherzer, Kenneth A. *The Unbounded Community: Neighborhood Life and Social Structure in New York City, 1830-1875*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.
- Schudson, Michael. "How Culture Works." *Theory and Society* 18, no. 2 (1989): 153-80.
- Schuman, Howard, and Jacqueline Scott. "Generations and Collective Memories." *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 3 (1987): 359-81.
- Schuyler, David. *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015.
- Schuyler, David. *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Segal, Charles. *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral: Essays on Theocritus and Virgil*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Self, Robert O. *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Seligman, Amanda. *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Seligman, Amanda I. *Chicago's Block Clubs: How Neighbors Shape the City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- Sennett, Richard. *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996.

- Shaw, Clifford R., and Henry D. McKay. *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942.
- Shaw, Ronald E. "A Final Push for National Legislation: The Chicago Freedom Movement." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 94, no. 3 (2001): 304-32.
- Shepard, Benjamin, and Gregory Smithsimon. *The Beach Beneath the Streets: Contesting New York City's Public Spaces*. New York: SUNY Press, 2011.
- Shermer, Elizabeth Tandy. *Sunbelt Capitalism: Phoenix and the Transformation of American Politics*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.
- Simmel, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." In *The Blackwell City Reader*, edited Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, 103-10. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002.
- Sites, William. "God from the Machine? Urban Movements Meet Machine Politics in Neoliberal Chicago." *Environment and Planning A* 44, no. 11 (2012): 2574-90, 2574.
- Smith, Carl. *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb, and the Model Town of Pullman*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.
- Smith, Justin E. H. *Nature, Human Nature, and Human Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Smith, Neil. *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984.
- Somerville, Siobhan B. *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

- Sorensen, Andre. "Taking Path Dependence Seriously: An Historical Institutional Research Agenda in Planning History." *Planning Perspectives* 30, no. 1 (2015): 17-38.
- Sorkin, Michael, ed. *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992.
- Spear, Allan H. *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.
- Spear, Jennifer M. *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.
- Stake, Robert E. *The Art of Case Study Research*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, 1995.
- Steffen, Will, Paul J. Crutzen, and John R. McNeill. "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature." *Ambio: A Journal of the Human Environment* 36, no. 8 (2007): 614-21.
- Steptoe, Tyina Leaneice. *Houston Bound: Culture and Color in a Jim Crow City*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2015.
- Sugrue, Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Swyngedouw, Erik. *Social Power and the Urbanization of Water: Flows of Power*. New York: Oxford University Press: 2004.
- Taylor, Bron. *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- Taylor, Dorceta E. *The Environment and the People in American Cities, 1600s – 1900s*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

- Taylor, Dorceta E. "Urban Parks, Social Class and Leisure Behavior in Nineteenth-Century America." *Journal of Leisure Research* 31, no. 4 (1999): 420-77.
- Taylor, Paul, Mark Hugo Lopez, Jessica Martínez and Gabriel Velasco. "When Labels Don't Fit: Hispanics and Their Views of Identity." Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/04/when-labels-dont-fit-hispanics-and-their-views-of-identity/>.
- Thernstrom, Stephan, and Peter R. Knights, "Men in Motion: Some Data and Speculations about Urban Population Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 1, no. 1 (1970): 7-35.
- Thomas, W. I., and Dorothy Swaine Thomas. *The Child in America: Behavior Problems and Programs*. New York: Knopf, 1928.
- Thompson, Heather Ann. *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden: or, Life in the Woods*. Houghton Mifflin: New York, 1910.
- Tissot, Sylvie. "Of Dogs and Men: The Making of Spatial Boundaries in a Gentrifying Neighborhood." *City & Community* 10, no. 3 (2011): 265-84.
- Toro-Morn, Maura, Ivis García Zambrana, and Marixsa Alicea. "De Bandera a Bandera (From Flag to Flag): New Scholarship about the Puerto Rican Diaspora in Chicago." *Centro Journal* 28, no. 2 (2016): 4-35.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. "Transitions as Translations." In *Transitions, Environments, Translations: Feminisms in International Politics*, edited by Joan W. Scott, Cora Kaplan, and Debra Keates, ch. 18. New York: Routledge, 1997.

- Ture, Kwame [f.k.a. Stokely Carmichael], and Charles V. Hamilton. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. New York: Vintage, 2002.
- Turner, James, *The Politics of Landscape*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Twombly, Robert, ed. *Andrew Jackson Downing: Essential Texts*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2012.
- Vale, Lawrence J., and Thomas J. Campanella, eds. *The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover from Disaster*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi. *American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Vitale, Alex S. *City of Disorder: How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics*. New York: NYU Press, 2009.
- Wachsmuth, David. "City as Ideology: Reconciling the Explosion of the City Form with the Tenacity of the City Concept." *Environment and Planning D* 32, no. 1 (2014): 75-90.
- Wachsmuth, David. "Three Ecologies: Urban Metabolism and the Society-Nature Opposition." *The Sociological Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (2012): 506-23.
- Wahrman, Dror. "'Middle-Class' Domesticity Goes Public: Gender, Class, and Politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria." *Journal of British Studies* 32 (1993): 396-432.
- Walker, Brett L. *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010.
- Walker, Samuel. "Urban Agriculture and the Sustainability Fix in Vancouver and Detroit." *Urban Geography* 37, no. 2 (2016): 163-82.

- Ward, David. *Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Warner, Sam Bass. *To Dwell Is to Garden: A History of Boston's Community Gardens*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987.
- Weber, Max. *The City*. Edited by Don Martindale, translated by Gertrud Neuwirth. New York: Free Press, 1958.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.
- Wherry, Frederick F. *The Philadelphia Barrio: The Arts, Branding, and Neighborhood Transformation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Wing, Adrien Katherine, ed. *Global Critical Race Feminism: An International Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Wolch, Jennifer, John P. Wilson, and Jed Fehrenbach. "Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles: An Equity-Mapping Analysis." *Urban Geography* 26, no. 1 (2005): 4-35.
- Wolch, Jennifer R., Jason Byrne, and Joshua P. Newell. "Urban Green Space, Public Health, and Environmental Justice: The Challenge of Making Cities 'Just Green Enough.'" *Landscape and Urban Planning* 125 (2014): 234-44.
- Wolcott, David B. *Cops and Kids: Policing Juvenile Delinquency in Urban America, 1890-1940*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005.
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409.

- Wrede, Stuart, and William Howard Adams, eds. *Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1991.
- Yancey, George A. *Who is White?: Latinos, Asians, and the New Black/Nonblack Divide*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003.
- Yglesias, Caren. *The Complete House and Grounds: Learning from Andrew Jackson Downing's Domestic Architecture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Sage: Los Angeles, 2014.
- Zukin, Sharon. *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.
- Zukin, Sharon. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.